SOCIAL MEDIA AND MODERNIST AUTHORITY: THE HAUNTOLOGY OF FACEBOOK

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ABSTRACT

Highly biographical Modernist author profiles on Facebook seem to adopt or encourage a purely biographical, Genius Cult-esque understanding of the relationship between an author and that author's work. This is initially problematic, as authorial intent is a particularly complex issue of consideration for many of the authors currently haunting Facebook. This article thus establishes the paradoxical view on author-ity of three such authors – T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, and James Joyce – and examines how such Facebook profiles undermine and simplify the arguments made by these authors both through their critical and creative works. It then suggests that, by mere nature of being present on Facebook, these profiles may indeed engage in teasing out the very same paradox that these Modernists proposed in the first place, using Derrida's Hauntology to examine Facebook as a textual space both of biography and self-prosthesis. The argument ultimately seeks to propose that all Facebook users are indeed just such spectres haunting digital spaces.

KEY WORDS

Modernism; Authority; Biography; Social Media; Hauntology; Intertextuality

I began with the desire to speak with the dead.

—Stephen Greenblatt,
Shakespearean Negotiations

There are spectres haunting Facebook: the spectres of Modernism. In the spring of 2017, while perusing my Facebook news feed, I was struck by a haunting experience. A few stories down the feed, nestled between my brother's vacation photographs and the typical polemic against neo-liberal capitalism from one of my Marxist brethren, T.S. Eliot had posted a new comment on one of my friends' Timelines. This is not to say that someone had posted a line from T.S. Eliot. Eliot himself had posted a new comment in the 21st century.

Obviously, as a Modernist scholar, my curiosity was immediately piqued. I was aware, of course, that anyone could create a Facebook profile with any name and any characteristics she chose, and thus there were likely profiles for any number of dead individuals; but seeing Eliot pop up in my news feed, as an active Facebook user alongside so many colleagues and friends, was nevertheless startling. Upon investigation, I found that there were many profiles for Eliot, as well as for Marianne Moore, James Joyce, and seemingly endless other authors, both

Modernist and otherwise. Many of these are "dead profiles" – they were started and abandoned, showing no signs of having been edited for years. But regardless of why they were created or what their activity status may be, the fact remains: there is a Modernist phantasmagoria haunting Facebook.

As of May 2017 (when I first started collecting data on these), there were 13 T.S. Eliots, 10 Marianne Moores, and 25 James Joyces – this after cutting out any profiles which are Modernists-in-name-only, e.g. the profile-curator happens to be named James Joyce, or she uses Marianne Moore as a pseudonym out of admiration but otherwise uses the profile as her own profile with no apparent attempt to make the profile particularly Moorish.[1] There are profiles for any number of other canonical Modernist authors – e.g. Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, H. D. – but the number of publicly viewable profiles and the amount of detail therein for other authors was limited in contrast to those analysed here. Presumably this is largely a case of canonicity, and thereby celebrity within literary circles – a point worthy of further analysis, but beyond the scope of my argument here. I should also note that, though Virginia Woolf was a part of my research – and is perhaps the most popular(-ous) Modernist on Facebook, with 152 profiles – she was unfortunately cut from this analysis for length concerns; and it was she who was cut because an inordinate number of the Woolf profiles focus on Woolf as informed by her character in the movie (or, less often, the book) *The Hours* – e.g. dozens of Woolf profiles use stills of Nicole Kidman playing Woolf in the movie as the profile picture. Though this could add a fascinating level to the argument, it required excessive analysis not directly applicable to the other authors discussed.

The majority of these profiles are purely biographical details with little (or no) content or activity beyond a historical account of the authors' lives: some admixture of the name, portraits, 'Hometown' (by which they almost uniformly mean birthplace), *almae matres*, profession, relationship status, gender, sexual orientation, and the like. The profile 'Timelines' generally outline the specific dates and life events of the authors, occasionally with quotes and additional author photographs. The profile 'Thomas Stearns Eliot (T.s. Eliot)', for example, merely contains the kind of biographical details one finds in his biographies by Peter Ackroyd or Craig Raine: it highlights St. Louis as his hometown and London as his 'Current city' (rather than East Coker); notes his education at Smith, Milton, Harvard, and Merton; marks his 'Relationship status' as 'Married' to Valerie and includes Vivienne in his 'Family members' as an aunt – there is no category for 'ex-wife' in Facebook; and outlines his employment history at Highgate School and *The Egoist*; among many other biographical details. These appear around and within the Timeline, which displays a long list of Eliot quotes interlaced with Life Events and photos of him. Similarly, the profile 'Marianne Moore' (a) lists her education, hometown, current city (Carlisle, PA rather than Gettysburg) in the 'About' section, along with a few Moore quotes, with Moore's photo always looming in the corner.

The effect of such biographical profiles is to embody the author of the quoted (and non-quoted) works, to identify the hand which penned them and head which thought them up, and to give that body a context which conditioned the writing. By including quotes and material alongside places lived, places worked, places educated, etc., it implies that the biographic material is the source for understanding the author's works, and suggests a certain level of "authority" the author holds over those words. It argues for a relevance in the birthplace, residences, academic backgrounds, employments, etc. for understanding the works which bare that author's name, and thus creates an indelible and largely one-directional semiotic link to the author's works from that author's life and intents.

For a Modernist critic, however, profiling authors in such a biography-heavy way is initially quite problematic. As Marshall et al. (2020 p. 29) point out, analysis of artistic "personae" (the title of one of Pound's early poetry collections) was explicitly part of the early 20th century Modernist movement Imagism, which sought "a poetic language that produced a persona or character that was beyond the authorial identity". This is not to say that Modernism as a whole positions a strong divide between author and work, but rather, as will be established in the following section, that Modernists and Modernism tend to take a highly ambivalent view of the relationship between the author and the text. And though I will complicate this in the final half of this essay, highly biographical profiles of Modernist authors seem to unnecessarily simplify this into univalence and encourage intentional and biographical readings of works that, whether explicitly or implicitly, dedicate ample text to questioning this very practice.

