

FORUM

University of Edinburgh
Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts
Special Issue 03 | Winter 2014
<http://www.forumjournal.org>

Title	Editing Lives/Rewriting Public Identity: Celebrity and Authorship in Martin Amis's <i>Experience</i>
Author	Sally Mitchell
Publication	FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts
Issue Number	Special Issue 03
Issue Date	Winter 2014
Publication Date	20/01/2014
Editors	Victoria Anker & Laura Chapot

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Editing Lives/Rewriting Public Identity: Celebrity and Authorship in Martin Amis's *Experience*

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Addressing the negotiation of fame by the celebrity-author, and treating authorial persona as a collectively inscribed discursive identity-text, this article examines Martin Amis's Experience (2000) for the textual strategies used to position Amis as implied editor and to emphasise the postmodern textuality of the life being narrated.

Writers need definition. The public can only keep in mind one thing per writer. Like a signature. Drunk, young, mad, fat, sick: you know. It's better if you pick it rather than letting them pick it (Amis, *Information*, 130-131).

As the son of the late British novelist and poet, Sir Kingsley Amis (1922-95), Martin Amis has consistently been the object of public attention as a literary celebrity since 1974, when, in an echo of the auspicious beginning of Kingsley's own literary career, Amis's debut novel, *The Rachel Papers* (1973), was awarded the Somerset Maugham Award. It was during the period 1994-95, however, that the extent of Amis's celebrity began to trouble his public image, as a series of personal upheavals provoked a campaign of intense media interest in his personal life. Amis's marriage to Antonia Phillips ended in divorce; his missing cousin, Lucy Partington, was discovered to have been a victim of the British serial killer, Frederick West; Amis met with his illegitimate daughter, Delilah Seale, for the first time; Kingsley passed away after a fall and the swift deterioration of his health; and Amis became embroiled in a literary scandal by seeking an enlarged advance for his novel, *The Information* (1995), in order to pay for a complete reconstruction of his teeth and parts of his lower jaw. His appointment of a new literary agent at the time led Amis into a very public disagreement with his former agent, Pat Kavanagh, and her husband, the novelist Julian Barnes, and Amis and his novel were branded with allegations of greed, vanity, selfishness and disloyalty, levelled at him by journalists and authors in the period surrounding the release of *The Information*.ⁱ

"The Amis affair," as it was popularly dubbed, demonstrates the troubling discursive clash inherent in the figure of the literary celebrity – a figure who is ever-present to contemporary culture, but whose signified meaning is "(co-)produced by the actors and institutions that are responsible for [its] presentation and reception," and is therefore never entirely stable (Franssen 92). As public attention shifted towards Amis's divorce and the events of his personal life, as well as *The Information's* £500,000 price tag, Amis could no longer be said to securely inhabit the discursive realm of the literary author, which conventionally privileges economic disinterestedness and the subjugation of the personal as hallmarks of the author-figure.ⁱⁱ Instead, with public attention focussed upon Amis's private self, or what Chris Rojek has termed the "veridical" self (11), as well as the commercial aspects of his activity as a writer, Amis's authorial persona was increasingly perceived in

terms which reference the discourse of popular celebrity, in which “the logic of profitability [and] the foregrounding of personal and private issues” are key concerns (Franssen 94). As a public figure in which various circumstances of both literary authorship and celebrity meet, Amis is therefore obliged to negotiate a path through these various constraints, and this paper will examine the strategies he employs for such a negotiation in his autobiography, *Experience* (2000).

The processes by which an individual figure is discursively constructed as a celebrity frequently oblige the subject in question to publicly perform a specific model of personality, or “persona,” which is collectively inscribed with various signified meanings, not only through the celebrity subject’s self-presentation, but also via the interventions of various cultural intermediaries (journalists, publishers, or PR agents, for example). The theorist P. David Marshall (1997) interprets celebrity as a form of public rationalisation, whereby, as mass society becomes increasingly embroiled in a project of modernity which subordinates the individual to the anonymous forces of rationality and bureaucracy, there occurs a social gravitation towards irrational, charismatic forms of legitimation and leadership (53). The celebrity is an ideal locus for such attention, functioning as “an expression of popular culture and social will” which legitimises the value of the individual (56). Marshall explains, “the culture industry [...] re-present[s] aspects of the personality, the emotional and affective and hence irrational elements of human action, in the exchangeable commodity form of the celebrity,” and thereby rationalises “the concept of personality differences and individuality into a system of exchange” which causes “the audience to see these representations of personality in the celebrity as legitimate forms of identification and cultural value” (55). The personality of the celebrity subject is thereby commodified, and comes to exist within the public sphere as a “persona,” or a cultural product which is both shaped and consumed by a mass audience.

