TITULAR SPACE IN J.M. COETZEE’S SUMMERTIME: A MAQUETTE FOR A PORTRAIT, OR A SELF-PORTRAIT, OF THE ARTIST FINDING HIS FEET

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Before the law, the title of a work is a title-deed subject to determinants of place and time (London after the 1710 Statute of Anne, or after the 1988 Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, for example). The work the title undertakes, however, also frames its own architecture, and so must be cognized as a topology as real as the “reality effect” of alpha-numerically simulated topography envisaged by Roland Barthes, must be recognized as a topo- and tropo-logico-logical space built by the tropes which dwell, sound, and turn in the space separating—in a book—the cover from the textual body concealed within. This is in part a question of finding how the title stands, and of discovering what standing the title can be said to have earned, inherited, or proclaimed for itself.

Tropos (Latin tropus) signifies a rhetorical turning (τρόπος a turn; τρέπειν to turn). Titular space, to turn a phrase, is the dwelling (or root) grounded in the border area of what relates first to page-turning in a book: dust cover, spine, and outermost initial pages—where the title is grafted or marcotted, where it stakes its roots. And whence it asserts the book’s domicile or growth as a place of (perhaps poetic) business: through performances of desire, reproduction, interest, and auto-identification (including the author-portrait and the authoritative signature) more than by any cognitive operations that naming on its own can induce. The title thus bestows and grounds the first gestures of auto-beginning and page-turning, which—as in any even moderately-sincere autobiographical effort—constitute “the abruptness of what we call a beginning” that has “inconspicuously prepared itself over the longest time” (Heidegger 48).

The identity markings of genre quickly and often explicitly insinuate themselves into the turning-field of desire and interest, mingling there with the self-protecting and auto-promoting provisions of what comes to resemble also a building permit: an announcement of intent to create that authorizes its intent by listing certificates of right or acknowledgement and predicates of authority guaranteed by the name and reputation of a particular author and her agents; that engages further with even more overtly commercial acts of advertisement insofar as the artwork-book also at least half-hopes to turn into a profitable venture (to make some more).

The auto-bio-graphical undertaking in J.M. Coetzee’s Doubling the Point, edited by David Attwell, who also conducts the interviews printed in this book, and perhaps the governance of any such undertaking, if not “dominated by self-interest” (392), is at least replete with traces of self and competing visions of interest. This is emphatically so too for Coetzee’s most recent ‘auto-biographical’ novel, Summertime, grounded as a sketch or study of how an English biographer plans a biography of the late “John Coetzee” by grafting together various accounts—solicited in interview—from people who knew Coetzee at the beginning of his novel-writing career.
The farm Vogelfontein takes its place in an area of the Karoo called the Koup; the farm lies between Merweville and Fraserburg Road, a village which since 1950 has been known as Leeu Gamka. The map above still designates the village as Fraserburg Road. In 1916 J.M. Coetzee’s grandfather bought Vogelfontein, which the family spoke of (in Afrikaans rather than in Dutch) as Voëlfontein. “The farm is called Voëlfontein, Bird-fountain,” says the Coetzee-narrator of Boyhood: “he loves every stone of it” (80). It is here also that an interviewee remembers the John Coetzee from Summertime whispering to her as a child, “I want to be buried here” (108), echoing through memory the words attributed to the Boyhood narrator: “Belonging to the farm is his secret fate,” and, “When he dies he wants to be buried on the farm” (96–97). In 1971, J.M. Coetzee lived with his wife and children—within walking distance of Leeu Gamka—in a farmstead on Maraisdal (lower image on map above). Coetzee finished writing Dusklands, his first novel, on this Karoo farm (Kannemeyer 215).

My essay seeks its standing in the boundary, frontier, or fragment border-area between the pictorially graphic and another rationality afforded by and from a typographical base. Political border areas in the British Isles were once and are still, less commonly, called marches, the typically marquisate places from which long ago a Marquess would have drawn or derived his title, a title also elsewhere called Marquis.
Henceforth, pictures and text will march with one another; “march” as a verb linked to boundary marches once commonly meant “to border on.” Photographs of Voëlfontein homestead (above) and Maraisdal (below) courtesy of Wium van Zyl.
“Just above the farmhouse is a stone-walled dam, twelve feet square, filled by a wind pump, which provides water for the house and garden”; but he, the Coetzee-narrator of Boyhood, “is proud of how little he drinks”: “He wants to be a creature of the desert, this desert, like a lizard” (83). Below: the dam wall across the usually dry Boesmansrivier, a little further beyond the homestead: “never does he lives [sic] more intensely that in the early mornings when he and his father set off with their guns up the dry bed of the Boesmansrivier in search of game” (Boyhood 87).

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“People can only be in love with one landscape in their lifetime,” J.M. Coetzee once said in interview:

“One can appreciate and enjoy many geographies,
but there is only one that one feels in one’s bones” (cited in Penner 20).
A sketch or maquette of how and what in *Summertime* the title entitles might initially need to turn away from mimetically-induced topographies in the book (principally the expanses of the Karoo from the Roggeveld to the Koup), might need to turn for a while to the “paratextual” site of what Gérard Genette calls the “title apparatus”; might need to turn away, for a while, from the environs of the Coetzee family farm (JMC’s “place of origin” *Doubling* 393), and turn instead towards the topology of a titular border space as spatially graphic as a maquette (the model from which a work is elaborated) even as it turns to the typographic, straddling viewpoints thus made vulnerable to confusion: especially in works of fiction, linked as these usually are to the legal names of their authors, but also sometimes to the proper names of the fictional characters they propagate by facto-graft or marcottage—Mme Bovary, or Harry Potter perhaps. Fictions are also marcotted by their own title-names, which compound opportunities for confusion insofar as a title is and is not a name, even if it resembles a proper name. And this is not only so when the title reiterates a name, but under other circumstances also, especially in English, given the English-language custom of capitalizing most, if not all, titular words: *Summertime*, for example, or *In the Heart of the Country*.

Marcottage, also called air layering, is a method of propagation in which a girdled cut into the bark of a shoot is covered with rooting medium to encourage new roots to form before the shoot (now a marcot) is severed from the parent plant (says the *OED*). *Summertime* as title is a marcot propagated from Coetzee’s second novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, with which it cultivates a temporal and graphic layering in the portrait or self-portraiture of a youngish John Coetzee “finding his feet as a writer” (225): *A Portrait of the Artist Finding his Feet*; a portrait of one who later will unofficially come to earn the title, ‘the Master of Cape Town,’ like and unlike the Dostoevsky-subject portrayed in his seventh novel, *The Master of Petersburg*.

