

Transatlantic Conversations
The Art of the Interview in Britain and America

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Abstract

This thesis assesses the role of the interview form within literature from the late nineteenth century to the present day. The project contends that the interview, although styling itself as a revealing, authentic, private confession, is a genre of life writing that deeply troubles the model of singular Romantic authorship that it simultaneously promotes. The thesis argues that the interview has been a key site for negotiating conceptions of authorship since its inauguration. Exploring issues of publicity, life writing and gossip, through nineteenth-century newspaper depictions of scandals (chapter one), I argue that the act of interview publication is a staging of the speaking self in the public sphere. In chapter two I triangulate discussions of journalism, celebrity and material modernism to argue that the characteristic modernist authorial persona, far from being revolutionary, avant-garde or iconoclastic, was in fact deeply retrograde. Chapter three examines how the interview operated as a negotiation of the study, the marketplace and the middlebrow in the 1930s, with reference to the popular *Everyman* magazine series “How Writers Work.” The development of an interrogative interview model in the postwar era forms the subject of chapter four, as I demonstrate how the backdrop of the Cold War transformed the ways in which writers as diverse as Ezra Pound and the Beat poets responded to the interview in their work. The penultimate chapter argues that the *Paris Review* interview offers a hitherto unrecognised link between New Criticism and New Journalism and can revitalise discussions around the historical institutionalisation of literary studies. Chapter six considers the interview’s prominent contemporary position within world literature as a purveyor of literary value and archive of global cultural memory. Overall, the project illustrates how central the interview has been in the cultural construction of authorship in the last 150 years.

Figure on cover: A. B. Walker, “The Reporters’ Dream” (1179). [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

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Introduction

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Fig. 1 “The Great American Interviewer” 1877 (7).

In 1877 the satirical magazine *Puck* printed a cartoon entitled “The Great American Interviewer” (fig. 1). The sketch depicts the interviewer as a spy, peering through windows, up chimneys and down drains; so too he listens at doors and gossips with the servants. Invading the sanctity of the private home, the interviewer is a (resourceful) pest. Such a figure became a common target of satire in the latter half of the nineteenth century in British and American novels, periodicals and newspapers at the same time that the interview itself saturated these same publications. Debates about the irritant

interviewer have continued to the present day, often without the humorous undertones. While he no longer wears a top hat, the interviewer is as often dismissed in the contemporary era as a pest, spy, or – even worse – a tool of the publicity department.

Nevertheless, we live in an “interview society,” as sociologists Paul Atkinson and David Silverman memorably put it (304). Today the interview exists in a myriad of forms. From the television talk show to the police interrogation, from the celebrity chat to the sociological inquiry, the interview pervades our culture and is utilised within multiple disciplines. Even in the narrowed arena of academia, search “interview” in Project Muse or JSTOR and the hits number in the hundreds of thousands.

Meanwhile in the area of literature, despite recurrent protests against the form, interviews with authors have proliferated in fiction and the marketplace since the late nineteenth century. Not only is the interview a significant form for writers as diverse as Henry James, Djuna Barnes, Vladimir Nabokov and J. M. Coetzee, but author interviews abound in critical journals, paperback anthologies and magazines, not to mention in broadcasting, on promotional tours, in publicity materials and at book festivals. The interview suffuses literature and literary culture. Yet, against this abundance, the majority of critical discussion about the interview has been in the social sciences, either on the informational aspect of the form or on its ethical dimension: the dangers of skewing responses, the lack of objectivity in a first person account, how to produce the fairest relation between interviewer and interview. So too mainstream media’s cultivation of the interview as source material enforces this perception.

Conversely, the Frankfurt School’s attention to the “culture industry” and, under the umbrella of “postmodernism,” the cross-disciplinary influence of work by (French) theorists trained in or influential on sociology, such as Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and others, has left the interview vulnerable in literary culture and studies to accusations of it being a marketing or publicity device. One such critic,

Bruce Bawer, derided the trend for authors giving interviews in the 1980s, likening it to the publicity device of the music video and thus ignoring the aesthetic potential of either form (422). When, in 1962, historian Daniel Boorstin characterised the modern age as typified by the “pseudo-event,” the interview was his example *par excellence* of “an event which takes place only for the purposes of being reported” (11). In such accounts, the interview becomes suspiciously tied to the marketplace or the flattening of literature into “texts”.

One consequence is that the form has been largely neglected by literary scholars. Such discussion as does exist is often dominated by the informational, ethical or promotional aspects of the interview. The limitations of such an approach were nicely summarised in an incisive interview-article by interviewer and academic Ronald Christ in 1977. According to him, “the purpose of the interview is to allude to data while being about the real business of creating character” (114). For Christ, the interview’s links with portraiture have been undermined by its being overwhelmingly associated with the social sciences, as a form to convey data. The point is hugely significant. As I will argue, the interview not only has ties to portraiture, but can often be considered a form of life writing. To reconceive of the interview as such demands that the hitherto neglected literary and aesthetic aspects of the form be examined and rehabilitated. Not only does this enact an important re-balancing within cross-disciplinary discussions of the form, but opens up avenues for thinking about why the form has been so dominant in literary culture. This project takes up such questions.

There is also a fascinating interdisciplinary history of the interview to be told as it pertains to broadcasting, employment history, market research, political polling, psychology, sociology, anthropology and the wider social sciences. So too attention to its role in the justice system, art world and in oral history projects would produce a valuable cultural study of the interview. However, this is not that study. While facets of all of

these interdisciplinary conceptions and usages of the interview are discussed here, it is as they pertain to the interview in and as literature.

That said, given the dominance of discussions around the use value of the interview and the prevalence of accounts of the form in the sociological fields, it is as well to outline the significant disciplinary responses to the interview outside of the literary field. Following this, and in a large sense as a counter to these conceptions of the interview, the remainder of this introduction will respond to the question of what it might mean to study the interview within and as literature. The discussion begins with an analysis of the features of the interview; in doing so it also offer something of a review of available scholarship, drawing as it does on the limited discussions of the interview in literary studies to date. The introduction will then sketch out the main issues, scope and direction of the remaining chapters. Before this, however, we must consider the import of the multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary uses and conceptions of the interview.

Facets of a Form: Disciplinary Responses to the Interview

At its simplest, the interview can be defined as meeting between individuals, often with one party a representative of the press, with the assumption that the ensuing dialogue will be published.¹ Such a definition presupposes the existence of the press, and a cultural assumption of the value of the individual perspective in the public arena, both of which, as we shall see, are historically contingent.

Such a general definition requires finessing. If the interview can be conceived of as both portraiture and informational, then how does it achieve these often divergent ends? The clue is in its versatility. In terms of dialogue the interview can consist of a

¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of "interview, *n.*" particularly 1.c is relevant here: "*spec.* in recent use: A meeting between a representative of the press and some one from whom he seeks to obtain statements for publication. Similarly in broadcasting." Interestingly the OED is less specific about the interview as used within the social sciences: the aim that was press publication is replaced, presumably, with scientific enquiry and the ensuing report.

relatively meandering conversation, an interrogation, or a Q&A. Participants can be highly informed, intimate, ignorant, hostile, uninterested. They can be relatively equal participants, or the power dynamic can fall heavily on the side of interviewer or subject. Questions themselves can be leading, they can be ignored, evaded, rejected; responses can be short or long, hesitations, diatribes, anecdotes, serious reflections or flippancy. So too the topics under discussion can commonly cover the subject's opinions, childhood, beliefs and working habits; but creeds, personae and books can also be promoted. Similarly the interview itself can be published verbatim or heavily revised, editorial control can sit with the subject(s), interviewer(s) or third parties. It can take place over several sittings across years or it can involve five minutes at a train station. The interviewer can be an active participant or rendered invisible. When published the interview can be accompanied by manuscript facsimiles, photographs, sensational headlines or sedate prefaces, and in newspapers, periodicals, critical studies or multi-author anthologies. The possibilities are almost endless. But what precisely the effects of these conventions are and what such acts might do, has been less extensively explored. As has been noted, the area in which they have been most systematically considered is in the social sciences.

The Social Sciences

In the social sciences, the emphasis has been upon the interview as a tool for obtaining data. The publication element of our definition is jettisoned. The conversation might be quoted in publications, but it is a means, not an end. As one group of social scientists proclaimed, "interviewing is a means of gaining access to information of different kinds. It is done by asking questions in direct face-to-face interaction" (Minichiello et al 88). So too for Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein, editors of the most influential educational

handbook on interviews in the social sciences, the interview is a “procedure for securing knowledge” (4). While the potential problems inherent in the form have been extensively discussed (leading questions, the relationship between interviewer and subject, etc.), particularly since the 1980s, this basic premise is never ultimately undermined. Feminist scholars Ann Oakley and Gayle Letherby might resist the interview’s gendered dynamic, calling for changes in method, and oral history scholars Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson might note the interview is a “co-construction, a dynamic process of interactivity” wherein the interviewer plays an important role, however, the interview remains as a capturer of data, the subject’s utterances a source to be mined (Oakley throughout, Letherby 82-83, Perks & Thompson 118).

Of all the scientific and scientific uses of the interview, psychoanalysis has employed the interview model most centrally. As a tool of diagnosis, the interview is essential to a set of theories that fundamentally transformed our understanding of consciousness at the beginning of the twentieth century. Unlike other uses, psychoanalysis also turned the interview into a reparative tool: with Freud’s “talking cure” the interview took on therapeutic connotations. The process of being interviewed becomes not necessarily an invasion of privacy, but perhaps of benefit to the subject. Psychoanalysis has also had another influential result through its promotion of an epistemology of depth. In psychoanalytical terms, that which was readily accessible to the mind was to be treated suspiciously and further interpretation sought through consultation with an expert. Not only has this been important for Western cultural conceptions of selfhood since the *fin-de-siècle* but it has also had a significant impact on the way in which the interview is read within literary culture. Deconstructive critic John Forrester has perceptively modelled psychoanalysis as structurally similar to gossip: both convey illicit knowledge (243-59). While not discussing the interview *per se*, Forrester’s point does much to highlight the similar questions around authority, authenticity,

knowledge and the status of speech in both psychoanalysis and the interview. Such points will be of central concern in our discussion of the interview in literature.

The societal impact of the widespread use of the interview has been contemplated by other social scientists, although the focus has been less on the experience of the subject and more on that of the interviewer or reader. As Gubrium and Holstein point out, the form establishes the realm of personal experience as “important sites for securing answers,” and broadens the relevance of a subject’s “experiential truth” (9-10). While such results can be productive, sociologists Paul Atkinson and David Silverman have spelt out the dangers in an influential article on the topic. In “Kundera’s *Immortality*: The Interview Society and the Invention of the Self,” the pair reflected on what they see as the Romantic impulse at the heart of the interview. Noting the cultural value placed on the confessional mode as authentic and valuable, Atkinson and Silverman also warn social scientists against naively valuing the myth of the pseudo-spontaneous, authentic confession. Indeed, for them, scholars should take heed to note the literary conventions that shape the interview and cultural understanding of the individual voice. While Atkinson and Silverman conclude that the interview can and should be a tool of sociological research, their article has been an important acknowledgement of the literary dimensions of the interview.

Another scholar to contemplate the import of the interview on the reader-sociologist is Pierre Bourdieu, whose application of sociological methods to analysis of the literary field has proven influential for literary specialists. Commenting on the form’s “scientistic” rather than scientific use by social scientists, Bourdieu has noted that, “at the risk of shocking both the rigorous methodologist and the inspired hermeneutic scholar, I would willingly say that the interview can be considered a sort of *spiritual exercise*, aiming to obtain, through *forgetfulness of self*, a true *transformation of the view* we take of others in the ordinary circumstances of life” (italics in original, “Understanding” 17, 24). For Bourdieu

the interview offers the possibility of, not a subject, but a reader-, or interviewer-centred therapeutics. Significantly for this study, he also utilises a lexicon drawn from narrative studies and specifically the vocabulary used when discussing focalisation: “point of view,” “revelation,” “intrusion,” “gaze,” “unveil,” “authenticity,” “realist.” While not explicitly discussing the interview’s function in terms of life writing, and while concluding that the interview can still be a useful tool for sociologists, Bourdieu, like Atkinson and Silverman, indicates potential avenues for literary research.

Other social scientists have expanded on these points, reflecting in detail upon the shifting narrative and representational facets of the interview, the role of researchers and wider “postmodern trends” in interviewing (Fontana 161).² Sociologist Norman K. Denzin, discussing the voyeuristic gaze that contemporary “cinematic society” promotes, argues that the researcher needs to be attuned to the influence of this when interpreting interviewee responses; indeed he argues that the interview is itself emblematic of this society and a crucial facet of our self-construction (*The Cinematic Society* 2). Meanwhile, Laurel Richardson has argued for the “poetic representation” of interviews in the social sciences (877). In an essay that illustrates her strong commitment to post-structuralism, Richardson advocates publishing interviews in the form of poetry, in itself a “practical and powerful, indeed transforming, method for understanding the social, altering the self, and invigorating the research community that claims knowledge of our lives” (888). While all of these researchers uphold the value of interviews for the social sciences, such discussion also highlights aspects of the form that speak more overtly to the interests of scholars of literature.

The importance of the interview to the social sciences has had significant ramifications for the interview’s treatment in literary studies, as we shall see. The emphasis that social scientists place on the informational aims of interviewing has also

² For a chronology of the interview’s evolution in the social sciences, see Platt; Fontana & Frey also offer a more cross-disciplinary history.

led literary scholars to approach the interview as a qualitative tool. In fact, the history of the interview is not only interdisciplinary, originating in a period in which modern disciplinary boundaries were in the process of being established, but also illustrates problems within such categorisations.

In an essay discussing the rise of literary studies, John Guillory traces the reputations of *belles lettres* and philology in the late nineteenth century and the amalgamation of them under the umbrella discipline of English. In doing so, “Literary Study internalized the fault line between the sciences and the humanities” wherein Literature became the study of that which was irreducible to the rational and scientific represented by Language (35). Born out of what David Fuller and Patricia Waugh have called “a dialectic relation between the impulse toward objectivity and a recognition of subjective engagement,” literary criticism parallels the interview in straddling this fault line (12).³ While the postmodern turn of the 1960s and 1970s has drawn the arts and sciences closer and focused interest on the narrative potential of interviewing through the development of oral history, the widespread understanding of the form as a tool of (debatably useful) enquiry has somewhat blinded literary studies to other ways of reading interviews. The one area of wider literary scholarship that has developed a more thoughtful response to the interview is, perhaps unsurprisingly, journalism studies.

