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Chapter 3

Authors, Implied and Implicated

Explaining Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Kabir Khan’s *New York*

The preceding chapter was concerned with continuities in the implied author, not only at the level of the individual work, but at the level of the canon. The present chapter argues that the unity or consistency of implied authorial intent is greatly overestimated. Recent accounts of cognitive architecture predict that, rather than a single, consistent authorial or implied authorial intent, there are partially contradictory ideas and attitudes. These partial contradictions affect not only theme and emotional response, but even some story elements. This is not to say that there is no unity in a narrative. There are certainly strong tendencies toward continuity within most works. But there are various sorts of discontinuity and even contradiction as well.

Authorial Self-Understanding

The first chapter stressed that an author does not have direct, introspective access to the principles guiding his or her decisions. Thus all English speakers are able to judge correct and incorrect regular plurals. But only those with some knowledge of linguistics are able to state the rule governing such judgments. Of course, the limitations of self-knowledge should not be overstated. Clearly, authors do know some things about why they produced and accepted certain sentences, certain plot devel-
opments, certain narrative voices, and so on. The point is particularly clear in the case of self-consciously political literature. Before going on to consider the diversity of authorial response, then, it is important to briefly reconsider authorial self-understanding.

Again, an author wants to produce a certain sort of effect, a certain sort of response in his or her readers. He or she develops the plot, alters the narrative voice, revises the phrasing, and so forth, until he or she produces, in implicit, imaginative simulation of the reader's response, the effect that he or she desires. That simulated effect may be accompanied by explicit, self-conscious goals. For example, Stowe wished to oppose the Fugitive Slave Act. This was a self-conscious purpose and she could almost certainly have articulated some of her implied authorial reasons—for authorial intrusions, for characterization, and so forth—by reference to that goal.

On the other hand, her introspective access was only partial. After all, even in the most apparently overt cases—for instance, in direct arguments against the Fugitive Slave Act—Stowe's implied authorial decisions were embedded in a complex of ideas, feelings, and imaginations that all contributed to her sense that a particular passage produced the "right" effect. One might say that her explicit reason for a particular argument was itself embedded in a more complex set of mental causes. It was the entire set of mental causes that gave rise to the decisions involved in producing, revising, and accepting the passage at issue.

Indeed, even authorial reasons are somewhat more complex than this suggests, since reasons need not be explicit or self-conscious. A mental cause is whatever gives rise to a certain behavior or action. One may understand a reason, in contrast, as a justified motivation in context. In this usage, the reason must be a genuine motivation (i.e., it does not include rationalizations). Thus it must be part of the mental causality. At the same time, it must provide a rationale for the action. That rationale may be prudential or ethical or something else. But it should cohere with some contextually relevant aim. In relation to narrative discourse and authorship, reasons are those mental causes that bear on receptive, thus implied authorial, intent, with their guiding aim of producing a certain effect on the reader.

Authors are self-conscious about some reasons for their decisions, but only some. Thus one may distinguish between a self-consciously thematized part of the implied author's reasons and a part that is not self-consciously thematized. Reasons of the former sort are usually open to fairly clear articulation. Indeed, they may even have been articulated
in the literary work. This articulation may occur through an “autho-
rial intrusion,” where the voice of the author and the voice of the nar-
rator are (temporarily) conflated, or through “authorial ventriloquism,”
where a character becomes (temporarily) the voice of the author. A
more attenuated form of authorial ventriloquism occurs in what might
be called “authorial mirroring.” In this case, one or several characters
manifest the normative emotional orientation of an implied author,
particularly characters witnessing the relevant event (as opposed to
characters directly involved in those events). As Suzanne Keen puts it,
“Many novelists call up empathy as a representational goal by mirroring
it within their texts” by “present[ing] empathetic connections between
characters” (121). This is a technique used repeatedly by Stowe, who, for
example, has characters witness a scene of familial separation and weep,
thereby expressing the implied author’s emotional response and helping
to guide that of the reader.

Within the unthematized part of an implied author’s reasons, one
may distinguish genuine vagueness from recurring features that sug-
gest governing principles. Implied authorial reasons of the former sort
are imprecise, not fully specifiable. They may fall within a certain range
of possibilities. But, in many cases, it is difficult to say if any particu-
lar articulation is correct within that range. This is not accidental. It is,
rather, a key feature of receptive intent, bound up with the profile of
ambiguity.

At the same time, not all specifiable reasons are self-conscious for an
author. The articulation of reasons sometimes requires knowledge that
the author simply did not have. With adequate knowledge, however, it
may be possible to articulate principles governing these patterns, thus
reasons. These may be referred to as “theoretically specifiable,” though
unthematized, reasons. Here it is useful to return to the example of
English pluralization. Regular English pluralization is not vague. It is
rule-governed. However, most speakers require special knowledge to be
able to articulate the relevant rule. In the case of authors, similar points
hold for, say, reasons governing human emotional response, which may
require knowledge of human emotion systems before they may be ade-
quately formulated.

These complexities are, in fact, part of the rationale for literary criti-
cism. One task of a critic is, roughly, isolating reasons for the choices
made by an author. The mental causes that bear on the initial creation of
a work are all to be found in the real author. In part, authorial biography
serves to set out some of those mental causes (e.g., in describing the per-
sonal acquaintances of the author who contributed their idiosyncrasies to his or her characters). But the reasons for authorial choices operate most importantly at the level of the implied author. Sometimes those reasons are genuinely vague and lead to ambiguity. Sometimes those reasons are explicit. But often they are implicit and require inference and articulation, frequently with the help of knowledge unavailable to the author.

**Implicated Authors**

The preceding chapters have tacitly presupposed that there is a single implied author for a literary work. In a sense, there is only one implied author for a particular work taken as a whole, the textual implied author. Indeed, in a sense the unity of a work is a function of the unity of the implied author. At some point, an author makes a judgment regarding his or her receptive response to a work—the judgment that the work is finished. That judgment of completeness defines any global unity the work may have. Whatever the author had in mind when writing a particular passage, choosing this word or that, devising one or another plot element—all that is now superseded by the final evaluative response. That final response is, in some degree, singular. Moreover, it undoubtedly includes cognitive and affective elements that are relatively constant across the course of the work.

Yet, even in a final reading, the simulative, receptive experience of a work is temporally extended. As such, it necessarily involves shifting attentional foci, different interests, variable inferences. If one takes seriously what is known about human cognitive architecture, one has no choice but to conclude that there is great multiplicity in implied authorship throughout the course of an extended work. Specifically, as contexts shift, different elements will become salient. In consequence, different cognitive structures and affective orientations will become active. Those changing structures and orientations produce sometimes radically different understandings and may develop into very different evaluative responses on the part of the author/reader. One result of these shifting contexts and cognitive activities is that the implied author, even if relatively consistent at the global level and consistent within each separate context, is unlikely to be fully or ideally consistent across all those contexts. Instead, it is likely that local implied authors will be partially
inconsistent with others, while some will form themselves into patterns of coherence.

For example, one well-known study showed that people tended to support military intervention in a hypothetical political crisis when presented with a fictional event that was framed to activate the model of World War II. However, test subjects were likely to oppose military intervention, given identical relevant facts, when the fictional event was presented in such a way as to activate the model of the Vietnam War (e.g., in having refugees leave by train in the first case and by boat in the second case). These sorts of shifting contexts occur regularly in novels and other creative products. Indeed, precisely these circumstances could arise for an author in the course of writing a novel—circumstances that prime (i.e., partially activate) models of World War II in some places and the Vietnam War in other places. In such a novel, one could very well find an explicit thematic statement that is pro-intervention (based on the tacit activation of a World War II model). But, even a few pages later, one may find a case that is implicitly anti-interventionist (based on the tacit activation of a Vietnam War model).

Indeed, things are even more complicated. Most importantly, there are other influences on one’s judgments beyond exemplary models. One of the most frequent is simply common beliefs or common emotions. One often, so to speak, believes that one believes something or feels something because one has heard that so many other people believe or feel it. Such an “asserted belief” or “asserted emotion” may be entirely at odds with one’s actual “operational beliefs” and “operational emotions,” which guide one’s thought and behavior—including one’s creation of literary narratives.

At this point, it would be good to have a terminological distinction in order to help keep these differences clear. I will continue to use “implied author” for the explanatory coherence that governs a larger work. But it is necessary to distinguish that global explanatory coherence from the more local receptive intentions. I will refer to the latter as “implicated authors.” Thus it is possible to say that any given work has one globally implied author, but many locally implicated authors.

It is important to note that a degree of diversity in the implied author has been suggested by some critics and theorists, if usually without cognitive development and without a systematic treatment of varieties of intent. For example, Susan Lanser has rightly commented that one should not “assume that a text has a singular, coherent implied author”
and that “implied authors can be—and perhaps more often are—multiple personalities” (“(Im)plying”). Booth himself notes that “The flesh-and-blood author is already full of conflicts” and that “many voices are present in every published work” (“Is There” 125)—though, in the terms presented here, Booth seems to have in mind a multiplicity in expressive rather than receptive intent.