*In the Heart of the Country* is complexly entitle in ways that bring to mind the early English novel trying to find its feet, aware of its precarious identity—its lack of footing or rootedness in cultural tradition—and aware too of the commercial stakes surrounding its newness. The original title of Defoe’s *The Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Mariner, of York…* (the title continues at length from this point onwards) is exemplary in all respects, down to its reluctance to confess what Coetzee calls its “fake autobiography heavily influenced by the genres of the deathbed confession and the spiritual autobiography” (*Stranger* 19-20). “[N]o self-portrait without confession,” writes Derrida in *Memoirs* (117).

*Summertime* and *Doubling* share an interplay of interest and self-interest revealed by imbricated interviews by means of which both books show several views, some “between the lines” as we say, thinking perhaps of looking through the slats of a blind, as Derrida does in *Memoirs of the Blind* (55) and as Mr. Vincent the biographer seems to be doing in *Summertime*, peeping back through time to catch glimpses in inter-view of a Coetzee finding his feet in the heart of the country some thirty years before. About thirty years prior to this, Joyce Carey’s Blake-inspired painter, Gully Jimson, finds himself sketching massive feet in a mural he plans to title *The Raising of Lazarus*: “The finest feet I’d ever seen” Jimson says of the feet on the wall, “They came up like music” (*Horse’s Mouth* 269). This is visibly contrapuntal and contrapuntally visible music: the title-music filmmakers strive for and hope to achieve.
In addition to the family farm and various writers including Dostoevsky and Defoe (the list is long), another crucial feet-founding grounding and sounding for Coetzee is lodged in music, the contrapuntal music of J.S. Bach in particular, celebrating life despite difficult circumstances; blind Bach at the end, beautifully composing contemplations of death.

In his several tributes to Bach, articulated sometimes in his own public voice (Stranger Shores), sometimes in the actions or voice of a more or less fictive character (Mrs. Curren from Age of Iron, for example, or JC from Diary of a Bad Year), and sometimes in the context of interview, Coetzee acknowledges being “deeply interested in music,” though on this specific occasion he adds, “but I am not a particularly visual person and have only an amateur’s interest in [graphic] art” (2009 interview with Kannemeyer [635 n45]). The disclaimer comes a decade after Coetzee had collaborated with Dan Cameron and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev to produce the first major account of the celebrated graphic artist, William Kentridge, and so cannot entirely be trusted (cannot quite be trusted despite its insertion into ‘the public record’).

For the cinematographic version of The Horse’s Mouth, directed by Ronald Neame, the late John Bratby was commissioned to paint Gully Jimson’s paintings. Presented right is the tiger head detail from The Raising of Lazarus (the feet will only later emerge; it takes time to find one’s feet). Below is one of Bratby’s many self-portraits; this one exploits another and perhaps absolute identity-paraph of any humanimal artist: the fingerprint, paw-print, hoof-print, dental marking, iris pattern, tiger stripe, whatever. (The stripes on a tiger are as distinctive as a fingerprint.)

Above: Tiger Head detail from The Raising of Lazarus by John Bratby (1958). Oil on Canvas.

Left: Self-Portrait with Fingerprints by John Bratby (1957). Oil on hardboard, 27.5 by 23.5 inches. Private collection.


For more on Bratby and his “tubist” style of painting, see Yacowar.
But although titles of books assume the structure and some of the effects of a person-or place-name, perhaps to assert civil status (under copyright law, say), or assume the thing-name effect of labeling or name recognition (for retail purposes, perhaps), in many ways titles function unlike proper names: one reason being that facility of reference is a central function of names but only a peripheral function of titles, which are altogether more diversely peculiar in character (Levinson 38; cf. Fisher 287 ff., Adams 14 ff., Petersen, and just about any Derrida).

Just about any Derrida; just about any title-by-Derrida, that is, to summon titles by this proper-name synecdoche, although “The Law of Genre” and “Before the Law” are especially pertinent. In the latter essay Derrida engages with Kafka’s “Before the Law,” “Vor dem Gesetz,” published under the latter title in Kafka’s lifetime and so, by virtue of this title, not equivalent to the otherwise identical passage in the penultimate chapter of *The Trial*, where the text of “Before the Law” is uttered by a character and appears within quotation marks: but without the title-value of the independently published work, despite the quotation marks.

Titling as a supplemental act is a recent development, tied to the rise of the author and the printing press, and so to the fortunes of the novel; tied also to the law that at some point came to mandate the display of edition and cataloguing information, usually grounded on the verso of the title page. Febvre and Martin tell the story of how the title page came to be; Corbett and Lightbown pause at length over the graphic character of titling in the form of emblematic frontispieces from the Renaissance. But before all this, before the law took this particular turn, early texts were commonly titled by conventional incipit (“Here bigynneth the Book of the Tales of Canterbury”), and were not necessarily so marked by the author, but often by scribes, commentators, or, in due course, printers. This is one of the complications about that text Max Brod apparently titled “Before the Law” by incipit; Kafka refers to it in his *Diaries* as the “Legend of the Doorkeeper” (Gray 288–289)—after the doorkeeping sentry, the first of many, who guards this particular entry to the law.

Not apparently worried, as Levinson is, whether or not a title originating from someone other than the author can be considered a true title (editors are now typically involved in titling decisions), Derrida builds on his interest in the difference between the identical Kafka word-events (from “Before” and repeated in *Trial*) by turning to the related instance of a difference between the two otherwise identical phrases, “Before the Law” operating as title, and “Before the Law” as incipit performing a beginning of the textual body (212).

Derrida’s “Before the Law” (an additional occurrence of the phrase after those in Kafka’s “Before the Law” and in *The Trial*) also looks back in autobiographical glance (“All writing is autobiographical” insists Coetzee in *Doubling* [17; 391]); the phrase looks back to Derrida’s own appearance “before the law” in Czechoslovakia on charges of drug trafficking late in 1981, while he was still working on an early version of this, *his*, “Before the Law.”
The words that constitute a title are and are not—only sound or seem to be—identical to the same words that might occur elsewhere, even in the body of the text so entitled, even at its very beginning. Such equivalence would constitute a homophone rather than a synonym, says Derrida, since the two instances have neither the same reference (nor, more importantly I would think, the same value [189]).

As previously mentioned: although it might closely resemble a person-, place-, or thing-name, in many more ways the title is closer in identity to a graphic than to a name; the title constitutes part of a textual signature, part of a textual fingerprint.

Despite its apparent identity with the incipit, “Before the Law” as title remains heterogeneous to the same words located elsewhere (as the opening words to an essay on titular space and feet-finding, for instance) and heterogeneous also to what it entitles: that which in Kafka begins with the incipit “Before the Law,” itself part of the opening sentence—“Before the Law stands a doorkeeper.” Its heterogeneity, in other words, is connected to the way that the title belongs to the work and does not belong, given its topology—its separate placement before the inside of the work to which it connects—and given that the work this titular placement undertakes is connected to the outside, as Derrida points out: “It is self evident that the power and import of a title”—which “names and guarantees the identity, the unity and the boundaries” of the work—“have an essential relationship with something like the law, regardless of whether we are dealing with titles in general or with the specific title of a work” (188–189).