Journalism

Journalists offer the most familiar purveyor of interviews in contemporary culture; the profession also promotes itself as the originator of the form. As such, the media’s usage

³ In 2010 *New Literary History* dedicated a special issue to sociology in literary studies, *New Sociologies of Literature*, ed. English and Felski. In his introduction English offers a useful survey of the usages of sociology by literary scholars since the 1980s “Everywhere and Nowhere” (v-xxiii).

and attitude towards the interview is significant for literary studies, although, as we shall see it is not without its own internal conflicts.

Discussion of the origins of the interview has tended to focus on its journalistic roots. Media scholars have argued over the provenance of the interview and its exact date of birth. In 1971 Nils Gunnar Nilsson wrote an article entitled “The Origin of the Interview” for *Journalism Quarterly*. Seven pages of detail weigh the competing claims of James Gordon Bennett’s interview of brothel madam Rosina Townsend in relation to the sensational murder of prostitute Helen Jewett on 16 April 1836 in the *New York Sun* or Horace Greeley’s interview with Brigham Young in the aftermath of the Mountain Meadows massacre in the *New York Tribune*, published on 20 August 1859. While engaging, such an effort smacks of the great man theory of history as well as ignoring the important aspects of the interview’s provenance that lie outside the newspaper.

More generally, newspaper scholars such as Michael Schudson, Joel H. Wiener and Frank Arthur Mott, amongst others, have identified the important role the expanding public sphere played in the rise of the interview: the nineteenth century saw profound alterations in the influence and societal penetration of papers.⁴ This was largely the result of technological innovation. As Wiener has noted, “within a relatively short period of time (1860-1900) the electric telegraph, telephone, typewriter, high-speed rotary press, and half-tone block for the reproduction of photographs all came into regular use” (*Papers* xii). Similarly, the consolidation of news agencies (Associated Press in 1849 and Reuters in 1851) and improvements in transportation (the advent of the pony express in 1835, for example, followed by the railroads) allowed for the faster dissemination of news.

⁴ For a history of American newspaper history, the classic account is Frank Luther Mott’s *American Journalism*. Mott also authored the important *A History of American Magazines*, which should be augmented with Theodore Peterson’s *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*. More recently the work of Michael Schudson has been influential, as has the scholarship of Joel Wiener and Laurel Brake. Transatlantic study of newspaper and periodical history has also received attention in edited collections by Ardis and Collier’s *Transatlantic Print Culture* and Wiener and Hampton’s *Anglo-American Interactions, 1850-2000*.

Social changes also contributed to the shift. In America, the rise of the dailies is commonly associated with Jacksonian democracy and the widening political participation of the era. Increased urbanisation, primary education and suffrage raised the demand for news-stuff, whether dailies such as the *New York Sun* (with a circulation of 8000, this was double its nearest rival), weeklies such as *Harper's Weekly*, or monthlies such as *Peterson's*. In Britain, the decade of the 1830s and the years following saw a drastic reduction in the so-called “taxes on knowledge” (stamp tax and paper duty were lowered by 1836 and 1855 saw the *de facto* removal of stamp duty entirely) which led to an influx of penny and two penny papers onto the market, such as the (unstamped) *Poor Man's Guardian* and later the *Daily Telegraph*, which appealed to both the middle and working classes.

Perhaps the most profound shift was the change in the concept of news itself.

Schudson comments that:

We have so completely identified the concept of “news” with the newspaper itself that it may be difficult to understand how dramatic a change the penny press represented. Until the 1830s, a newspaper provided a service to political parties and men of commerce; with the penny press a newspaper sold a product to a general readership and sold the readership to the advertisers. The product sold to readers was “news” (Schudson *Discovering the News* 25).

In an increasingly saturated and mediated marketplace, newspapers began to compete with each other to attract readers and boost circulation. The new techniques they used came to be known as “new journalism”. Wiener characterises the methods as: “bold headlines, gossip columns, interviews, sports reporting, pictures” (*Papers* xii). The interview then, was widely associated with this new conception of news and the popularisation (and satirising) of these novel techniques.

Such an account, emphasising a news “product” however, neglects the significant sources of the interview outside of and contiguous to the newspaper. Plato's *Dialogues* offer the original question and answer form, but so too a tradition of publishing great

men's conversation had been established back in the sixteenth century with Martin Luther's *Table Talk* and boosted in 1791 with Samuel Johnson's *Life of Boswell*, and Johann Peter Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836, 1848). Walter Savage Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, first published in book form in 1824, eventually stretched to six volumes and Nathaniel Parker Willis's accounts of European salon conversation, *Pencillings by the Way*, were hugely popular in America at mid century. Moreover, the witness stand offers an important model of the public interrogation at this time – indeed it was common practice in many English newspapers to print court proceedings in the 1820s and 30s and Bennett's interview closely resembles a deposition. Henry Mayhew's street biographies for the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849-50 also employ an ethnographic and dramatic understanding of the form and sociologists were quick to adopt it for the grand Victorian social surveys of Charles Booth and others.

While not a complete account then, the journalistic lineage and account of the interview is important – not least because it dominates discussion of the form. Significantly, the media display an almost schizophrenic attitude towards the form. On the one hand, in common with the social sciences, the interview is used by reporters to obtain information, whether facts, opinions or perspectives. When the *Guardian's* mantra is "Comment is free but facts are sacred" it indicates how much the reputation of the fourth estate is dependent upon the reliability of the source interviewed, the facticity of quotes and figures and the accuracy of the reporter's transcript. In drawing upon the expert knowledge of a subject, whether a specialist or an eyewitness, the interview becomes an important tool for transmitting knowledge from the individual to the public sphere. The public's "right to know" becomes an important justification for demanding facts, views and answers from individual sources.

On the other hand, journalism also regularly uses the interview in lengthy feature articles to depict a subject's personality. Interviews become a form of life writing,

profiling and potentially promoting anyone from a prince or a politician to a historian or an actor. Here the interview is not a tool, but a portrait, something that will be discussed extensively below. Facticity might still be important, but the emphasis is upon rendering an engaging portrait and a revealing account of the individual. The extensive attention the profession pays to the process of interviewing is indicative: if the goal is to obtain an insightful portrait, what happens when a tape recorder seems to stifle the subject's speech? How too should the interviewer write up "taperecordese" or notes into the final published interview? The answers are not universally agreed upon.⁵

Daniel Boorstin's point also needs to be recalled – the interview can create a news item itself: it can be an advertising and promotional tool, often for both subject and publication. An exclusive interview can hugely increase a title's circulation (think of *Hello!* or *OK* interviews on the occasion of celebrity marriages); so too it can promote an author's new book, or an actor's new film. Numerous interviewers have decried the press junket, characterised by *Sunday Telegraph* interviewer Nigel Farndale as the unpleasant experience of being on a "conveyor belt outside a hotel room, waiting for your hour with the star; while a publicist sits outside (and sometimes, God forbid, alongside you) with a stopwatch" (10). Indeed, this experience can form the basis of the interview itself: "The star interview is dead, as a form. Sent to New York to interview Madonna, I felt no significant disruption in my plans when Madonna refused to se [sic] me. The great post-modern celebrities are a part of their publicity machines, and that is all you are ever going to get to write about: their publicity machines" (Amis viii). With national and international audiences reached by radio, television and the internet, a media interview (or even its lack) can be an important promotional opportunity or news event.

Most media uses exist somewhere in between these characterisations. Nevertheless, the problem of the interview and also its appeal for the profession is the

⁵ Noble offers an engaging view on these issues, published in the 1930s.

potential incompatibility of these aims. The role of the press in creating, promoting and sustaining a public sphere, a subject on which much has been written, has tended to inflate these debates.⁶ Schudson has pointed out that the interview has a triadic structure, one that “promoted a novel form of communication between interview and interviewee, in which the most important auditor, the public, was present only in the imagination” (*Power* 49). The interview then is structured around an absent and *imagined* reader or public. Schudson continues: “That imaginative construction of a public for whom the words of the interview were designed helped to construct and define the concept of the public itself” (*Power* 49). Like Bourdieu, Schudson claims the form can have a transformative effect on the reader, although in this case the reader is a collective readership constituted of the wider public. How exactly interviews are produced and read then is of no little consequence, within and outside of journalism.

It is significant to note then, that interviews are often used by literary scholars as sources of information, with little awareness of the debates that surround the form in journalism or the social sciences.⁷ One of the few critics to do so, Usha Wilbers, reflects that William Faulkner’s interview with the literary magazine, the *Paris Review*, was considered “vital” in analysing his “intentions towards his works” when it was first published, and yet very little attention was given to the form in which these intentions were conveyed (208). Against this backdrop, I now consider the interview in the literary sphere.

⁶ Jürgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action and his understanding of culture in terms of rational dialogue has been central in these debates. See also Warner, *Publics and Letters* and Calhoun for summaries of the debates and dissenting voices.

⁷ Back in 1905 the “literary journalist” Hutchins Hapgood, friend of Lincoln Steffens, Gertrude Stein, Eugene O’Neill and others, was loudly trumpeting the interview as a tool for novelists to improve their own writing of dialogue and characterisation (424).

The Interview in Literary Studies

In 1890 interviewer Frank A. Burr proclaimed that the interview can “reach the humblest, as well as the highest, when a statement, however strong, put in the form of an essay, seemed to be neglected save by the few” (391). Ninety years later Bawer was lamenting that, “poets don’t *write* anymore,” instead of composing essays they give interviews (424). Burr’s enthusiasm has placed him somewhat in the minority of critics. The decline of the essay has been announced repeatedly since the late nineteenth century (rather ignoring the prevalence of the form in academia and high profile periodicals such as the *New Yorker*) and is commonly linked to the declining influence of the public intellectual. Meanwhile the popularity of the interview, often characterised as gossip or chatter, is taken as further evidence that “the age of the critic as the arbiter for public taste and cultural consumption seems to have passed” (McDonald vii).

While the interview does often turn on the promise of communicating illicit, private, or informal talk in newspapers, periodicals, on the internet and television, the interview is just as likely to offer a serious, formal, public discussion. Indeed, the comparison with the essay is less oppositional than might be expected: both can offer a personal, experimental endeavour in writing. Indeed, Jeffrey J. Williams noted in an introduction to an anthology of interviews with critics that the form has virtues that the academic article (one particular model of the essay) does not – it can combine personal detail and reflection on the contemporary moment, it is readily accessible but “intellectually on point” (xi). Just like the interview, the essay can be comprised at various times of biography, criticism, reflection, personal story and pronouncement.⁸ So too the essay, like the interview, exists in an uneasy temporal position between the transitory, or the small essay, on the one hand, and the grand authorial statement for the ages on the

⁸ In the Preface to his anthology *Essayists on the Essay* Carl H. Klaus notes that, “By virtue of being the handmaiden of criticism, the medium in which other forms of literature, art, and culture are interpreted, the essay perhaps has seemed to need no explanation” (xi). The parallel with the interview here is telling. See also Atkins *Tracing the Essay* and *On the Familiar Essay*.

other. Granted they diverge in other significant ways, but both offer flexibility: commentators on the essay and the few on the literary interview often describe both as bastardised or hybrid (Christ 111, Lasky 61).

Despite these similarities, the interview has commonly been written off by literary critics.⁹ The promise of gossip, the “bastard form” and the rhetoric of invasion of privacy surrounding the interview are perhaps largely to blame, but these, often sexualised, tropes are themselves significant. So familiar a part of the interview, we have forgotten to evaluate them critically. Part of what I am going to term the “fictions of access” that constitute the interview form need to be defamiliarised. The rhetoric of the illicit and the structures of exposure common within and surrounding the interview, part of these “fictions of access,” have resulted in a general neglect of the interview. Only by recognising and engaging with these fictions can we begin to explore what it might mean to examine the aesthetics and poetics of the interview form.

The designation of the interview as a “form” rather than a “genre” is also deliberate and deserves comment. There is, of course, a degree of overlap between the two and while we could certainly talk of the “interview genre” I prefer the alternative term for several reasons. The first has to do with the importance of features we might overlook when thinking about genre: paratextual elements, the material and medium of the text, the relationship between space, time, and speaking position within the interview. Given its association with structure, the term “form” encourages more flexibility in moving between stylistic devices, text, frames and medium than “genre” might allow. The second has to do with the somewhat troublesome history of the term “genre.” I am keen to draw upon notions of genre that understand it as relational and culturally and

⁹ By contrast, Elena Gualtieri and Thomas Harrison have based strong claims about the intellectual projects of Virginia Woolf, and Conrad, Musil, and Pirandello respectively on the authors’ engagement with the essay form. For Gualtieri, Woolf’s historiographic project and essayism carries with it a “critique of modernity as the triumph of rationalism and the culmination of a linear, progressive vision of history” (146). Indeed, essayism “becomes effectively indistinguishable from the Marxist critique of the dialectic of the Enlightenment” (146).

historically contingent, shaped by and shaping reader expectations – Hans Robert Jauss’s “horizon of expectations” and Tzvetan Todorov’s “meeting place between general poetics and event-based literary history,” for example (Jauss 22, Todorov 19-20). However, the term’s prior understanding as a taxonomy and Jacques Derrida’s (very different) notion of the “law of genre,” which itself emphasises stasis, have not entirely left the definition. By using “form” I gesture towards the adaptability and flexibility of the interview.

Life Writing and Fictions of Access

Ronald Christ’s seminal article on the interview, with its plea for considering the interview as portraiture, suggests that we have much to gain by considering the interview in line with other forms of life writing. The word “interview” comes from the Latin *videre*, meaning “to view” (Christ 114). Before the mid nineteenth century, it referred to a formal, face-to-face meeting, literally an inter-viewing, and this meaning co-existed with the newer reference to publication for much of that century. Such an origin does encourage us to think about the form in relation to portraiture.

The interview purports to offer a first person account of the subject: a portrait straight from the horse’s mouth. As Atkinson and Silverman and others note, the interview is perceived to be a confessional mode and one that promotes the value of individualised subjectivity. Specifically, the interview turns on the myth of authentic speech; it utilises its dynamic as a private discussion to purport to offer more genuine access to the subject. Like the “making of” documentary, it commonly presents itself as offering behind the scenes access. The setting of the private study or the dressing room underlines the notion of privileged access. The common practice of including “shoptalk”, discussing authors’ habits, methodology and tics, merely confirms this

suggestion. This rhetoric and structure, so central to the interview, which promotes the apparently interior, original, private or difficult to access, I call the “fictions of access.”