A crucial point here is that explicit, thematized reasons, given in authorial intrusions or authorial ventriloquism, are, as such, only (locally) implicated authorial ideas or attitudes. The fact that they are explicit does not give them special status in determining (more global) implied authorial meanings. Indeed, it seems rather that concrete, narrative representations are the crucial part of literary work, not the authorial statements. As such, one’s interpretations should give greater weight to the former than the latter. This is most obvious when the statements appear to be concessions to a particular audience, such as government censors, or restatements of commonplaces (that authors may simply believe that they believe).

More complex and interesting cases occur when the contradictions among implicated authors are not a matter of explicit statement versus implicit narrative development, but of one implicit narrative development versus another implicit narrative development. These cases are at the center of interpretation and are crucial to understanding the implied author. In part, the task of interpretation is a matter of isolating these discrepancies, these divisions and contradictions. But that is not the entire task of interpretation. The task of interpretation is equally a matter of ascertaining just what it is that underlies those contradictions and connects them.

In most cases, such “reconciliation” will be a matter of finding some principle that governs the contradiction. For example, in the case of the hypothetical prowar/antiwar novel, it would be a matter of isolating different historical models for military intervention—Germany and Vietnam. Note that, in this case, the contradiction remains. Some sections of the novel are still prowar and others are still antiwar. But interpretation has been able to account for the contradiction by reference to the models.

This does not mean that the implied author equally favors all the mutually contradictory options. He or she may have clear preferences without thereby entirely eliminating ambivalence. Indeed, this is just what one would expect, given the general operation of the human mind. People like to think of themselves as consistent and univocal in their
beliefs and attitudes. However, people are usually ambivalent, even if the ambivalence may be more or less strongly weighted toward one option.

Of course, people are in some cases aware of or at least sensitive to their own ambivalence. This tends to occur when the different options are more equally balanced. When an author thematizes his or her ambivalence, this produces what might be called a “dialectical” work. A dialectical work is a work in which different emotional attitudes, different political or ethical positions, or other sorts of contradictory options are developed in such a way as to highlight their relative advantages and disadvantages. This occurs most obviously in works where the different positions are articulated explicitly, often by way of characters who may even engage in literal debate. However, it may also occur implicitly or by a combination of implicit and explicit representations.

In some cases, apparent contradictions may be bound up with the simulated readership. It is often important to recognize the degree to which an implicated author is bound to an implicated reader. Again, implied authors are defined by a receptive simulation of readers. In consequence, there are implicated, local readers as well as implicated, local authors. Divergence across implicated readers may occur serially or simultaneously. For example, Stowe clearly envisions both Northern whites and Southern whites reading her book (with perhaps a smattering of free blacks as well, though blacks are clearly not her main simulated audience). To some extent, her goals with respect to different white readerships are the same. Specifically, she wishes to cultivate self-criticism in both Northern and Southern whites while simultaneously appealing to their compassionate inclinations. However, she does not equally simulate all audiences at all times. When writing about the Bird family in Ohio, she is appealing primarily to the humane impulses of Northerners. When writing about Ophelia, she is first of all addressing antislavery New Englanders. When representing Mr. Shelby, she may be trying to provoke greater self-criticism among the more liberal segment of Southern whites.

Conflicts among implicated authors also often involve some social ideology. The obvious case of this occurs when an author explicitly states some criticism of dominant ideology, but goes on to manifest dominant ideology in his or her narrative and characterization. For example, an author might affirm feminist views in authorial intrusions, while simultaneously portraying female characters in stereotypical ways or tacitly endorsing patriarchal social structures through his or her guidance of readers’ expectations and preferences in the emplotment of events. This
sort of discrepancy is a central concern in Marxist and related forms of ideological critique (e.g., feminist ideological critique), though it is not usually framed in narratological terms.

In some ways the more interesting case occurs in the opposite direction. Then, the author explicitly asserts some dominant ideological position. However, his or her representation of actual conditions and events contradicts that assertion. This is the case of repeating standard beliefs, as mentioned above. For example, an author might overtly state that a particular national war was a noble venture. But he or she might go on to present the concrete development of the war as degraded, cruel, and cowardly. Again, one’s usual inclination is simply to accept the overt statements as the view of the implied author—and they are part of that view. However, the concrete development of the story is usually far more consequential.

This has been recognized in the Marxist tradition. Specifically, Georg Lukács argued that the self-conscious political “tendency” of an author does not necessarily determine the political orientation of his or her “portrayal” of society in a literary work. Citing Engels, he considers the example of Balzac—“his conscious intention was to glorify the declining class of the French ancien régime, but in actual fact he was ‘compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices,’ and present a correct and exhaustive picture of the society of his time. His ‘tendency’ thus stood in contradiction with his portrayal” (40). In keeping with this—and in keeping with the general possibility of ideological critique—an author’s observation and imagination are not wholly constrained by his or her ideological predispositions.

Consider race or gender. An author has certain self-conscious beliefs about race or gender. He or she also imagines characters. Perhaps he or she begins with racial or gender types. But as he or she develops these characters—imagining their inner lives, for example, or drawing on characteristics of real people—they become increasingly individuated. As such, the stereotyping will tend to become less pronounced, in keeping with the general cognitive tendency for particular information to suppress generalizations (see Holland and colleagues 215). The result may be a set of characters who do not fit the stereotypes—even though the author may continue to assert those stereotypes explicitly.

Before continuing on to specific cases, it is worth making one final point about contradiction. Sometimes an author will have a sense of the contradictions he or she is expressing. Even if he or she has not fully recognized and formulated the problem, he or she may have a more or
less vague feeling that something is not quite right. (Such a feeling is obviously in keeping with the operation of authorial receptive intent and evaluation.) This feeling often gives rise to forms of explicit or implicit elaboration in which the author seeks to reconcile possible difficulties in the ideas or emotions of the text. Such elaborations are, of course, encompassed by the implied author’s final judgment of the work. Nevertheless, they often have the status of rationalizations and may diverge considerably from the patterns a critic may be able to isolate.

The Many Implicated Authors of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is, as Leslie Fiedler once remarked, “an astonishingly various and complex book” (*Love* 264). It is a sign of that complexity that it includes a good deal of discontinuity across its implicated authors. To a great extent, these are straightforward contradictions between overt general statement and particular narrative depiction. An obvious case of this is the view that Africans are not industrious—a view explicitly stated, but not borne out by the African characters. A more nuanced case concerns the putatively “childlike” quality of Africans. The comments about African lack of industry seem incidental to the work’s purposes. In contrast, the view of Africans as children—equally contradicted by actual depictions—seems more important in implied authorial reasons.

Readers familiar with criticism of the novel will recognize that these points are closely related to debates about the work’s politics and ideology. Some critics have condemned the novel, stressing its racist comments. Others have praised its cultivation of sympathy, its real political effects, and its feminist sensibilities. As Tawil puts it, “Perhaps the most enduring problem in Stowe criticism over the past several decades has been to find a way to analyze her most famous novel’s assault on the practice of slavery, and at the same time to come up with some satisfying account of its particular brand of racialism” (154).

A common solution is to see the novel as manifesting “romantic racialism,” in which racial differences are asserted, but in a nondemeaning way (see Frederickson; see also Otter). There is certainly an element of this in parts of Stowe’s novel. In other words, this view does appear to have been held, self-consciously, by one or more implicated authors of the work.

The same point holds for Tawil’s account of the novel’s racialism. Tawil engages in a painstaking analysis, arguing that Stowe’s racial ide-
ology attributes to “the Negro” a highly imitative and malleable nature. There are some weaknesses in Tawil’s analysis. For example, it is not clear that an ability to mimic (which characterizes some of the black characters) is the same thing as a susceptibility to influence. Indeed, self-conscious mimicry seems to suggest a degree of control over the imitation that is incompatible with malleability. More significantly, it is not clear that Tawil has gotten hold of the precise property at issue. It does not seem that Africans are centrally malleable in the novel. Rather, in certain contexts, the implied author understands Africans according to a childhood model. That model includes a propensity toward mimicry as well as some degree of malleability—or, put more positively, openness to change and development. (This model will be considered further below.) Nonetheless, it seems clear that Tawil is partially correct. He has isolated an aspect of implicated authorship in the novel—though only one such aspect.  

Early treatments of Stowe tended to be much less nuanced than those just mentioned. Referring to such interpretations, Cindy Weinstein laments that they “hermeneutically contained” the novel, creating “a critical paradigm in which Stowe can only be trapped or transcendent” (6). But even the more subtle, recent readings have something of this effect. A more complex, differentiated understanding of the implied author and implicated authors may help to preserve the insights of these discussions while avoiding the tendency toward reductive binarism.

A SIMPLE CONTRADICTION OF IMPLICATED AUTHORS

As just noted, one straightforward contradiction in the text involves the commonplace that Africans are not enterprising. In an apparent authorial intrusion, the narrator explains that Africans “are not naturally daring and enterprising” (108). In the following paragraph, the narrator elaborates on the point, claiming that “the African” is “naturally patient, timid, and unenterprising” (108). Later, St. Clare, often a ventriloquized voice of the implicated author, says that Africans need to be given “an idea of that industry and energy which is necessary to form them into men” (358). The idea is a commonplace of American racist ideology. Like much ideology bearing on group identities, it can be expressed in more or less demeaning terms. The more demeaning version is that “blacks are lazy.” Stowe’s narrator presents the same idea in the less overtly derisive form of “unenterprising.” The difference is
related to the explicit model of Africans as children (discussed below). Seeing Africans as children has a modulating effect on such racist attributions, since children may be educated and thus outgrow these putative inclinations.