And so writers negotiate, divide, map, marcot, sound, ground, and plot their materials; and novelists continue, as they have from the beginning decades of the novel’s struggle for legitimacy—for entry through the doors and gates of cultural value—to explore the possibilities of license titles appear to afford, including division into chapter titles—fertile playground for the eighteenth-century novel—as, for example, in Fielding, who genially speaks in Joseph Andrews of chapter titles as “but so many inscriptions over the gates of inns […] informing the reader what entertainment he is to expect, which if he likes not, he may travel on to the next” (74): many gates; many doors.

Derrida made the Czechoslovak trip under the auspices of the Jan Hus Foundation in support of the Charter 77 group in Prague, who, among other activities, conducted clandestine philosophy seminars. Drugs were planted in his valise, according to Derrida, probably while he was visiting Kafka’s grave (Points 128; For Strasbourg 13). This lead to “an arrest and an investigation without trial” Derrida writes in “Before” (218), no doubt relishing—at least in retrospect—the opportunity to double once again the already multiplying and always different instances of being, after Kafka, before the law, and of being under this title, “Before the Law,” which Coetzee too doubles in the penultimate segment of Elizabeth Costello, entitled “At the Gate.” Here Costello arrives as “a petitioner before the gate” (194) only to find herself “hurled” into a “mise en scène” that—“she dislikes the word but there is no other”—she can only describe as “Kafkaesque”: the “wall, the gate the sentry, are straight out of Kafka” (209). The doubling device of constructing dialogic or heterogeneous viewpoints from which to examine complex sets of phenomena is a strategy Kafka, Derrida, and Coetzee share; with others, of course. Many doors; many gates.
The first of several gates leading to Voëlfontein farm, and the ladder leading to an attic door at the back of the homestead. Many gates, many doors; several portraits also: in a review of *Elizabeth Costello*, Marlene van Niekerk aptly refers to this text as a “pseudo self-portrait of J.M. Coetzee, a portrait of the artist as an old woman” (qtd. Kannemeyer 549; I have re-hyphenated). Photographs © Ben Maclennan, 2013.
The non-equivalence of title and name might be why seasonal names (like “Summertime”) or day names (like “Friday” from Robinson Crusoe and from Coetzee’s Foe, which re-names Daniel Defoe by birth-name) seem odd as given names, though less odd when thought of as titles: Friday, Summertime. Commentators on titling often emphasize that, unlike the name of a person, a title is an integral and constitutive part of what it names. Whereas titles may be thought of as parts of works, names are less plausibly conceived of as parts of the people they name: “Romeo doff thy name,” says Shakespeare’s Juliet, “And for thy name, which is no part of thee, / Take all Myself.” In addition to legally registered names, I was at birth graced with a Sesotho name, “Tapelo,” though this does not actually make me the “answer to prayer” signified by the Sesotho name.

Especially in verbal works, titles also tropingly participate in the troping of what they entitle. Hence, for Adorno, “The title is the microcosm of the work” (Notes Two 4); for Levin, “Most titles are synecdochic” and “many are metonymic” (xxxiv); for Adams, titles are “always synecdoches” (7).

Over the course of a century or so the early novel accumulated the credentials it had so determinedly sought, and so its title could begin to shorten, to become more like a name. The novel had made a name for itself, was even shortly to be promoted (by Bakhtin) to the status of most-valorized literary genre. But despite this rise in the novel’s fortunes, the entitlement process has no doubt to be repeated, propagated again or marcotted, by every single writer aspiring to literary significance. Thus we return to Coetzee’s second, still feet-finding, novel: the first to get an international toe-hold, the one he was ficto-finishing in the intimate company of Mr. Vincent’s last-placed interviewee, Sophie, who in Summertime was and is surprised “not to find myself”—herself named—“in his book,” this marcot, Coetzee’s early, earlier, book (235).

Coetzee’s Friday from Foe is closely inter-related with all the arts, despite that or because his tongue has been cut out, perhaps by slave-traders long ago, though Susan Barton (“Mrs Cruso” as she sometimes titles herself) suspects other possibilities too. Denied auto-access to the performance of language, Friday sings in a monotonous hum, plays a single six-note tune on an island flute made of reed (and on a recorder back in England) and dances, in a trance and for warmth perhaps (Barton speculates). Resisting the alphabet-tutelage of Foe and Barton, Friday fills his writing slate with “row upon row of eyes upon feet: walking eyes” (147), as though he were apprenticed to William Blake or anticipating Gulley Jimson. Again: the Doubling strategy of constructing dialogic or heterogeneous viewpoints is at the heart of all Coetzee’s writing; obviously so in the later fiction which again (as in Dusklnds, the first novel, completed it so happens on a farm near the Coetzee family farm in the Karoo) most obviously engineers the process by proliferating a series of initials and proper names, to which eventually are added complications silently but urgently presented by the animals, very few of whom ever get named with proper names.

Easier to eat them that way.
For Derrida, in a phrase that appears to peer through the slats of a blind at the equivocal inter-view of graphic and grammar that titling inaugurates, the title places “about the name the abandonment of the sentence” (“Title” 11). This phrase can be turned, this way and that. By abandoning the sentence, the title can be said to pare down the semantic habitat of the work it entitles, and to present itself as if it were a name or a label or only a graphic condensation. Like the proper names in books that facilitate reading, (titular) name-labels help us conduct practical transactions with works: enable, for example, someone to purchase a sculpture, or designate a painting in an exhibition catalogue, or find and borrow a book from a library.

But, now on the other hand: to claim that the title places “about the name the abandonment of the sentence” is also to suggest that although the title might look or sound like a name, it can—yes—gather around itself by virtue of its title-value the plenitudinous abandon of the sentence, a plenitude it will propagate and so multiply: by pointing inward to the sentences it entitles, remaining heterogeneous from them, and by pointing outward to attract potential readers through gloss or advertisement. No book can anymore escape the market; and so Fisher is surely wrong to dismiss “any serious consideration of titling for merchandising purposes as being conceptually helpful” (287). Copyright itself hesitates between economic and natural law self-identity models. (Yen gives a concise account.)

Under circumstances shaped by its feet-finding earliness, In the Heart of the Country came to be multiply entitled: it exists as an “English-language edition published in [the] U.K. by Secker & Warburg (cloth) 1977”; and as an edition “for sale in the Republic of South Africa only” (this is the Afrikaans- and English-language version published by Ravan Press in 1978, the source of these quotations); and as a first U.S. edition under the title of From the Heart of the Country (Harper 1977), on whose edition notice we are reminded of the specimen “first published in Great Britain” and further learn, in a misleading note, that the “English version [was] prepared by the author from the original Afrikaans”; the U.S. title originally served to distinguish the book from William Gass’s In the Heart of the Heart of the Country and Other Stories, also published by Harper, 1968.