We can also see important parallels between the interview’s fictions of access and the psychoanalytic encounter, as mentioned previously. The latter utilises the same notion of authenticity through depth, in this case in terms of access to consciousness. Even more importantly, the interview also invokes the primal significance of the confession in Western culture. In its parallels with the church or the legal confession, the interview dialogue brings with it a (suppressed) notion of spontaneous confession as offering redemption, forgiveness or redress (Peter Brooks 2, Foucault *Discipline* 32-47).

The foundational text of the autobiographical genre utilises this language of spiritual confession. Saint Augustine’s *Confessions* (c.398-400) is a conversion narrative, one that recounts the events of the subject’s inner life. This first person act of public exposure of the private self, the scrutiny of selfhood and individual personality, and the intention to represent truth have been taken as identifying features of autobiography ever since. The autobiography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, itself entitled *Confessions* (1782), has also been crucial for the history of the form. In opening the autobiography with a declaration that “my purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I will portray will be myself,” Rousseau indicates the tension between the account of spiritual reckoning indicated by his title and the narrative “display” his prose promises – the latter both “true to nature” but also suspiciously artistic (qtd. in Anderson 41). Rousseau’s ability to exploit this tension within his account, and his influence on successive writers, has ensured he holds a pre-eminent position in discussions of autobiography. Attempting to offer an original, authentic account of selfhood in a narrative that re-casts the past (and indeed searches for origins), Rousseau’s *Confessions*, the Romantic autobiography *par excellence*, has also prompted fertile deconstructive readings by Derrida – upon autobiography’s impossible attempts to

create self-presence within the text – as well as Paul de Man, whose problematic notion of “autobiography as de-facement” reminds us not only of the important work figurative language can do in the autobiographical portrait, but also evokes Bourdieu’s notion of the interview reader’s self-effacement (Derrida *Of Grammatology* 101f, De Man 67-81, see also Anderson 14-15).

Given the extensive discussion of subjectivity, narrative, representation and confession in relation to autobiography, the lack of interest these scholars display towards the interview is perhaps surprising. Indeed, in a sense the interview is the ultimate form for enacting confession as it, unlike autobiography, structurally includes the confessor or interrogator who asks the questions. Given also that psychoanalysis has influenced critical understanding of autobiography in the twentieth century – Freud’s case studies themselves read like stories, as he himself admitted – the absence of discussion of the interview is intriguing.

Part of the reason for this absence must be attributed to the role of the interviewer. While a precise definition of autobiography is contested, scholars have generally accepted one that recognises “identity between the *author*, the *narrator*, and the *protagonist*” (Lejeune 193). Although this “identity” relies upon authorial intention – something Laura Marcus has noted is pervasive throughout discussions of autobiography – it does point to one of the significant differences between autobiography and the interview (*Auto/biography* 3). While the interview purports to offer the interviewee’s authentic unmediated words, it is not an individual endeavour but the result of collaboration between the subject and another.

In this sense, we might more appropriately equate the interview with biography. Hermione Lee, in her account of the form, discusses two commonly deployed metaphors of biography: the autopsy and the portrait. The former, frequently used by Henry James, “invokes biography as a process of posthumous scrutiny,” a process which can pain

relatives, change our view of the dead and also suggests the limits of biography, “since an autopsy can have nothing or little to say about the subject’s thoughts, intelligence, emotions, temperament, talents, or beliefs” (2). By contrast, biography as portrait, a view expressed by Hazlitt and others, “suggests what can go wrong with biography – flattery, idealization, flatness, inaccuracy, distortion. It makes us think too about the viewer’s dependency on the artist’s approach and technique” (3-4). It also has its limits: a portrait fixes the subject at one moment in time. While the interview is not a posthumous activity (though its publication might be), it too has been likened to a bodily incursion. Virginia Woolf herself compared the interviewer to a parasite, a bug who “sipped blood” (Bell 254). Similarly, we have already seen how the interview can be usefully compared to a portrait. Given the parallels (figurative and structural) between biography and the interview, it should come as no surprise that critical discussion around biography has much to offer scholars of the interview.

Lee also outlines many of the debates around biography: its truth, its value for the reader, the objectivity of the biographer and his or her relationship with the subject, the scope of the account, etc. In the case of the first, Virginia Woolf’s famous pronouncement on biography offers a succinct summary of the “whole problem”:

On the one hand there is truth; on the other, there is personality. And if we think of truth as something of granite-like solidity and of personality as something of rainbow-like intangibility and reflect that the aim of biography is to weld these two into one seamless whole, we shall admit that the problem is a stiff one. (E4.473)

This stiff problem has rendered the relationship between biography and literature a delightfully quarrelsome one since the early modern period.¹⁰ Crucially, all of these debates appear again in relation to the interview. Noting contradictions and shifts in the

¹⁰ Richard Altick’s *Lives and Letters: A History of Literary Biography in England and America* (1965) is still a classic introduction, as is James Clifford’s anthology *Biography as an Art*. See also Batchelor.

understanding and general practice of biography across time, location and personal preference, Lee also indicates that many of these debates are contingent.

For our purposes, it is notable that even the seemingly fastidious issue of how to transcribe or reference conversation in biography has been divisive. Wordsworth was to deplore the “gross and trivial recollection” that “sully[s] the imaginative purity” of authors’ works” in 1816; meanwhile the abolitionist James Field Stanfield was applauding the “valuable addition” that dialogue could offer biography, bringing it “almost to a state of perfection” (Wordsworth “A Letter” 18, Stanfield 70). Whether the publication of speech sullies or perfects, in the form of autobiography, biography or the interview, is still debated. Nevertheless, just as comparison with autobiography identifies some important similarities between it and the interview, so too comparison with biography indicates how useful it can be to view the form within its terms.

More recently critical attention has re-oriented debates into discussion of life writing more generally. Scholars such as Laura Marcus and Max Saunders have refigured debates about distinctions between fact and fiction, biography and autobiography, literature, memoir, diaries and alike into a more general interest in what is termed “autobiografiction.” Marcus and Saunders both focus on the modernist era and have led the way in demonstrating the valence of reading at the boundaries of fiction and life writing. Unfortunately, the interview has yet to benefit and remains overlooked even in this field. Perhaps this is the result of the interview often being used as a tool for biographers – something Janet Malcolm has written on extensively and James Boswell employed to great éclat – but the relevance of discussions about life writing for the interview should now be clear.¹¹

¹¹ See particularly, *The Silent Woman* and *Two Lives*. However, Malcolm’s engagement with the interview stretches across her career, from the form’s psychoanalytical associations in *Into the Freud Archive*, to those of the courtroom interrogation (*Iphigenia* and *The Journalist*).

The most extensive engagement with the interview has been in French. Profiles of important practitioners such as Jules Huret, Frédéric Lefèvre and Bernard Pivot have focused scholarship; Jean-Marie Seillan, Marie-Eve Thérénty, Philippe Lejeune, Louis Marin and others have published nuanced studies of the interview form.¹² Seillan, for example, reflects upon the ambiguity surrounding direct quotation in early interviews and Thérénty illustrates the fictional aspect of the form with her catalogue of interview types at the end of the nineteenth century: the fake, the joke, the self-interview, amongst others. Perhaps tellingly, little of this work has been made available in translation to scholars writing in English. Thus Lejeune's *Le Pacte autobiographique* (1975, trans. 1989) has proven influential for scholars of life writing working in the Anglo-American arena, however, *Je est un autre* (1980), which expands his theory of autobiography through discussion of radio interviews amongst other materials, has yet to be translated more than thirty years after the fact.

This general neglect in the Anglo-American world can partly be linked to the length of the interview. Unlike biography or autobiography, which usually premise themselves as authoritative and often lengthy accounts, the interview is typically a short form, similar to a diary entry. While it might have been formed by talk over many hours, in its published form it is commonly the length of a short article, only rarely longer than forty pages and can frequently fill just half a column. On television it can range from two minutes to an hour, but rarely more than this. Biography is commonly a posthumous exercise, the autobiography a retrospective at the end of a life. By contrast, the interview offers an account *in medias res*. It might reflect back over a career – as the *Paris Review* interviews do – but it is equally able to capture one moment. What exactly determines these conventional limits? The episodic, anecdotal, nature of the Q&A format suggests one reason; perhaps another more compelling reason is the form's purported promise to

¹² For the most extensive bibliography of English, French and German sources, see Martens et al.

portray a conversation verbatim. But if the travelogue, the journal format and the memoir can sustain reader interest over a book-length volume, and conversations can and do last longer than an hour, the convention of brevity in the interview is not as self-evident as it might seem. Yet again, we are reminded that the interview turns on various fictions of access.

The most obvious distinction between auto/biography and the interview is of course in narrative. While biography often includes reports of conversations or utilises source interviews, it is not structured around dialogue between persons, but (usually) the life story of one subject. From one perspective, the most useful parallel in life writing is not with auto/biography but the epistolary form (and indeed the e-mail and the telephone conversation in the modern era). While there are obvious differences between a (supposedly) face-to-face interaction and a correspondence, or between a form that premises itself on its spontaneous, accessible and oral elements and one that often encodes its own mediated, written form, the similarities are indicative. Just as with the interviewer and subject, correspondence can utilise much of the huge variety of communicative function that dialogue offers. Correspondence can be formal and authoritative, it can impart or demand information, coerce and threaten. Letter writing can also promote intimacy between parties, it can be chatty and anecdotal, convey gossip and rumour. It can also evade, misdirect and misunderstand.

Nonetheless, the most powerful elements in this comparison are the strong parallels and differences between how public and private function in these two forms. The letter is a private communication between writer and recipient, despite – and in opposition to – the fact that it travels through the public realm. The integrity of the private communication is legally protected no matter how many third party hands it travels through, until delivered and opened. The interview, with its fictions of access, might propose that it offers a private communication that has been inadvertently opened

for the public but in fact, the interview is usually conducted with full awareness of its intended destination in the public realm. While occasionally a subject is caught unaware, while sometimes conversations are later published under the heading “interview”, the convention entails the participants be fully aware of where the transcript is headed. The forms converge where the fictions of access, so central to the interview, have encouraged a rhetoric of invaded privacy to develop around this form, one that effectively models itself upon the correspondence.

Indeed, the strong cultural perception, that the most authentic utterance stems from spontaneous confession (extensively deconstructed by Derrida amongst others), leaves the interview in something of a quandary: to admit to its intended destination or reader is to risk invalidating the interview’s status. While the previous cartoon of the American interviewer does testify to a certain perception that the interviewer might be a social pest invading the subject’s privacy, such a manoeuvre also bolsters the notion that an interview obtained is genuine untainted talk that might never have been destined for the public sphere. Secrets or gossip might be held within. Effectively then, the interview emphasises its parallels with the epistolary form in order to bolster its own authenticity. The public/private dynamic of the letter and the interview might be very different but it is a useful fiction for the latter.

Unlike the unpublished letter, but like the biography and autobiography, the interview encodes the wider public or reader within its form. The questions asked, the responses given, the knowledge shown, the choice of subjects and level of discussion are in most interviews guided by the reactions of the reader: what would interest/edify/confuse/bore/entertain them? While the reader or public is not necessarily overtly discussed, the consciousness that this is an interaction designed for the public sphere is often a driving force. It is from this perspective that the fiction of access breaks down completely. While the interviewer might justify a purported invasion

of privacy on the grounds of public desire or right to know, the interview form has already encoded a public within its structure.

What then is the difference between a novel or biography, with an intended readership, and an interview? From one perspective there is very little difference: both are addressed to an unseen public at an individual level. The distinction perhaps lies in the role of the interviewer, whose authority is gained through his or her position as a proxy for the absent reader. As a representative of the (or one particular) public, the interviewer is purportedly enacting the role of reader, a position that recalls the various unreliable narrators of realist or detective fiction. Significantly too, it is notable that the interview is a form governed by debates over reader response. We have noted the assumed right of the public to know, but contemporary practitioners such as Lynn Barber commonly focus on the desires, urges and wants of readers when explicating upon the form. In a manner reminiscent of nineteenth century debates over biography as edifying reading, silly women reading silly novels, or descriptions of bestsellers and popular fiction since the nineteenth century, the interview is figured in terms of its results on the reader. This is an intellectual hierarchy wherein the interview-reader is inferior, often described not in terms of critical reading, but undiscerning appetite.

Janet Malcolm, one of the more outspoken commentators, offers a slightly different spin on this. For her it is the subject him or herself, rather than the reader, that is governed by desire: “Like the credulous widow who wakes up one day to find the charming young man and all her savings gone, so the consenting subject of a piece of nonfiction writing learns – when the article or book appears – his hard lesson” (*Journalist* 3). So too Fiammetta Rocco claims the “relationship acquires some of the characteristics of a passionate love affair. Journalists rarely sleep with their subjects, but the bond is still intimate” (50). Lynn Barber, who has made her own link, is wary of the “sisterly” confession school, made most infamous by Truman Capote’s interview with Marlon

Brando for his 1957 *New Yorker* profile “The Duke in his Domain.” In all these cases desire would seem to be the motivating force for participating in an interview, either as reader or subject.

Life writing has often been defended for the edification inherent in reading great lives and derided for its apparent sanctification of reader’s snooping tendencies; the interview is an important, though hitherto overlooked, site wherein such debates are enacted. In doing so, the interview offers a portrait of perceptions of the reading public, just as it offers a portrait of the interviewee. Blending granite and rainbow, the parallels between other forms of life writing and the interview are manifold and suggestive, as too are the qualities that make it distinct. Nevertheless, it is in the realm of authorship, that central concern of literary studies, where the interview offers the most dramatic and productive engagement with critical norms.

Authorship, Intention and Collaboration

The interview is a form that both perpetuates and confronts the notion of the individual artist’s authority. The interview promotes the individual voice of an author, while also being the product of collaboration. The form also offers an important site for thinking about authorship and related issues of intentionality, collaboration and the sources of creativity.

The dominant post-Enlightenment conception of authorship has a powerful ally in the interview. The notion of the author as an individual artist, closeted away from society, whose writings are a “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” an emanation of his selfhood, is well-suited to a form that seeks to focus its attention upon the utterances of the sage and encourages a biographical interpretation of works (Wordsworth *Lyrical Ballads* xi). That many critics have proven keen to consider the

author's work in light of biographical information gleaned in interviews has already been noted. The circumstances of writing a particular story or the editing practices of a particular writer, discussed in an interview, are often used to characterise authorial intention or practices. The fact that such discussion is framed in terms of direct access to the oracle lends rhetorical credence to the information gleaned.

