"Give Me the Seth Rogen Laugh": *This Is the End* and Parafictional Persona

BRADLEY J. DIXON

In the opening scene of *This Is the End* (2013), Seth Rogen walks through an airport concourse to pick up his old friend, Jay Baruchel, who has just flown in from Canada for a short stay in Los Angeles. After they meet, share a hug, and walk through the airport to begin what Rogen has planned to be "the best weekend ever," a paparazzo ambushes the pair with a video camera and a spotlight:

> PAPARAZZO: Hey Seth Rogen, how's it going man? So, you, like, always play the same guy in every movie. When are you going to do some real acting, man?
> ROGEN: OK, thank you…
> PAPARAZZO: Give me something, give me the Seth Rogen laugh.
> *Rogen gives his signature throaty laugh.*
> PAPARAZZO: Seth Rogen, everybody. (Goldberg and Rogen 00:01:40–00:01:55)

From the very first scene, *This Is the End* wants its audience to know one thing: Rogen and Baruchel are playing themselves. In the film, as in life, the two actors were childhood friends in Canada, came up in television comedy together in the early 2000s, and moved to Los Angeles shortly after finding fame. Baruchel disliked the decadent Hollywood lifestyle and moved back to the comparatively less glamorous life of a working actor in Canada, while Rogen stayed in Los Angeles and became one of the most recognizable faces in comedy. The opening scenes of *This Is the End* show the pair reconnecting for the first time in over a year.

Bradley Dixon is a writer and film programmer from Melbourne, Australia. He is the co-founder and editor of *The Essential*, an award-winning online publication of film and music criticism, and serves on the board of the Melbourne Cinémathèque and as a programmer for the Human Rights Arts & Film Festival. He is currently completing an Honours degree at RMIT University studying the suburban grotesque in Australian cinema. He can be reached at bradley@bradleyjdixon.me.

They spend their first day together in L.A. getting high, eating snacks and playing video games, before Rogen suggests they go to a party at the Hollywood Hills mansion belonging to his *Pineapple Express* co-star James Franco. Baruchel is reluctant, but Rogen convinces him to go and the pair soon find themselves in the middle of a wild Hollywood party, bursting with celebrities from the film, television and music industries including Jonah Hill, Craig Robinson, Rihanna, Michael Cera, Emma Watson and Kevin Hart. Just as the party hits its peak, however, things turn apocalyptic and a Biblical rapture befalls the earth, with partygoers elevated skyward through beams of blue light as the ground cracks open beneath their feet. Most of the party's celebrity attendees fall into the fiery hell, their impure Hollywood lifestyles disqualifying them from being saved. Six people—the film's main cast—remain holed up in the mansion fighting for survival: Rogen, Baruchel, Robinson, Franco, Hill, and Danny McBride, with each of the six actors playing themselves.

This paper will apply the theory of "parafictional persona" (Warren 56) to *This Is the End*, positioning its ensemble cast as a key example of an increasingly common occurrence: actors and performers playing themselves in fictional media. It will survey the history of personalization in comedy media to chart how the practice of performers appearing in character while using their own real name coincides with the rise of social media technology and the new media ecology. By analyzing *This Is the End* and its cast of comedian-performers, I will demonstrate how the interplay of real and fictional in parafictional media texts cause such texts to appear more recognizably a part of the real world of the audience. I will also demonstrate how the same parafictional interplay can be intentionally subverted and exploited by savvy performers for comedic or narrative effect.

Parafictional Persona and the Comedian Comedy

With a cast that includes so many established comic actors and comedians, *This Is the End* belongs to the filmic tradition of "comedian comedy," in which lead roles are played by performers who have previously achieved a level of fame or recognition as a comedian before moving into film roles (Seidman 2). In such films, the extrafictional elements of the star's persona as a comedian, their on-stage comedy material, and their public image as a celebrity, all invade the fictional universe of the film to influence the audience's affective interaction with the star's character.

This Is the End goes one step further than other comedian comedies, however, by having almost every member of its cast appear in character using their real name, resulting in a narrative world that is a complex tapestry of real, almost-real, and fictional elements. The film's stars do not actually play themselves, of course, but instead perform *versions* of themselves. By performing under their real name, they engage in the conscious act of blurring the boundary between character and actor, resulting in the creation of a "parafictional persona." Kate Warren introduced the concept of the parafictional persona in 2016 to explain the growing contemporary phenomenon of artists and performers playing fictionalized versions of themselves. Carrie Lambert-Beatty theorized about the "parafictional" in literature, in which fictional stories have "one foot in the field of the real" (Warren 54). Building on this theorization, Warren notes that such performers consciously cultivate a version of themselves for use in media which is different to their recognizable self, but which relies on the audience's recognition and knowledge of their persona and history as a performer to inform their relationship (56). By appropriating their own real name—"that basic distinguisher of individuality"—such performers, including those in *This Is the End*, engage in a highly self-conscious form of identity creation.