In the specific case of the celebrity-*author*, however, Joe Moran (2000) has noted that the authorial persona can be said to perpetuate the Romantic myth of the “charismatic, uniquely inspired creative artist” (7), who is distinguished from his mass of followers on the bases of intellect and originality, and who therefore satisfies the social need for charismatic forms of public leadership, as identified by Marshall. The celebrity-author is popularly conceived of as meditating upon subjective personal experience within his writing and, as Moran further notes, thereby comes to function as a symbolic vessel for the spiritual value of art, or “the human impulses that cannot be expressed within the social and economic realities of a society transformed by capitalism” (9).

The logic of celebrity therefore complicates the cultural function of personality for the public figure, and obliges the celebrity-author in a careful negotiation of his public persona. Whilst the reading public seeks to locate the spiritual value of “literariness” in the celebrity-author’s veridical self, the discourse on literary authorship maintains the collective expectation that the author should adopt a personally aloof or disinterested nature. For both the celebrity and the author, there is an urge to conceal the veridical self within a protected, private space; at the same time, however, the idea of a privately ensconced or “true” self becomes a tantalising hallmark of authenticity for a mass audience or readership. Furthermore, contemporary forms of book promotion such as author-interviews,

literary tours, festival appearances, and literary autobiographies (like Amis's *Experience*) all work to secure mass appeal and commercial success for the author, specifically by offering a personality model to accompany the literary product, or a collectively inscribed and consumed authorial persona which acts as a discursive intertext to the aesthetic text itself.

However, as we see from the example of "the Amis affair" and the controversy attendant upon *The Information*, an excessively prominent celebrity persona can threaten to compromise the autonomy of the author and the integrity of his aesthetic works. Upon publication, the tendency amongst reviewers of *The Information* was to impose parallels between Amis's personal life and his story of Richard Tull, a faltering novelist with a failing marriage, who suffers from a mid-life crisis and an all-consuming case of literary rivalry.ⁱⁱⁱ Regarding the early publication of *The Information* by HarperCollins, "who 'rush-released' the book in March 1995, two months ahead of schedule, to exploit the publicity surrounding it" (Moran 151), Amis writes in *Experience*:

They [the media] were dictating to me. And I lost, because I felt for my novel. It was a disinterested use of words, but it didn't look like that, arriving noisily and as it were triumphantly, and creating a cognitive dissonance about itself. Because the book was about losing, not winning, about failure, my failure (254; emphasis original).

Amis's comments demonstrate his feeling that any aesthetic integrity his novel may have had was, on this occasion, compromised by cultural intermediaries, who assumed the power to determine the meaning of his text before it had reached the literary marketplace. The authorial ideal of disinterestedness had become, in this case, the price of literary celebrity, and Amis's agency in presenting himself or his literary product to the world was likewise diminished. As a result of its intertextual bond with the discursive text of Amis's celebrity, the meaning of *The Information* can be said to have been distorted by a public process of discursive (re-)inscription, which precluded the novel from being judged as an autonomous aesthetic artefact, but conjoined it, instead, with the extra-textual "story" of Amis's person.

Such a conflict, as well as any further implications for the integrity of aesthetic products, represents the impetus for the celebrity-author to attempt to retain agency over the discursive text of his public identity. In what follows, this paper will address a number of textual strategies used in *Experience* which afford Amis editorial agency in re-appropriating and re-authoring the "story" of his persona as it exists in the public sphere. Amis's textual strategies allow him to negotiate the demands of authorship and celebrity by writing from the position of implied author or editor, thus seeming to offer a life-narrative for public consumption whilst simultaneously maintaining an air of detachment from the events narrated, and preserving some protected space of non-commodification for his private or veridical self.