What one finds here, then, is the implicated author expressing an ideological commonplace, modulated by a common model of Africans as children. This is what one would expect from a certain sort of liberal white attitude toward Africans. But Stowe’s novel communicates a much more complex attitude, for her representation of Africans—and, indeed, Europeans—seems entirely contradictory with this view. There are at least two ways in which one could construe “enterprising” or having “industry.” The first is the simple pursuit of accumulating wealth. The second involves a broader sense of self-advancement and advancement of one’s family, community, or society.

First consider the monetary construal. It is true that Africans are not generally presented in the novel as seeking to accumulate wealth. At the same time, Europeans are not generally presented that way. The whites who are represented as “enterprising” in this sense fall into a small number of categories, all of which are despicable. One character of this sort is Haley. Haley is the epitome of rational profit maximization. He is not particularly cruel to his slaves, but his treatment of them is guided entirely by the calculation of what will make them most salable. Stowe’s implicit model here seems to be that of a machine, as Haley lacks natural life (Haley is “alive to nothing but trade and profit” [39]). The other obvious character of this accumulative sort is Legree. In contrast with Haley, Legree treats his slaves with consummate cruelty, exacting every drop of productive labor from them. In economic terms, the difference between them is that Haley profits by trade whereas Legree profits by production. Their different treatments of slaves and their different sorts of accumulative industry are the result of their different locations in the economy. Stowe’s model for the productive sector, thus Legree, is explicit—he is Satan and his plantation is Hell.

Before going on to the other, and more significant, sense of “enterprising,” it is worth remarking on something about these two models. They are in part models explicitly or implicitly employed for Africans in white American racist ideology. The case of Satan is particularly clear. Blacks were commonly assimilated to devils in white racist ideology. Stowe reverses that standard characterization, which was based in part on the supposed blackness of devils. For Stowe, the proper application of the model is moral, not physical. While she draws many parallels
between the slave-owning planter and Satan, the crucial one is that both are the antithesis of the moral ideal.

The more implicit mechanical model is no less significant to the themes of the novel. Of course, the machinelike nature of the capitalist had been a commonplace since at least the beginning of the Romantic movement (see, for example, Schiller). But it is particularly germane here because it represents Haley as a more or less feelingless object. This unfeeling quality is particularly stressed in connection with attachment relations, as when Mr. Shelby remarks that Haley would “sell his own mother at a good percentage” (39). Of course, within the system of slavery, it was precisely Africans who were treated as feelingless things, who would be untouched by the sale of mothers—or husbands or children (Stowe has characters repeat this view, which she clearly condemns; see 197). Moreover, Legree’s attitude toward his slaves is precisely an attitude toward machinery. Its entire function is to produce. It is only right for such machinery to be used up in production (this being Legree’s view of slaves [386–87]). After all, what is the point of saving and protecting your equipment? Thus, in this case too, Stowe is taking up a model that has operated against Africans and in the service of slavery (as shown by Legree). However, she is reversing it to apply to whites involved in the slave system.

But, of course, this is not the primary sense in which the implicated authors of Stowe’s text are using words such as “enterprising” and “industry.” When St. Clare speaks of training Africans in industry, he is suggesting that they need training for self-improvement or self-advancement, both individual and collective. But this simply does not fit the characterization of Africans elsewhere in the novel. For instance, in terms of advancing one’s family, there could be no more striking case of such a commitment than Eliza escaping with Harry. Indeed, the characterization of African enterprise is quite general. A lovely instance is found in Dinah, the St. Clares’ cook. Much to Ophelia’s dismay, she shows the careless disregard for structure that was so celebrated in the romantic cult of genius. The results of her efforts are also in keeping with romantic accounts of genius. Her dinners are, St. Clare avers, “sublime” (241). Some readers may be inclined to take this as ironic. But there is nothing in the text to suggest this. Rather, it is important to take St. Clare’s comment entirely seriously, as both an antiracist and antisexist claim. Clearly, a dinner does not have the enduring quality of a painting or a poem. But, Stowe suggests, cooking can manifest the same sort of aesthetic brilliance and creativity. Within the astonishingly narrow con-
fines of possible self-cultivation, Dinah has manifested the very highest form of artistic industry.

The two characters who are most obviously relevant here, however, are Tom and George. Both are, in fact, remarkable for their industry and enterprise. For example, when Tom comes to the St. Clare home, he is struck by “the wasteful expenditure of the establishment.” In contrast, St. Clare is “struck with [Tom’s] soundness of mind and good business capacity” and ultimately “all the marketing and providing for the family were intrusted to” Tom (230). Indeed, subsequently, Ophelia explicitly characterizes Tom as “industrious” (369). Similarly, once George is free, he “devote[s] all his leisure time to self-cultivation” (487), eventually going to a university (491) and committing himself to work in Liberia (494).14

There are two particular incidents that stand out with these characters. With George, it is his youthful invention of “a machine for the cleaning of the hemp, which, considering the education and circumstances of the inventor, displayed quite as much mechanical genius as Whitney’s cotton-gin” (13). This is industriousness of the highest order—or, rather, the highest order within the economic system. George here shows a keen devotion to advancing himself and the firm where he is employed.

Tom shows an even greater degree of industriousness toward the self-advancement of Africans. Despite the common use of the phrase “an Uncle Tom,” Tom is deeply committed to the freedom of Africans.15 This is shown by the culminating commitment of his life. He devotes himself fully to the protection of Emmeline and Cassy. He literally allows himself to be tortured to death, but he will not betray them and thus prevent them from escaping a life of slavery. If this is not properly spoken of as “enterprising,” then it is a form of striving for social betterment that is elevated above enterprise and industry.

Here it is worth returning to the conceptual domains and models drawn on by Stowe. It is no accident that George exhibits his enterprising nature in a positive way by inventing a machine. This stands in direct contrast with the machinelike nature of the slave-trader Haley and the reduction of Africans to machines by Legree and other planters. It is not a metaphor, but a literal statement that contradicts the racist models that were pervasive at the time. The case of Tom is even more striking. If Legree represents the worst sort of striving, Tom represents the best. Just as Legree is metaphorically assimilated to Satan, one central model for Tom, noted by many critics, is Jesus (see, for example, Gilmore 72, Karcher 207, and Tompkins 138). Indeed, his death has liberatory conse-
quences beyond Cassy and Emmeline, for it inspires young George Shelby to free all his slaves (see 498–500).

Finally, Stowe is careful to indicate that this is not simply a fictional idealization. The final chapter of the book includes a series of real cases, testimonies to the industry and enterprise of real Africans and people of mixed African and European ancestry (see 508–9). She also stresses that her characters are to a great extent based on real people (Stowe explains that she herself “or her friends have observed characters the counter-part of almost all that are here introduced” [500]). Moreover, George’s invention is itself based on a real case (13n.).

Thus, it seems clear that the great weight of the novel is against the claim that Africans are unenterprising. Yet there does not seem to be anything suggesting irony in those passages where the unenterprising claim is made. The contradiction holds—even if the explicit statement is belied by virtually the entire narrative (in a very Lukácsian fashion).

IMPlicATED AUTHORS, THEMATIC ELABORATIONS, AND CONTRADICTION

Again, Stowe’s articulation of racist ideology in this case is bound up with her use of a racist model—that Africans are children or are childlike. Statements about the supposedly childlike nature of Africans pervade the novel (see, for example, 33 and 83). They too are almost entirely inconsistent with her actual portrayal of Africans. The general operation of such a contradiction is clear from the case of industriousness. However, there are some significant properties of this particular contradiction that are worth considering.

First, as noted earlier, there are characters who seem to speak, at moments, with the voice of the author. But there are also characters who seem to represent the precise opposite of the author’s view, characters that the author is clearly setting out to criticize. Marie St. Clare is one of the most mercilessly lampooned characters in the novel. She is pathologically self-obsessed, incapable of even basic empathy with others, hypocritical, superficial in her judgments, and unaffectionate even to her family—not to mention being hypochondriacal. She is also the one responsible for Tom being sold to Legree. Readers can expect anything coming out of Marie’s mouth to be highly suspect. Yet Marie prominently asserts that her slaves are “children” and “childish” (197). This is an astonishing development that I am inclined to read as a highly
localized yet sincere self-criticism on Stowe’s part. It suggests, in other words, the employment of an implicated author to express a nagging self-doubt on the part of the real author, a doubt of roughly the form “Perhaps even I am not that different from Marie St. Clare.”

But this apparent self-criticism is far from the only significant aspect of Stowe’s development of this child model for Africans. As noted earlier, an author will sometimes elaborate on an ideological assertion in an attempt to reconcile it with contradictory depictions in the narrative. This is more likely to occur when the conflict is sharp and to some degree evident. The conflict between Stowe’s statements about African childlikeness and her depictions of Africans is often quite stark.