The practice has a long history in television, going back at least as far as the Showtime sitcom *It's Garry Shandling's Show* (1986-1990): a self-referential, fourth-wall-demolishing program in which comedian Garry Shandling plays a partly fictionalized version of himself. Shandling's character is always aware that he is in a television show, and the fictional Shandling is closely modelled on the real one, including many references to details of the real Garry Shandling's life. Even the fictional apartment set on which the show was filmed is modelled on the Sherman Oaks apartment the comedian lived in at the time (Jean and Reiss). *It's Garry Shandling's Show* was soon followed by the NBC sitcom *Seinfeld* (1989-1998), in which professional stand-up comedian Jerry Seinfeld played professional stand-up comedian Jerry Seinfeld, with many details from the real Seinfeld's life reflected in the fictional world of the show. The fictional Seinfeld lived on the Upper West Side of New York City, just like the real one, and often performed stand-up comedy at New York clubs like Catch a Rising Star and the Comedy Store, where the real Jerry Seinfeld got his start as a comedian (Rea). He even occasionally performed on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, a show on which Seinfeld regularly appeared in the 1980s (IMDb). In *Seinfeld*'s fourth season, in a dizzying example of layered metatextuality, the show featured a storyline depicting the creation of a sitcom based on the life of the fictional Jerry Seinfeld called *Jerry*, in

which the comedian played himself, and which made reference to plotlines from earlier seasons of *Seinfeld* (David and Seinfeld).

Today, a panoply of performers have appeared as themselves in television or cinema, including *Seinfeld* co-creator Larry David's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2000-present), Joaquin Phoenix in the mockumentary *I'm Still Here* (2010), Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon in *The Trip* (2010-2017) series, and most recently Keanu Reeves in *Always Be My Maybe* (2019). The practice has found particular utility in comedy, as in the fake reality "talk show" *Between Two Ferns with Zach Galifianakis* (2008-2019), in which the belligerent host asks famous people rude or uncomfortable questions about their careers and personal lives (Aukerman and Porter). It is rare, however, that a film or television show features a parafictional universe as detailed or as comprehensively self-referential as that in *This Is the End*.

Persona and the Building of the Public Self

This Is the End was released to cinemas in 2013, the same year Twitter went public by listing on the New York Stock Exchange and was valued at over $30 billion (BBC News). While at first these two facts might seem unrelated, in many ways *This Is the End* could only have been made in a world in which a social network like Twitter–bringing together world leaders, mega-star celebrities and the general public on the same platform–had become so ubiquitous. The development of the parafictional persona can be considered as part of a wider shift in practices of identity construction that has its roots in the transition away from old media, which Twitter and other social media platforms had a large part in bringing to bear.

In 2014, after the rise of such social media, P. David Marshall identified a need to account for the effects of new media paradigms and technological changes on practices of identity construction, or personalization. The rise of reality television, the proliferation of social media and a vastly more democratized media ecology has changed the mechanism of personalization, both for celebrities and non-celebrities. Through the latter half of the 20th century our image of celebrities became more well-rounded, with the general public having access to more of their favorite celebrities' personal lives through gossip magazines, talk shows, and eventually websites like TMZ. At the same time, more and more "regular" people became household names not for their achievements or artistic ability, but by appearing in reality television or on news media as themselves. In this new, socially-networked media paradigm, identity is constructed in public and people present different

personas in different contexts (Marshall 160). Marshall uses the term "presentational media" to encapsulate the new media regime in which the boundary between private and public is eroded and people (or corporations, or entities) "present" different personas depending on context. The presentational media regime operates in conjunction with the old media regime, which Marshall terms "representational media," but has not completely replaced it. Marshall proposed the introduction of persona studies to investigate this phenomenon and identified three factors to explain the shift of personalization from a private process to a public one (154).