The most overtly editorial of any of the strategies by which *Experience* negotiates the public disclosure of personality is Amis's introduction of a semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional alternative persona, named Osric, who is composed from an archive of letters between the younger Amis, his

father, and Kingsley's wife of the time, the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard. One might surmise that the purpose of including these letters in the text is to present a historical source (past self) with which to legitimise the autobiographical portrait (present self). After all, the epistolary form has traditionally been regarded as an intimate form of communication, and the fact that the letters are usually signed using Amis's proper name – "Love Mart" – identifies the documents as a first-hand account of Amis's past that maintains the expectation of authenticity aroused by Phillippe Lejeune's autobiographical pact.^{iv} However, immediately after the inclusion of the first letter, Amis distances Osrice from the contemporary narrative voice of the text. He writes:

It would be nice to say that I 'make no apologies' for my early letters...But I do: I make fervent apologies for them... The toiling paraphrases, the tally-ho facetiousness... at least, here, I can recognise myself. *Elsewhere this letter seems to have been written by a stranger* (*Exp*, 12; emphasis added).

The nineteen-year-old hero of my first novel was described in one review as 'both a gilded and repulsive creature.' I accept this description, for my hero and for myself. I was *an Osrice* (15; emphasis added).

Distance is inscribed in the introduction of an alternative proper name for the letters' protagonist; this ensures that the autobiographical subject remains split between the narrative voice we call "Martin Amis," and the episodic protagonist we refer to as Osrice. Bonds of identity between the two figures are constantly ambiguous. Although they share the first-person, "I," above, to articulate an antagonistic but nonetheless symbiotic relationship, as the letters continue Amis's voice assumes a narratological distance from Osrice, as "I" is replaced by the third person:

Osrice surprisingly and narrowly passed the necessary O level. But Latin would be needed again if he got into Oxford, so Osrice thought he had better defend it (86).

The distance between Osrice and Amis, or "he" and "I," thus comes to signify the difference between the subject of understanding, and the implied editor of the life-narrative. This places Amis at a temporal and ontological distance from the events of the narrative, and shields Amis's veridical self from automatic implication in the life being narrated. As Amis adopts the role of editor over Osrice's letters and addresses a meta-commentary directly to the reader (as demonstrated above), Osrice, too, is not quite present to the text, but is made increasingly to seem like a literary phantasm, much like the "gilded and repulsive" *dramatis persona* who inspired his naming (*Exp*. 15). Indeed, Amis assumes the ontological distance of an author from a *textual persona*, and this distance is widened still further in the ninth letter, when he enacts a lengthy intervention to Osrice's text to "clarify the structural function" of the letters (150). In doing this, Amis demonstrates his editorial power to reflect upon and re-cast Osrice's account, and to intervene in Osrice's ontological space at will. Amis's meta-commentary therefore emphasises the *textuality* of the past that Osrice's letters recount, as well as its vulnerability to manipulation and re-creation in the transition from experience to representation in language, or from *bios* to *graphie*.

In Barrett J. Mandel's discussion of the importance of memories and "illusions" of the past to the autobiographical act (1980), it is argued that "the way in which the illusion of the past is presented

is, finally, the meaning of the author's life," and that, whatever version of this "illusion" the author chooses to portray, "all genuine power resides in the moment of creativity" (64-5). Through his strategy of applying the frame-breaking convention of postmodern metafiction to the Osric archive, and engaging in an openly editorial approach to the narrative, Amis demonstrates precisely this *illusory* nature of the "retrospective...story of his personality" that constitutes autobiography, as well as his agency to re-author it as a text (Lejeune 4). Osric, supplied on the promise of revelation of a private past, is consumed by the reader of autobiography who, desirous of an encounter with the authenticity of the veridical self, is looking to "flesh-out" Amis's celebrity persona. Amis's editorial strategy, however, asserts that Osric is not, in fact, the expression of an interior self which precedes autobiographical telling; rather he is "an *effect* of autobiographical storytelling" which asserts Amis's right to author the story of his persona in the public sphere (Smith 143).

Amis distances his presence still further from the narrative events of *Experience* by constructing a non-chronological, digressive text, full of jarring leaps back and forth through time. John Sturrock proposes that

autobiography represents an effort made by those who write it at the integration of their past lives and present selves: the autobiographer wishes to stand forth in print in the form of a *whole*...so that his text can finally take the place of his person, as the tangible evidence of his identity (4-5).