For example, Stowe portrays Africans fairly consistently, not as more childish than whites, but as more parental than whites. One instance of this portrayal comes with the St. Clares. When Eva returns home after a long journey with her father, she runs to Marie shouting “Mamma!” However, Marie quickly disengages from her, complaining, “you make my head ache” (186). A moment later, the child spies her half-African nurse. She cries “Mammy!” and runs to the woman. As the narrator explains, “This woman did not tell her that she made her head ache, but, on the contrary, she hugged her, and laughed, and cried” (187). It is clear that Mammy is the motherly figure, not Mamma.

The point is not confined to older black women and young children. It applies to black and white men as well. Thus Tom’s relation to Mr. Shelby does put Shelby in the social position of a patriarch. But the personal relation of the two men is the opposite of what one would predict from their social position, despite their relative similarity of age. This contrast is brought out strikingly in one scene. Shelby has sold Tom to Haley. Before Haley takes possession, Shelby tells Tom that, for the interim, “Go wherever you like, boy.” Particularly to a modern reader, the “boy” seems gratuitous. However it sounded to the original readers of the novel, it clearly signals the childhood model of Africans. Tom responds by recounting a story. “I was jist eight years old,” he explains, “when ole Missis put you into my arms and you wasn’t a year old. ‘Thar,’ says she, ‘Tom, that’s to be your young Mas’r; take good care on him.’” Though Shelby replies “My good boy” (62), the anecdote makes clear that Tom is the real father there, not Shelby.

The sharpness of this contradiction makes it particularly likely that it will be troublesome for the author’s receptive response. But the issue here is really why Stowe did not simply do away with the general statements linking Africans with children. Was she so wedded to the domi-
nant racial ideology in this respect? Perhaps in a way she was. But in order to consider this topic more fully, it is necessary to consider the nature of ideology more fully.

As is well known, there are more and less derisive versions of ideology bearing on disprivileged or exploited groups. Indeed, there are commonly positive as well as negative aspects to stereotypes about such groups. Both function generally to preserve social hierarchies. Despite this conservative function, it is sometimes possible to push the positive aspects of stereotypes to the point where they actually threaten the dominant social hierarchy. This is just what Stowe attempts to do with the ideology of African childlikeness.

Before elaborating on this, it is worth pointing out something that the preceding analysis does not imply. It does not imply that Stowe has no taint of paternalistic liberalism, no inclination to think of whites as adults and blacks as children. She almost certainly did have such tendencies. These would become dominant in certain contexts and certain moods. But she also undoubtedly had inclinations that contradicted this. The issue is, given that she clearly manifested strong inclinations to think of Africans not as children, but as parents, why did she not choose to eliminate expressions that clearly contradicted this? Part of the reason she did not eliminate these expressions is presumably that she partially accepted them. But, if this were sufficient, then the contradiction itself would presumably not appear so starkly. In other words, the belief would have more strongly affected her representation of blacks. Rather, part of the reason for Stowe’s inclusion of the “Africans are children” model is that she was able to use the model counterideologically.

Specifically, Stowe’s clear moral orientation in the book is Christian. She begins with the view that what is Christian is good and what goes against Christianity is bad. Moreover, she is envisioning an (implied) Christian readership who will at least potentially be swayed by an appeal to Christian principles. A well-known teaching of Jesus is that “unless you . . . become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 18:3, New American Bible). The ideology that made Africans into children must necessarily have cut both ways for Stowe. It deprived Africans of worldly status; yet it also elevated their spiritual status. Even the good white characters lack the fully spiritual elevation of Tom. St. Clare has no religious feeling, and complains that it is “given to children and poor, honest followers, like” Tom. In response, Tom quotes the Biblical passage according to which God has “hidden from the wise” and “revealed unto babes” (343, referring to Luke 10:21). The passage
clearly reveals the politically problematic nature of this model, since it excludes Tom from “the wise.” But it suggests why Stowe would find a childhood model valuable for her political purposes as well. This complexity is revealed on the next page also, when St. Clare addresses Tom as “foolish boy” (thus the opposite of the wise man), but then goes on to link what Tom is trying to teach about Christianity with what St. Clare’s (spiritually idealized) mother taught him.

Moreover, as Ashis Nandy has pointed out, one ideological use of the child model for Africans concerns their “civilizational” status. It is part of a large historical narrative in which the Eastern civilizations rose early in history, but are now old and decrepit. In contrast, African civilization is, according to this model, still in childhood. Only the European is adult, thus rightfully in charge of the superannuated Asian and the infantile African. A clear implication of this model is that European civilization will age and be replaced by Africa. However, this implication seems to have been developed only rarely. Stowe is one of the few writers to have recognized it. Indeed, in what is almost certainly an authorial intrusion, she writes of Africa that “come it must, some time, her turn to figure in the great drama of human improvement.” Then, she continues, “the negro race, no longer despised and trodden down, will, perhaps, show forth some of the latest and most magnificent revelations of human life.” Indeed, “they will exhibit the highest form of the peculiarly Christian life” and God may even make “poor Africa . . . the highest and noblest in that kingdom which he will set up, when every other kingdom has been tried, and failed” (204). The idea is repeated later, ventriloquized through the voice of George Harris, who suggests that the development of African “civilization and Christianity” will be of “a higher type” than what went before (493). The point is perfectly logical in light of the generational model. If Europe superseded the East, then it follows that the child Africa will grow up to supersede an aging Europe.

But, again, this logic does not eliminate either the contradiction or the racist ideology. There is a degree of rationalization in these appeals to the Bible and to a putatively teleological element in history. Here, it is necessary to add yet another consideration, an emotional one. This consideration also does not entirely mitigate the racism of the model. But it helps to explain its rhetorical operation in the context of Stowe’s novel. Stowe almost certainly wished to create among her (white) readers a protective attitude toward Africans, even a motherly attitude. She repeatedly appeals directly to the parental feelings of readers, as when she writes, “If it were your Harry, mother . . . that were going to be torn
from you by a brutal trader, to-morrow morning . . . how fast could you walk?” (56). The book presents very few true models for white readers to emulate, since so much of the book is aimed at fostering self-criticism among whites. But one of those characters is Rachel Halliday, who helps Eliza escape and “naturally” calls the escaped African “my daughter” (153). A childhood model of Africans thus had an emotional function for Stowe as an implied author as well: It should help to inspire parental care.

Though the contradictions and problems remain, this analysis suggests some of the political, moral, and emotional complexity of this aspect of the novel. It also leads to the issue of the overarching unity of reasons that give coherence to the implied author. This unity is inseparable from the emotions of parent–child relations and some of the ethical principles connected with those emotions.

**THE IMPLIED AUTHORIAL COHERENCE OF UNCLE TOM’S CABIN**

Clearly, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is fundamentally an antislavery novel. To understand its implied authorial unity of reasons, then, one needs to begin by considering just what Stowe viewed as the most objectionable aspect of slavery. It was not the physical hardship, the beating, the back-breaking work. She certainly wishes readers to feel badly for the slaves subjected to such treatment. But that is not the central point of her horror at that institution. Her horror focuses rather on what slavery did to the most intimate relations of human life. I take it that Stowe herself is engaging in authorial ventriloquism when one of the characters states that “The most dreadful part of slavery, to my mind, is its outrages on the feelings and affections,—the separating of families, for example” (139). This is why the separations of husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters are the repeated, heart-rending scenes of the novel. As an affective scientist might put it today, for the implied author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the greatest crime of slavery was its devastation of attachment relations, because they are the only things that can make bearable the physical miseries of slave-owners’ brutality. Indeed, without the security of attachment relations, life is unbearable even if one is not subjected to brutality. Due to the nature of slavery, the slave was almost endlessly in a state of attachment deprivation or, at least, attachment vulnerability.
Today, many readers would probably note that spontaneous human empathy should have worked against the operation of slavery, and they might ask just what prevented it from doing so. Stowe in effect asked the same question, though inarticulately, without modern affective science to guide her. In the South, there was clearly some inhibition on empathy, a blocking of spontaneous response, particularly relating to the terrible pain of attachment violation. This blocking is manifest in the repeated statements of Southern whites that Africans simply do not form personal relations in the same way that white people do (see, for example, 197). It might seem, then, that this lack in Southern whites is the sum total of the problem. But Stowe’s analysis of the problem is more subtle. She equally criticizes Northerners, not for blocking their empathy, but for feeling disgust at Africans. Ophelia is outraged by slavery and the treatment of slaves, which so prominently includes the violation of their attachment relations. But she is also repulsed to see Eva’s attachment relation with an African, manifest in Eva’s hugging and kissing Mammy (in fact, it “turned her stomach” [187]).