The first reason for the shift is the changing shape of labor in the new millennium. According to Marshall, the decline of unionization and shift to a knowledge economy has led to fundamental shifts in the make-up of the labor market. The "gig economy," in which service industry workers move from project to project rather than spending long stretches of time with a single employer, has disconnected workers from collective organization and a sense of belonging to any single company (154). In this environment it is incumbent upon workers to sell themselves to prospective employers by building a public profile that reflects their personality and abilities as a worker. In other words, they have to create a work persona.

This process described by Marshall has long been standard in the arts and comedy sectors, because it is standard for artists and comedians to work under their own name and, over the course of a career, attempt to build a unique profile for themselves. Comedians, as artists, have already been practicing some kind of presentational form of labor personalization for generations, ever since what comedy historian Kliph Nesteroff called "stand-up's great change" in the 1950s (358). This period saw the emergence of personalities like Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl and Jonathan Winters, coffeehouse comedians who weaved personal anecdotes and life experiences into their material, and in the process killed off the era of the "tuxedo comedian"–anonymous, jacket-wearing vaudevillians who recited rapid-fire gags and one-liners. After the great change, comedians began to sell records and concert tickets on the strength of their names, a practice which has continued to grow to the point where, today, practically all comedians wield (and manipulate) their public persona/s for the purpose of building a large public following for their comedy. Robinson and McBride, the two members of *This Is the End*'s main cast who most squarely fit into the traditional definition of a stand-up comedian, have both cultivated their comic persona throughout their decades-long careers, not only

through their on-stage material but also through fictional film and television performances, media interviews and talk show appearances in which they are easily recognizable as themselves. By the time an audience sees them in a film like *This Is the End*, much of the work of creating and maintaining a comedic persona to engage with has already been done.

The second reason Marshall identifies for the shift in personalization is the reorganization of society brought on by social media. In the presentational media paradigm, people create and enact an individual self online which may or may not be an accurate representation of their 'real' self. This simulacrum exists online in and amongst countless others, all interacting with each other, sharing information and links, and organizing into communities around particular values, interests or preferences. Marshall calls these communities "micropublics" (161), and people can belong to a theoretically infinite number of them, each with an associated persona that may or may not share similarities with any of their other personas. In the new media paradigm, social media users are engaged in a constant and ongoing process of creating and modifying a series of personas with which to engage in the various micropublics they inhabit. Kim Barbour et al. describe the persona as "an everyday performance, where the purpose of the presentation of self is to convince the audience […] that the performance is genuine and authentic." The goal, for celebrities and non-celebrities alike, is that the persona they project will be accepted as a true reflection of the 'real' person behind it, whether it bears any actual relation.

Rogen offers a salient example of the construction of presentational persona in new media, because he is a prolific tweeter and prominent social media personality with over eight million followers on Twitter and six million on Instagram, all of them privy to the everyday happenings of the actor's life and what interests him. When fans read Rogen's joke about smoking weed at the White House or hear his signature throaty laugh in his Instagram videos, it contributes to their sense of who the "real" Rogen is both as a person and as a comedy performer. When Rogen is in character in a film and laughs with the same laugh they have heard in Instagram videos or on television talk shows, the fan recognizes it as part of the "real" Rogen. It contributes to the sense that Rogen's public and fictional personas are one and the same, and his fictional persona is, to use Barbour et al.'s phrase, a "genuine and authentic" presentation of Seth Rogen.

The third and final explanation for the change in personalization is a change in the affective relationship between celebrity and audience. Affect makes sense of the connection between celebrity and audience, and "affective power" is the

capacity of a celebrity to embody emotional investment for a fan. Micropublics and social media communities are "affect clusters"–shared spaces in which affective connections are made and felt, embedded in social network technology, with the online self at the core (Marshall 158). Rogen's fans, for instance, form a micropublic around (and with) him, in which they build a lasting affective connection–an affective connection that operates not just in the social media environment, but which can also feed back into the fan's reception of Rogen's stand-up comedy, media appearances and film and television work. When those fans see Rogen in character they do not want him to shed any vestige of his true self and completely become his character; quite the opposite. For the Seth Rogen fan, part of the joy of seeing him in a film is access to his real-life persona: his very "Seth Rogen-ness."

Celebrities, in the new media landscape, are no longer rarefied "heavenly bodies," to borrow the term Richard Dyer used to describe stars in his 1986 book. Now, they are readily visible and easily accessible, and celebrity itself is no longer a virtually unattainable dream. The same process which has fundamentally changed the way people operate in public and online has also changed the nature of celebrity and stardom, and comedian-performers are well positioned to take full advantage of this new media regime and its implications for performance. This affective connection between performer and audience can be effectively exploited by comedians using the parafictional persona.