In works of fiction ostensibly ‘proper’ names can also easily be infected by some of the traits titles exhibit insofar as in fiction the proper name does not identify a real person but part of a simulacrum called a ‘character,’ whose linguistic identity usually includes a name as contribution to the “reality effect,” not the only effect fiction pursues or plays with. In Coetzee’s oeuvre one of the initial-title-name constellations plays variations on surnames that begin with ‘C,’ including the name of a woman called Curren, whom we meet in Age of Iron as a once academically-titled classicist now retired and simply titled “Mrs”—“Mrs Curren, nine letters, anagram for what?” (Age 158)—and whom Coetzee in Doubling speaks of as “Elizabeth Curren” (250; 340) despite that her first name does not appear in the novel, where she does however sign herself on one occasion as “EC” (38). The list of ECs comes to include also Elizabeth Costello, celebrated novelist (Lives of Animals, Elizabeth Costello, and Slow Man).
Such is the law of the title: to identify by tropos-turn, topos-label, paraph-signature and maquette-fingerprint the always permeable boundary between inside and outside, trope and name, person and character, work and world, the flourishes and privileges of linguistic identity, the rights and responsibilities of legal entity variously beholden to ethico-economic realities. And so it is that the title *Summertime* dwells linguistically and phenomenally in the domain it builds, grounding a discourse situated by synecdoche to the hotter season (in the Karoo from October to about April) and to the end of the beginning of the doubled yearly cycle—also therefore to the beginning of the end, the latter being the vantage point from which *Summertime* is assembled and whence it journeys back to visit its now dead subject-object and signatory of various names J[ohn] [M] Coetzee, absent in one sense, but still present as literary and auto-biographical destination and linguistic protagonist; dead now, but also still alive in legal fact, still beneficiary of copyright protection, still complicit with the commerce of his books, most of which are signed “J.M. Coetzee,” but sometimes “John M. Coetzee” (see Cavalieri), and several of which contain some sort of “John Coetzee” or JC character. Coetzee himself complains in interview of journalists who “don’t even know my initials” (Crwys-Williams; for a concise account of the peculiar confusions surrounding the middle initial “M” see Attridge). And so it is that this Coetzee-name, like a (literary) title, becomes implicated in a dialectic of the fictive and the phenomenal, the identical and the non-identical, the general and the particular, the textual and the paratextual, and so forth—Adorno territory.

Much signing of this feet-finding work in the heart of the country, the first of Coetzee’s novels to be released from the outset on multiple continents, *Dusklands* still being at this time only available in South African imprint. As I had occasion to point out twenty years ago (when I needed to establish some sort of modest footing) *In the Heart of the Country* not only concerns itself thematically with tropo-topo-logically multiple languages, but quite literally signs itself in multilingual, multinational, and ideologically heterogeneous signatures (“Charting”). The topic has more recently been resurrected by Andrew van der Vlies, Hermann Wittenberg, and others.

The EC list merges with the J[M]C list: John [M] Coetzee, Jacobus Coetzee from *Dusklands*, JC from *Diary*, and the JC / CJ chiasmus tropo-titularly implied by *The Childhood of Jesus*. Building thus on a set of Cs, Coetzee—related to them all—stages a play of characters who invite association with one another by their initials and who slip, slide, and glide into additional paradigms and contiguities of metaphorical and metonymic relationship by, for instance, linking Curren to Costello in the shared pain and shame of old age and imminent death, Costello to Coetzee in their shared concern with justice for all animals, including humanimals, and by gender-bendingly re-engendering the feminine Costello as *Diary*’s now-masculine Señor C (also known as “Señor C the Senior Citizen” and “Juan C” in a series of misunderstandings, mostly, given that a narratively-conducted internet search quickly reveals that this man who pursues the sultry young Anya despite his advanced age, sending her notes signed “JC,” isn’t “from Columbia” as Anya had supposed, “isn’t a Señor at all”).
As title, \textit{Summertime} turns on and into and so joins the troping of those pages it precedes, in structural terms as well as in more narrowly circumscribed instances of linguistic embrace, moments that acknowledge the sense of shame that attends (late) summertime excess and ripening, a sense of shame towards which the title points despite its apparently cheerful repository of connotations.

An example of this troping, this turning from fact to fiction and back again: towards the end of the “Margot” section (a medially-placed and otherwise centrally heart-felt section of the book, in many ways the most naked part of the book), John Coetzee’s aunt, Margot’s mother—ageing and ailing, suffering from problems of the heart—is being transported by ambulance all the way from Calvinia in the Karoo to Cape Town. The hospital in Uppington is closer, but Cape Town’s Groote Schuur Hospital is preferable for the treatment of serious conditions of the heart. J.M. Coetzee’s mother died of such conditions in 1985 (Kannemeyer 440); John Coetzee’s mother is (ficto-prematurely) already deceased before the innermost \textit{Summertime} narratives begin. Margot, a fictively reincarnated version of \textit{Boyhood’s} ‘real-life’ Cousin Agnes, shares the back of the ambulance with her mother and Aletta, “a young Coloured nurse” who, as such, is medially situated by apartheid South African race-sorting as neither black nor white (and so legally also unentitled, at this time, to be served in a café reserved for white patrons). Johannes drives the ambulance. Just a week prior, Johannes and Aletta “had to rush a man from Loeriesfontein to Groote Schuur Hospital along with three fingers packed in ice in a cool-box, fingers he had lost in a mishap with a bandsaw” (145). Now they are repeating the trip, with Margot and her mother.

Like \textit{In the Heart of the Country}, \textit{Summertime} travels on plural passports resembling one another but also distinctively marked by national origin of issue. The U.K. and U.S. editions adopt, as part of their titling apparatus, similar advertising gestures on their dust covers, ignoring the risk of confirming our instinct, or that of Horkheimer and Adorno, that culture spoken of is culture for sale, culture become business: “WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE” both front covers announce in close proximity to the author’s name; both back covers print locally-derived excerpts of “Praise for” particular Coetzee books, and both include a photographic author-portrait or passport photograph on the inside back flap.