Modernist Authority

These authors, of course, do not have a uniform attitude in this regard; however, almost all of them (particularly the ones discussed here) have a paradoxical, or at least ambivalent, attitude about author-ity, both emphasizing and rejecting it simultaneously. And, fittingly, the critical methods of the New Critics – the critical progeny of Modernist literature – are largely invested with the theoretical approaches to text outlined in Wimsatt and Beardsley's (1946) "Intentional Fallacy" and later Roland Barthes's (1977) "Death of the Author," largely rejecting biographical readings and authorial intentional primacy over interpretation. Largely, that is, along with a continual anxiety about this loss of grounded, authoritative "truth" or control.

Eliot

Authority is perhaps easiest to identify in Eliot, if only because he wrote such a large body of criticism and theory. Eliot's poetics, as outlined most succinctly in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," are much akin to Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, in which Eliot suggests that artistic production involves a "historical sense"; that is, "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an idea order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them" (Eliot 1921, p. 44). It takes little effort therefrom to extrapolate a nascent intertextual theory, in which the meaning behind any text relies on its relationship to other texts, and thereby this text is produced through an infinite collaborative authorship rather than by a single person. And because its meaning is formed through its relationship with texts that precede, coincide, and exceed it in time, interpretation of the text in a given moment (whether by the author or anyone else) does not establish authority or authenticity for that text.

This idea is reiterated much later in Eliot's career, in the 1946 German radio broadcast "*Die Einheit der Europäischen Kultur*," later translated into English and added as an appendix to *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (from whence I draw the subsequent references). Therein he notes the influence of French poetry from Baudelaire to Valéry on the poetry of W. B. Yeats, R. M. Rilke, and himself, and subsequently (or perhaps pre-sequently) the influence of E. A. Poe on this French tradition (Eliot 1948, p. 112). He thereafter notes that, if we were to expand our scope from individual authors to all of European poetry, we would "find a tissue of influences woven to and fro" (Eliot 1948, p. 112). Much like his earlier comments from "Tradition" – "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (Eliot 1921, p. 44) and any one poem must be conceived "as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written" (p. 48) – this clearly demonstrates a focus shifted off of the individual artist and onto an artistic network, such that the work of any one artist is rather to be understood as the

collaborative work of an innumerable plurality of artists. It is not at all coincidental, as Harding (2017, p. 2) points out, that Eliot "instructed his literary executrix not to facilitate the writing of any biography of him".

Eliot's poetry demonstrates this as well. Any one page of Eliot's *The Waste Land* is so clearly multi-authored that it is difficult to give Eliot unique authoritative credit. Eliot wrote parts of the title, epigraph, and first page of "The Burial of the Dead," of course, but so did Chaucer, Petronius, Jessie Weston, Sir James Frazer, Marie Larisch, Richard Wagner, the Anglican Church, and a few Christian scribes. Add one more page and you include more from Weston and Frazer and Wagner, along with Dante, Aldous Huxley, A. E. Waite, Shakespeare, Joseph Conrad, and Leonardo da Vinci. As such, any hermeneutic investigation which seeks explanation in the biography of "the" author of the text devolves into an infinite game of deferral along the infinite network of authors whose pens have effectively written it. Eliot's response to any attempt to investigate meaning through the author – what he calls his "Impersonal theory of poetry" – is the New Critical response: "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry" (Eliot 1921, p. 47).

However, at the same time as Eliot makes such claims and employs such stylistic resistances against biographic authoritative investigation, he also demonstrates a clear resistance to ungrounding any text from its author, and is thus far from the Scriptor-esque[2] postmodern view of later in the century. In *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, while considering the common practice (at least in the 1920s-30s) of setting a strong division between Wordsworth's poetry and his general opinions external to it, Eliot (1959, p. 87) writes, "I am not sure that this critical eclecticism cannot go too far; that we can judge and enjoy a man's poetry while leaving wholly out of account all the things for which he cared deeply, and on behalf of which he turned his poetry to account." The very title of "Tradition and the Individual Talent," where he outlines his "Impersonal theory of poetry," indicates the paradoxical irony of his view. True, it emphasizes the role of "Tradition" – other works, other authors – in the construction and interpretation of any given work, and thus demonstrates an intertextual plurality of authorship. But it also emphasizes the individual, the author of a given work, and that person's "talent" as a unique quality about that person which authoritatively shapes the text. Eliot's critical writing, despite its dialogic leanings, still maintains some focus on the role of the author in creating the work rather than the work wholly creating a Barthesian Scriptor.

Moore

Other Modernist authors are less explicit about their textual theory, but no less paradoxical. Marianne Moore's poetics, for instance, are never written explicitly in criticism about text-as-such, but rather arise from her vast body of criticism of other authors' works while she was writing literary reviews for little magazines like *The Dial*, *Contact*, *Poetry*, and *Broom*. Though she does note, in a 1921 review of Stewart Mitchell's *Poems*, that "in so far as a poem is a work of art, one does not wish to know, and must not know too definitely, the facts which underlie the expression" (Moore 1986, p. 62), such disconnections of authoritative background from the author's creative output are rare. In her 1924 review of Wallace Steven's *Harmonium*, for instance, she famously states, "The better the artist, [...] the more determined he will be to set down words in such a way as to admit of no interpretation of the accent but the one intended" (Moore 1986, p. 96), thus quite explicitly ensconcing her hermeneutic theory in authorial intent. Her reviews of W. C. Williams's works are even more heavily invested in the Genius Cult of the Author, suggesting "it is only one who is academically sophisticated who could write [Williams's poetry]" and later considering Williams's scientific background (as a trained physician) as

fundamental to understanding his writing (Moore 1986, pp. 56, 157). Harter (2013, pp. 335-336) argues that both in her review work and in her early poetry, Moore's writing is deeply invested in an "I" which Harter identifies as unambiguously the author herself, and thus that there is a highly subjective and personal connection between the text and its author.