Exploiting the Public Self in Fiction

As opposed to the theorization of the comedian comedy, in which the transfer of extrafictional information is one-directional (i.e. information about the star's comedy persona from outside the fictive world of the film travels into it), the parafictional persona is a discursive negotiation between real and fictional. The function of this negotiation in *This Is the End* is twofold: first, the appearance of a recognizable actor using their real name and acting in a recognizable manner enhances the believability of the fictional world of the film, helping to bring it closer in line with the real world of the audience; and second, fictional elements and their unity or disunity with the audience's understanding of the real world can be used as the basis for comedy.

The use of the actors' real names is just one way in which *This Is the End*'s fictive world is imbued with believability. Much of the humor in the film comes

from repeated reference to the real-life professional careers and personal lives of its many recognizable actors. The airport paparazzo who accuses Rogen of playing the same character in all his films is paraphrasing a common critique of Rogen's history as an actor, in which his giggling stoner persona takes over the characterization of whatever fictional role he plays. When Rogen and Baruchel arrive at Franco's party, the guests are grouped together in ways that reflect how they might actually mingle in real life: Jason Segel and Kevin Hart, who appeared together in the Judd Apatow pilot *North Hollywood* in the early 2000s and have been friends ever since, are always seen on screen talking to each other, while Martin Starr and David Krumholtz, real-life best friends, also appear together (Barone). Franco fans would notice several pieces of comically strange art on the walls of his mansion and recognize that the real James Franco has dabbled in avant-garde art himself (Saltz). When Rogen's planned "best weekend ever" turns apocalyptic, leaving only the film's six main characters alive, tension arises between Hill and the rest of the group stemming from the fact that Hill began his career alongside them in comedies like *Superbad* (2007) and *Knocked Up* (2007) before switching to serious dramatic roles and becoming a two-time Oscar-nominated actor. Hill, for his part, plays into his own persona as a famous actor by beginning a prayer with "Dear God…It's me, Jonah Hill, from *Moneyball*" (Goldberg and Rogen 01:06:10-01:06:20).

Each of these jokes and references relies on the audience's working knowledge of the history and public persona of the performer or performers involved, adding a layer of recognition on top of the joke's basic comedic effect. As Melanie Piper points out, references like these "can serve to locate the diegesis within our recognizable world," which enhances the effect of authenticity of the film world (125). At one point, Robinson points out that the group, who are all actors and therefore "soft as baby shit," are completely ill-prepared to survive an apocalyptic event. Sure enough, their status as millionaire Hollywood stars has insulated them from the "real" world, and their attempts to overcome the apocalyptic situation are continually hampered by selfishness, petty bickering and a general inability to deal with problems requiring hard work or diplomacy. Thus, the film uses the real-life personas of its cast to add authenticity to the narrative.

On the other end of the spectrum, some parafictional personas more directly attempt to undermine or contradict the comedian-performer's public persona; indeed, much of *This Is the End*'s comedy comes from conscious or exaggerated differences from the comedian's real lives. In interviews, Rogen has said that he

and co-writer/co-director Evan Goldberg wanted to cast some actors who would play into the audience's expectation of them as performers, and some who would play against it (Atkinson). While Rogen, Baruchel, and Robinson play characters generally close to their real-life personas in demeanor, Franco, McBride, and Hill to varying levels play exaggerated caricatures of their own. Many of the jokes at Hill's expense revolve around Hill effecting an overly conscientious and kind personality, even though the rest of the group believes that Hill considers himself better and more famous than them. Occasionally a crack appears in the façade, leading to a glimpse of the "real" Jonah Hill—that is to say, the parafictional one: "A huge earthquake happens, who do they rescue first? Actors," he says. "They'll get Clooney, Sandra Bullock, me…if there's room you guys will come" (Goldberg and Rogen 00:24:39-00:24:49). Franco and McBride both play up their arrogant or boorish tendencies, playing their roles as stars with massively outsized egos. In an interview, Franco stated that his character was written as the host of the party because, of all the primary cast, he was "the easiest to classify as the Hollywood guy with a big mansion," even though in real life he lives in a small apartment in New York City (Kendrick).

