My dissertation, entitled *Likely Stories: The Postwar American Novel and the Logic of Digital Probability*, examines the influence of a new form of statistical thinking on American fiction written between 1950 and 1964. In particular, I explain a tendency to incorporate improbability into literary realism at midcentury. My research clarifies that even as literary critics continued to insist, as they had for decades, that fictional events must be probable to be realistic, the most celebrated postwar novelists were producing the opposite effect, creating a sense of verisimilitude from statistical improbabilities. *Likely Stories* identifies a range of improbable narrative devices in midcentury fiction, showing that prominent novelists of the era turned to statistical sciences in the digital age to redefine realism as a form capacious enough for the unbelievable. I argue that these “likely stories” help clarify the surprising influence of mathematical formalism on an unidentified phase of the American novel: what I call “digital realism.”

The present piece of writing comes from the first chapter of my dissertation and represents an article version that I will revise and resubmit for the editors at *Post45*. As I prepare for resubmission, I would appreciate to learn how readers understand the movement between theoretical concepts, historical examples, and close readings. In particular, the reviewers have raised questions about the relationship between Nabokov’s art and the influence of machine translation, as I’ve elaborated it. For example, are the sections on the New Criticism or Jakobson’s structural linguistics convincing in establishing the institutional context in which Nabokov wrote his campus novel? Or, do they distract from the interpretive goal of explaining the purpose of *Pnin*’s narrator—a problem that has occupied readers of *Pnin* for decades? I thank any readers in advance for their time and feedback.