JC is neither South American nor a Señor, but a South African it turns out (50); like Jacobus Coetzee from \textit{Dusklands}; like J.M. Coetzee; like Magda and Margot whose name-initials echo the median “M” in and at the heart of JMC. This JC from \textit{Diary}, despite internal mislabeling, is a (thematic) compatriot of that Mrs. C JMC calls “Elizabeth Curren,” and a (national) compatriot of “Elizabeth Costello.” This is a JC living in Australia, home to the latter Elizabeth C, whose name “Costello” according to James Joyce, is “a corruption, I think, of two Irish words meaning: beautiful foot” (374); one of the feet to be found? This \textit{Diary} JC is one who admits having once been “a professor of literature” (191), and who claims authorship of a book entitled \textit{Waiting for the Barbarians} and a “collection of essays on censorship” resembling the J.M. Coetzee text \textit{Giving Offense} (171; 22).
“At Clanwilliam,” almost the half-way point in real-time, in real-life, “they stop for petrol” (145). Here, half-way to Cape Town in topo-fact and in ficto-fact, topography gives way to topology and tropology in exemplary fashion. From his thermos flask, Johannes—who like Aletta it should be said, though the novel does not say it, is also “Coloured”—offers Margot a cup of coffee, which she declines for multiple and almost unspecifiably nuanced reasons, although it can surely be said that these reasons, in all their nuance, are born of shame, many decades worth of it:

She would have liked to buy the two of them a cup of coffee at the café, would have liked to sit down with them in a normal, friendly way, but of course one could not do that without causing a fuss. Let the time come soon, O Lord, she prays to herself, when all this apartheid nonsense will be buried and forgotten. (145)

But despite the commercial similarities, despite the language-identity (no difference this time in how the various editions negotiate those bits of Afrikaans-language they contain), despite the passport photographs identifying the bearer (those author-portraits once engraved in books and situated alongside or on the title page), despite all these similarities, Summertime’s two textual identities begin to diverge. The U.S. edition, for instance, displays that most common and most commonly-circulated recent Coetzee portrait, the Bert Nienhuis photograph of Coetzee in his sixties standing outside, hands in pockets, relaxed and illuminated from the front and also from behind (by the summertime flowers of an ornamental shrub against which he stands). The U.K. edition, by contrast, shows a Coetzee in his thirties, using the same darkly intense interior portrait featured on the 1978 South African imprint of In the Heart of the Country. This edition, that is to say, resituates its author as belonging to a darker time, a time perhaps since passed: a pre-Nobel time, a pre-post-apartheid time, a biographical time, an object-time of Vincent’s inquiry. All this even as it links, on its back cover, this past (hardly emblematic of a “summertime” in pictorial terms) with an autobiographical project by singling out as “Praise for J.M. Coetzee” commentary prompted by Boyhood and by Youth; (the U.S. edition instead promotes Disgrace, Slow Man, and Diary).

A different kettle of fish? Different strokes for different folks? Perhaps, though the differences seem more interesting than these geo-idioms can accommodate, more interesting than the differences between the idioms themselves.

Such nominative play of association by difference, or of difference among initials, of identification by non-identity or of idiomatic similarity in distinction, constitutes for Coetzee a dialectics in the valence Adorno gives that term: “the name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy.” More economically put, contradiction here “indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that concept does not exhaust the thing conceived”; or: “contradiction is nonidentity under the aspect of identity” and “dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity” (Negative Dialectics 5). Via Plato, Derrida arrives at a similar place under the name of Khôra, name-site alternating “between the logic of exclusion and that of participation” (89).
After admitting her mother to Groote Schuur Hospital, site (in fact) of the world’s first human-to-human heart graft, performed (as a matter of fact) by Christiaan Barnard, born and raised in the Karoo, Margot finds herself too late in ficto-fact to thank Aletta and Johannes, who have already doubled back so that they can wait and be on call for who knows what: for the next (white, yes only white) finger-loss, the next (white, yes only white) heart to fail. “When I get back” Margot promises herself, “When I get back to Calvinia”—where she works all week as an accountant for the local hotel while her husband is on the road driving freight so that together in their week-long separation they can earn enough to keep their farm going, a farm on which “if they chose to” the childless Margot and her husband could “scrape together a living” were it not that the farm is also home “to thirteen other souls as well,” were it not that wife and husband had “made up their minds long ago they would house their workers properly and pay them a decent wage and make sure their children went to school and support these same workers later when they grew old and infirm”—“When I get back to Calvinia I will make sure I thank them personally” (141–142).

In Adorno’s Lectures on Negative Dialectics—supplement grafted on to Negative Dialectics—the stakes for thought of a “dialectics not of identity, but of non-identity” are again presented in resistance to that “coercion on [and of] identity” Adorno (negatively) identifies with the sort of identity-thinking traditionally practiced by predicative logic (6; 8). Such dialectical thinking has critical and wide-ranging implications for the relationship between subject and its other, and for some possible reconciliation between human subjectivity and natural, phenomenal reality; but the immediately local issue for this moment of writing—in which editions, portraits, and initials are proliferating—is smaller, more modest, and at heart concerns the typo-rather than photo-graphic identity or constitution of “John Coetzee.”
When I get back I will become a better person, that I swear! She also thinks: Who was the man from Loeriesfontein who lost the three fingers? Is it only we whites who are rushed by ambulance to a hospital—only the best!—where well-trained surgeons will sew our fingers back on or give us a new heart as the case may be, and all at no cost? Let it not be so, O Lord, let it not be so! (146)

But it is, or was, so; officially so.

It is the abandon of sentences like these that Summertime as title syntactically abandons, but to which it remains linked by a nod and a wink, and to whose nuanced semantics it points in a gesture of belonging made especially poignant by the absence of the John Coetzee whose death becomes the reason such moments get articulated at Vincent’s prompting—get articulated at all—by way of this ruse, these grafts, this desire or compulsion to look back at what might have been Summertime (though surely not for all), from later, from Wintertime perhaps (though again not for all).

The most demonstrative sign of difference between the U.K. and the U.S. editions of Summertime remains the generic supplementarity afforded by the two subtitles grafted onto the title. The title-page of the London imprint appends “Scenes from Provincial Life” to that Summertime, thereby intimately (from the inside) linking it to the dust cover and title pages of Boyhood [:] Scenes from Provincial Life and to the dust cover, at least, of Youth [:] SCENES FROM PROVINCIAL LIFE (which omits the subtitle on its inner title page). These subtitles nod (and wink) at Flaubert’s Madame Bovary, Moeurs de Province, and anticipate the (revised) republication of all three ‘memoirs’ as Scenes from Provincial Life.

On both its dust cover and again on its title page, the New York edition more directly and more explicitly stipulates the genre to which it belongs: “Fiction by the author of DISGRACE” (dust cover); “Summertime [:] FICTION” (title page). No longer exactly a trivial matter of idiomatic custom then, this latter instance of ostensible exactitude, this identity claim and specification. Now perhaps (again) a legal matter rather than only a commercial or literary matter, a legal matter in at least a couple of different and more or less literal and literary senses.