The most memorable example of this, however, involves one of the film's supporting cast. The real-life Michael Cera, whom Rogen calls "the sweetest guy ever," began his career playing a series of awkward, innocent teenaged characters in films and television shows like *Superbad* and *Arrested Development* (2003-2019) (Barone). Cera appears as a guest at Franco's party early in the film, and in contrast to his awkwardly nerdy public persona, his character recklessly takes copious amounts of hard drugs, swears loudly and frequently at friends and strangers, and treats women with utter disrespect. Mindy Kaling, appearing in a short cameo appearance against her own public persona as a sweet and likeable actress, describes Cera lustfully as "pale, 100 pounds, hairless, probably has a huge cock, coked out of his mind" and declares that "if I don't fuck Michael Cera tonight, I'm going to blow my brains out" (Goldberg and Rogen 00:08:04-00:08:14). Later, Baruchel goes to the bathroom but finds it occupied by Cera having sex with two women while sipping on a juice box. Rather than being surprised or embarrassed, Cera casually stares at Baruchel and invites him to join them. The collision of the audience's expectations and the (para)fictional reality of the film world can lead to shock or surprise on the part of the audience, as well as delight at the ridiculousness of the situations. In each of these examples the fictionalized self plays against the presentational self of the comedian-performer in one way or another, lending

uncertainty and unreliability to their persona and creating a web of interconnections, intertextuality and self-reflexivity for the audience to unpack.

Conclusion

Warren suggests that parafictional personas interrupt the audience's ability to clearly differentiate between real and fictional, and involves a level of deliberate deception, "not necessarily with malicious intent, but certainly aimed at sowing levels of uncertainty or misrecognition within the viewer" (57). In *This Is the End*, the audience is deceived for a very specific reason other than for humor: the realism of the characters is played against the incredible un-reality of the apocalypse that drives much of the plot. As the Hollywood Hills literally break apart and open a passageway to hell, unleashing massive fire-breathing demons and all manner of evil creatures upon the earth, the recognizability and realism of the relationships between its main characters give the film a narrative and emotional anchor that, to the audience, feels real.

The film takes narrative advantage of this disconnect: just as many of the comedian-performers play their characters against their own public persona, at the end of the film their fictive characters realize that they must resist their own fundamental nature as selfish, self-involved actors and sacrifice themselves for others in order to be saved in the rapture. Warren describes parafictions as "seductively dangerous because they threaten the truth status of their referents; constructing a fictionalized version of oneself allows for multiple levels of fiction and reality to co-exist, maintaining a sense of open-endedness and irresolvability" (56). This irresolvability presents opportunities for comedic exploitation, while also helping to sell the believability of the film's emotional core. This effect is particularly strong in a film like *This Is the End*, which was intentionally conceived to feature a complex, interwoven set of references to real life and deliberate, sometimes outrageous, falsehoods.

Scholarship has long identified a fundamental paradox at the heart of stardom and celebrity in popular culture: the paradox of appearance and illusion, real and fiction, ordinary and extraordinary all existing within a single being (Dyer 25). The concept of parafictional persona illustrates how this paradox has transmogrified in and because of new media paradigms and technologies. The comedian comedy is a genre in which parafictional personas are particularly effective in creating an affective tension between the real, parafictional and fictional facets of the

comedian-performer's persona, upending entrenched practices of engagement between fan and comedian and creating new possibilities for the production of comedy. When an audience watches *This Is the End*, they are of course watching a film as fictional as any other mainstream Hollywood comedy; due to the narrative power of the parafictional persona, however, to the audience it feels like they are watching the real Seth Rogen, Jay Baruchel, James Franco, Craig Robinson, Jonah Hill, and Danny McBride: stars they have known and followed across multiple media platforms for many years.

The necessity for comedian-performers to operate as transmedia personalities has never been more pronounced. The most successful comedy stars, such as Kevin Hart, Will Ferrell, and Amy Schumer, are not merely comic actors but also cultural totems: their personas represent something more than just their status as actors. Persona has become so central to comedy that "comedian comedy," first identified in the 1980s as a tradition or subgenre tangential to mainstream comedy media, could today describe almost all mainstream comedy: it is practically impossible for a viewer to watch a major comedian-performer in a film or television show and not have at least some level of working knowledge of that performer's persona through other media.