Critical manoeuvres to render intentionality and the authority of the (subject) author largely irrelevant, or to decentralise it, have of course put something of an embargo on the use of the interview. The work of New Critics, dominant from the thirties to the sixties, has been one of the most powerful elements in rendering the interview largely outside criticism. T. S. Eliot's famous pronouncement in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) that the progress of the artist is "a continual extinction of personality", emphasising that great art necessitates an engagement with cultural history rather than absolute originality, was taken up in such influential works as Cleanth Brooks' *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947) and W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy" (1946) (Eliot 154).¹³ These works focused critical attention away from biographical and cultural readings, enforcing the idea of the autonomous and impersonal art object. In doing so, the interview, perceived as a form promoting access to the oracle, has been sidelined.

Roland Barthes' epochal essay "The Death of the Author" (1967/68), though originating in a very different tradition from that of New Criticism, would seem to confirm the embargo on the interview. Barthes explicitly discusses the author's personality and public persona and its relevance – or lack – for critical interpretation. Birthing the reader at the expense of the author, Barthes' essay has often been read in

¹³ Seán Burke offers an interesting reading of Eliot's essay, re-contextualising the ostensibly anti-romantic arguments of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" within a different, but still Romantic, tradition (66, see also xxiii). For a very different use of the essay, see Jaffe: "Modernism re-organizes the romantic cult of the solitary literary genius by linking it with the imperative to suppress its own conditions of production, specifically, the collaborative work of making and promoting modernism" (166).

conjunction with New Critical endeavours to resist the “intentional fallacy.” However, this link need not be made: a form that imagines the absent public would seem compatible with Barthes’ model of the newly elevated reader.¹⁴ Indeed, in other works such as “The Writer on Holiday” Barthes becomes explicitly interested in the public persona of the author. More widely, such interest has held the attention of other French theorists in work that has proven influential in Anglo-American literary studies.

Michel Foucault’s “What is an Author?” (first given as a lecture in 1969) in which he puts forward his notion of the “author function” might seem to deny the relevance of the author for critical study (and therefore the interview). However, it also opens up analysis of the fictions that surround authorship and the “ideological product” that is the author. The interview’s potential role in the creation and promotion of these fictions is clear to Foucault. When he gave his (now infamous) anonymous interview “le philosophe masqué” in *Le Monde*, and published a self-interview/conversation to frame *L’Archéologie du savoir* [*The Archaeology of Knowledge*] (1969/1972), he demonstrated a playful and generically-aware use of the author’s public positions, the interview form and its engagement with structures of knowledge and power (Delacampagne).¹⁵ By attending to the author function – and against the backdrop of wider (and varied) theoretical interest in discourse, text and identity politics, the interview and its fictions of access offer an important site for Foucault from which to consider publically offered narratives of authorship and utterances.

¹⁴ Indeed, in this respect Barthes has suggestive links with I. A. Richards, often identified somewhat problematically as a New Critic. Richards, in his foundational *Practical Criticism* (1929), acknowledges the relevance of personality in the reader: “The personal situation of the reader inevitably (and within limits rightly) affects his reading, and many more are drawn to poetry in quest of some reflection of their latent emotions crisis than would admit it” (239).

¹⁵ In fact the use of the interview by Barthes, Foucault and Derrida is, as with other French intellectuals in this era, surprisingly common, if largely neglected by scholarship (including French). A 2003 special issue of the journal *Nottingham French Studies* “Thinking in Dialogue: The Role of the Interview in Post-War French Thought”, demonstrates the importance the form has for prominent French intellectuals such as Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Irigaray, Barthes, Kristeva and Derrida. The articles in effect excavate the importance of the interview and issues directly related to the form for these thinkers.

Again from the French intellectual tradition, the most significant discussion of the interview for Anglo-American literary studies is certainly Gérard Genette's influential work *Seuils* (1987), translated as *Paratexts* (1997). In a detailed account of paratextual apparatus, Genette attends to the import of both peritextual features (those appended to the text) including binding, dedications and type, and epitextual features (those unattached to the text), including public speech acts, private correspondence, diaries and interviews. Genette's study is extremely productive for thinking about the relationship between the interview, the various features of the text and the authorial persona. His distinction between the conversation and the interview and his description of the latter as "constitutively bland" and "occasions capable of furnishing us with paratextual scraps" might be more limiting than helpful (358, 346). Nevertheless, Genette does acknowledge the interview's specificity as a unique form and his study is an essential starting point for thinking about the form and for placing the interview and the author function within a discussion of book history and the conventions of the marketplace (346-64). It also illustrates the central importance of public/private distinctions and the importance of considering the meaning conveyed through graphic aspects of the text, things that will be considered at length in chapter three.

The worth of Genette's study as a prompt to these discussions is clear if we turn to consider what precisely the difference between, for example, Henry James's Prefaces and William Faulkner's interviews might be. Both purport to offer origin stories of their creative work; both too purport to offer methodologies and even theories of art. Why then is the Preface commonly cited and read straightforwardly in conjunction with the fiction, whereas the interview has been so neglected by criticism? We could suggest that it is something to do with location: the former is a peritext, the latter an epitext, untethered to the specific creative work in question. But we might then note that both

Prefaces and interviews have been collated into books, rendered discrete and detached from their original settings.

It is here that we identify the most curious aspect of the interview's status and the feature that renders it unique for considering these questions of authorship and intentionality: its collaborative element. While the Prefaces are considered to be the sole work of the author and his genuine pronouncements, the interview is a collaboration between interviewer and subject, in the case of the *Paris Review*, between Jean Stein and William Faulkner. Somehow the collaborative element is seen to render the interview less authoritative. How accustomed we are to considering the author as a single, imposing figure, despite postmodern attempts to destabilise it, is indicated precisely in this critical discomfort with the interview.

But what of the collaboration at the heart of the interview? Back in 1896 interviewer Frank Banfield declared the interview to be an "affair of two. Two brains, two personalities, two points of view come in visible contact, and, just in proportion as this dual play is adequately rendered, is the interview bright and pleasant reading, or dull and lifeless. Cooperation is essential" (33). For others, such a cooperative relationship is undesirable and certainly the manner of collaboration can vary greatly: the writer surprised on the telephone, or not offered review of the final piece might regard his or her involvement as minimal. By contrast the *Paris Review's* calling card is the editorial control which is granted the author: Nabokov wrote his interview – questions *and* answers – others were the product of extensive involvement by editors, interviewers and the writer. The fact that the *Paris Review* interviews are the most commonly cited by criticism suggests that perceived authorial control plays a key role in our valuing of the form. Indeed Kasia Boddy, in a brief but engaging article on the literary interview in the *Paris Review*, Andy Warhol's *Interview* and *BOMB*, has explicitly called for editorial

practices to be laid clear before the interview can be “respected as a research method for literary study as well as enjoyed as a literary genre itself” (66).

This emphasis upon the editing of the interview is of course important and examining changes are often indicative of particular goals of the parties: genetic criticism can be particularly interesting in this light. In an unpublished thesis on the *Paris Review* interviews Kelley Penfield Lewis makes extensive use of manuscript revisions to comment upon the persona the author wishes to present in public. Discussing Ernest Hemingway’s hypermasculine “Papa” public persona, Lewis explores how the *Paris Review* interview was shaped by both parties to fashion a particular image that engaged with and sometimes resisted this persona (248-60, 337-44).

The medium through which exchange occurs is often significant: we might think of technology as yet another party to the collaboration. Philip Larkin notably would only conduct his *Paris Review* interview by post; others will only talk in person. Some refuse to allow a tape recorder – itself only in widespread use since the 1960s – and many interviewers suggest notebooks should be left at home for fear of putting the subject on edge. The presence of such technological mediation (or lack) is important. For example a transcript of a tape-recorded conversation will include hesitations, contradictions, pauses and repetitions. To present the exchange in the form of what critics often call the “interview vérité,” including many of these speech markers, is to create the sense that the published interview is a more authentic, unedited, exchange. Andy Warhol’s interviews famously play on this dynamic (ed. Goldsmith). These features can be as much a fiction as any other of course, but without the Dictaphone or tape recorder, the interview can only imitate such effects.

Similarly, the length and number of quotations available from the encounter will determine the type of interview that can be published. When the interviewer’s memory was the major recording medium the interview often paraphrased and summarised views.

So too what I call the “novelised” interview can be viewed as a direct result of this technological lack. Presenting the subject using the conventions of a realist novel, including speech tags, lengthy descriptions of character, appearance and setting, reduces the need for direct quotation, but still offers a compelling narrative portrait. In this sense the novelised interview, common in the nineteenth century, has much in common with the *New Yorker* profile or the biographical sketch. In the contemporary world the interview is, of course, not limited to the vérité format; perhaps because the fictions of access are just that – the spontaneous, unedited transcript of an exchange does not necessarily offer the best portrait of a subject. Indeed noted interviewer Gay Talese comments that “The tape recorder is to fine interviewing what fast-food is to fine cooking. It permits a journalist to spend a minimum amount of time with a subject while following the question-and-answer path that leads to the undistinguished kind of article-writing that prevails today” (“Preface” xxi). The tape recorder can be a useful tool, but the interview is still dependent upon collaborative and editorial acts.

We might also want to consider why the interview’s multi-party activities mark it out. James’s Prefaces were largely dictated to an amanuensis. Writers often compose in dialogue with their editor, change text for publishers or write with their friends. Aaron Jaffe has pointed out that the collaborative work of modernism, especially the role of women, has often been occluded by a myth of individual artistry and has done much to unearth this work, to significant effect.¹⁶ We might wonder then how exactly interview collaborations might transform our understanding of creativity itself. The value of thinking in dialogue, of conversation for developing ideas, of collaboration as beneficial for producing creative work, is a common trope in the humanities. Writers often suggest that to talk is to develop an idea and theorists since Plato have figured thinking and

¹⁶ Jaffe 166. Faye Hammill offers an important counterbalance in her attention to middlebrow literature, noting in *Women, Celebrity and Literary Culture Between the Wars*, that histories of celebrity have often been depicted in strongly masculine terms (13).

culture in terms of dialogue. Since the renewed interest in classical models of dialogism in the late nineteenth century the term has had particular purchase, with important thinkers such as Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Karl-Otto Apel, Richard Rorty and others drawing on the notion in their philosophical enquiries. The lateness of interest in dialogues and interviews within literary studies perhaps bears the trace of the ideological standoff in the 1980s between Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, although work by Bronwen Thomas, Lynne Magnusson and Peter Gibian since the 1990s has demonstrated how productive attending to dialogue in literature can be.

It is interesting to note then where the interview diverges from this concept of productive talk. Authors commonly express fear that the interview competes with their fiction. Siegfried Sassoon resisted being interviewed in the thirties because “I have a feeling that I say all I want to in my writings”.¹⁷ In such a light the interview is seen to threaten finitude, rendering the fiction irrelevant with its own more easily consumed form. The question and answer format would seem to offer a form that directs thinking – steering discussion and providing questions and “final” answers. It also frequently offers neatly packaged, easily extractable sound bites. The interview is seen to be the opposite of modernist difficulty: the potentially anecdotal, episodic, informal qualities of the interview somehow sates a desire that might otherwise lead to reading. As one commentator put it, “authors’ utterances have elbowed aside authors’ texts – conversation can democratize their linguistic dexterity” (Molibio n.pag).

Yet this clearly sits, in one sense, in direct opposition to the perception of the interview as a good marketing tool. While increasing the author’s public profile, the consistency with which the interview is used suggests that the form in fact piques interest, encouraging readers to look out the author’s work. It is no coincidence that interviews in periodicals often end with a summary of available works and publishers.

¹⁷ Louise Morgan and Otto Theis Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, box 16, folder 344. Hereafter cited as “LM Box/Folder.”

This attitude is in fact more understandable in terms of the writer's fear that the interview is competition for the source of inspiration. An interview with Naipaul performs such an anxiety:

Naipaul
Do you think I've wasted a bit of myself talking to you?

Interviewer
Not, of course, how I'd put it.

Naipaul
You'll cherish it?

Interviewer
You don't like interviews.

Naipaul
I don't like them because I think that thoughts are so precious you can talk them away. You can lose them. (Rosen and Tejpal n.pag)

A curious exchange, this, and one that pits interview against creativity. Here talk is not the source of inspiration, but declared its nemesis. Inspiration is curiously finite and, rather than the product of an external muse, equivalent to selfhood and the writer's body. The form that promotes the authorial public persona is deployed to express its danger here, something that we shall see is quite common.

It is surely significant too that the interview is one of the only forms that does not commonly offer the writer payment. The public's right to know, the promotional "value" of the interview and an emphasis on the work done by the interviewer (and editor) have been used to bolster an economic structure that does not always reflect the reality of the collaboration or the work that produces the interview. The work and time the writer-subject dedicates to the interview are, it seems, paid in kind through the promotional value it offers. While not wanting to devalue the work of the other parties – and certainly a journalist may spend many more hours crafting an interview than the author spent in being interviewed – it is an unusual situation, frequently elided in

discussions, but one of which writers are often acutely aware. The lecture, symposium, essay and multiple-authored work commonly garner a fee for the writer; the interview rarely does.¹⁸ Similarly copyright is a murky issue, commonly (but not always) lying with the interviewer, rather than the subject (as long as the subject knows he or she is being interviewed). Despite being a collaborative endeavour and despite the public perception of interest usually lying with the identity of the subject, the law commonly assigns authorship to the interviewer. The work entailed in creating the piece is not equally valued in the economy of the interview and reflects societal assumptions about the status of the form.

We might well see this as a hangover from the sociological interview: the subject is sometimes paid for his or her “time,” a term that delimits the contribution they offer. The expert interviewer utilises skills and knowledge in order to extract information from the vessel. While sociologists are often acutely aware of this problematic dynamic, economics perpetuate this perception, thus we pay the psychoanalyst, not the analysand. So too, the concern that payment for data might skew results in the sociological field has leaked over to the literary field. Writers don’t pay an interviewer for their services, though an interested third party – such as a publisher’s marketing department – might. Quite how paying for an interview with an author might render the form undesirable is less obvious, still the taboo exists.