Experience, however, actively *disconnects* representations of its subject(s) and frustrates any effort to unite the Amis experiencing events with the authorial presence, or to interpret the text as tangible evidence of Amis's "unified" identity, as we see if we chart the chronology and themes of "Part One: Unawakened:"

Introductory: 'My Missing' » 'Learning About Time'	Jumps back and forth through the present day, 1967, and points in the 1970s and 80s.	Treats Amis's genesis as a writer.
'Learning About Time' » 'Bus Stop: 1994'	Jumps anecdotally through points in 1973/4, 1967, 1987, 1997 and 1994.	Discloses details of Amis's missing persons.
Fifth 'Letter from School' » 'Him Who Is, Him Who Was!'	Various events through the 1960s and 1990s.	Deals with mortality.
Eighth Letter » 'The Problem of Reentry'	Scattered anecdotes of 1959-68 and resumes in 1994.	Broadly deals with accumulation of life experience.
Tenth Letter » 'Letter from the Old Forge'	The letters all date from Amis's undergraduate years. Intervening chapters cover a selection of events from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.	Deals with coming of age.

Of greater importance here than a chronological life-narrative is the common thread we see emerging through the themes of “genesis,” “My Missing,” “mortality,” “life-experience,” and “coming of age:” namely, the forging of an authorial consciousness. In his analysis of “Narrative Time” (1980), Paul Ricoeur identifies two dimensions to the ordering of narrative: “the episodic dimension, which characterises the story as made out of events,” and “the configurational dimension, according to which the plot construes significant wholes out of scattered events” (178). The episodic dimension is clearly the more passive aspect of *Experience*’s non-sequential and patchy account of Amis’s life. Were we to examine the text for the “story” of the development of Amis’s personality, we would be left wanting, as he devotes little space to producing a coherent narrative of his life as a child, or his time as an Oxford undergraduate, and withholds any account of his meeting his first or second wives, or the births of his sons. Instead, Ricoeur’s non-chronological, configurational narrative dimension (represented by the third column of the table above) is influential in structuring the text, which outlines the evolving “plot” of Amis’s authorial identity, but fails to go so far as to offer his life story as a coherent whole. Thus the reader is reminded, through the fragmented nature of Amis’s anecdotes and the “digressive” sequencing of his text – what James Diedrick has described as Amis’s “poetry of recurrence and return” (181, 182) – that the disclosure of personal information is the result of a careful process of selection and plotting, with the life-narrative measured and meted out, little by little, under editorial control.

Nonetheless, *Experience* does furnish its reader with a “story” of the development of Amis’s authorial self, and I suggest that Amis shares this narrative specifically *because* it already exists within the public sphere, and can therefore be re-appropriated and re-authored in place of further disclosure of the veridical self. When elaborating upon his reasons for writing *Experience*, Amis states that, aside from commemorating his late father, he wishes “to set the record straight (so much of this is *already* public), and to speak, for once, without artifice” (7; emphasis original). This statement functions as an autobiographical pact with the reader, made using a narrative voice which operates from under the proper name, “Martin Amis,” and is distinguished from the “already public” celebrity figure. The expectation that we are to read a truthful or authentic account of events is thereby aroused. However, Amis continues:

... And I do it because it has been *forced* on me. I have seen what perhaps no writer should ever see: the place in the unconscious where my novels come from. I couldn’t have stumbled on it unassisted. Nor did I. *I read about it in the newspaper* (7; emphasis added).

The reader is now left with a definite sense of reluctance toward disclosure on Amis’s part, as well as a distinction between the “already public” self, the “writer,” and the voice of the text. The above excerpt specifically intimates that the act of disclosing his person in writing has been “forced” upon Amis as an unwanted obligation of his celebrity. The “place in the unconscious where... novels come from” refers, we suspect, to the personal loss of various loved ones: Amis’s “Missing” of the chapter heading.^v Whatever this “place” may be, however, disclosing its details through the autobiographical act, after it has already been publicly appropriated “in the newspaper,” comes as yet another obligation of Amis’s celebrity – one which interferes with his consciousness and activity as a writer by

showing him the externally mediated account of things of a personal nature. The self-conscious manner in which Amis identifies this invasion of a personal space further supports the notion that his writing imposes an objective distance between the subject who writes and the subject of examination, with the following passage suggesting that the autobiographical portrait will be mediated by authorial impersonality, rather than publicly exposing Amis's veridical self:

My principles... derive from... the novelist's addiction to seeing parallels and making connections. The method... should give a clear view of the geography of a writer's mind (7).