Moore's poetry, however, complicates this view even more than Eliot's does – even the earlier poetry (*pace* Harter). Her "A Marriage" and "An Octopus" in particular demonstrate an intertextual collage of numerous authors, to the extent that rather little of the poetry can be argued to be original at all; and she thereby suggests an intertextual theory in which no text is wholly original to that author – the poems are, quite literally, Barthesian "tissue[s] of quotations" (Barthes 1977, p. 146). Indeed, as Bazin (2010, p. 130) notes, Moore's heavy use of "quoted fragment displaces the speaker, disrupting her authority as the locus of meaning"[3]. Moore, like Eliot, is not wholly on one side or the other of the argument over the relationship of an author's own biography and thoughts about her work; both are clearly conflicted over how they imagine this relationship. As such, critical examinations of Moore's biography or authorial intent which attempt to illuminate her poetry are excessively reductive of how her own work struggles with the issue of authorship.

Joyce

Joyce holds a more blatantly ambivalent attitude about the connection between author and text. Budgen (1943/1972) provides a highly biographical reading of *Ulysses* in 1943, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'*, largely informed by Budgen's conversations with the author while Joyce was writing it; and Joyce was reportedly delighted at its publication (Bowker 2012, p. 463), suggesting that he encouraged such biographical readings. Joyce's oft-quoted reason for not providing his explanatory schemas to whoever requested them – "If I gave it all up immediately, I'd lose my immortality. I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant" (Ellmann 1982, p. 519) – clearly centers the text on authorial intent. Furthermore, as Jonathan Goldman argues in *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity*, Joyce's stylistic experiments (for example changing from vignette style in the "Wandering Rocks" episode to the musical overture style in "Sirens") point decidedly toward authoritative intentionality beyond the novel itself: "The stylistic changes in *Ulysses*, by continually asking readers to guess Joyce's extradiegetic rationale for that change, create the idea of the author" (2011, pp. 61-62). Continuing soon thereafter, "In such a system the author functions as not only the origin of the novel but also the last critical word on its meaning" (Goldman 2011, p. 63).

However, this authorship is discursive rather than biological, a Foucaultean author-function born of the text rather than vice-versa. The very idea of "immortality" from the Richard Ellmann quote above clearly suggests an authorship which is not bound by the corporeal author, suggesting that the authoritative source becomes abstracted, spectral. Goldman additionally suggests that Joyce plays with this desire to connect the author (author-function arising from the text) with the corporeal person ("historical" Joyce, in Goldman) via Stephen's ready-made association as a diegetic Joyce stand-in. Goldman is here drawing on a well-founded assumption taken largely for granted in Joyce scholarship: Stephen is an ersatz Joyce, an autobiographical character giving Joyce himself a voice within *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. The heavy use of verbs in the imperative mood throughout the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode, Goldman argues, becomes an overdetermination of Joyce-as-author commanding Stephen's actions and Stephen-as-*Kunstlerromanner* commanding Joyce-as-author's memory. E.g. the narration-*cum*-stream-of-consciousness line, "Local colour. Work in all you know. Make them accomplices" (Joyce 1990, p. 188) could be read either as the author

(Joyce) instructing himself as a character (Stephen) how to proceed with his argument or the character instructing himself as an author how to write the remainder of the scene. In either case (or in both simultaneously, for Goldman), one can no longer understand the author as embodied, but rather a constructed figure born from the text, born of its writing. Thus, Goldman (2011, p. 64) argues,

> Joyce's manipulation of the trope of the autobiographical figure makes it impossible to locate the author of Ulysses within a character, within a diegetic body. Stephen Dedalus makes it impossible, then, for readers to embody the author, to locate the author as subject within a physiological object.

The "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses,* from which Goldman's analysis above draws, is a paradoxical examination of authorship broadly – and the episode title is apt, referencing a sort of Catch-22 in navigating a patch of Mediterranean water in Greek mythology. The episode is structured around Stephen's argument for a highly biographical reading of William Shakespeare's life into *Hamlet* against a group of dissenters. As Stephen makes his connections between Shakespeare's son Hamnet and the character Hamlet and muses on his second best bed,[a] Russel notably dismisses his biographical readings: "All the rest [everything which is not the artwork itself] is the speculation of schoolboys for schoolboys" (Joyce 1990, p. 185); and he suggests that such authorial details are "Interesting only to the parish clerk. I mean, we have the plays. I mean when we read the poetry of *King Lear*, what is it to us how the poet lived?" (Joyce 1990, p. 189). And later, when Eglington asks Stephen, "Do you believe your own theory?" Stephen responds, quite simply, "No" (Joyce 1990, pp. 213-214).

But Russel's very repeated insistence on intention – "I mean" – draws attention back to the author of a text (written or spoken) as the primary source of meaning behind that text, such that the author of his statements is reasserting his own need to clarify his authoritative meaning in an argument that the author is not the source of meaning. And soon after dismissing his own theory, in a stream-of-consciousness section, Stephen furthers this equivocation: "I believe, O Lord, help my unbelief. That is, help me to believe or help me to unbelieve?" (Joyce 1990, p. 214). Stephen's expression of doubt is just that: not dismissal, but dilemma, a superimposition of two seemingly irreconcilable attitudes about such authorial readings. Hence, yet again, the problem with highly biographically-structured Facebook profiles: they put an emphasis on authorial biography, on understanding the author through the details of that author's life; and by connecting the author with the author's works (nearly all of the profiles list or quote from the authors' works), such profiles suggest that this understanding of the author through the biographical details is a source of meaning for those works, without recognizing that the authors being profiled therein criticize this very practice, both critically and creatively.[4] These profiles encourage an understanding of textual interpretation based on Stephen's initial stance and are unnecessarily dismissive of the alternative, resolving the paradox by ignoring one of the paradoxical stances rather than engaging with the paradox which fundamentally structures the text itself. A purely biographical reading of authorship essentially erases Charybdis from the titular metaphor and renders this chapter, this challenge in the journey, pointless. It becomes merely a patch of calm water through which Ulysses sails by Scylla effortlessly.