The value of the interview can lie in directions other than monetary. For many writers the fictions of access and the conventions of the interview have been a source of creativity, as this thesis will show. The interview offers an opportunity to perform public personae and attitudes and manipulate generic expectations, exploitable for aesthetic ends. Oscar Wilde, Evelyn Waugh, Norman Mailer and others have all written humorous

¹⁸ There are of course notably exceptions to this – as when the interview has a perceivable financial value beyond Bourdieu’s “symbolic capital,” for example the Frost-Nixon interviews. W. H. Auden and Nabokov were also paid (minimally) for their *Paris Review* interviews.

self-interviews and spoof interviews abound. Meanwhile David Foster Wallace has used the form in his short story collection *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* (1999) and J. M. Coetzee simultaneously promotes an attitude of resistance to the form and utilises it regularly within his creative writing. These usages commonly exploit the promotional possibilities of the form; indeed, so important are these links with promotion and public performance that they need to be considered at length.

Promotion and the Interview

The advertising possibilities of interviews have been exploited since the inauguration of the form. While the American right to publicity has only been enshrined in law since 1953, Dickens was giving promotional interviews in 1842 to local papers (who reported a meeting having taken place rather than quoting him) as he toured the United States giving lectures. Writers regularly give interviews on the launch of their latest book, and have done for most of the century. Wyndham Lewis promoted the launch of *Blast* with a newspaper interview in 1914 and a hundred years later countless authors follow in his footsteps.

Although effectively inseparable, we need to distinguish between two aspects of the promotional possibilities of the interview. On the one hand an interview can promote the author's book, cause or opinion; on the other hand an interview can shape and promote the author's public persona. While an interview can and does usually contribute across this range simultaneously, each facet needs to be discussed in more detail.

As promotional content, an interview in the *New York Times Book Review* or the *Guardian* "Review" section can be part of a marketing push on the launch of the author's latest work. The work can be the main topic of the interview – What was the inspiration?

Why was it written? How does it relate to the author's oeuvre? etc. – or it can be publicised more obliquely with a more general interview. The effectiveness of this tactic in the last decades of the twentieth century is seen in the popularity of the book tour and the festival circuit. While this has been somewhat replaced by online campaigns in the last decade, the use of interviews to promote works by increasing media coverage is readily acknowledged by marketing departments and journalists alike.

As scholars of the publishing industry, such as Claire Squires have noted, publishing house mergers have brought the market economy to an industry which had historically treated the book as a unique artefact and somehow outside of a commodity economy (49). The increased power of the marketing department has contributed to the rise of the celebrity author. While sometimes the publication of the latest title by a blockbuster author – J. K. Rowling, Stephen King – is treated as a news event, for the majority of authors interviews are an attempt to increase coverage and promote a title.

Authors don't restrict themselves to being interviewed on the release of a new work. Neither does a public profile necessarily tie in with the chronology of an author's oeuvre. An author can use interviews to publicise particular issues or opinions – anything from youth reading to a particular presidential campaign, to bemoan the state of modern education or to celebrate a humanitarian project. This tendency has existed since the nineteenth century – Oscar Wilde used interviews to promote his American lecture tour and a certain interior design aesthetic. He in turn was being used as advanced publicity for a play satirising aesthetes that was following behind.

Such a tendency has been encouraged by the rise of identity politics. Perceived by the media, or self-identifying, as a minority representative, authors often utilise interviews and their own public visibility to promote diverse social issues that are often neglected by mainstream public discussions. Thus Toni Morrison has highlighted the percentage of Africa-American men imprisoned and societal stereotypes around single-mothers and

black female writers in her interviews. Notably too a huge number of interview anthologies have been published that specifically target identity politics, often geographically delineated: from Claudia Tate's *Black Women Writers at Work* to Richard Canning's *Hear Us Out: (Conversations with Gay Novelists)* and the huge number of available interview anthologies with African writers, postcolonial writers, Latin American writers and others (Boddy 63-65).

While authors can be frustrated by these attempts to position them as spokespersons, the perception that the interview offers a writer a platform is important. By privileging an individual voice, the form presents an opportunity for those opinions to be heard. Hence why the interview is often termed "democratising." However, such a view sits in tension with the aspects of the interview that resist its characterisation as authentic utterances. Thus the collaborative aspect of the form, editing, technological mediation and its portraiture function all become threats to the "truth" of the interviewee's speech. So too anything that suggests the interview is being employed as a pseudo-event renders the authority of the form troublesome. If the interview is to be a democratising tool, a platform, the interview's promotional abilities need to be scrutinised more carefully.

The author's public persona is precisely the portrait being promoted. Encompassing the public utterances, promotional strategies, publically available biography, perceived position in the marketplace and oeuvre, the author's public persona is a multi-faceted, unstable portrait. The author's public persona is not constructed by interviews alone – indeed numerous authors have been accused of being celebrities ahead of writers, Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal and others having been targeted. However, it can play an important role in shaping that persona; indeed as we shall see, Mailer's engagement with the interview's celebrity associations forms an important part of his oeuvre.

Shifting perceptions of authorship discussed above have obviously influenced the way in which these personae are understood, but so too have understandings of public image. As already noted, the interview promotes fictions of access in utilising the motif of special contact – by apparently taking the reader behind the scenes the interview promises to offer the reader access to the individual behind the hype, behind the celebrity image, behind the bright lights of stardom. The language of the film star is deliberately employed here as it is the fame of the actor and later the Hollywood star that offers the interviewee his or her model. Richard Dyer's important work on film stars, including *Stars* (1979) and *Heavenly Bodies* (1986) builds upon some of the insights in Boorstin's *The Image* to largely invent the field of celebrity studies, along with Richard Schickel's *Intimate Strangers* (1985) and Leo Braudy's 1986 book, *The Frenzy of Renown*. While the work of Dyer and Schickel focuses largely upon Hollywood in the twentieth century, Braudy's has been a key text for its historicising of fame and celebrity.

Taking energy from this scholarship, literary critics have begun to consider the author's public persona and indeed celebrity status in tandem with critical understandings of their work. Loren Glass's *Authors Inc.* explores the emergence of literary celebrity in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the autobiographical work of figures such as Mark Twain, Gertrude Stein, Norman Mailer and others. While Glass is not concerned specifically with the interview, he and scholars such as Aaron Jaffe and Timothy W. Galow, utilise interviews in their discussions of how celebrity authorship is promoted and sustained. More specifically, Richard Salmon has used such ideas to great effect in relation to the interview form itself. In a perceptive essay "Signs of Intimacy: The Literary Interview in the 'Age of Interviewing'" Salmon explores how interviews in the late nineteenth century, along with manuscript facsimiles and photographs accompanying the article, are used to construct the author's status as a celebrity at a moment when celebrity culture was expanding.

Focusing on contemporary authors meanwhile, John Rodden's 2001 anthology *Performing the Literary Interview*, discusses how the subject's performance in the interview can shape their public persona. Indeed, Rodden even offers a typology of interviewees, distinguishing between the raconteur, the traditionalist and the advertiser. While Rodden's catalogue ultimately feels restrictive – he makes no mention of the role of editors or publishers for example – he does usefully remind us that the interview is an instance of the public persona being performed.

This aspect of interviews is usefully theorised in relation to performance studies. While the interview is a portrait and helpfully conceived in terms of life writing, it is also a staging of the self in the public sphere. Structurally the interview is a dialogue staged for an absent or imagined audience, in this sense it has an affinity with the play. It also, like theatre, relies on voice, visibility and embodied interaction. Though of course in the interview these features are represented through text rather than being fully realised as they are in the play, it is an important element of the interview dynamic that these features existed in the supposedly originating conversation. In addition, the interview purports to offer the same context-bound interaction presented in the theatre: just as the theatrical experience is time and place limited and roles occupied by physical bodies, similarly the interview turns on its contribution as the record of a specific, context-bound, interaction.

On television, radio, and as staged in front of an audience, an interview can become precisely the staged conversational performance that the written interview purports to transcribe and relate. From this perspective the interview is performance, one that has historically been quickly adopted by new technology. Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of interviews in these media, the form is still dominant and popular as a written form and it is as a written form that it must hold our attention for thinking about interviews in and as literature. In this light the interview is more easily compared to the

play-text. Both promise to be transcriptions of an embodied, ephemeral performance. They are written accounts – archives indeed – of the spoken and enacted. Both gesture out to an extra-textual fulfilment while privileging themselves as the durable record of that performance.

We could also layer this theatrical perspective with a more linguistic-based understanding of performance. J. L. Austin's speech act theory has been utilised by theorists such as Derrida and Judith Butler to think about the nature of language itself. Austin's identification of the performative aspect of some utterances – they transform or perform, rather than merely stating or describing – has been influential, especially as expanded by Derrida and John Searle.¹⁹ Particularly relevant for thinking about the interview as an event, this notion of language as potentially performative encourages us to think about the layered import of the interview utterance, particularly its political or societal effect. Butler, drawing on Derrida and Austin, also refocused the question of the performative utterance in terms of identity construction and the composition of power, concluding that both and especially gender, rather than being essentialities, are performed. For Butler, performativity is a series of practices wherein “discourse produces the effects that it names” (*Bodies 2*). In this light, authorial identity, personae or authority are, like all identities, types of linguistic iteration. The interview becomes in this reading one such dramatic repetition of the performative utterance. While focusing on the illocutionary aspects of the form does not sufficiently illustrate the important ties between the history of celebrity, the marketplace and the interview, it does demonstrate that the interview can be a performance and performative in a constitutive manner. Performing fictions of access in the interview can have real-world consequences.

We have come very far from our discussion of authenticity and confession by now. The fictions of access that surround the interview have become even more

¹⁹ See Austin; Butler, *Bodies That Matter* and *Excitable Speech*; Derrida, *Limited Inc., Of Grammatology, Writing and Difference*; Searle.

markedly a *performance* of accessing a realm of authenticity, privacy, intimacy and confession. This is not to suggest that this performance does not have any of the utility it purports to offer and indeed its uses in other disciplines and, more generally, the value we place on individual subjectivity in literature, starkly contradicts this claim. Rather, it is the discussion of the interview in terms of its use value that has delimited discussion of the form and obscured the significance of its aesthetic elements and its position in literature.

Structure

The remainder of this study examines the form from the perspective of literary studies and reflects upon the aesthetic qualities of the interview. Informing this discussion is the contention that the interview is a truly interdisciplinary form that emerged at a moment before epistemological distinctions were hardened by the institutionalisation of disciplines in postwar academia and the specialisation of many professions. In the last seventy years, the dominant usage of the interview by the social sciences, and in part too by journalism and the legal system, as a tool to collect information has rendered the literary facets of the interview obscure or discussed within the terms proposed by the social sciences. By contrast, I demonstrate that the interview offers a key site for examining negotiations around the status and value of authorship, readership, the marketplace and literature itself over the last hundred and fifty years ago. Although interviews do not always have to be understood as literature, the form can and should be considered a topic of literary scholarship and as a literary genre itself.

Since its inauguration the interview has displayed remarkably consistent formal features and conventions – most specifically the aforementioned fictions of access. To theorise about the specific structures and conventions of the form involves, as we have

seen, close consideration of how the oral and written interact, how voice and personality are conveyed through text, and how informational, life writing, publicity and portraiture modes co-exist and operate in the interview. So too, study of the interview involves attention to specific details such as quotation, layout and speech tags, amongst other features and has much to offer scholars interested in thinking about how publishing practices can promote specific literary forms.

This formalist approach needs to be augmented with a more socio-historical consciousness. Like life writing, or the play-text, the interview is a form that gestures out to the external world. Promising to convey both accurate data and the speech and personality of the interviewee, the interview transforms the subject into a text to be read and acknowledges its own relation to a world beyond the written. Moreover, the interview also aligns itself imaginatively around this external world and indeed dramatically shapes the reading practices that we bring to the form and its own reception. Such gesturing outwards makes the interview not only of formal interest, but also a particularly fascinating site for thinking through the specific social and historical circumstances of reading and modes of authorship and celebrity as figured in these texts. As such, discussion of the interview requires a reading that acknowledges this peculiar orientation.

While the formal features of the interview do not dramatically change in one hundred and fifty years, offering more variety at any one moment in time than across the decades, the manner in which the interview has been used, read and written about in literary culture has varied enormously. As a result, the timespan of this book is necessarily ambitious. The main scope of the book covers over a century: chapter one begins in the 1880s and chapter six discusses the contemporary milieu. Given the massive social, technological and historical upheavals of this period, the lack of formal variation in the form across time might seem surprising. However, it also testifies to both

the versatility of the interview (in terms of medium, subject and style), and the continued suitability of a form that explores the relationship between author, text and reader in a mediated public realm.

In terms of geographical focus, the thesis concentrates on the Anglo-American interview. While a study of the interview as an American phenomenon might suggest itself given the form's first appearance in New York and early characterisation as an American menace, I argue that the interview developed as a peculiarly circumatlantic form. Drawing on recent scholarly work on transatlanticism, I contend that the interview can only be properly understood within a context that accounts for (textual) travel, border crossings and invasion, institutional collaborations, market overlap, and literary and cultural debates that span the Atlantic Ocean.²⁰ The form itself emerged out of these particular cultural conversations and it is therefore apt that this study acknowledges such back and forth.

The identifying features of the interview are of central importance and each chapter will be focused around one particular aspect. Combined with this, the case studies utilised in each chapter together form a chronological narrative of the history of the interview's reception in literary culture. In some respects these are arbitrary divisions: aspects of orality and voice could be discussed in relation to any interview at any historical moment, so too could dialogue, or conceptions of privacy. However, the case studies have been selected for together offering a particularly significant, interesting or appropriate context for exploring the formal features in question. Overall they provide a summative historical and formal account of the interview in literature.

My choice of authors and texts arises out of a desire to sketch out the general shape of the interview and its reception, while also indicating the important individual innovations and divergences in the way that authors of different genders, ages, ethnicities

²⁰ For an excellent summary of the field and critical debates, see Manning and Taylor's anthology.

and nationalities experiment with the form. Furthermore, I also want to indicate the important continuities and differences between interviews in middlebrow periodicals, in mass-market newspapers, in trade anthologies, scholarly journals and underground mimeographs. In trying to maintain a balance, some authors have been unfairly neglected, while others appear surprisingly frequently.

Inevitably, this attempt is imperfect. There are, for example, a notable lack of female authors discussed in the second half of the book. This is not for a dearth of interviews with or by female authors on either side of the Atlantic, indeed anthologies with women writers were one of the tactics in and the widespread result of feminists' attempts to alter canons and heighten awareness of female authors in the 1980s. While a fascinating history of women authors' engagement with the form in the latter half of the twentieth century could be written, the significant re-masculinisation of the interview in the postwar period was largely brought about thanks to male-centred, often hypermasculine or gay-dominated groups and publications. Women did participate in these groups, just as male interviewers were more numerous than their female counterparts during the 1920s and thirties when the form had primarily feminine connotations (see fig. 2), however, my choice of case studies reflects heavily-gendered associations of the form over the twentieth century. This is also the reason that authors who identified as homosexual, or who have resisted heteronormativity, are very well represented in the study. While the promise of the fictions of access to reveal scandalous secrets had real-life consequences for writers under threat of criminal prosecution for much of this period, the result has been in many cases to encourage writers to explore the rhetoric and tropes that promise such access, with productive results.

