

After all, metafiction is defined as the border between criticism and fiction. Anything that *can* be dissected about a metafictional text *will* be, and if it isn't, there's at least a dialogic quality that allows for it. In the postmodern era of art technology and writing, conventional fiction demands criticism. When I am reading fiction, I hold the author responsible for all aspects of the story, yet the author usually remains anonymous throughout the work. Metafiction demands more interaction between the writer and the reader, and therefore holds the writer more accountable for his or her words. Not only does it ask more transparency from the author, it asks more transparency from the story as well. If a reader understands that a story is meant to diverge from conventions of fiction, there is room for freedom and originality that is impossible to have if held to normal fictional standards. Further, if a relationship of personability or straightforwardness is established between the author and reader initially, it implies a certain level of trust. When the author acknowledges the absurdity of their power as the omnipotent god, it puts the author and reader on an even playing field. It is as if the author and reader are engaging in a very private and personal mission together, elevating the reader above others.

"The main effect, however, is a duplication and multiplication of our perceptions: we perceive what we perceive *and* we participate in the experiences of someone else. We participate in many ways in the emotions, ideas, thoughts, and intentions of others. It is by means of others we see ourselves as if from the outside; we perceive our environment differently when we note how others feel about it." (The Dark Side of Empathy)

After reading Calvino, Conrad, Fowles, and Morrison, authors with ranges of empathy-seeking intentions, it's clear that there are many routes to attain connection between author and reader. But might metafiction be the best way that authors express and communicate empathy?