The argument is not that Joyce, Eliot, or Moore was staunchly for or against biographical readings of authorship into the work, but that they struggled with the dilemma, and that this struggle is fundamentally part of their work, whether explicitly or implicitly. The point, as

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[a] In his will, Shakespeare left his "second best bed" (and nothing else) to his wife Anne Hathaway. His *first* best bed is never mentioned.

Chekhov is famous for having said (but never did),[b] is not that it has an "answer" but that it "raises questions" about reading an interpretation; and the creation of such Facebook profiles encourage purely biographical readings of texts which explicitly draw into question such readings.

De-Authorizing Biography

Modernist biographies broadly thus risk a similar problem, as they can easily reduce this paradoxical superimposition – of both adhering to authoritative hermeneutics and eschewing it – purely to the former;[5] and as such, they can and often do diminish the complexity of the author-text relationship which these texts and their authors introduced during the Modernist era. Eliot biographies often reduce the "tradition" (the intertextual structuration) and overemphasize the "individual talent" (the Genius) of the poet; Moore biographies often focus purely on the moderator of her poetic conversations rather than the conversants; Joyce biographies often uncritically and dismissively resolve the very dilemma of biographic authority his works analyze.

However, we also must be vigilant against the assumption that biographical details, or profiles such as these, are in fact purely indicative of the corporeal organisms which they purportedly depict. Importantly, *a biography is not the person biographed*. It is a record, an archive; and as an archive, biography functions through the same principles and mechanisms of archive theory. While relying on a grounding in some *physis* (here the corporeal author), biography simultaneously does what Derrida (1995, p. 7) calls "archival violence" to the material it archives by removing it from the *physis* and encoding it into the *nomos* and *techne* of the text – which is to say, of text. There must be a relational connection between the signifier archival biography and a signified *physis*-based organic person, such that a reading of the biography is understood to be a reading of the biographed person; and the biography simultaneously must – as biography, as non-organic text – be wholly separate and different from that organic person. Thus, as Derrida (1995) suggests, the biography comes to supplant the person, such that the signified-person is defined and hermeneutically understood via the signifier-text; and, thereby, the biography simulacrally comes to take primacy and originality in the semiotic relationship between the two.[6] Any attempt to "know" Marianne Moore does not investigate the bones and decayed organic materials buried in the Gettysburg soil; it investigates the archival records which are associated with them, which bear the same name, and then come to define those remains, such that the remains themselves become signifiers reliant on the archival Moore for meaning. But without a grounding in the corporeal author, the archival text also loses its grounding or perceived validity, as it needs to be an archive of something or someone in order to be biographical or archival at all. A corporeal hand, when composing these Modernist works, necessarily had to be holding the pen.

This inherently complicated relationship between biological author and biographical author, between Author and Scriptor, is precisely the point of the overdetermined attitude of these Modernist authors about biographically and authoritatively based hermeneutics. The Shakespearean debate in *Ulysses*, in particular, examines just this paradox: Russell's insistence

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[b] The quote, which is as ubiquitous as any quote available online, is generally thus: "The role of the artist is to ask questions, not answer them." Chekhov is quoted as having said this everywhere from Facebook to Goodreads to UBC's Department of Theatre and Film website. Nowhere in Chekhov's letters, fiction, or drama does this line appear in any text or translation I have been able to locate. It is, at best, a very loose paraphrase of two 1888 letters he wrote to A. S. Suvorin (see Chekhov 1920, pp. 88-89, 99-100). This being said, the idea that a contemporary discursive Chekhov is saying things which the corporeal author appears never to have said is apt for my argument.

on focusing on "the plays" and ignoring "how the author lived" is ultimately based on a rejection of biological authority, such that the "author" he is referring to is the decayed remains now buried in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. He is understanding Shakespeare's final will and testament (whence the "second best bed" reference comes) to have a concrete semiotic relationship with the once-living person – as it must if it is to be understood as a "Will" at all. But the will is as much a text as the plays are; and thus, by his own logic, because we "have the [will]," it too must be interpreted as text. By pluralizing the word "plays," Russell is implicitly recognizing a relationship between multiple works which are linked through their authorial imprimatur; and thus, logically, the last will and testament of "William Shakespeare" necessarily holds just such a relationship with other texts bearing that imprint. The will, logically, *must* be read into the plays as an intertext.

Russell's rejection of a "will" in order to argue against author-based hermeneutics is thus doubly ironic. A will is a textual representation of just that – authorial will, desire, intention – and one which is precisely an extension of that desire and intention beyond the author's presence. His dismissal of reading the will into the plays therefore represents a rejection of reading the corporeal author's life and intentions in favor of a New Critical reading of a synchronic textual present. But in order to do so he must understand the will through a wholly different textual condition: the will *must accurately represent the corporeal person*, must be a textual signifier absolutely referencing the signified intentions of its author diachronically (through time). But as William Shakespeare does not corporeally exist in the present moment, what the will ends up referencing is actually itself, as it is the only present object through which William Shakespeare's intentions are declared and can be interpreted in the synchronic moment. Russell's grounds for rejecting the will's relevance are founded on its ability to deliver intended meaning and accurately represent the corporeal author diachronically, at the same time as he is arguing that texts should only be read synchronically.