These points lead to the central ethical and political view of Stowe’s implied author. From the beginning to the end of the book, despite the various contradictory ideas and attitudes of the implicated authors, there is a consistent implied authorial view that is both thematic and emotional. Specifically, the implied author holds two emotional/cognitive attitudes to have profound moral and social value. These attitudes are the opposites of the great Southern and Northern faults. The first great virtue is attachment sensitivity. This virtue is an ability to recognize attachment bonds, attachment anxieties, attachment needs, wherever they occur, in whatever identity group (here, whatever race). It is also an ability to value those bonds, not merely intellectually, but emotionally. It is the opposite of the empathic insularity that characterizes the emotional lives of so many Southern whites in Stowe’s novel. The second great virtue in this work is attachment openness. This virtue is the willingness to accept and potentially reciprocate attachment bonds, again independent of the identity group to which the other person belongs. This openness is the opposite of feeling disgust at the thought of any intimacy with members of out-groups, the disgust that characterizes the righteous New Englander, Ophelia. In short, there is implied authorial consistency here along with the implicated authorial inconsistency. Moreover, the consistency and the inconsistency are closely interrelated, both thematically and emotionally.
Chapter 3
Profiles of Intentional Coherence, Implied Authorial Misdirection, and Filmic Narrators

The issues of multiplicity and coherence that arise in literature are only intensified and made more complex in film. Again, any given film is likely to have multiple implied authors. The preceding discussion indicates that these implied authors will themselves comprise multiple implicated authors. This multiplication of intentions, so salient in film, suggests a general, theoretical point. Just as each work has a profile of ambiguity, one may say that each work has a “profile of intentional coherence.” In the case of film, one prominent part of that profile involves the distribution of productive and receptive intent across different individuals involved in the production process. As in the case of a profile of ambiguity, one can think of this in terms of a graph. In some cases, there will be fairly uniform contributions by many people, perhaps following general craft-based principles. This will give a relatively flat line. One could then say that the director, cinematographer, producer, and others were all contributing in fairly nondistinctive ways to the productive and receptive intent of the work. In contrast, some works could be envisioned as having one sharp peak marking the very distinctive contribution of a director who is perhaps the screenwriter and producer as well, or who greatly influenced the emotional and thematic orientation of the screenplay and the cinematography. There are also possibilities for two or three such peaks.

In addition to this profile across all those involved in the production of a film, there is also a profile of intentional coherence for implicated authors. This is true for both literary works and films. However, a film is shorter than a novel. In other words, a filmmaker can watch a rough cut of his or her film in a couple of hours. A novelist may take several days to read a draft of his or her novel. Put very simply, a filmmaker is less likely to forget details of part one when viewing part three forty-five minutes later (in contrast with a novelist who may read part three two or three days after reading part one). As such, in film, there is less scope for variation in authorial receptive intent. As with literature, different attitudes, models, and so on, arise in different contexts. Sometimes these can vary radically. However, it is perhaps relatively easy for an author to fail to recognize contradictions across a large novel (which, again, may take many hours to read across many days). Such a failure should be more difficult when the span of time is two hours. Indeed, this point holds generally. Thus one would expect less divergence of implicated
authors in short stories than in novels and very little in lyric poems. On the other hand, in the case of film, the actual production is very complex and reconciling parts may be very difficult. If an author sees a problem between two scenes in a novel, he or she only needs to rewrite. If a filmmaker sees a problem between scenes in a film, he or she may have to raise money for extra days of shooting. Indeed, if the crew has already dispersed, even money may not suffice. Thus there are complications in the nature of cinematic implicated authorship as well.

Finally, there is another possible level of intentional inconsistency. Richard Maltby has discussed the ways in which some scenes in Hollywood movies project two audiences based on age and moral attitude. One may add that they project different implied or implicated authors as well. Consider, for example, a sequence of scenes in which two people are alone. There is a fade to black. When the image returns, they are lounging in different chairs, jackets removed, collars unbuttoned, and one is leaning back and smoking. In at least some cases, a sequence of this sort has two meanings, thus two implied authors/implied audiences. In one, it suggests sexual relations. In the other, it suggests only informality after some passage of time. Often, this difference may simply be part of the ambiguity of the work. In some cases, however, there may be a “true” alternative, thus a privileged implied author and a privileged implied audience. Brian Richardson has recently explored differences in implied readers, noting that “there is often a distinct hierarchy among these readers” such that “one reader knows both what the other perceives and what it alone can know” (“Singular Text” 263).

Chapter 1 considered the case of someone running for office who wished to conceal his own views. This involves insincerity. But it does not involve any complexity in the implied author. If Sloe wants to project an image of being anticolonial, then the implied author of his speeches is anticolonial even if the real author is not. But now suppose that Sloe wants to appear anticolonial to some voters, but wants other voters to understand his real (colonialist) views. In that case, he projects two audiences and two implied authors. One implied author so to speak subsumes or encompasses the other. Specifically, the colonialist implied author is the genuine implied author, whereas the anticolonialist implied author is a pseudo-implicated author. Put differently, the work is designed to produce a certain sort of misreading for a particular group. It is designed to lead some people to interpret an ironic narrator as the implied author. One may say that this is a form of implied authorial multiplicity that occurs through misdirection.
This sort of misdirection certainly occurs in literature. But it is perhaps more obvious in film, in part because films involve large investments of money and are (in general) more tightly regulated by governments. The financial investment involved in a film often means that real authors have to be much more concerned with the potential financial success of their final product, thus the breadth of audience reception. Regulation by governments means that filmmakers must be very sensitive to the sorts of representation that would be likely to trigger censorship.

The precise operation of misdirection is, of course, bound up with processes of narration. Here, too, there are differences between literature and film. Specifically, as a number of writers have indicated, the primary selection of information given to the film audience is perceptual. As, for example, Scholes and Kellogg note, film “does not present a story directly, without narration, but always through the medium of a controlled point of view, the eye of the camera, which sharpens or blurs focus, closes up or draws off, gives the image its color and shading, and provides, through its synchronous sound track, a continuous commentary of words, music, noise or silence, along with the voices of the dramatis personae” (280). The agency of this selection may be referred to as the “perceptual narrator.” As discussed in chapter 2, the perceptual narrator may be distinguished from the verbal narrator. The latter is always the narrator in verbal art.

Gregory Currie has argued against the ubiquity of narration in film. It is worth considering this briefly before continuing. Currie’s argument is roughly that the perceptual aspects of the film cannot be the text produced by a narrator. That would be possible only if one assumes that the narrator “has gone to the trouble of recreating” the events “on camera, spending millions of dollars, employing famous actors,” and so on (22). First, even if true, this is beside the point. The important thing is that information from the (author-created) storyworld has been selected and organized in the film presentation. The audience is not given some sort of direct and all-encompassing access to the storyworld. That selection and organization are narrator functions. Second, the fiction of film is that we are actually seeing the characters, etc., not that we are seeing actors playing the characters. Whatever we decide is the status of the narrator’s “text,” it does not involve “employing famous actors.” Finally, there is no reason to suppose that the perceptual narrator is confined to real-world filmmaking constraints in presenting images, whether of actors or of characters. Readers accept that a verbal narrator can know
peoples’ thoughts or recount long stretches of prehistory or be in two places at once. There is no reason to suddenly become strict realists when it comes to perceptual representation.

Despite these theoretical issues, perceptual narration is, in some ways, fairly straightforward. Verbal narration, however, is more obscure in film. In order to understand cinematic verbal narration, it is useful to draw a couple of distinctions. First, one may distinguish the frame narrator from the commentator narrator. The frame narrator is a (visible) character, voice-over, or text that sets up an embedded story. When that narrator is a character, one is inclined to think that the frame narrator is the narrator of the embedded story. However, he or she is rarely if ever the perceptual narrator (that would be the case only if the story were presented entirely through point-of-view shots). Indeed, often the frame narrator merely serves as a transition to an independent story. If the embedded narrative retains some relation to a personified frame narrator, it is often through focalization. Indeed, the frame narrator often has very little impact on the viewer’s ongoing response to an embedded narrative. In contrast, a commentator narrator may repeatedly qualify or explain what the viewer is seeing or hearing, thus modulating his or her perceptual response. This commonly occurs through a voice-over. Often, the two forms of narration are combined and the commentator narrator is identified with the frame narrator. Indeed, where there is a personified frame narrator and a personified commentator narrator, they are almost always the same.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is usually a significant difference between a verbal narrator that is vocal and one that is textual. The textual narrator gives, for example, identifying titles (such as “New York City, September 10, 2001”). In comparison with the vocal narrator, he or she is much more likely to be entirely nonpersonified and omniscient. The vocal narrator may present the same content (i.e., the same words). But the very fact that this content is generated by a distinctive human voice tends to give it an air of personification, even when there is no information about that individual.

By default, viewers tend to assume that nonpersonified narrators—particularly perceptual narrators—are trustworthy. As Margolin writes, “If anonymous,” the narrator’s “voice is equated with the voice of truth” (“Person” 423) or, as MacCabe puts it, “a visual discourse . . . guarantees truth” (11). Viewers only question the reliability of the perceptual narrator when given reason to do so. Typically, this occurs when the perceptual narrator is in some way personified, as when viewers are
informed that they are seeing a character’s dream. But there are cases where a nonpersonified narrator may be problematic. Such cases may be involved with the projection of multiple implied authors. Indeed, a problematic nonpersonified narrator is sometimes crucial for the creation of implied authorial misdirection. Kabir Khan’s *New York* presents a subtle case of this sort, relying on the interplay of different types of narrator.

**Narrators and Implied Authors in Kabir Khan’s *New York***

The film begins with panoramic shots of New York behind the titles. The use of perceptual narration is not necessarily consistent in any given film. Moreover, the titles sequence is often visually and aurally separate from the rest of the film. Nonetheless, if this indicates anything about the perceptual narrator, it suggests a sort of godlike omniscience as the viewer is taken through various visual perspectives not ordinarily available to real people. The titles sequence ends with the camera following a yellow taxicab. This begins to hint at surveillance and a sort of “omniscience” that is not associated with God, but with the police. Indeed, this impression is quickly verified when the camera cuts to a second perspective, revealing an FBI helicopter.