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 2 W. K. Haselden, “The Lady Interviewer and her methods of work” (n.pag).

Paul Gilroy’s seminar study *The Black Atlantic* (1993) must also remind us of the role slavery played in shaping our understanding of the Romantic idea of authorship. Defining the Black Atlantic as the “counterculture of modernity,” Gilroy demonstrated how the Enlightenment project itself rested on slavery (1, 49). While an explicit history of the interview as used by black authors and publications on either side of the Atlantic is outside the scope of this study, the import of race upon the manner in which authors negotiated questions of authorship, publicity, collaboration and privacy, has informed my thinking as much as questions of gender, sexual orientation and indeed class.

Discussion of Toni Morrison’s interviews in chapter six, while focused mainly on scholarship’s reading of them, also reflects upon the public identity of the black woman writer in the aftermath of identity politics debates and is informed by a history of depictions of the racialised body of the interviewee, whether Frederick Douglass, Paul

Robeson, Zora Neale Hurston, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Josephine Baker. More generally, such negotiations inform my wider argument. Anne Anlin Cheng's book *Second Skin* for example, while not talking about interviews per se, situates Baker's celebrity image in relation to modernism's "primacy of surface" and wider cultural debates about surface, depth, privacy and spectacle (10). Cheng's discussion has been productive in my thinking about these debates in chapter two. So too, attempts to improve the status of African Americans in the fin-de-siècle and afterwards often combined sociological and journalistic campaigns in ways that enacted the cross-disciplinary status of the interview. The careers of Ida B. Wells, W. B. DuBois and later Harlem Renaissance projects also offer confirmatory examples in this respect; indeed attending to the interview form opens up future research avenues around the role of literature in the Civil Rights movement, the intersections of sociology and literature, and other such topics. Given the limitations of space, these narratives will remain somewhat underdeveloped in what follows; however, they do contribute to my overall thinking about the interview form.

The first chapter focuses on one particular fiction of access: the form's promise to convey conversation, speech or the authoritative voice of the subject. The chapter demonstrates how central the interview voice was to late-nineteenth century notions of the public sphere in a period characterised by mass readership of newspapers, the globalisation of media networks and the increasing professionalisation of both journalism and literary criticism. A transatlantic newspaper spat in the autumn of 1886 is used to illustrate how the interview was a key site for the negotiation of issues of literary etiquette, gossip and anxiety around the circulation of the private voice in an Anglophone public sphere. Turning from journalism to fiction, Henry James's response to that scandal and his own use of the form in his writings are examined. While repeatedly deploring the invasive interviewer, in fact, James found the interview voice to

be a deeply productive means of exploring wider issues around gender, aestheticism and intimacy. In making such links James was not alone; the chapter closes by exploring the association between the interview voice and mediumship at the fin-de-siècle and demonstrates how the interview voice became entwined with larger debates about errant or excessive speech and knowledge.

While James drew creatively on the interview voice, it was the “glare of publicity” that the interviewer represented for him that was to dominate in the first two decades of the twentieth century. From the 1880s onwards the interview’s ability to act as a portrait of the individual began to predominate in uses of the form. Portraiture, specifically, in terms of the image, photographic and celebrity, are explored in chapter two. Case studies include Hollywood fan magazine interviews and celebrity interviews in mass-circulation newspapers to demonstrate the characteristic use of tropes of surface and depth, visibility and revelation in interviews in this period. While writers like Djuna Barnes utilised these fictions of access with a degree of subversion, more generally little magazines and modernist writers rejected the form, or favoured what I call the “cloaked” interview, a version that downplayed these tropes. Not only was this resistance to have important ramifications for later perceptions of the interview by writers and scholars, but given the materialist turn in modernist studies and recent interest in modernist engagement with celebrity, attending to the interview’s associations with portraiture in this period unexpectedly re-polarises modernist and mass cultures.

Continuing this focus on the interview’s position in relation to culture stratification, the third chapter analyses a series of interviews in a middlebrow periodical in the early 1930s. Written by American journalist Louise Morgan for the London-based magazine *Everyman*, the series was later anthologised and published by the British firm Chatto & Windus in 1931. Drawing on the archives of Morgan and the publisher, the chapter demonstrates the ways in which these interviews’ emphasis on the author’s study

spatialise cultural ambiguities surrounding the nature and site of authorial work and the writer's relation to the marketplace. Furthermore, it argues that this series and volume capture an important moment before the institutionalisation of literary studies and before New Critical practises largely excluded the interview and the middlebrow from scholarly scrutiny, a moment wherein reading these interviews could be a form of critical work.

In the fourth chapter the privacy of the author takes on more threatening associations. Moving to the period after the Second World War, the poet Ezra Pound's indictment for treason and subsequent incarceration in an asylum offers a useful example of the increasing associations of the interview with surveillance and psychiatric and juridical interrogation. In part to explain this shift, I trace the development of interrogative interviewing in broadcasting on both sides of the Atlantic in this period, through the central figure of journalist and television host Mike Wallace. While broadcasting is somewhat outside the scope of this thesis, understanding the development of the interview as interrogation or surveillance on television and its associations with new technology, is vital for exploring how the interview question functions in literature in this period. I then turn back to the literary realm, illustrating how the American 1960s countercultural scene responded creatively to these developments and in doing so began to imbue the interview form with radical associations.

The fifth chapter is in some ways a return to the debates of chapter two, touching as it does on author celebrity and public image. However, it specifically examines the roles of interviewer and interviewee, focusing on debates around subjectivity, objectivity, presence and personality in a period in the late 1960s and early seventies wherein these roles came under particular pressure. Drawing on interviews in the *Paris Review* and the New Journalism of Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer and colleagues, the discussion illustrates how the interview benefited from the waning of New

Criticism's domination of English Studies, emerging as an important feature of literary criticism, while simultaneously developing from a countercultural interest into an important mainstream site of literary experimentation.

The final chapter brings the story of the interview up to date and considers the status of the utterance in the interview form. It explores how contemporary literary culture has read the interview as an informational mode, with little acknowledgement of what Derek Attridge has called the "mobilization of meanings" that the formal qualities of a text perform (*Singularity* 109). The perception of the interview utterance as marketing, criticism and archival document are explored. Case studies include J. M. Coetzee, J.G. Ballard, Toni Morrison and Orhan Pamuk and explore how trade publishing, academia and global prize culture often ignore the formal qualities of the interview in order to emphasise its informational mode.

The thesis closes with a coda that re-emphasises how the interview has been an important site of creativity throughout its history. Study of the interview not only transforms our understanding of authorship, intention and the process of writing itself, but also disrupts conventional periodisations and disciplinary distinctions. Modernism becomes something of an anomaly in the historical trajectory of the interview; sociology's understanding of the interview is sometimes closer to that of Philip Roth than that of the literary scholar in this account. Only by attending to the interview's fictions of access can we begin to understand how much the form that privileges the single-authored, private and spontaneous utterance works through collaboration, publicity and often heavy editing. The interview, as we shall see, belies its own fictions of access.

Around the World in Eighty Quotes: The Interview Voice in the Fin-de-siècle

The year 1886 did not witness the first interview. In the same year that the first Irish Home Rule Bill was debated and defeated, the Statue of Liberty was unveiled, Coca-Cola was first sold, Emily Dickinson died and Siegfried Sassoon was born, countless public figures were interviewed. The form had been flourishing for some time by 1886, though it was not without its critics.¹ Despite this, I argue that 1886 was a significant year for the interview. It was the point at which a number of factors coalesced to position the still innovative form within wider debates concerning intimacy, authority and their circulation in the public sphere. Within a few years these debates were to harden as journalism professionalised, Oscar Wilde's 1895 trials transformed public perceptions of male same-sex intimacy and the invention and commercial deployment of the gramophone, telephone and radio enabled the human voice to be separated from bodily presence.

Such debates join together in their concern over the voice of the interview. The form promises the rendering of an individual voice; it offers the speech of that individual captured in prose. While reading an interview requires the exercising of the eyes and is an activity associated with literate culture, particularly given the form's association with mass journalism, the interview itself turns upon oral communication. It promises to capture the dialogue of two people in print. The oral dimension of the public sphere is itself a

¹ Outside of this study's scope, the year also witnessed the first photo-interview in France, published in the *Journal illustré* (Sep 5 1886). A collaboration between the photographer Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon) and his son Paul, the chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreul was the subject.

repeated trope in this period.² Even the quintessential printed form of the newspaper is discussed in terms of conversation: for de Tocqueville early in the century, American newspapers “talk” to the citizen, while at the end of the century Irish journalist T. P. O’Connor was complaining that contemporary reporting style failed to record the aural inflections of speech (de Tocqueville 134, O’Connor 428-29).

The recent “oral turn” in American Studies has been premised upon attending to this contemporary interest.³ In particular, Sandra Gustafson’s summative article “American Literature and the Public Sphere” situates this trend as a counter-move to the over-emphasis upon print in scholars engaging with Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*. In doing so, she links orality with questions of access, audibility and circulation: in the nineteenth century, with expanded readerships and the widening of the franchise on both sides of the Atlantic, voice took on significant political associations. The public sphere was commonly discussed in relation to one’s ability to speak to and be heard by the public. The interview was often lauded precisely for enabling politicians and others to “speak” directly to the public.

As a result of this perceived efficacy, the interview was also a highly contested site that, in its conveyance of a conversation, threatened to overflow its textual vessel, or form. Debates around authorship, agency and access recurred again and again as commentators, subjects and interviewers argued over questions that still occupy us today: who should be interviewed, who should do the interviewing, how the dialogue should be rendered, the extent of the subject’s editorial input, and how the often competing interests of the public and the subject should be resolved. Debates around a seemingly minor innovation, a form that promised to publish a spoken dialogue, were inextricably

² For an extended discussion of the culture of conversation in mid-century America, see Gibian (15-57).

³ Important works include those by Looby, Gustafson, Shield, Fliegelman and, on the nineteenth century specifically, Cmiel, Gibian and Mark M. Smith. See also Wright.

tied to larger questions about the authority and legitimacy of an individual voice, public spheres and, as we shall see, national identities.

This chapter examines the rise of the interview in the nineteenth century, and the year 1886, through three case studies that help to clarify these wider concerns. In doing this, we find the interview tied to contemporary matters that might initially seem surprising: spiritualism and aestheticism, for example. However, it is only by first appreciating this wider nexus of issues that we can begin to understand why the form proved so controversial in this era. Far from a local concern over a journalistic innovation, debates around the interview had, metaphorically and literally, global import.

The chapter opens with the figure of W. T. Stead, well-known proponent of new journalism in Britain for thirty years, and, later in his career, a keen spiritualist. In 1886, while in prison and at the height of his reputation, Stead penned an influential article on “Government by Journalism”. Six months later he wrote a companion piece, “The Future of Journalism”. Both reflected upon contemporary newspaper practices and both use a model of aurality in their figuration of debate in the public sphere. This model was to have significant implications for contemporary reception of the interview.

While the oral aspects of the interview were lauded by some, they also brought a whiff of illegitimacy to the form. In her book-length study *Gossip*, Patricia Meyer Spacks discusses notions of legitimacy, privacy and publicity and considers the workings of this oral form in the novel. Such a serious exploration of what is often considered to be “idle talk” is useful when thinking about the interview voice in the nineteenth century. The interview’s association with gossip and scandal have often been used to dismiss the form. The publication and rapid circulation of the interview also operate under this model, to the horror of nineteenth-century critics. Discussing the interview voice is not merely idle talk; it offers new insight into not only the form itself but the particular anxieties about perceived transformations in the public sphere in this period.

The second case study turns on gossip, scandal, private conversation and public speech. As “The Future of Journalism” was being typeset in London, a scandal erupted in New England about an interview between Julian Hawthorne (son of Nathaniel) and James Russell Lowell, published in the *New York World*. Ostensibly the scandal responded to issues of literary etiquette and the barriers between public speech and private conversation. In this respect it was similar to a whole series of Anglo-American literary scandals about the propriety of printing authors’ intimate correspondence (the Keats letters), discussing their private (sex) lives in print (the Froude-Carlyle controversy, the Landor-Hawthorne spat) or publishing private conversation (Nathaniel Parker Willis’s *Pencilings by the Way*, General Adam Badeau’s 1886 book *Aristocracy in England*).⁴ However, the extent of the coverage and the distances it travelled indicate that there was something particularly unsettling about the interview form; namely, an individual voice could now be heard across the globe.

The third case study takes up the interview’s associations with gossip and conversation in a more phenomenological sense, pursuing the affective and aesthetic aspects of the interview voice as explored in fiction. In early 1886 Henry James had published his most conversation-focused novel *The Bostonians*, complete with unpleasant interviewer figure. As a friend of Lowell and acquaintance of Julian Hawthorne, James was profoundly affected by the autumn scandal, responding with fierce (private) condemnation of the latter and drawing upon the incident in his later fiction. As several critics have noted, the character of George Flack in his 1888 novel *The Reverberator* is based upon Hawthorne (Knox “Reverberations,” 348-54). While scholars have often been quick to read this as exemplary of James’s hatred for the new culture of publicity of his times, I argue instead that the interview becomes a particularly generative form for

⁴ For the Keats scandal see Rollins (4-6); for the Froude-Carlyle upset see Broughton (83-172); for the Landor-Hawthorne spat, see Bassan (115-20, 158-60). See Baker for a book-length study of N. P. Willis’s career and Simpson for Badeau’s background (n.pag).

him: although linked to the culture of publicity, it is part of a much wider engagement with the transforming gender roles of the fin-de-siècle and the affective import of these changes. In a period when the New Woman and the Aesthete were increasingly publicised figures, the vocality of the interview, with its manifold and contradictory associations with intimate conversation, gossip, political agency, the Wildean epigram and the “art of conversation” tradition of the female-dominated eighteenth century salon becomes a vehicle for James to explore gender dynamics at the level of individual affective communications.