On both accounts, of course, Russell is correct. Text cannot be understood in a perfect signifier-signified relationship with its corporeal author and her intentions, as the author, immediately after the moment of writing, ceases to be living in that state or expressing those intentions; and thus, as Barthes (1977) argues, the text becomes its own Scriptor, an archival record of a thing which has ceased to exist outside of the archive of itself. But as the text logically must have been written by a corporeal author who had some intention of a meaning behind what she was recording, and as the social situation of an author (e.g. employment, education, and places she has lived) undoubtedly shapes that person's thoughts and expressions, the text must naturally carry with it an implicit sense of the author's life and intentions as influential on her writings, even if this life and these intentions are only spectrally present through text. An author's name, indeed, is nothing more than a signifier; and as such, it builds meaning through synchronic intertextual relationship as much as any word does. Shakespeare's plays only gain historicity through the application of his name and the intertextual relationship between his name on those plays and accounts of when he lived *which are presently available*. The author simultaneously must *have been a person* in the past, but must *be a specter* in the present in order for there to be an author at all.

FACEBOOK SPECTRALITY

And it is here that these Facebook profiles in fact engage in the very debate which they seem to problematically resolve, in that they demonstrate this spectral presence with a bizarre clarity. They demonstrate the traditional biographical understanding of the person represented *and* they demonstrate a synchronic *Aktualisierung* ("updating," "reactivation"), [7] both establishing the rootedness in corporeal personhood and demonstrating how representations of that

personhood necessarily belong to a synchronic present. I will take a few Eliot and Moore examples (from among many) to demonstrate.

Biographical Profiles

"T.s. Eliot" is strictly biographical. For pictures, it holds only an image of Eliot's classic middle-aged bespectacled face alongside a bookshelf. For 'Work', it lists *The Criterion*. For 'Education', it indicates Harvard and Merton. 'Current City' lists London. The 'Details about T.s.' section holds a relatively long paragraph, written in the first-person, listing biographical details and influences:

> *My name is T.S. Eliot, short for Thomas Stearns. I was born on September 26, 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri. I attended Harvard and then went to graduate school at the Sorbonne, Harvard, and Merton College, Oxford graduating with a degree in philosophy. I then traveled to England and became a schoolmaster, bank clerk and eventually literary editor for the publishing house Faber & Faber. I later became a director. I created and edited the exclusive and influential literary journal Criterion. In 1927, I decided to become a British citizen and also entered the Anglican Church. I take pride in my stubbornness and will never compromise with the public. I believe poetry should represent the complexities of modern civilization in language. I am also well know [sic] for my influence in modern poetic diction. My poetry is inspired by the development of a Christian writer. My poem, The Waste Land, is a negative look at the horror encountered when searching for a higher world. Along with poems I also write plays. Some of my plays are Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman. In my spare time when I am not working I like to relax and take a break from my busy life. I also need time off to help deal with my anxiety due to a rough childhood. Writing is my true passion and I would be nowhere without it.*

His 'Favorite Quotes' is merely a line from *TWL*. 'Life Events', fittingly, mentions only that he got married, eschewing any details about Eliot's life deemed superfluous to the author-function (as it were).

"Marianne Moore" (a) similarly creates a biographical sketch. The single iconic image (an older Moore in her large-brimmed round hat), 'Education' (Bryn Mawr and Metzger), 'Current City' (Carlisle) and 'Hometown' (Kirkwood), with few other details and no life events except for similar 'Favorite Quotes' from Moore herself and a similar (albeit more laconic) blurb for 'About Marianne':

> *"I see no reason for calling my work poetry, except that there is no other category in which to put it." I was raised in my grandfather's house with my mother. My mom is my best friend. I am single, always have been. I was a school teacher from 1911-1915. I have always wanted to be an artist, but [I] guess I'm stuck as a poet.*

These profiles, notably, are author-specific, not person-specific, highlighting only basic biographical details and elements of their lives deemed relevant to their works; though they speak in a first-person present, there is a sense of insulation from the present world as dead authors, with little or no engagement with other people or events on Facebook or beyond in the time post-mortem.

Aktualisierten Profiles

By contrast, there are also a number of profiles which explicitly demonstrate their spectral presence. "Thomas Stearns Eliot (T.s. Eliot)," for instance, shares a picture and a link to the IMDB page for the 1994 film *Tom & Viv* with the caption, "A Hollywood movie about the old

Lady and I"; has a Timeline post commenting "I 💗 Philosophy and Sanskrit!"; comments (among the many quotes drawn from Eliot's interviews and critical writings) "I don't know if I'm being paranoid, but it seems like Bertrand Russell has a crush on my wife......." with a link to a Bertrand Russell profile;[c] and contains a bevvy of images of Eliot throughout his life doing things both literary and not. Along with the general biographical details from the more traditional pages, it also lists post-mortem events (still spoken in first-person present) such as his star on the St. Louis Walk of Fame and the Tony awards for *Cats*. He also has 32 friends, both contemporary (e.g. Valerie) and present, spanning from Ukrainian artists to Indian film workers to Texan car enthusiasts. And in another profile, "Thomas Stearns Eliot (T.S. Eliot)" comments on the Timeline in present Facebook style, adding an emotion tag ("feeling hopeful") to a December 1913 comment, "Just resigned from my teaching job. Hopefully I can earn a living lecturing and obtaining more review work! 👆", doing location check-ins (e.g. Margate and the Albemarle Hotel), using slang ("OMG Time Magazine just wrote a review on my poem, 'The Wasteland [sic]'!!!!"), and including a picture of Groucho Marx, noting that he is "feeling accomplished" at receiving it and Marx's letter.