Another cut gives a clear POV shot from the helicopter, again tracking the taxi. Now the audience hears words transmitted to the inside of the helicopter, an oral report of the movement of the taxi. The effect here is of a gradual narrowing of the knowledge of the narrator, from the apparently divine omniscience at the start, to the complex of particular, observing and communicating FBI agents. Among other things, this gives the chase both a sinister or foreboding quality (already foreshadowed by the music of the titles sequence) and a possible sense of human fallibility.

Subsequently, the perceptual narrator moves to street level; the black opacity of the limousine following the taxi repeats that of the FBI helicopters. The entire sequence is ambiguous between an Orwellian vision of massive governmental observation and a heroic image of smart and painstaking police work foiling a dangerous plot. This ambiguity, with its associated emotional ambivalence, continues through much of the opening of the film. It is undoubtedly part of the receptive intention of the implied author and it begins to suggest a tacit simulation of distinct implied audiences—one inclined to worries over state terror, the other to worries over nonstate terror.
In a massive show of force, the taxi is surrounded by FBI vehicles. Members of a SWAT team, almost all white, pour out of the vans, training their rifles on the driver. The officer in charge barks orders at the driver, a pudgy Middle Eastern man. In apparent confusion, he asks what he has done. The officer immediately has the trunk of the car opened. It contains weapons. The man protests that they are not his. The officer orders his subordinates, “Get rid of him!”

The scene is fascinating in a number of ways. It suggests a certain sort of temporal complexity to the implied author. Specifically, I suspect that the director’s receptive intent here runs along the following lines: Initially, the viewer is uncertain as to the precise nature of this action. Again, some viewers will be inclined to assume a heroic story of police officers foiling crime or terrorism. Others will be inclined to infer the Orwellian tale of massive governmental surveillance. But both will initially take the discovery of weapons to “confirm” the first, heroic reading. Subsequently, however, the audience learns that the FBI has planted the evidence to coerce the cab’s owner, Omar, into serving as an FBI spy. In retrospect, it is clear that the driver’s protests were sincere. Moreover, the speed with which the officer moves to opening the trunk appears suspicious. How did they know precisely where the weapons would be? Finally, after the detailed treatment of FBI torture later in the film, the officer’s order, “Get rid of him!” appears ominous.

This opening sequence suggests the complexity of the perceptual narrator’s relation to the implied author, and it indicates that there may be particular sorts of temporal extension for implicated authors. Specifically, the author, on the one hand, simulates the moment-by-moment interpretation and response of a viewer. On the other hand, he or she also simulates such a viewer’s recurring revision and reconsideration of earlier inferences and feelings. Those revisions may reflect initial uncertainties or indeterminacies in the meaning or emotional force of the work. In other words, as one views a section of the narrative, one may favor one of the ambiguous possibilities. However, later events may lead one to favor another possibility. That change is part of implied authorial intention. Putting the point technically, one might say that the profile of ambiguity for a work may involve initial and retrospective implicated authors.

The general idea is hardly a new one. It is widely recognized that viewers and readers come to reinterpret earlier sections of a work in light of later information. The point here is primarily a theoretical one about the nature of that reinterpretation and its relation to local and global implied authorial intentions.
The following scene presents the SWAT team breaking into someone’s home and training their laser-guided rifles at his head. Here, too, there is the same ambiguity between efficient crime-prevention and governmental terrorism. The film cuts to FBI headquarters in New York. The audience sees the man who was just arrested, Omar, first through a video surveillance camera. The examining officer, a Hindi/Urdu-speaking Indian, serves at this point as the voice of the implied author explaining that, by the provisions of the PATRIOT Act, Omar has virtually no legal rights. Indeed, he indicates that the usual presumption of innocence is reversed in such cases and the “detainee” is responsible for proving his or her innocence.

The interrogator, Roshan, wants Omar to tell him in particular about his school friend “Sam.” Here, there is a sort of teasing ambiguity as well, since Sam could be a European or Jewish American. As it turns out, he too is Muslim—Samir Shaikh.

Roshan’s question about Sam leads to an embedded narration frame in which Omar begins to recount his arrival at New York State University. The perceptual narration cuts to the university, presumably seven years earlier. Omar is having his photo taken at a large sign for the university, giving a peace sign. The brief scene suggests Omar’s perhaps naïve enthusiasm on his first visit to America.

The embedded story begins with the continuation of the verbal narration, seamlessly moving from frame narrator to commentator narrator. However, when Omar meets the fourth main character, Maya, the commentary stops and the viewer is entirely immersed in the embedded storyworld. Khan marks this in the aural presentation of dialogue. Omar had exchanged a few words with the young woman who took his photograph earlier. But the volume of that dialogue was roughly at the level of the background, suggesting that it was part of the perceptual narration, but not the information explicitly communicated in the dialogue of the frame story. When he begins to speak with Maya, however, the dialogue has the same volume as the narrative commentary, which it replaces, as the nondiegetic music is reduced to the level of background accompaniment. Perhaps even more important than the aural cues, there are several POV shots from Omar’s perspective. These partially serve to provide a transition between the commentator narration and the internal focalization on Omar in the embedded storyworld. Techniques of this sort are common in films, signaling shifts in narration, though viewers, it seems, rarely notice them self-consciously.
The next sequence introduces Sam. Sam is involved in an apparently wacky college competition. But it has obvious thematic resonance. There is an annual race to see who can raise the U.S. flag most quickly. Showing great physical prowess, Sam wins. More importantly, the film shows him proudly gesturing toward the flag. The suggestion is that his pride is not only in winning the contest, but in being American. The perceptual narrator not only presents this information. That narrator frames Sam’s relation to the flag in a stereotypical posture of a national hero. This is one of moments in the film designed to show that Sam is “all-American” (as he later calls himself).

Subsequent scenes present the developing friendship of Sam, Maya, and Omar, particularly stressing Sam’s all-American qualities. In keeping with this, his multicultural and multiracial pals play football on a field with the twin towers prominent in the background. This unobtrusive selection of information serves to highlight that this is before September 11. These scenes generally stress his heroic excellence as well. Omar explains that Sam was good at sports, spoke well, and was a good student. In one sequence, he rescues Maya’s purse from a mugger and is wounded in the process. In part because of these virtues, but in part simply because he is sweet and charming, Maya is in love with him. This last point provokes Omar’s jealousy. That jealousy is continually suggested as a possible underlying motive for Omar’s subsequent cooperation with the FBI. Finally, this entire sequence serves to establish the hopefulness of these young people who anticipate a happy, well-integrated life as Americans in America.

A peculiarity of this part of the film involves the relation between the Indian Americans, on the one hand, and European Americans, on the other. In one rather strange scene, Sam and Omar speak in Hindi while their European American friends join the dialogue speaking English. There are several ways in which one could read this scene. It could be that the viewer is supposed to assume that the whole conversation is in English (even though Sam and Omar are actually speaking Hindi). This would take up a common convention—what allows ancient Greeks to speak English in an American movie about ancient Greece. But this does not fit the fact that the white characters are clearly speaking English. Alternatively, one could assume that the white characters actually understand Hindi. But that seems empirically unlikely and there is no evidence that they ever speak it. Finally, it may suggest that this portrayal of pre-September 11 America is inaccurate, an idealization
designed to make a point about what happened in post–September 11 America. More exactly, this may suggest two audiences for the implied author, thus two implied authors (one genuine implied author and one pseudo-implied author). For one audience, this discrepancy is invisible. They should simply accept the utopian vision. For the other audience, this discrepancy serves primarily to prepare the viewer for an untrustworthy epilogue that follows the main action of the film.

After this, Roshan explains that the FBI suspects Sam of operating a terrorist sleeper cell in New York. He also accuses Omar of being part of that cell. However, this already seems highly unlikely, given the attenuated relations between Omar and Sam in the intervening years. Omar shouts that Roshan is framing him. The audience subsequently learns that this is indeed the case.

Generally, the internal focalization on Omar is limited to perception. However, the audience is at this point given fragmentary access to some of his internal thoughts as he remembers Roshan’s claims and accusations. This leads to a recollection of Sam’s defeat of the mugger and Maya’s confession of her love for Sam. The context leads the viewer to assume this is a recollection by Omar. But here something else strange happens. Omar stops seeing Maya and Sam with the excuse that school is about to end and he is packing. As Omar is explaining this to Maya, he hears a scream. They run into a common room on campus and witness many distraught students watching the breaking news about the destruction of the twin towers. The Middle Eastern and South Asian students are as overwhelmed with sorrow as the European students. The scene ends with a transition to frame narration in which Omar is announcing that this day changed everything.

The problem here is no doubt obvious to every reader. The school year (in both the United States and India) ends in early summer. The events of September 11 took place on September 11. It is very difficult not to interpret this as a deliberate challenge to the reliability of Omar’s memories. In itself, that is not terribly theoretically interesting. However, it again suggests that the idealization of America prior to this moment of complete change is to some degree problematic. The point has consequences for the ending (which does not involve personified narration of any sort).