This declaration places stress upon Amis's desire to "speak without artifice" and any expectation of authenticity we may have inferred. It characterises the text as a space in which Amis as implied author/editor may comment upon the process of writing, interposed between his own private person and the reader, rather than disclose the "story of a personality," as was once anticipated by Lejeune (4). What is actually a text with a specific artistic design (which also therefore entails a position for Amis, as architect of this design, at an objective distance from the subjects examined) is offered to the reader under the guise of an autobiographical pact which claims to abandon artifice – i.e. the craft and contrivances of a writer – thereby naturalising or disguising itself as an "authentic," unmediated expression of personality, to be articulated in the voice of a supposedly unified subject. Amis's autobiographical pact can, in fact, be better classified according to Lejeune's re-definition of the function of the pact within a "literary system," in which "the writing no longer aspires to transparency but is able to mime perfectly, to mobilize the beliefs of [the original autobiographical pact]" (126). Amis therefore crafts an autobiographical text which meets the generic demands of commodification, through its guise of personal authenticity, whilst simultaneously maintaining a far more ambivalent approach towards the commodification of his person. His approach attempts to make concessions toward both supplying a celebrity model of personality and maintaining a more detached authorial stance.

Amis's relationship to Kingsley is a major thread running through his representation of self in *Experience*, with "Part Two" of the text being devoted to the narrative of Kingsley's decline and death. Because of this, *Experience* is often referred to as a memoir of life with Kingsley, from which the reader expects to gain insight into Amis's person through accompanying him in his reflections upon his father. Any such disclosures are, however, carefully measured. On their shared literary profession, Amis comments:

They seemed to think that it must have been extra difficult for me, coming out from behind my father, but it wasn't; his shadow served as a kind of protection. And I felt no particular sense of achievement, either... The pains, and perhaps some of the pleasures, of authorship were therefore dulled to me (35).

This passage marks *Experience* as a text which moves beyond earlier characterisations of autobiography, by theorists such as Lejeune and Sturrock, as an autonomous act of individuation. Rather, it articulates Paul John Eakin's concept of relational identity (1999), which argues that the subject of autobiography is not a singular, autonomous self, but defined by and articulated through its relations with others.^{vi} Kingsley functions, here, as Amis's "proximate other" (176), and this relational

identity (as above) allows Amis's narrative focus to be determined by that very relation, affording him the opportunity to delimit his disclosure of personal experience according to a framework of relevance to Kingsley. The use of relational identity, as Eakin points out, involves Amis in the act of appropriation inherent to such intersubjective accounts of identity,^{vii} which destabilises our reading of "the identity of the self who writes and signs as author" (176). In the case of *Experience*, this destabilising effect is part and parcel of Amis's strategy of disguising the "story" of his own identity behind the intersubjective, public "story" of the shared Amis literary celebrity.

Amis is thus able to utilise his relational identity to Kingsley as a form of narrative shield, which protects his veridical self from public commodification. Fragments of Amis's personal narrative appear specifically as they relate to Kingsley, and are therefore already implicated in the public discourse on the Amis literary legacy. Amis's account of coming to terms with the end of his marriage, for example, proceeds through a process of merging and blurring with a portrait of Kingsley's own experiences of divorce. Amis describes Kingsley's invitation to "talk as much or as little" as he likes about his own divorce, but Amis's subsequent talking, and any anticipated confession, flows only towards Kingsley and not, crucially, towards the reader of *Experience* (99). Indeed, Amis writes: "only to him could I confess... Only to him could I talk about what I was doing to my children. Because he had done it to me" (99). Elsewhere in the text, Amis's own experiences are implied by a reading of Kingsley's published work: a reading of Kingsley's poem, "Wasted," is offered as an expression of "the recurrent grief, endemic to the male divorcee – grief for the lost family" (219). Thus Amis's use of relational identity is both elegant and evasive, with the merging of the two men's life-narratives conveying the sense of intimacy demanded by the consumer of celebrity autobiography without actually disclosing Amis's personal experiences, nor articulating his emotional or psychological reactions to them. Instead, Amis's veridical self remains shielded behind a narrative emphasis upon Kingsley, and the re-appropriation of the already public narrative of his father's life and works.