There are equally *aktualisierten* Moores. "Marianne Moore" (b) tags that she is "feeling proud" with a picture of Jim Thorpe, posts that she "Got a Cat Named Buffy" – "the most adorable kitten ever!! I am in LOVE!!! 💗", alerts her readers of the shut-down of *The Dial* ("I regret to inform you, my dear readers, that 'The Dial' has shut down because of financial reasons"), heavily hashtags her posts ("Just finished writing my 50th letter today! #addictedtowriting #justcuz #writerscramp"), and laments that her editor wouldn't let her wear her hat in her profile picture before updating her profile picture the next day to a picture of herself in a hat for a "#selfiesaturday". She also posts likes for contemporary digital cultural products like WGT Baseball and 101 Little Riddles (both Smart Phone games), and has back-and-forth conversations on her Timeline with everyone from her brother to T.S. Eliot using Facebook writing style (albeit always grammatically correct), resplendent with emojis, excessive capitalizations, and long strings of exclamation points. Yet "Marianne Moore" (c), on the other hand, complains about the grammatical poverty of Facebook – "Everyone insists on forgetting the most basic grammar and punctuation on this site" – to which Elizabeth Bishop (her Friend) replies, "Indeed they do."

HAUNTOLOGY

The effect of these *aktualisierten* profiles is blatantly spectral. The specter, as Derrida (1994) lays out in *Specters of Marx*, is an essentially semiotic condition to all ontological presence which has a perceived historicity, focusing primarily (due to the nature of the talk from which it developed) on authorship via the theory of Karl Marx, but also using the literary example of Hamlet's father's ghost. The ghost, Derrida (1994, p. 8) notes, is not seen; it embodies a suit of armor which is identified with the deceased Danish king. To some extent, the suit of armor functions as what Donna Haraway (1987, pp. 33-34) calls "prosthesis" in her "Manifesto for Cyborgs": "[M]achines can be prosthetic devices, intimate components, friendly selves", which is to say that the mechanical or digital accoutrements which one uses to function as one uses teeth to chew or feet to walk, or which one uses to identify oneself as one uses clothing or speech-patterns or even one's face, become equally appendages, not *to* the self but *of* the self, constituting the self as a sort of Deleuzean collective which includes elements traditionally identified as the self and the not-self – note the plural: "friendly selves". Derrida's theory, however, differs from Haraway in that the appendages are the whole of what can be seen or

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[c] The profile is joking about a well-known affair Vivienne Eliot had with Russell, about which T. S. was either ignorant or tacitly permissive.

understood as the identifiable object, such that even when the corporeal self is removed (dies), the self continues unimpeded through its prosthesis, though necessarily "haunted" by a deceased corporeal self – or, rather, the abstracted identity of the corporeal self – which only continues to exist through its spectral presence within the prostheses. The author-self of these Facebook profiles, like the Danish king, is purely an absence, an invisible abstraction which haunts its present representations (like the ghost in the suit of armor) and thereby gives them an identity or meaning through deferral to that absence, to that non-present-presence, to that spectre.

Furthermore, as Derrida (1994, pp. 7, 11) notes, the spectre is always realized as a "revenant", as a returning of something dead; but as such, as a wholly new thing: an *Aktualisierung*, both a diachronic "re-" and a wholly present "new". It is perceived as a thing of the past, a dead thing from a dead discourse and a dead context, which paradoxically manifests in the present, speaks in the present, situated in a present discourse and, thereby, a present intertextual semiotic field, such that the meaning of its speech is constructed through present language and in reference to present existence. Eliot commenting on films and world events after his death, Moore metatextually critiquing the writing style of the medium in which she speaks: it is not that these exist spectrally only in Facebook – it is also a spectral move to postulate "What would Eliot think of *Cats*? What would Moore think of Facebook grammar?"; rather, what Facebook does is *manifests* the spectral commentary *through the mouth of a revenant*, and thereby reveals the spectrality of such postulations by drawing attention to the fact that any such postulations are inherently the speaking of a spectral author. Each utterance of "Moore", again, is not referring to the corporeal material mouldering in Gettysburg, but rather the spectral Moore, the discursive Moore; they are as much Moore, the same (and yet a different) Moore as the author of her poetry and criticism. Each interpretation of Moore (whether profilic or poetic) is, in Derrida's terms, both a different Moore and the same Moore – one among many, one spectral Moore amongst the phantasmagoria of spectral Moores haunting Facebook, which function singularly as a unified Moore through their intertextuality within that ghostly cacophony. All of them (plural) are a dead person (singular) whose spectre (both) now – every now, *always now* – speaks.

But it is important to note that the strictly biographical profiles, too, are contributing to that spectral intertextual unity. In the most simplistic terms, they are, like all the words and attitudes and character traits of Moore, the discursive presence of a past author, who must be understood both as the static "that to which they refer" and as a dynamic signifier who is intertextually defined through all the present discourses about her. But even if they are Moore speaking words which are recognized as being written by Moore in the more traditional sense, they are speaking them through a uniquely un-traditional medium, and that medium is inherently hauntological. Firstly, to speak on Facebook, to have a profile on Facebook, is fundamentally to speak and to be an active social agent in a present moment. And secondly, particularly for Facebook (as well as certain other social media platforms), that present moment is declaratively ever-present. Facebook's algorithms and functionality are designed such that it is quite literally never the same text moment-to-moment, in a constant state of *Aktualisierung*. Matthew Kirschenbaum (2013, p. 60) notes that *all* digital texts are new texts every time a page or file is loaded from the bytes in storage: "[E]ach individual access creates the object anew." For Facebook, however, this is compounded by the fact that each page is modifiable in any given moment by a series of different users, not only the creator of the persona. Any number of different users can post to a given profile Timeline, tag that profile in images or posts on another profile, or alter the myriad "friend" profiles or affiliation pages (e.g. the page for Merton College) which are linked to that profile, and thus these other profiles and organization pages intertextually inform and are informed by it. To speak of a Facebook profile as a text is either to

speak of one infinitesimally immediate moment of its existence, or to speak of a constantly protean space of textuality, such that "Marianne Moore" the profile is only and always that profile at the very moment of its utterance. Every profile is born anew, *aktualisierte*, every moment it is loaded or refreshed. Thus even when a profile is not actively being updated by its user, the profiles are still in a constant state of alteration, such that the subject represented on those pages continues, constantly, to speak. Even for a more traditionally biographical profile, it is still intensely hauntological to say that T. S. Eliot posted on a Facebook Timeline in 2017, to say that Marianne Moore is someone's Facebook friend in 2019. Ultimately, even the strictly biographical profiles, as Facebook profiles, are thus engaging in a deeply Modernist, paradoxical discussion of authorship.