In the following scene, Roshan threatens both Omar and his family. He thereby coerces Omar into cooperating with the FBI in an investigation of Sam. Omar soon manages a (seemingly) chance meeting with Maya, who is now married to Sam. They have a young son to whom Sam
is a devoted and loving father. Following his FBI cover story as a radicalized militant, Omar convinces Sam that he desires some sort of revenge against America. Sam then introduces Omar to his friends. It turns out that Sam is indeed running a sleeper cell. To test Omar, Sam has him actually kill someone—an act that Omar carries out, with the subsequent approval of his FBI contact.

This leads to Sam’s story of the preceding seven years. Before going on to this, however, it is important to mention another character—Zilgai. Maya is working in a law office giving legal aid to people who were detained and tortured following the September 11 events. The audience hears the testimony of Zilgai. He explains the various techniques used by his interrogators. Many of these techniques are familiar to viewers from reports on Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.

Sam’s story in effect corroborates that of Zilgai. The main difference is that Zilgai’s story is a testimony spoken into a camera operated by Maya. In contrast, Sam serves as a frame narrator for the perceptual narration of an embedded story. The framing narration is delivered beneath a waving American flag, selected by the perceptual narrator in parallel with the scene where Sam is introduced. He prefaces the story by referring to himself as formerly “all-American” and now a “terrorist,” asking, how did the change occur? In the frame, he explains that it was ten days after September 11 and he was taking a train to meet Maya. The film then cuts to the flashback. The perceptual narrator shows Sam looking at the train schedule. A woman approaches and leads him to an empty part of the station where he is hooded and handcuffed. He is subsequently taken to a detention facility, stripped, and chained to a chair. The perceptual narration shows the dogs outside the facility, the barred doors closing, the clothing being cut from his body. The perspective is clearly not that of Samir, since the audience sees these things while his eyes are covered by the hood. However, at least the central images are information inferentially available to Samir as he would have heard the dogs, the clanking of the doors, the slicing of the scissors, just as the audience hears them. In this way the perceptual narrator does not present Samir’s optical point of view, but does presumably present his auditory point of view and his (inferential) knowledge of the situation.

Finally, the hood is removed and the interrogation begins. Sam is accused of involvement in the terrorist attacks because he took photographs of the twin towers. Despite his explanation of the photos as work for a class—and despite the more important fact that photos of the towers hardly constitute criminal or even suspicious activity—Sam is
still presumed guilty and tortured. The commentator (Samir in a voice-over) explains that he was one of 1,200 people who were subjected to this treatment. Subsequently, the audience is shown the various tortures reported by Zilgai and others—waterboarding (suffocating with water-soaked cloths), hanging by the wrists, sleep deprivation through blaring music and lights, guards urinating on his hooded face and leaving him for the night to choke on the urine. The mutually re-enforcing nature of the perceptual and verbal narrations tends to enhance the viewer’s sense of their reliability—not only with respect to the storyworld, but with respect to the real world as well.

The perceptual narration reveals a clear change in Sam. At first, he is defiant and self-confident. By the end, he is weeping and helpless. This is what first makes him susceptible to the suggestion of joining a militant organization. (Another prisoner tells him what he can do if he wishes to take back his “izzat” or honor, precisely what is taken away in humiliation.) When he is finally released after nine months in detention, he is listless and deeply traumatized. The perceptual narration presents what are apparently nightmares derived from the torture and show his clear susceptibility to anxiety and concrete fear. With Maya’s support, Sam regains confidence and enters back into life in the world. But his attempt to find a job leads only to further humiliation as employers reject him, perhaps because he is Muslim or perhaps because they have been informed of his detention. He eventually makes the terrorist contact suggested to him in prison.

Omar confronts Roshan with Samir’s detention and torture. Roshan admits that Samir was not a terrorist, that no one could remain the same after such an experience, and that following this detention and torture Samir became what he was not previously, a terrorist. Omar then says that such torture and detentions have produced terrorism. For a moment, Roshan is silent. He then gives a speech about how he is Muslim and that he is deeply pained by Muslims leaving the way of peace. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that if one supports Islam, one supports peace. He then explains that only in the United States could he be put in charge of such a sensitive case, even as a Muslim.

The scene is fascinating because it is difficult to say just how it should be read in relation to the implied author. On the one hand, there is some truth to what Roshan is saying. Whatever the U.S. government has done to some innocent people, that does not justify killing other innocent people. At the same time, the ringing support of peace seems, at best, forced. It comes from the mouth of someone whose profession is inseparable
from violence. The point is particularly clear in context, since Roshan has just finished telling Omar that it was perfectly fine for him to shoot a man. Moreover, while the United States does provide many opportunities, it is simply false that governments never employ members of a targeted, “enemy” group in their attack on that group. Indeed, employing collaborationists is fairly routine. Moreover, the viewer already knows that his ability to speak Hindi/Urdu is crucial for his work on this case. There is also the obvious fact that there are plenty of countries in the world where Muslims hold such positions—not only Muslim-majority countries, but even countries where they are a discriminated-against minority, such as India.

My own inclination is to read the scene in one of two ways. The first possibility is that this is genuinely dialectical. In other words, there is one implied author and he or she is suggesting the moral complexity of the problem. There is no moral complexity to torture—it is wrong. There is no moral complexity to terrorism—it is wrong. But judgments about individual people are often more difficult than judgments about their acts.

The other possible reading is that there are two implied authors here. One implied author accepts Omar’s accusations; the other accepts Roshan’s rebuttal. In this case, it is difficult to discern just where the subsuming or encompassing implied author may come out. The viewer can only get a fuller sense of this retrospectively, at the end of the film.

Most of the remaining story concerns the development of Sam’s terrorist plot. It turns out that he has managed to have his company hired to clean the FBI building. He explains to Omar that he has no interest in killing random people. His fight is with the FBI, so he is attacking them. The argument is not without plausibility. However wrong, it shows that Sam is, in some ways, morally (or perhaps merely intellectually) superior to his antagonists. He is not striking out at, say, European Christians or at some other identity group, blaming everyone in that group for what he suffered. He is, rather, striking at the institution that tortured him and that subsequently continued those heinous practices.

The climax of the film comes with the attempted bombing of the FBI building. The plot nearly succeeds. Indeed, it is foiled due only to coincidence. This indicates that the apparently ubiquitous FBI surveillance is just as much of a failure at preventing terrorism as is detention and torture. The coincidence is that Maya happens to be in the FBI building. She has agreed to cooperate with the FBI to prevent a terrorist attack. She happens to see Sam outside the building. When Sam is informed of
Maya’s presence, he cannot detonate the explosives. He drops the detonator and is immediately shot many, many times by the FBI, although he is no longer a threat. Just before the firing begins, Maya runs toward Sam. She is therefore killed as well. Roshan receives a medal for preventing a terrorist attack, although the FBI created the terrorist and the terrorist himself decided not to detonate the explosives.

The movie is to this point an utterly despairing tragedy. The FBI brutalizes an innocent, and indeed heroic, man. This and broader social isolation lead him to terrorism. The FBI actually fails to learn of an attack he is planning and it is only by chance that he himself decides to call it off. At this point, FBI agents murder him and his wife, orphaning their young child. The final result is that the very agency responsible for this brutality is celebrated.

This leads to the ending. The transition is marked by a single title, a very minimal textual narrator that reports a time lapse, “Six months later.” After this, there is only a perceptual narrator. With no personified narrator, it may seem that there could be no discrepancy between the narrator and the implied author. In other words, it may seem that, when not personified, the perceptual narrator could not be untrustworthy. However, the ending of New York suggests something else. The final scene begins with Danyal, the son of Maya and Sam, happily playing baseball. Omar has taken over the role of his father and everything seems perfectly fine. Danyal has not changed in any visible way since his parents were murdered. Roshan comes to the baseball game. Initially, Omar is cold. But Roshan delivers another speech about the marvelous opportunities given by this country. He goes so far as to claim that the work of the FBI has enabled a Muslim boy (Danyal) to play on an American team and be celebrated, even though his father was a terrorist. Roshan meets Danyal, who is immediately drawn to this friendly stranger. Danyal invites Roshan to join them for dinner and the three go off together as friends.

The ending takes up some of the uncertainties from earlier in the film. The utopian vision of the United States is here again, though it presents a post- rather than pre-9/11 utopia. As noted earlier, there are hints that this utopian vision may be mistaken with respect to the period before September 11. Is it possible that the implied author really feels that the country has fully overcome those problems—that prejudice against Muslims has really been so eradicated, that there would be no bias against someone known to be the son of a terrorist? Then there is the personal story of Danyal—is it really plausible that he would be so totally unaffected by the murder of both his parents?
Perhaps this is, instead, a case of implied authorial misdirection, thus a dual implied author for a dual implied reader. For one implied author, thus for one audience, this is a perfectly plausible conclusion, one entirely fitting to the situation in the United States after the initial hysteria of September 11 declined. But for another implied author and audience, this is straightforwardly ironic. The personal emotional relations are incredible; the social situation is idealized beyond recognition.

One possible reason for this split is that the subsuming or genuine implied author holds to the position of the second implied author, but has to assuage the sensibilities of precisely the forces that brutalized Sam. Put simply, the first implied author may be understood as implied for the FBI, the CIA, and their supporters in the general population. This possibility actually has a polarizing effect on one’s understanding of these two implied authors. Conditions in the United States diverge from the happy communal harmony depicted in the film precisely to the extent that the subsuming implied author fears retribution for his portrayal of the FBI.