Although it “serves the end of reconcilement” (ND 6), Adorno’s is not a dialectics which culminates in simple triadic or even Hegelian synthesis, registering instead the extent to which, as a matter of thought, a concept always gathers unto itself not only those “identical” characteristics of the elements it subsumes (the authority of last initial ‘C,’ for example), but also necessarily includes elements not thus integrated (the remainders initially visible in the first initials E[izabeth] and J[ohn/uan] the would-be Don Juan, say, to mention only the immediately obvious): “the concept is always less than what is subsumed under it.” By corollary, when an ‘EC’ or a ‘JC’ is defined or identified as a ‘C,’ “it is always different from and more than” ‘C,’ the concept under which it is subsumed and to which it appears to belong. And this is a matter of thought, “the fibre of thought” itself, a contradiction thus implanted within concept, not merely between concepts (Lectures 6–7).
In the Margot interview, one of the earliest Vincent conducts (the first outside England) but also—in its revision—the very last-conducted (“December 2007 [Summer] and June 2008 [Winter]” [152]), and as previously noted, an internal interview positioned in about the middle of this book, the topography of the Karoo becomes part of a median and medially-situated tropology, topology, and polis to which the politics of the just-read sentences overtly attest, and wherein the various graftings and graphologies take their place: in a topos birth-marked with the authority of birth-place.

Situated by birth in this geo-political linguistic placement, Margot finds herself wondering “What are we doing in this barren part of the world”:

The part she means is not Merweville or Calvinia but the whole Karoo, perhaps the whole country. Whose idea was it to lay down roads and railway lines, build towns, bring in people and then bind them to this place, bind them with rivets through the heart, so that they cannot get away? (140)

Margot has lost her heart to this place: to which and in which she belongs, and also does not belong.

First, with regard to literary law: the genre-announcement “Fiction,” as Derrida points out with reference to that other common paratextual genre-designator, “A Novel,” is a mark “of belonging that does not belong”; is a designation, ‘fiction,’ that is not obviously fictional, though it could be; is a mark, a “remark” or a “re-mark” that participates “without belonging,” though it cannot be dismissed (“Law of Genre” 230). Second, now more mundanely and practically in a context numbed by litigation: the genre remark here is also a stipulation—“FICTION”—that could protect if need be against further scandals in the publishing media. (Scandal furnishes free advertising, but not without potentially serious risk.)

The media industries are indeed prone to epistemological and other sorts of scandal as they engage, sometimes in graft, with the building of their empires. One thinks, immediately, of journalists: not only of Vincent taking gross liberties with the text of Margot’s interview (“I had no idea you were going to rewrite it completely” Margot protests [91]), but of Janet Cooke from the Washington Post, for example, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1981 on the record of work that included her story about an eight-year old heroin-addict who turned out to be her own invention. The Post did return the prize.

Adorno also insists, however, that “in a sense every concept is at the same time more than the characteristics that are subsumed by it.” In the current case, C[oetzee] is more than the unity of characteristics shared by all the ECs or JCsthis letter might subsume; it also (of course) contains a surplus that goes “well beyond” the initials, a surplus of authority in the first instance, a surplus that thus precisely manifests the non-identity previously registered as the key to an “identity” among these disparate “authorities.” The concept (‘C’) is “always both more and less than the elements included in it,” those elements that belong, but also do not belong to it. Hence the necessity for dialectical thinking “that does not presuppose the identity of being and thought” (Lectures 7–8; I pursue the issue of authority more explicitly in “Authority”).
Belonging is a complicated issue for white South Africans; as complicated as the relationships between title, work, and entitlement to. Belonging is complicated for the Coetzees, including John, Margot, and J.M.; and also for Martin, the sole male interviewee in *Summertime*, to whom Vincent reads from one of John Coetzee’s notebooks a fragment that breaks off at the mention of “white South Africanness.” The phrase is Vincent’s, and it leads to his opening question for Martin, who speculates that he and John shared an attitude: “our presence there was legal but illegitimate. We had an abstract right to be there, a birthright, but the basis of that right was fraudulent” (209). Title deeds show JMC’s original Cape ancestor established in the Stellenbosch area by the late seventeenth century (Kannemeyer 18). For how many centuries or years before his birth Martin’s family lived in South Africa he does not say, though he does note that, unlike John—who left South Africa in the 1960s, came back in the 1970s, and hovered between the U.S. and South Africa for decades before going to Australia—he, Martin, left “in the 1970s and never returned” (209). This latter ‘fact’ links Martin loosely to Jonathan Crewe (another ‘JC’); Coetzee and Crewe both interviewed for positions at the University of Cape Town in 1971. Both were appointed (though not in the novel). While these things can’t be measured, neither John nor Martin appears to have lost his heart to this place quite as thoroughly as Margot has.

One might think also of Jayson Blair, rapidly-promoted by the *New York Times* (in the interests of affirmative action it seems [Nwazota], though Bob Herbert of the *Times* insists that “the race issue in this case is as bogus as some of Jayson Blair’s reporting”). The Blair reportage that appears to have crossed one-too-many lines of the blind involves Blair plagiarizing a story about the family of a U.S. soldier in Iraq. Further inquiry unfolded a series of reportage graft: fabricated interview ‘quotations’ from people Blair had never met in cities to which he had not travelled; plagiarized material from other newspaper reports simulating interviews never conducted.

By positing negative dialectics as the methodology of a critical theory (rather than of a “literary theory” in Russian Formalist fashion)—a critical theory prepared to embrace non-identity rather than to resolve it—Adorno establishes for dialectics a third position: situated between the dialectics of an idealism Adorno thinks “has sunk to the level of a cultural fetish” and that of a materialism “degenerated into dogma” (*Lectures* 184).

Ordinary logic fails here to the extent that it is governed by the mandate of registering either the truth or the falsity of that which is being asserted; ordinary logic, that is, fails here to the extent it is governed by the law of contradiction. To assert an equivalence of identity between EC and JC is to produce the equation EC=JC, an equation as obviously false as the assertion that Señor Juan C ‘is equal to’ J[M]C[oetzee]. Under the law of logic we have no option but to dismiss the equation as self-contradictory, and thereby to put aside further pursuit of a real and interestingly contradictory relationship between these subject and predicate terms, and, more importantly, to abandon a really important and perhaps really rich contradiction in the thought reaching towards this relationship or to that between J.M. Coetzee and the late John Coetzee; thought reaching also, that is, for the heart of autobiography.
Margot’s heart has been grafted to this place. Insofar as she has lost her heart to this place, Margot is lost: not despite but because of her intimate familiarity with the place to which her heart has been riveted. Margot is lost and not lost in the same heart of the country that has corrupted Magda In the Heart of the Country; Magda who has been “corrupted to the bone with the beauty of this forsaken world” (266); Magda who, more egregiously than Margot, is “lost in the being of [her] being” (35), lost and not lost as a being in this place “on the road from no A to no B in the world, if such a fate is topologically possible” (“I hope I use the word correctly” Magda adds, “I have never had a tutor” [41]); this forbiddingly beautiful place, this “part of the world in which he who cannot burrow is lost” (236), this part of the world into which the eponymous Michael K will literally and literarily burrow, this place that the Coetzee-narrator of Youth will call the “country of his heart” (137), a place of more or less entitlement.