SPEAKING WITH THE DEAD

In closing, I would like to propose further extensions beyond Modernism and suggest an implication behind this research for Facebook profiles in which the profiled user has died. There have been various analyses in recent years of the user/profile relationship in terms of deceased users. Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010 p. 311) argue that profiles are curated "exhibitions," recordings of past expressions of the individual, not "living performance," since (they argue) the death of the profile's author leaves the profile to persist after them without newly-added material. That is, profiles do not give new performances; they are recordings of the past – albeit Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010, p. 312) do note that the pages serve thereafter as spaces of mourning, and thereby may go through a process of "reframing". Ebert (2014) similarly posits that, though the page of a deceased user is written upon by mourners – specifically the timeline – the representation of that user doesn't change. Stokes (2015 pp. 243), while agreeing with Ebert, takes issue with Hogan & Quan-Haase's strong division between user and profile – between an "'exhibition' *about* the user" and "the user themselves." Specifically, Stokes (ibid.) identifies ways in which "intersubjective person-identities" of deceased users continue to function, via the profiles, for other Facebook users. In one telling instance, Stokes (ibid.) notes that other users continue to post to deceased users' walls and address them as other subjects in the second person; and drawing on a number of studies, he notes that "what they write is not simply rhetorical apostrophe: many users report that they *do* take themselves to be communicating with the dead." Based on my analysis, however, I would suggest that the representation of the user *does* change; and in response to Stokes, I would further note that not only do users communicate with the dead, the dead talk back.

In intertextual terms, Hogan and Quan-Haase's argument that "dead" profiles do not exhibit "living performance" is an oversimplification. First, as noted above by Ebert and Stokes, the pages accumulate comments, tags, and posts from other users (often in "memorial" terms). Given, this does not add new data for certain aspects of the profile that cannot change after the sole possessor of the username and password is no longer able to alter this data – e.g. "Hometown" or "Work." However, it does still add new data based on the social interaction of other users with that profile – e.g. timeline posts or tags in photos, places, and events; and as noted above, the identity of such a social persona[8] is in no small part defined through others' discursive interactions with it, particularly evident on Facebook where those discursive interactions are encoded textually within the profile Timeline. Furthermore, as argued via Derrida (1994) above, a text is only ever read, and thus is only ever *spoken*, in the present moment; its meaning is ever (re)established through the text's intertextual relationship with other texts at the moment of its (re)iteration. If we therefore accept, as Eliot (1921) touches upon above and Jorge Luis Borges (1964, original Spanish 1939) more directly argues in his "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," that a text changes, even says something different,

depending on the historical context of a given reading of it and the collected history of social engagement with it, then we must equally accept that the textually-born persona of such a Facebook profile gives a new, different performance of identity as its moment and social engagements change as well. Even after the death of the corporeal user, the persona, like Derrida's spectral suit of armour, very well may continue to speak.

Second, the profilic persona is not self-contained within the profilic data. All the data points in the profile are not inert; they point outward to establish the meaning of those data points, and what they point out to does not remain static. The Hometown, given, does not stop saying "St. Louis" (for both Moore and Eliot), but without a semiotic deferral to other iterations of "St. Louis," the text is nothing more than electronically-rendered squiggles and lines on a screen. St. Louis only has meaning to the extent that it defers to other St. Louises, other iterations of that signifier and the ever-changing context of those other iterations – as points on a map, as news stories, as archival histories, as others who were also born there, as the hometown of Eliot (for Moore) and also the hometown of Moore (for Eliot). These deferrals come to inform what St. Louis means on Moore's page and, thereby, shape a reader's understanding of who Moore is. As St. Louis changes – as the intertextual meaning of "St. Louis" changes with new iterations and contexts of that signifier, as news stories move from its jazz scene in one year to racial protests in the Ferguson suburb in another – so do those profiles that use it as a data point in constructing their personae. Facebook profiles, again, make this process and its mutability overt, in that many of the data points hold hyperlinks to other pages (like the city page for St. Louis) that change over time. Clicking the hyperlinked "St. Louis" on many of the Eliot and Moore profiles one day brings up the same URL, but the page at that URL is not the same as it is on another day, with its own new data points that equally and necessarily point out as signifiers to other pages equally in flux. For Friends, this is even more evident, as the Friends list on a profile also holds thumbnails of each friend's profile picture, which (like all other data points) is infinitely changeable by those users. Changing one's profile picture makes an alteration, however slight, to the profile of every person one identifies as a Friend. A profile whereon many of the Friends images have rainbow flags one day says something different, performs a different image of the person, than the same profile on a different day when the Friends images all depict MAGA hats, even if the user of that profile makes no alterations. The persona undergoes changes whether the user is living or dead; it is a "living performance".