The film ends with the more significant introduction of a textual narrator. Again, textual narrators are generally judged highly trustworthy. Given no reason to believe otherwise, one’s default response to a textual narrator is to see it as the voice of the (subsuming or genuine) implied author. In this case, the textual narrator explains that more than 1,200 “men of foreign origin” were detained and tortured after September 11. It goes on to state that the government did not find evidence linking any of them to the September 11 attacks. The textual narrator notes that “Eventually, more than a 1000 were released.” The statement seems to suggest a sort of reconciliation. However, it also suggests that some 200 of these men—along with many others like them—remained imprisoned at the time of the film’s making. Moreover, “To this date, most of [those released] suffer from depression and stress . . . and have not been able to focus enough to hold a job . . .” (ellipsis marks in the original).

These statements arguably make the preceding scene almost entirely implausible. They may even suggest that viewers should disregard the scene, just as they would disregard anything inserted at the insistence of a censor. Of course, one may disagree about whether the textual narrator’s challenge to the perceptual narration here is that extreme. However, the point at least suggests that discounting a nonpersonified perceptual narrator is possible, even to the extent of disregarding an entire plot sequence without any replacement. At the very least, this seems to be part of the film’s profile of ambiguity. In other words, this profile includes at least the possibility of implied authorial misdirec-
tion. Put somewhat simply, the film should lead one audience to infer an implied author who represents a post–September 11 “overreaction” and who now sees that “overreaction” as a historical incident that the nation has overcome. Indeed, for that audience, the implied author is a sort of cheerleader for the United States. However, at the same time, the film suggests another implied author. This second implied author believes that the terrible actions of the U.S. government after September 11 have not been resolved. Moreover, this implied author may even feel that there is enough remaining danger that he must conceal his real views and in effect wrap himself in the American flag.

The film does conclude with a moment of hope. Specifically, the textual narrator reports that “On the 22nd of January 2009, just two days after being sworn in as the new President of the United States of America, Barack Obama signed an order to shut down the infamous symbol of detention and torture, Guantanamo Bay.” It seems clear that the (subsuming) implied author did see the possibility of a future that was at least better, if not necessarily utopian. The real author has undoubtedly been deeply disappointed by what has actually been done by the Obama administration since that time.

Conclusion

In sum, both productive and receptive choices by an author are the result of complex mental causes. Some of those causes are also narratively, emotionally, or thematically justified—thus reasons. Some implied authorial reasons are thematized in that the author is able to articulate them accurately. Many others are theoretically specifiable. Thus critics can in principle articulate these reasons by relating patterns in the author’s work to abstract knowledge not available to the author.

The unity of a work comes, first of all, from the enduring emotional attitudes and thematic commitments of the textual implied author as these are manifest in his or her final judgment that a work is complete. However, that final authorial response does not necessarily reconcile all authorial receptive responses to the work. An author does not read and evaluate a work in a timeless “now.” He or she responds to a work not only globally, but locally as well, not only as a whole, but moment by moment. These local authorial receptions define “implicated authors.” The striking feature of implicated authorship is that it entails different sorts of continuity and discontinuity. The highest level of continuity is
encompassed in the implied author. But implicated authorial views form various patterns of coherence and contradiction on their own.

The most obvious type of implicated authorial contradiction involves incompatibility between particular developments of story events or character traits, on the one hand, and self-conscious generalizations, on the other. These generalizations are often expressed by authorial intrusions (through the narrator) or authorial ventriloquism (through characters). Contradictions of this sort may operate in any ideological direction. For example, opposition to dominant racist ideology, articulated in authorial intrusions, may be belied by racist portraits. But, by the same token, dominant racist ideology may surface in the overt statements only to be contradicted by the more nuanced and humane depictions of characters. When sensitive to contradictions, authors may elaborate on the self-conscious statements, often producing rationalizations rather than expressing actual justificatory reasons. Contradictions may also arise across different story events or character portraits. These more particular contradictions are often due to changing contexts and the resulting shifts in cognitive models.

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* manifests contradictions of implicated authorship, particularly between overt statements and depictions. Perhaps the most striking case of such a contradiction concerns the putatively childlike character of Africans. Stowe elaborated on this idea by drawing out the implications of the racist model of Africans as children—including implications that are inconsistent with the ideology of white supremacy. (These implications are made possible in part by the fact that dominant ideologies about exploited groups commonly have both negative and positive versions.) Perhaps most importantly, she used the model of Africans as children to foster parental emotions in her white readers. In doing so, she also sought to foster the two primary virtues that tacitly guided her implied authorial ethics. These are, first, attachment sensitivity, or enhanced empathy toward the attachment vulnerabilities of others, and, second, attachment openness or emotional availability for the formation of attachment relations, particularly attachment relations with members of despised groups.

Film further complicates the issues surrounding implied and implicated authorship. Again, films have many authors. Moreover, any film author shares the local diversity found in implicated literary authors. There are two variables affecting this local diversity. The first is simply length. Shorter works tend to produce less diversity in implicated authorship; thus films will tend to have a higher degree of unified
implied authorship than novels. Second, and partially balancing the first variable, some works are more difficult to alter than others. It is much more onerous to reshoot and edit a scene in a film than to rewrite a scene in a novel.

The study of film in this context also gives prominence to several further types of authorial multiplicity. The first is the “profile of intentional coherence.” As discussed in the preceding chapter, one cannot simply say that a film has a single implied author. On the other hand, it makes even less sense to claim that every collaborator contributed equally (e.g., the caterer who made the sandwiches for a scene is probably not as interpretively significant an implied author as the screenwriter). Rather, any given film involves a complex set of relations among contributors. In some cases, there will be a fairly broad distribution of intentional coherence. Thus, in some cases, the screenwriter, director, producer, cinematographer, main actors and actresses, and so on, will all be similarly interpretively relevant. In other cases, however, there will be one or two more prominent peaks (often including one for the director). This profile is also affected by the diversity of implicated authorship. Thus, again, the implied director himself or herself manifests multiplicity. Generally, the profile of intentional coherence for a literary work is only of the second sort (i.e., a matter of implicated authorship). Exceptions occur in cases of collaboration or in instances where an editor has made truly extensive changes in a literary work.

Beyond this, there are cases where there may be multiple implied authors in a work. Or, rather, there are cases where the implied author distinguishes two (or more) sets of implied readers. This implied author then may misdirect one group of implied readers to infer a particular (pseudo-)implied author, typically by identifying an ironic nonpersonified narrator as the implied author. He or she then properly directs a second group to understand the implied author quite differently (and correctly), typically while also recognizing that many other readers will infer a very different implied author; in this way, the genuine implied author subsumes or encompasses the pseudo-implied author. This division is most prominent in theme, but occurs also in emotional force and even in storyworld construction. The multiplication of implied authors or the misdirection of implied author inference is not confined to film. However, it may be more prominent in film due to the commercial need to reach a broad audience and due to possibilities for censorship.

Isolating implied authorial misdirection in film is connected with understanding the nature and operation of cinematic narration. First,
one needs to distinguish the perceptual narrator, the selector of visual and auditory information. Second, one needs to distinguish different types of verbal narrator. One distinction is between vocal and textual narrators, that is, narrators who speak and narrators who supply text—main titles, intertitles, superimposed identifications (e.g., “Delhi 1947”), and so on. Among speaking narrators, frame narrators may be distinguished from commentators. Frame narrators provide a transition between a frame and an embedded narrative. They are most often personified and explicitly introduced in some frame story. That introduction commonly suggests that they narrate the main story. However, they rarely do. They may become focalizers or commentators. Commentator narrators provide voice-overs or silent-film intertitles at points in the course of a film. These are often personified. But they need not be (thus they may be comparable to nonpersonified verbal narrators in fiction). Still, the mere fact of an individual voice tends to give commentator narrators at least a hint of personification. Different sorts of verbal narrators have different degrees of presumptive authority for viewers. Textual narrators typically have the greatest authority.

In *New York*, Kabir Khan presents a complex interplay of different sorts of perceptual and verbal narration. At some points—prominently, when dealing with the mistreatment of young Muslim men after September 11, 2001—this contributes to a sense of the reliability of the narration. At other points—prominently, when treating the integration of Muslims in U.S. society before September 11—it contributes to a sense of unreliability. This unreliability is not precisely that of the narrator. Rather, there is at least a possibility of unreliability in a pseudo-implied author. This possibility becomes particularly intense with the ending of the film. Specifically, the perceptual narrator presents an apparently true ending, but, in part through textual narration, the film simultaneously provides hints that viewers—or, rather, some viewers—should not take that ending seriously. In other words, the ending of the film suggests implied authorial misdirection bearing on different sorts of implied audiences for the film.

Finally, film makes the temporal process of narration particularly salient. This foregrounds temporal differences in implied authorial meaning, though these occur just as widely in literature as in film. Specifically, the implied authorial profile of ambiguity for a given scene or sequence may shift over the course of a work. In connection with this, it is important to distinguish initial from retrospective profiles of ambiguity, along with their associated implied and implicated authors and readers.