Blair currently practices as a ‘life coach’ in Virginia. To “life-coach,” it seems, at least according to an admittedly flagged set of digital pages from Wikipedia, the signature-free online encyclopedia, is to be entitled or auto-entitled to engage in one of several specialized instances of “coaching,” itself designated as “Today [a] recognized discipline used by many professionals engaged in human development focused on achieving results.”

To wit, or in wit, or as the late John Coetzee might put it, in agenbite of inwit (4): “Life coaching is a future-focused practice with the aim of helping clients determine and achieve personal goals.”

The ficto-fact instance of Summertime is more compelling, more graphically critical, than the case of Jayson Blair or any such media-graft scandal, perhaps even including the phone-hacking scandal that brought to an end 168 years of publication at The News of the World. For all the advertising exploited as part of the title apparatus, Summertime’s title remains something other than an entitlement to some crudely rationalized instrumental practice of achieving results.

He who writes, or ‘we,’ could of course adjust the copulative sign, substituting for ‘equal to’ the relation ‘implies’ (EC→JC, and so on); or substitute the equivalence relation (‘has the same last initial as’) with more flexible permutations derived from geometry and topology, or from typology and allegory (‘is similar to’ or ‘is congruent with’). Yet such alternatives still function as incorporative attempts to translate speech into logic rather than following Adorno’s attempt to enable or entitle logic to speak, in all its heterogeneous accents (Against Epistemology 40).

The vagaries of reference in Coetzee’s Nobel Prize Lecture, He and his Man, wherein mysterious connections and disconnections—not only pronominal—link and ink together, even as they distinguish, a group of writers—Defoe, Crusoe, Cruso, Coetzee, the one called “He” and the one called “His Man”—similarly and dissimilarly invite Adorno-conscious consideration. These disconnections could detain. But, for now: back to Doubling the Point, and to its bearing (one resonance of this book’s title, suggests Attwell, is a nautically mercantile allusion to “rounding the Cape” [3]); the bearing it takes on the issue of generic identity by non-identity.
Voëlfontein photographs © Ben Maclennan, 2013.
Margot and Magda are and are not lost in this place, on this soil into which Margot imagines she will “so naturally” dissolve after death (129), this ground “approximately five feet” above which Magda imagines herself moving as a monologue (“if the ground does not turn out to be just another word, in which case I am indeed lost” [122]) on the road from no A to no B, on the page, surrounded by names and pronouns and punctuation marks and what Samuel Beckett’s richly titled Unnamable calls “other parts of blather” (331), the blather to which paper beings are subjected, as Margot additionally is by Vincent’s editing of her story from the original transcript, now “dramatized” and “fixed up” so that it might pretend to “read as an uninterrupted narrative spoken in [her] voice” (87). Many of the “fixed up” phrases are unfamiliar to Margot, who accuses Vincent of taking liberties and of making things up: “Multitudinous shades?” (88); “Now I must protest. You are really going too far. I said nothing remotely like that” (119); “You can’t write that. You can’t” (137). Nor does Margot understand why in this version of the interview she is referred to by the third person pronoun; she is not persuaded by Vincent’s explanation that “The she I use is like I but is not I” (89). She is not sure which pronoun belongs where.

Some sorts of books—Summertime and In the Heart of the Country, say, along with many others in whose company these do and don’t belong—resist instrumental practice, and turn critically instead to questions towards which their titles might already have turned, sketching possibilities and richly inconclusive not-answers in graphically-grounded display.

Adorno’s Critical Theory was prompted, among other irritations, by “the observation that the semicolon is falling into desuetude” (Geuss 114; Adorno, Notes One 91 ff.). What fascinates Adorno about punctuation marks in general and the semicolon in particular (which “looks like a drooping moustache”) is the way such marks “constitute the opposite pole in language to names”: unnames they are, but not exactly unnamable. In the graphic weight of the punctuation mark, language most closely comes to resemble music: “only a person who can perceive the different weights of strong and weak phrasings in musical form can really feel the distinction between the comma and the semicolon” (91–92). It seems quite consistently the case that the little things in language matter a great deal; that, to support the claim of entitlement sought by the title, many—sometimes also graphic—small scale assistants are called upon: punctuation and the small words like prepositions and pronouns, for instance, indices all of linguistic fluency. For Adorno, linguistic capitulation “starts with the loss of the semicolon; it ends with the ratification of imbecility by a reasonableness purged of all admixtures” (95). Analogously, Coetzee’s JC at length bemoans the way the prepositional phrase “in terms of” is replacing and perhaps making redundant a rich range of particular prepositions (Diary 143 ff.).

In addition to its titularly doubled self-identification as a book about the doubling of two discursive genres (“Essays and Interviews” reads the subtitle), Doubling the Point brings forward a third, difficult, more or less fictive genre—autobiography—a genre not identical to the concept ‘fiction,’ not easily assimilable even to ‘genre’ as concept. Acknowledging the special difficulties involved in thinking of autobiography as a genre among other genres, Paul de Man is led to write that “Empirically as well as theoretically, autobiography lends itself poorly to generic definition” (68).
Magda might be more amenable than Margot to the possibilities of a she being like but not I, given her apparently intuitive embrace of that sense of identity predicated, for Blake, on contrariety (not negation), most explicitly so in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, precisely the Blake text whose words Magda occasionally mimics without apparently being aware of Blake’s existence, and precisely the Blakean source from which are grafted In the Heart, by some sort of Karoo transplant, utterances articulated (it seems to Magda) by voices emanating from the flying machine(s), voices that rehearse a Blake proverb of hell here and there (“Those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained,” for example [259]). These voices say things, thinks Magda, that might have some bearing on her afterlife, so that if they were to stop speaking she feels she “will truly be lost” (249). This constitutes graftage in most if not all the usual meanings of graft as noun and as verb: horticultural and surgical hybridization or transplant; digging, labouring, working a deception; loosely speaking, engineering an implant, even linguistically. Young school children often have to transplant or transpose first-person to third-person discourse (and vice versa).

Coetzee’s interest in indeterminacies of genre and the play of pronominal deixis is confirmed by the two ‘memoirs,’ the first of which he annotates in manuscript as “Not a memoir but a novel,” later expressing satisfaction to his publisher that “Boyhood has floated in a rather indeterminate way between the classification Fiction and the classification Biography & Memoirs,” the second for which he contractually requested fictive status on legal grounds, adding to his publisher that he’d nevertheless “be disappointed if it were to be marketed unambiguously as such—as Youth: A novel, for instance” (Kannemeyer 505; 509–510). In both books, the focalizing protagonist-subject is articulated in the third person. Such play operates in Summertime also; in the prefatory gloss Vincent gives the notebook fragment he reads to Martin, for instance: “I suspect it was intended to fit into the third memoir, the one that never saw the light of day. As you will hear, he follows the same convention as in Boyhood and Youth, where the subject is called ‘he’ rather than ‘I’” (205). And, again, in the editing of Margot’s interview. Also, finally, in the way Summertime establishes a deictic context of reference with which to embody or bring ‘to the light of day’ and so also into typo-graphic existence an “intriguing idea” JC has in Diary: “to write a novel from the perspective of a man who has died” (158). Salman Rushdie adopts the same pronominal strategy in his 2012 memoir of a self who might have and might still die under fatwa.