CONCLUSION

In this sense, all Facebook profiles are haunted, whether the user is living or dead. As should be clear from the Modernists' analyses of authorship and authority *in vivo*, as well as from Barthes' (1977) arguments, the paradoxical relationship of author and text are not limited to the corporeal death of the author. Even the profiles of the living are, in a sense, a depiction of a past self, a "dead" self that continually performs the user's selfhood even when her back is turned and in ways she does not control; a text over which she both does and does not hold author-ity. Those of us with Facebook profiles are all such authors in a sense; but rather than a singular author, I would suggest that it is a plurality of spectral author-selves speaking together through an archive which bears our name – a plurality of places, comments, actions, likes, friends and conversations with them; each of which is itself defined and determined through links with others who share that data in the semiotic field of that moment on social media; and each of which, as archival data, happened in the past, but is necessarily accessed in the present, such that each is rendered spectrally as one haunting among many in an always-*aktualisierte* depiction of selfhood. To borrow from Hayles (2005, p. 9), I would suggest that *we*, as social agents via our digital personae, are "texts as clustered in assemblages whose dynamics emerge

from all the texts participating in the cluster, without privileging one text as more 'original' than any other."[9] On Facebook, we are written – by ourselves, by others commenting on and tagging ourselves, by the multiplicitous past selves who have inscribed upon our Facebook profile – all functioning intertextually in a network of selves; and this intertextual cluster comes to write itself upon our corporeal self, much as the discursive Moore writes upon her bones. The legacy of Modernism's preoccupation with the question of textual authority, when manifested through social media profiles, is to reveal that the author, the written my-self, is a spectral figure even before death, arising out of the intertextual network of my-selves which share a given synchronic moment, all conjuring my authorial persona through their conversation.

END NOTES

[1] A note on methodology:
1) I performed a People Search for the author names (James Joyce, Marianne Moore, T.S. Eliot and Thomas Stearns Eliot, for those authors analysed here).
2) I collected a list of every profile URL for each author and eliminated any URL repeats (which happened twice).
3) I eliminated pages which were not clearly representative of the author according to the following criteria:
3a) The profile had to use some iteration of the author's full name (e.g. tseliot, Thomas S. Eliot).
3b) The profile had to have a portrait or photograph of the author as the Profile Picture; or, if the Profile Picture was abstract (e.g. a Vorticist painting), the profile images had to have at least one photograph of the author and more than one piece of information biographically relevant to that author (e.g. residence as "Monk's House" and occupation as "writer" for Woolf).
4) The profile had to be publicly viewable (i.e. not limited to "friends-viewing only").
[2] Cf. Barthes (1977), particularly "The Death of the Author" where he establishes this term. The "scriptor," in short, is the "author" as determinate by the text alone or by its reading, "born simultaneously with the text" (p. 145); at the moment when "writing begins," the author as traditionally understood "enters into his own death" (p. 142), such that the text itself holds its own author-ity: the scriptor.
[3] Intertextuality has been a relatively popular focus in Moore criticism (even moreso than for other Modernists) for at least the past few decades. See, among others mentioned in the text, Keller (1991), Sielke (1997), and Costello (2012). Though not referring to intertextuality, Gilbert (2018) and Finch (2018) address the relationship between her style and a complicated sense of authorial identity. Gilbert (2018) argues that her collage-style poetry is effectively the construction of a *blazon* of herself (or rather a narrative persona) through correlated fragments, and that her conception of identity broadly was similarly as a fragmentation. Finch (2018 p. 229) argues that Moore's poem "Tell me, tell me" argues for "a definition of personhood as a surface interwoven [...which] 'perplexes' any notions of straightforward autobiography" lying behind Moore's work.
[4] At the time of collecting and analyzing the profiles for this study, none of them referenced the authors' attitude about biographical readings or authorial intent. However, as active and "living" profiles, it is possible that some may now or in the future have recognized this, or that new profiles may have been created that recognize this.
[5] As is discussed toward the end of this article, I do not mean to suggest that biography has no place in Modernist scholarship. Many Modernist biographies, importantly, construct their biographies while simultaneously recognizing the author's complex attitude about that very practice. See, for instance, the ultimate chapter of Raine (2006) and introduction of Leavell (2013). However, most other Modernist biographers are silent on the issue of biographically analyzing the work of authors whose works criticize biographical readings, and thereby run into similar issues as biographical Facebook profiles discussed herein. Cf. Connor (2012), Bowker (2012), Ellmann (1982), and Ackroyd (1984), the last of whom received a rather critical review in the *NYT* which opens by noting this very dilemma: "Eliot himself left instructions that there should be no official biography" (Gross, 1984 p. 24).
[6] Derrida never states this explicitly in *Archive Fever*, but as Kamuf (2005) argues, the process of deconstruction in all of Derrida's writing inherently presumes this process of preservation-as-destruction: to preserve a person is, indeed, both to archive him and to set his archive on fire (see in particular p. 40). *Archive Fever* is, after all, a speech given at a conference of the Freud Museum that contemplates the archival violence of archiving Freud.

7 I use the German term *Aktualisierung* because the various English translations it permits fold together nicely to describe these profiles. *Aktualisieren* is generally translated as "to update" in the sense of "taking something from the past and making it accurate for the present" (like a financial ledger), but it can also mean "to reactivate," as Harry Zohn translates it in his English version of Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin 1968 & 1974, §II). Benjamin's argument here is that the reproduction "reactivates/*aktualisiert*" the object it reproduces in different contexts. Thus while "update" has the sense of "altering the past to make it present," "reactivate" has the sense of "making a thing work in the present as it did in the past." The overdetermination here is apt, as it suggests both an integrity and a difference, both a sameness to the different iterations of an object and an alteration based on temporal context. Not at all coincidentally, "aktualisieren" is also the German verb used for "refreshing" web pages – a "re-loading" of the same, which needs alteration to accurately or (in an ironic way) "authentically" represent itself.

8 It should be understood, also in intertextual terms, that a person's online persona is not limited to a single profile on a single social media platform, but similarly arises from the interrelation of all profiles, comments, activities, publications, accounts, etc. associated with it in hyperspace (cf. Marshall, Moore, and Barbour, 2020, p. 20). I am limiting my focus to Facebook for the sake of this article's discussion, and implicitly arguing that the same kind of intertextual persona-formation at that macro-level is also at play at this micro-level.

9 Cf., among others, Turkle (1999), Barbour and Marshall (2012), Bollmer (2013), and Graham, Gibbs, and Aceti (2013), all of whom largely rely on this concept of the self or social persona as an assemblage or correlational plurality but do not position it explicitly in textual terms and focus more on macro-level assemblages from various platforms and mediations.

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