Lastly, in reference to the infamous end of Amis's friendship with Julian Barnes, Amis adopts a strategy of re-appropriating and re-mediating what was a very public discursive narrative, constructed in 1995 by a range of cultural intermediaries. In *Experience*, Amis makes reference to Barnes's friendship-ending correspondence and the tabloid journalism of the time – "Martin Amis in Greed Storm" (247) – without, crucially, re-iterating or re-producing either the media's narrative, or the text of Julian Barnes's letter of dismissal. Rather, Amis re-words the accusations made against him – "It was said that I turned away. It was said that I took a friendship lightly" (247) – and re-frames the dissolution of this friendship from a different narrative perspective – namely, that of the private individual who has secured the sympathies of the reader in relating his account of a set of personal losses (his teeth, his cousin, and his father). The story of the Barnes/Amis disagreement, then, rather than solely being the product of a narrative written through journalistic and literary discourse of the time, also comes to assume existence in the public sphere as a product of Amis's own letter to Barnes – "Jules, tell me to fuck off and everything if you want – but try and stay my friend" – and his own authored text (*Exp* 249). Thus, Amis attempts to regain agency over the affair by authoring a new narrative, in which he can assert: "It was said that I turned away – and I don't do

that. I won't be the one to turn away" (249). By re-appropriating and re-authoring the discursive narrative attached to his public identity, Amis attempts to negotiate his own celebrity (or, in this case, notoriety), with a strategy which grants him an autonomous, retrospective position of editorial agency from which to speak – a form of agency which is diminished at the time of actual experience, when the words, position-taking or self-fashioning of the celebrity-author are being actively re-interpreted and re-mediated by journalists, and the meaning of his authorship generated as the product of public discourse.

In conclusion, the autobiographical act itself can be regarded as an empowering process of revision, as it opens a textual space in which the autobiographical consciousness is distanced from the immediacy of actual experience, and therefore enabled to retrospectively reconsider and re-frame events. Amis's use of editorial strategy in *Experience* enables him to exert control over the extent to which the text exposes the authorial person, by maintaining a separation between the narrative voice and the experiencing subject(s). Amis constructs and offers a commodified celebrity persona within the text, whilst simultaneously withdrawing into the position of implied author or editor, behind a range of fragmented and relational textual selves. "Osric," for example, functions as a sacrificial offering to the consumer of autobiography, but simultaneously as an innovative "meta-biographical" trick, which shields Amis behind his own image. Thus, Amis's veridical self is ensconced within the authorial self, as a space of privacy and autonomy, and a space that enables Amis to select and artistically re-shape the content of his autobiographical portrait from those aspects of his life that have already been appropriated into public discourse. The position of editorial detachment from which Amis is enabled to speak marks *Experience* as a postmodern revision to the theory and practice of life-writing, which emphasises and utilises the textuality of both the life-narrative and the public identity being recounted.

Notes

ⁱ For an account of the scandal from a range of sources see, "The Information Advance", <<http://www.martinamisweb.com/works.shtml>>, and Richard Bradford, *Biography*, 283-287.

ⁱⁱ Such discursive notions of authorship have, of course, been derived over time from theories such as T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1921), Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (1968), and Pierre Bourdieu's articulation of the "anti-economic" logic of the literary field, according to which the symbolic value and market value of cultural products operate independently of one another: (*Rules of Art*, 142).

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example Julian Loose and John Nash in Tredell, *The Fiction of Martin Amis*, 154-172. Both compare Amis and Tull on the basis of Amis's own mid-life crisis, which was publicised in *The Guardian* newspaper in 1995. Other journalists emphasise the autobiographical significance of the rivalry between Tull and Barry, attempting to connect it with the brake-down of Amis's relationship Julian Barnes – "Perhaps it is very telling that the novel will be about a writer who envies another writer's success" (Grove, 'How Amis signed up the demon king').

^{iv} Lejeune defined autobiography as a "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality." Under the terms of the "pact" between autobiographer and reader, a sincere or truthful account is anticipated, based on the "identity of name between author, narrator, and protagonist" (Lejeune, 4; 14).

^v The chapter refers to the death of Kingsley – "the intercessionary figure, the father" (7), the abduction and murder of Amis's cousin, Lucy Partington, and Amis's estrangement from his daughter, Delilah Seale: "these are, or were, *my missing*" (8; emphasis added).

^{vi} For further explanation, see Eakin, 43-61.

vii “Relational identity... informs the act of self-representation accordingly: the space of autobiography, the space of the self, is literally occupied by the autobiography and self of the other. Yet, at the same time... the other’s story, the other’s life, is possessed – indeed created – by the recording self” (Eakin, 61).

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