Nevertheless, and perhaps not so perversely so, Coetzee asks from the outset of this Doubling book that his essays “be seen as part of a larger autobiographical text” (vii). Attwell promises that the interviews interpolated among Coetzee’s essays will “fashion the selection” of essays “into the shape of a writer’s intellectual autobiography,” going on to explain that “the notion of ‘doubling the point’ relates, in the first instance, to the kind of autobiography the collection represents” (2). To demonstrate his point, Attwell provides “the relevant illustration” from Coetzee’s Foe. In this novel, Foe reveals a strategy of his to the castaway Susan Barton (who has solicited his help in writing her autobiography). Foe’s strategy is “to plant a sign or marker in the ground where I stand, so that in my future wanderings I shall have something to return to, and not get worse lost than I am” (135–136).
As its title quickly insinuates, *Summertime* is grafting time: from the hard graft John Coetzee undertakes ‘inside’ the interviews “to overthrow the taboo” on whites doing manual labour (61;114, and him “‘an artist to boot’” [65]), to Vincent’s graft in choosing, assembling, and editing interviewees and transcripts at the conceptual edges of the narrative—“Changing the form should have no effect on the content” he disingenuously says to Margot (9)—on to the supra-level of inventive grafting-chicaneries by J.M. Coetzee, chief architect, who like his internal namesake appears to believe that “our life-stories are ours to construct as we wish, within or even against the constraints imposed by the real world” (227; external constraints like death, or self-imposed constraints like writing in rows, or like composing in counterpoint: ‘learned counterpoint,’ it was called in Bach’s day).

A reader could quite easily lose herself or her heart in all this graft, could quite easily lose his feet in this fictive foot-finding auto-biography. And this is likely enough because the ones grafting here are the ones we usually turn to as ‘authoritative guides’: not only those whom Joyce Carey’s Gulley Jimson calls “art crickets,” but also that ostensibly reliable guide to the real, the biographer, whom Jimson cunningly calls the “biograbber” (188), the “biografter” (183). Nor is there much hope here of relying in the usual way on information straight from the horse’s mouth, for the simple reason that *Summertime* is and is not information, and the horse in this case is practising autobiograftery.

Doubling the point, Attwell marks “Coetzee’s writings on literature, rhetoric, popular culture, and censorship” as Coetzee’s “personal markers” and announces hereby his own strategy of planting the essays and interviews in such a way as to underscore that the “intensity and accomplishment of Coetzee’s life in literature and scholarship are borne out finally in the novels” (2).

Lest anyone get lost, Attwell emphasizes that “autobiography is secondary to fiction” (3).
My account of graft and grafting in *Summertime* and elsewhere has compiled a set of notes towards a sketch of how the title stands, a set of notes and graphics taking place in the marches or borders of territory occupied in the first instance by Attwell, who has thus helped shape these notes; other valuable accounts have recently taken their places also, and will continue to do so. In 2012, on the typographic front, the first authorized and so legally entitled biography of J.M. Coetzee, subtitled “A life in writing,” was published in South Africa (in the original Afrikaans and in English translation), in Australia, New Zealand, and in the Netherlands, though not in the U.S.; a U.K. release appeared in 2013. Written by the South African academic John Kannemeyer, who publishes under the initials J.C. (yet another JC) and who unexpectedly died on the 25th of December 2011, shortly after finishing the biography, this book grapples at length, not always successfully, with the slippery slope between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ as it traverses overlapping territorial states of bio, auto, and autre-biography, ground in some ways made more treacherous than it initially was for Attwell by the publication of the memoir-novels, *Boyhood*, *Youth*, and *Summertime*, and by the later 2009 interviews Kannemeyer conducted with Coetzee specifically for the biography.

Despite or because of his markers, the prioritizing beacons working to stipulate and to fix conceptual bio-divisions among categories of the personal, scholarly, novelistic, and historiographic, Attwell gets lost, or partially lost, his familiarity with the Coetzee oeuvre as it then existed notwithstanding. Despite or because of the typological landmarks he chooses in a topology of boundary and division rather than interrelation, Attwell loses sight of Coetzee’s insistence that “all writing is autobiographical” (17; 391), loses sight of the curious identity of reference in autobiography, an identity predicated on non-identity and the sometime equivalence, sometime non-equivalence, between what Coetzee, alternately speaking of himself in the first and in the third person during the last interview in *Doubling* identifies as a slippage, one could say graftage, in and out of—between—auto- and autrebiography (394).
And, on the graphic front: Adam Chang, Shanghai-born Australian artist, has won title to the 2011 Archibald Prize People’s Choice Award for his striking portrait of the artist, the artist J.M. Coetzee, that is, who long since has established his feet, feet by now so long ago found that they visually no longer need to appear.


Were there space and time for one last Shandean turn, I would now tropingly turn—neither to Tristram Shandy nor exactly to Sterne himself, but—to the composition of a coda ficto-informed in its musical pretentions by Frenhofer from Honoré de Balzac’s Unknown Masterpiece. In this story, which Balzac revised and republished over a period of six years from 1831 onwards, Frenhofer is a fictional character in a mostly historical cast including the graphic artists Mabus, Porbus, and Poussin. Frenhofer is the legendary albeit fictional seventeenth-century painter who would later come to fascinate or to haunt Picasso, Cézanne, Matisse, Rilke, de Kooning and others, including (less directly) Schoenberg (see Ashton).

Frenhofer has for a decade been working on his final and crowning painting—a portrait of the also perhaps fictional courtesan Catherine Lescault—though when the painting is at last seen by the painters Poussin and Porbus, they can see “Nothing” or...
only “colors daubed one on top of the other and contained by a mass of strange lines forming a wall of paint”—a mess, not a masterpiece—until, coming closer to the painting, they unexpectedly see “in one corner of the canvas the tip of a bare foot emerging from this chaos”: “a delightful foot, a living foot!” (Balzac 40-41). Among others, Dore Ashton takes the Balzac story as a fable for modern art, a grounding instance of modernist versions of less mimetic or non-objective instances of representation. Indeed, perhaps here Modernism precociously takes a stand, finds a foot and its footing, so to speak.

Alec Guinness, playing the role of Gulley Jimson in the cinematographic version of The Horse’s Mouth directed by Ronald Neame from a screenplay by Guinness, finds—with the help of a match—a foot in ‘his’ canvas, Adam and Eve. Painting by John Bratby: Oil on canvas (1958) 6’x 8’. Private collection. Reproduction from The Horse’s Mouth courtesy of the Criterion Collection / Janus Films.
Works Cited