As a final move, I push these links between gender, voice and the interview to their extreme. I stage Stead’s “Slight Return,” as the argument takes up the notions of voice, illegitimacy and excess in relation to wider concerns with credulity (Luckhurst “The Sinking of the *Titanic*” 181). This section explores the parallels between the (usually female) medium and the interviewer. Two decades after his articles on journalism appeared, Stead interviewed the dead ex-prime minister William Gladstone in 1909. Coverage of the afterlife interview was extensive in America, Britain and her Empire and, while many editors poked fun at the aging journalist, newspapers displayed much anxiety about the status of the interview comments. While an end case, Stead’s interview does shed light on the more general interplay between embodiment, (female) agency and interviewing at the turn of the century. As shall be shown, the bodiless voice of the interviewee is here disquieting precisely because it highlights the potential illegitimacy of the speech of the interview in general.

Despite being gossipy, gendered and delegitimised at times, the interview voice is centrally tied to dramatic social-cultural transformations in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The interview is at the centre of debates around modernity itself, whether on a technological, cultural or affective level.

W. T. Stead's Aural Public Sphere

In 1886 W. T. Stead was one of the best-known proponents of new journalism and the interview in Britain. Beginning his career on the *Northern Echo* in 1870, a decade later he moved to London to take up the position of assistant editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (PMG). Three years later he became editor and promoted new journalism practices in the paper, including interviewing and exposing the scandalous private lives of numerous public men. During this period he spearheaded several high-profile reform campaigns in the publication, with varying degrees of success. These included sending General Gordon to Khartoum, changes to the Naval budget (both 1884) and an exposé of child sex trafficking in London, for which he was later imprisoned (1885).⁵

Stead resigned from the PMG in 1890 and launched the monthly *Review of Reviews*, which was eventually to have American and Australian editions. As well as authoring numerous books and lecturing in America, from the early 1890s Stead had become deeply interested in spiritualism, including telepathy, automatic handwriting and mesmerism. From 1893-97 he published the quarterly *Borderland*, a magazine dedicated to all aspects of psychical matters. This included regular “Letters from Julia,” communications from the deceased American journalist Julia Ames, and in 1909 he opened Julia’s Bureau, an organisation designed to put people in spiritual touch with their dead relatives. Three years later Stead was a passenger aboard the *Titanic* and his name topped the list of people missing when the British press reported the story. Though his body was never found, psychics reported contact with him for years afterwards (Luckhurst “The Sinking of the *Titanic*” 185-88).

⁵ Stead has been the subject of a number of biographies, the most recent being Robinson’s *Muckraker*. Owen Mulpetre’s *W.T. Stead Resource Site* at www.attackingthedevil.co.uk also contains extensive material on the man and his work.

Stead's career combined a deep commitment to popular journalism, to reform and, later, to spiritualism. His diverse activities and interests attracted a variety of responses from contemporaries. To some he represented innovation, to others he characterised the worst in "feather-brained" journalism (Arnold 639). Stead's reputation had suffered following his opposition to the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and his enthusiasm for spiritualism, reaching its lowest point with the 1909 interview. Nevertheless, in his career, and in his own figurations of the newspaper as a psychic connector (as we shall later see), he offers an excellent opportunity for reflecting upon the authority of the interview voice in this period.

In November 1886 the *Contemporary Review* published the second of two articles by Stead that reflected upon the current and future role of the newspaper. In "The Future of Journalism" Stead conceived of the newspaper editor as a powerful figure in the governing class: "He would not govern the Empire, but his voice would be the most potent among all those whose counsels guide the holders of our Imperial sceptre" (664). This editor of the future would gain this sway through his knowledge of public opinion, through "touch with the public" (665). Stead is careful to note that such knowledge of public opinion does not necessitate "blind obedience" to its will, but rather that in order to respond to public opinion, one must know first what it is (664). Crucially, as we shall see, this is an affective, intimate and, perhaps surprisingly for a dealer in type, aural process.

Stead suggests that the duty of the editor is to "get at ... every one, from the Queen downwards, in order to ascertain what they are thinking about the topic of the day" (666). The editor and his team (a system of sympathetic men and women spread around the country) should foster personal relations, with "every one whose opinion has any weight on any subject with which he has to deal. Nor should it be mere acquaintance. There should exist such relations of confidence as to render it possible for

the editor to be put in possession of the views of any personage whose opinions he desires to know” (666). This grandiose conception of the editor’s position figures an intimate, private relationship, rather than the assumption of public communication on which the interview is based.

Indeed Stead continues:

This is not interviewing. Interviewing is the public, this is the private phase of what, after all, must always be the primary department of journalism – that of interrogation. The least confusion of the two, the case of matter spoken in private as if it were material for an interview, would be fatal. If the editor cannot be trusted to keep a secret, if he betrays confidence, the whole edifice collapses. Personal confidence is the foundation of the system (666-67).

Stead’s distinction between conversation for the purposes of publication and the private confidence is notable. His insistence upon the importance of the private communication between editor and expert (often a Minister in Stead’s account), is fascinating for the intimacy it posits between press and government. Interrogation is here a private act wherein the editor acts as proxy for the absent and unhearing public. Cynically we could read collusion into such intimacy. However, in Stead’s utopian model, such confidence enables the paternalistic editor to guide public opinion through his own superior knowledge gained in private.

In some respects this is in direct contrast to the model promoted in Stead’s earlier article, “Government by Journalism,” published in the *Contemporary Review* in May 1886. Composed in prison, from where Stead continued to edit the *PMG*, the article emphasises the desirability of political affairs being discussed at public meetings. Such meetings enable “the direct utterance of the voice of Demos, without any intermediary” (658). While Stead ultimately argues that the evanescence of the public meeting renders the newspaper the more practical platform for such discussion, he continues to utilise a metaphor of aurality throughout his essay.

“Government by Journalism” announces that “If any one raise his voice, it is audible from Aberdeen to Plymouth” thanks to the newspaper (653). Indeed, “The telegraph and the printing-press have converted Great Britain into a vast agora, or assembly of the whole community, in which the discussion of the affairs of State is carried on from day to day in the whole hearing of the people” (654). The modern penny paper and the telegraph system create communication networks that relay *sound* across the country. Stead continues with the metaphor:

The Press is at once the eye and the ear and the tongue of the public. It is the visible speech if not the voice of the democracy. It is the phonograph of the world. On its columns are printed the spoken words of yesterday, and it is constantly becoming more and more obvious that the importance of a spoken word depends chiefly on the certainty of its getting itself printed ... A great speech is now delivered in the hearing of all the nation. The orator ostensibly addresses a couple of thousand, who cheer and hear. He is in reality speaking to the millions who will read his speech next morning at breakfast. (656)

Although Stead acknowledges the transformation of the spoken word into the printed and the activity of listening into reading, he still bases his argument upon the metaphor of hearing.

While the classical model of democracy, based upon the notion of face-to-face communication, was becoming increasingly problematic in this era of mass media, Stead’s metaphor (common to his contemporaries as well) reaffirms the centrality of aurality in conceptualising communication in the late nineteenth century. Stead’s article abounds with such usage. The newspaper is a “free and open hall” in which the “voice of the poorest and humblest can be heard,” an oracle, a horn’s note, a reverberation and echo (656-57, 659, 661). He even defends charges of sensationalism through a sustained comparison with voice, indignantly pointing out that “The myriad murmurs of multitudinous tongues ... render it practically impossible for anyone to obtain a hearing for the most important truths, unless he raises his voice above the din. And that is

sensationalism so-called” (671). For Stead, “It is the thing you shout that will command attention after you have first aroused it, but you must arouse it first” (671). As debates about the interview were to heat up in the autumn of 1886, this common linkage of the public sphere with vocality was to have important ramifications.

The Hawthorne-Lowell Scandal

As “The Future of Journalism” was being typeset in London, a scandal erupted in New England, the echoes of which were to be heard around the English-speaking globe. Newspapers as far away as Wales, Australia and Guyana reported on the affair in obsessive detail and men of letters everywhere commented on the affair in public and in private. Given that the other major scandal of the season was the London-based divorce trial of Lord and Lady Colin Campbell, complete with accusations of purposeful transmission of venereal disease and multiple adulteries, we might expect the New England tale to be one of similarly sordid doings. On first glance, modern readers will be disappointed.

While various nineteenth-century scholars have discussed the Hawthorne-Lowell scandal, in particular the affair’s influence on *The Reverberator*, the wider implications of the scandal have been neglected.⁶ In order to understand both the development and reception of the interview and the interview voice in this era, these implications need to be acknowledged. To do so, something of the background and reputations of the protagonists needs to be conveyed.

Born to a distinguished New England family, James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) had been educated at Harvard and trained as a lawyer before embarking on a literary

⁶ In 1936 Carl J. Weber “rediscovered” the affair and sketched the events from Lowell’s perspective for readers (“Lowell’s ‘dead rat in the wall’” and “More about Lowell’s ‘dead rat’”). Two decades later George Knox attempted to redress the balance in several articles that focused on Julian Hawthorne’s role (“Reverberations”, “The Hawthorne-Lowell Affair”). Rubery’s recent work on the personal interview also mentions the scandal (*Novelty* 115-16).

career in the 1840s. His political verses, *The Biglow Papers* (1848), which satirised the newspaper depictions of the Mexican War (1846-48), proved immensely popular (Lowell *The Biglow Papers* 101-3). He lived in Cambridge for much of his life and was personally acquainted with many of the transcendentalists. As a literary critic, Lowell was influential in shaping the reception of this group of writers throughout his long and distinguished career. Later on the faculty of Harvard and editor of several important journals, Lowell was also Ambassador to Spain and, from 1880, the Court of St James. During his lifetime he was popular and esteemed on both sides of the Atlantic. In the twentieth century Lowell has been critically neglected, but as the scholar Thomas Wortham states, “no understanding of the cultural life of America in the nineteenth century can be complete without recognition of Lowell’s centrality and versatility” (n.pag).

Meanwhile, as the only son of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Julian (1846-1934) had grown up on the Continent and at the centre of the New England literary culture. Matriculating at Harvard in 1863, after irregular attendance due in part to his father’s death in 1864, Hawthorne eventually trained as a civil engineer. This professional career was short-lived and he soon turned to writing. Over the course of a prolific and initially acclaimed career Hawthorne produced more than twenty-five novels and short stories. In the 1890s his reputation declined and his fiction output was replaced largely by journalism and editorial work, including a biography of his parents, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (1884), and *Hawthorne and his Circle* (1903). In 1912 his reputation was ruined when he was sentenced to a year in Atlanta Penitentiary for his part in a mining share fraud. From 1923 he wrote for the *Pasadena Star-News* until his death in 1934 (Russell n.pag).

While even his biographer was to write that, “in an age of giants ... Hawthorne was a pygmy,” Julian Hawthorne’s reputation in 1886 was at its highest point (Bassan ix). Back from a successful sojourn in England, Hawthorne was now a member of the

Author's Club, literary editor for the largest circulation newspaper of the time and active in the American Copyright League. His was also a distinctly modern conception of the writer as a professional and sometimes hack. While in part a reaction to unfavourable comparisons to his father, Hawthorne consistently emphasised his pecuniary motives when discussing his writing. Bassan figures Hawthorne as a "gentleman-journalist," a man of his time in his ambivalent attitude towards the power and role of the news in his culture at the point at which the generalist man of letters was being replaced by the professional journalist and critic.

Lowell and Hawthorne shared many things: friends and acquaintances on both sides of the Atlantic, their New England heritage, experiences living in England and on the Continent and, not least, a career dedicated to literature. Despite such similarities, however, it was to be their differences that were to characterise the protagonists in the public's mind as the scandal developed.

"Lowell Talks Out:" Private Words in the Public Sphere

When the New York *World* published an interview with Lowell on Sunday 24 October 1886, Lowell was the distinguished elder statesman of American letters and politics and (Ex-)Minister. Any public utterances that Lowell might make were an event in themselves. Entitled "Lowell in a Chatty Mood," the lengthy interview related Lowell's opinions on British character and some extremely blunt descriptions of the Queen as "tough," the Prince of Wales as "immensely fat" and stupid and the late Duke of Albany as a "cad" (9). Unsurprisingly, such utterances circulated quickly and widely. The day after publication a dispatch appeared in the *Washington Post* under the title "The Queen and Wales: Ex-Minister Lowell Talks Out in Meeting." In Philadelphia, Boston and even

Oregon the news item of the day was the opinions of Lowell. In less than twenty-four hours, the interview had become national news.

Two days after the interview was published James Russell Lowell responded in the pages of the Boston *Daily Advertiser*:

nobody could have ever been more surprised or grieved than I by Mr. Julian Hawthorne's breach of confidence in his report of my conversation with him ... On such terms society would become impossible, and the *tempora fandi* would need to be qualified by quite another adjective than *mollia*. It never entered my head that the son of my old and honored friend was 'interviewing' me. If it had he would have found me dumb. (Lowell "A Prompt Denial" 1)

Lowell's repudiation added spice to the story and newspapers were quick to respond, as we shall see. However, the terms in which Lowell frames the alleged interview are crucial for understanding how the scandal was to develop.

Lowell emphasised the personal relationship between himself and Hawthorne. In doing so, he denied that the alleged interview was an interaction destined for the public sphere, but rather a conversation between two kinsmen. The article in this reading, becomes an act of personal betrayal, a "breach of confidence" in which even the suspicion that "the son of my old and honored friend" might conceive of the conversation in that light would be ungenerous. Indeed, he goes further in insisting that "[o]n such terms society would become impossible" (1). Interviewing is a practice characterised as antisocial. The scare quotes depict it as new-fangled and innovative, the rhetoric positions it as antagonistic to the very stuff of social interaction.

Reports of conversations had long been published in America and so too the transcendentalist emphasis upon the ethical import of conversation has been noted by scholars (Buell 76-99). What Lowell (and his supporters) seemed most to resent was the apparent degradation of conversation's serious and ethical purpose for the immediate interlocutors, into a newspaper commodity transmitted through a potentially unreliable

medium and circulated widely. Conversation was transformed from a dialogic process into a subject's stated opinions that could be quoted in the public sphere.

The form of the contested interview certainly encourages such a transformation at a moment when the interview form itself was under pressure. As was often the case in this period, Lowell and Hawthorne are surrounded by narrative tropes more usually associated with realist fiction. Drawing on the conventions of the novel, the dialogue is often accompanied by speech tags such as "he said," "the reporter asked," or more convoluted rhetorical flourishes. The quotes are commonly interwoven with descriptive passages of the subject's appearance, habits, mannerisms and room layout. The interviewer effectively takes on the role of the narrator, telling the story of the interaction to the reader. Such a format, which I designate the "novelised" interview, is clearly effective in creating a compelling interview and character – the style has endured into the twenty-first century.