At the same time, comedy is undergoing a phase in which many of the most popular media texts operate in formats that straddle the boundary between real and fictional. Mockumentary-style television has grown in prominence since the U.K. television series *The Office* (2001-2003) and its U.S. counterpart (2005-2013) brought the production style of documentary to the television sitcom, and this has been extended to fictionalized "reality"-based shows like *The Eric Andre Show* (2012-present) and *Nathan for You* (2013-2017), in which unwitting real people and celebrities are set up to interact with a fictional or fictionalized host. There has also been an explosion of comedy which is metatextual and either features extensive cameo appearances by celebrities (*The Larry Sanders Show* [1992-1998], *30 Rock* [2006-2013]) or makes thinly veiled references to real-life personalities, such as Adam Sandler playing a character closely based on himself in *Funny People* (2009). Clearly, it is becoming ever more difficult to cleanly separate the real from the unreal in comedy media and stardom. The parafictional persona offers a compelling framework to begin to understand those comedian-performers who deliberately blur the boundary between real and fictional.

Works Cited

Affleck, Casey, director. *I'm Still Here*. Magnolia Pictures, 2010.

Andre, Eric, creator. *The Eric Andre Show*, Comedy Central, 2012-2019.

Apatow, Judd, director. *Funny People*. Universal Pictures, 2009.

Atkinson, Katie. "'This Is the End': Seth Rogen on Film's Warm Welcome and Subconscious 'Ghostbusters' Vibe." *Entertainment Weekly*, 17 June 2013, ew.com/article/2013/06/17/seth-rogen-this-is-the-end-interview.

Aukerman, Scott, and B.J. Porter, creators. *Between Two Ferns with Zach Galifianakis*, Funny or Die, 2008-2019.

Barbour, Kim, et al. "Persona to Persona Studies." *M/C Journal*, 2014, journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/841.

Barone, Matt. "Decoding 'This Is the End': A Behind-the-Scenes Look at 2013's Best Comedy (So Far)." *Complex*, 1 June 2013, www.complex.com/pop-culture/2013/06/this-is-the-end-making-of.

BBC News. "Twitter shares jump 73% in market debut." 2013, www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24851054.

Daniels, Greg, Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant, creators. *The Office* (U.S.), NBC, 2005-2013.

David, Larry and Jerry Seinfeld, creators. *Seinfeld*, NBC, 1989-1998.

David, Larry, creator. *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, HBO, 2000-present.

Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2004.

Fey, Tina, creator. *30 Rock*, NBC, 2006-2013.

Fielder, Nathan and Michael Koman, creators. *Nathan for You*, Comedy Central, 2013-2017.

Gervais, Ricky and Stephen Merchant, creators. *The Office* (U.K.), BBC, 2001-2003.

Goldberg, Evan and Seth Rogen, directors. *This Is the End*. Columbia Pictures, 2013.

IMDb. "Jerry Seinfeld." 2019, www.imdb.com/name/nm0000632/#self.

Jean, Al and Mike Reiss. "Garry Acts Like a Moron." *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, audio commentary, season 3, episode 12. Shout! Factory, 1989, DVD.

Kendrick, Ben. "'This Is the End' Cast Interview: Apocalypse, Grizzly Deaths, & Playing Themselves." *ScreenRant*, 25 Apr. 2013, screenrant.com/this-is-the-end-movie-cast-interviews-james-franco/6.

Khan, Nahnatchka, director. *Always Be My Maybe*. Netflix, 2019.

Marshall, P. David. "Persona Studies: Mapping the Proliferation of the Public Self." *Journalism*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2014, pp. 153-70.

Nesteroff, Kliph. *The Comedians: Drunks, thieves, scoundrels, and the history of American comedy*. Grove P, 2015.

Piper, Melanie. "Docucharacters: Public Persona as Character in Film, Television, and Fandom." *The University of Queensland*, 2017.

Rea, Steven. "Jerry Seinfeld's true comedy." *Entertainment Weekly*, 1 Mar. 1991, ew.com/article/1991/03/01/jerry-seinfelds-true-comedy.

Saltz, Jerry. "In Conversation: James Franco." *Vulture*, 17 Apr. 2016, www.vulture.com/2016/04/james-franco-jerry-saltz-converstaion-c-v-r.html.

Seidman, Steve. *Comedian Comedy: A Tradition in Hollywood Film*. UMI Research Press, 1981.

Shandling, Garry and Dennis Klein, creators. *The Larry Sanders Show*, HBO, 1992-1998.

Warren, Kate. "Double Trouble: Parafictional Personas and Contemporary Art." *Persona Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2016, pp. 55-69.

Winterbottom, Michael, director. *The Trip*. BBC, 2010.