Nevertheless, associations with a form of fiction were problematic in a period when the press was professionalising itself in part through declared commitments to factual accuracy. This is formally visible in the Hawthorne interview: although the interviewer dominates as the narrator, he is also presented as a questioner and transmitter of the subject's words, rather than as an equal interlocutor in a dialogue. His views and questions are rarely recorded, in contrast to the extensive attention paid to those of Lowell.

The interview also diverges from the conventions of the novelistic account or ethical conversation by offering a series of quoted views upon a variety of topics thematised under subheadings, rather than representing the shape of the conversation that produced them. These thematically organised opinion interviews offered a form more palatable to a profession keen to emphasise their accuracy and facticity. One such advocate explained that, "had it not been for the interview much valuable matter relating

to the history of this country since 1860 would have been lost, not only to the nation, but the nation's annals" (Burr 391). This valuable matter was precisely "the thoughts and recollections" of these men (391). Hawthorne himself was to justify his own use of the interview form, on which he expressed a decided ambivalence, in this manner. Having turned down an offer from the *World* to write a series of articles, Lowell's opinions were too valuable to be lost, hence Hawthorne's decision to interview the writer ("Hawthorne to Lowell" 5). In the case of this interview, the critics did note that Hawthorne's account covered an unusually large number of topics, from the Irish question to art and literature and the mores of the aristocracy ("Mr Lowell's Denial" 4, "Mr Lowell Talks Freely" 4). The impression on reading is of Lowell having been "pumped" for his opinions on everything under the sun, rather than having engaged in a collaborative oral venture.

It was these opinions, however, that Lowell specifically denied in his repudiation. Notably, he associates the illegitimacy of the utterances with the interview process itself:

I do not believe Mr. Julian Hawthorne wilfully misrepresented me; but whatever I may have said, after passing through the refracting medium of his memory, much more his than mine ... the reporter has made me say precisely the reverse of what I really must have said and of what is the truth ("A Prompt Denial" 1)

Here the conversation has been "refracted" through the interviewer, himself a "medium." The legitimacy of the interviewee's voice is undermined (for Lowell) precisely because of the mediation involved in transcribing this speech.

Lowell was not alone in feeling such an anxiety. Responses to the scandal in the press focused particularly on the character and authority of the main protagonists, as they continued to express themselves publically, and with increasingly heightened rhetoric.⁷ This is evident in the emphasis placed on Hawthorne's perceived professionalism as an interviewer. Without recording devices and with note-taking not an established practice,

⁷ Hawthorne, "A Note from Mr Hawthorne" (4); Hawthorne, "Hawthorne to Lowell" (5); reprinted in "The Lowell Interview The Victim Says..." (4).

the interviewer's role as amanuensis or medium was of crucial significance in transmitting the conversation from private to public sphere. The interviewer's use of the conventions of the novel may well simply result in a tissue of fictions.

On the day it printed Lowell's first repudiation letter, the *Daily Advertiser* commented scathingly on the form of Hawthorne's interview. The article is pronounced to be "a very clever piece of composition" bar the "amateurishness" of neglecting to "inform his host that he was being 'interviewed'" and for reproducing a "conversation which was not intended for publication, and which he should have regarded as the confidential chat of a friend and host" ("Mr Lowell's Denial," 4). The editorial re-affirms the terms employed by Lowell but also uses them to characterise Hawthorne as unprofessional. Other commentators concurred, agreeing that Hawthorne's main crime was his failure to clarify, beyond a doubt, his own purpose. While many papers used this as an opportunity to insult the competition's journalistic practices, especially the new journalism represented by the *World*, others lauded Hawthorne's efforts ("Altogether too much fuss is being made" 2, "A Picture of James Russell Lowell" 8).

These debates over the professionalism of the interviewer often turned ostensibly upon financial matters. The *New York Sun*, amongst others, was to accuse Hawthorne of transforming a confidential chat into a "vendible commodity," implying his professionalism had been replaced by pecuniary motivation ("The Etiquette of Interviews" 2). Meanwhile, another New York columnist utilised remuneration to present a sympathetic portrait of Hawthorne as an honourable hack, caught between the demands of literary reputation and the practical necessity of providing for his family (Macswell 4). The divided and overblown newspaper response indicates that the interview was still an innovative practice in 1886 and the interviewer's position as a professional transmitter of speech an ambiguous one.

Such an anxiety was not limited to the medium of the interviewer, but also extended to the mediating role of the rapidly changing (and professionalising) journalistic trade itself. Fostered by the still comparatively young cross-country cable communications and newspaper syndicates, stories and quotations circulated quickly as newspapers reprinted articles and dispatches from their fellow publications around the country. News items were often reprinted directly from other newspaper sources, without secondary confirmation. This led, in the case of the Lowell affair, to an onslaught of rumour and conjecture regarding the circumstances of the scandal. When reports were countermanded, the corrections were often delayed or hidden away in the back pages.

Lowell had made precisely this point in his initial letter: “The worst of such offences against social morals is that explanation and correction are alike futile, even had one the time or the inclination for them, and if the public cared anything about the matter” (“A Prompt Denial” 1). Many newspapers ruminated upon the problems created by this ease of transmission and the irresponsible journalism practices it seemed to encourage. While the cable system offered speed of transmission, it did not guarantee accuracy. The journalistic norm of the special dispatch, at least, was “print first, reflect after”. While such practices amplified the interviewee’s purported opinions, they also implied an association between the interview and idle talk.

This is particularly evident if we examine the scandal from a transatlantic perspective and with an eye to conceptions of national identity. Given that the alleged interview with Lowell specifically addressed the topic of England it is not surprising that the British press also covered the story. The voice of the interviewee was to echo across the Atlantic, with significant repercussions for conceptions of conversation, the interview and the interviewer.

Plain-speaking and British Gossip

In America, the same week in which newspaper reports of the interview controversy were being printed, papers across America announced Lowell's engagement to British aristocrat and relative of William Gladstone, Lady Lytton. Seemingly unrelated to questions of speech, the announcement in fact had heavy implications. The British (and French) aristocracy had commonly been characterised as effete, extravagant and morally lax in the young Republic. Since mid-century, this reputation had strengthened as the British aristocracy as a group had suffered from a series of high-profile sexual scandals. These included the Dilke Affair and the Crawford divorce trial, both of which were mentioned in the alleged interview. These and others, such as the Campbell divorce trial, reinforced perceived associations between the aristocracy, and deviant secret behaviour.⁸ In his alleged interview Lowell had explicitly supported the aristocracy, defending them from accusations of immorality. Now that he was to marry into this world, the press smelt a sensational story.

In fact, the engagement announcement was untrue. On this occasion Lowell remained publicly mute; it was left for his friends to deny the story. While the probity of Lowell's private and public reputation was never overtly called into question, the news item and the inevitably delay between announcement and denial nevertheless reinforced Lowell's public reputation as a devoted Anglophile and, potentially, as the owner of a scandalous sexual secret. For American newspapers, Britain was the source of sensation. Despite a reputation for public reticence and conservative reporting styles, American newspapers were keen to imply that Britain's national speech was gossip.

⁸ In subsequent years, Parnell's fall from public grace in 1889, the Cleveland Street Affair of the same year, which involved the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister and, most famously, Wilde's three trials of 1895, all covered in detail by the British and American press, were only to cement such associations of the aristocracy with sexual transgressions (Thomas 39-70, William Cohen 8-12, Deborah Cohen *Family Secrets*, 38-73).

In the case of the Hawthorne-Lowell scandal, the *Chicago News* made the tongue-in-cheek suggestion that if Hawthorne were to re-consult his notes, he would find that Lowell in fact described the Prince of Wales as “talented and amiable,” while the Queen was “a woman of commanding height, of willowy lissome [sic] figure, panther-like in her movements, with a voice like the tones of an Aeolian harp, and a laughter like the tinkling exuberance of a sylvan cascade” (reprinted in “What Mr Lowell Did Say” 2). The extravagant praise mocks Lowell’s perceived Anglophilia and propensity towards a high-flown literary style. This was contrasted with the perceived plain-speaking “American-ness” of Hawthorne. The *Washington Post* commented that it was “regrettable that [Lowell] feels that it is necessary to deny such an excellent interview, for it greatly improved his status in the eyes of his countrymen. He seemed suddenly to be inoculated with a courageous Americanism, altogether different in spirit from his timorous official utterances” (“That Interview” 2). American speech is opposed to bland official language, but also, obliquely, to the Old World art of (indirect) conversation.

By contrast, in England America’s reporting style left it vulnerable to the same critique. The announcement of Lowell’s engagement had reached Britain before the interview affair. In an indication of the differences between British and American reporting at this time, it is notable that Lady Lyttleton’s name is not mentioned in the majority of reports. Instead, allusion is made to a woman aligned to a noble house. When personal reporting was still being fiercely debated in the periodicals, the naming of subjects was similarly contentious and, crucially, perceived as an Americanism at this time.⁹

News of the interview scandal was broken in the *PMG* on 9 November. Under the editorship of Stead the paper had a reputation for utilising the innovative techniques

⁹ John Morley’s 1867 article “Anonymous Journalism” had outlined the advantages to signed publication, but T. P. O’Connor was still complaining in 1889 that, “we are to admire personality in history but not in journalism. In other words, history is to be made personal, but the material for making it personal is not allowed to exist” (428).

and subjects associated more often with American journalism. While Stead was one of the strongest proponents of interviewing in the contemporary press, the paper strongly endorsed Lowell's position. In defending Lowell, the *PMG* was tacitly indicating not only Lowell's own popularity in England, but also the much less secure reputation of the interview in Britain at this time.

The *PMG*'s account was quickly followed by coverage from other periodicals who castigated Julian Hawthorne's interview and the American practice of interviewing. In the *Saturday Review* Hawthorne was depicted as torturer in his role as inquisitor (taking its cue from Hawthorne's own characterisation of the interview process, ("Lowell in a Chatty Mood" 9)). It is suggested that Lowell should have been more on his guard as, though an old friend, Hawthorne was "not only a pressman, but an American pressman" ("Mr. Lowell Put to the Question" 640). While the writer wonders sardonically of Lowell "what could he suppose an American pressman meant by asking such a lot of questions? Did he think it was a mere sign of an open and inquiring mind?" he or she also adds that "all English readers regret the annoyance he has suffered" (640). Here nationality is central to the interpretation of communication, to the discredit of America.

The *Saturday Review* article also emphasised Hawthorne's own literary heritage, as well as his position as a pressman. Such focus is to the detriment of both Hawthorne's reputation and to contemporary American literature. Hawthorne's "lively fancy, the imagination of a writer of romance" is seen as constitutionally opposed to the qualities required for respectable journalism. In addition, while the category of "romance" is associated with respected American authors, including William Dean Howells and James in the article, Hawthorne is condemned for his similarity to these writers' fictional interviewers. More particularly, Hawthorne's lineage is used to condemn him. Following the allusion to torture, the *Review* asserts that English readers will attach as much credit to the Lowell observations "as to the confessions of witches in the pilliewinks" (640). The

Salem witch trials, drawn on in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*, are here alluded to. Recognised classics of American literature offer a subtle critique of the country's contemporary journalistic practices. In an appropriate move, given the elder Hawthorne's obsession with family curses, here father damns son.

The allusion to *The Scarlet Letter* also recalls Lowell's own discussion of literature in the alleged interview. Despite his perceived Anglophilia, Lowell had been largely negative about British literature, preferring the works of the elder Hawthorne, "one of the most remarkable minds we have ever had in America" ("Lowell in a Chatty Moody," 9). For Lowell, *The Scarlet Letter* offers "perhaps the finest, the most imaginative passage in our literature" (9). Nathaniel Hawthorne's legacy and the meaning of conversation becomes a symbol of American literature's development. It should come as no surprise that the *Saturday Review* article was reprinted back in the States: at stake in the Hawthorne-Lowell affair was not solely the ethics of transmission, but the authority of America's future literary voice as idle talk or otherwise.

Both Hawthorne and Lowell were to remain largely silent upon the events of the autumn of 1886 in subsequent years. Press chatter was to continue well into the New Year as other parts of the British Empire heard of the scandal from sources in both London and New York. From the Antipodes to the Caribbean the English-speaking world took note. In this scandal we find the seeds of transformations that were to occur over the next thirty years, as American models of new journalism were to become increasingly influential on the global stage.

Indeed, a profoundly different definition of conversation, stemming from the American interview, was to succeed in the 1890s. The so-called Yellow Journalism, (itself developed against the backdrop of another international dispute, the Spanish-American War of 1898) promoted in papers such as Joseph Pulitzer's *World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and the popularity of celebrity interviews across the Atlantic

were to transform the global media. Despite regular protestations by men of letters on both sides of the Atlantic, the Americanisation of the English-speaking media was triumphing. Julian Hawthorne's version of conversation, and not Lowell's, dominated. In 1886, however, the profound anxieties expressed about the excessively available or gossipy voice indicate that the battle was at its height.

Henry James and Hearing

When the Hawthorne-Lowell scandal broke in England, Henry James was apoplectic. A good friend of Lowell and a strong critic of modern invasive journalism practices, particularly the figure of the American interviewer, James declared that Hawthorne [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (James to Lowell, 16 Nov 1886). Yet despite this categorical denunciation, James displays a more nuanced reflection upon issues that surround the interview voice in his writings at large. Critics have hitherto been keen to emphasise James's depiction of the invasive glare of publicity, engendered in the interviewer and his or her product. Nevertheless, the writer's emotional response to the Hawthorne-Lowell affair, his novel *The Bostonians* (published in book form in 1886) as well as various short stories, particularly "The Death of the Lion" (1894), indicate an engagement with a model of literary appreciation that turns upon a strongly affective aurality.¹⁰ These texts must complicate our understanding of James's attitude towards the interview form and our understanding of the interview voice itself.

Henry James was not shy in declaring his hatred of the interviewer and the wider culture of publicity that was gaining strength in the latter part of the nineteenth century. He wrote repeatedly of the "invasion, the impudence and shamelessness, of the

¹⁰ Steven Connor's *Dumbstruck* contains an in-depth discussion of the physical, affective and cultural qualities of voice, which draws heavily on the work of linguist Walter Ong and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of perception*. While not referring to the form, Connor's work has directed my own engagement with the affective aspect of voice and aurality.

newspaper and the interviewer, the devouring *publicity* of life,” hated the practice of printing the author’s “literary remains” after his death and repeatedly figured interviewers in a negative light in his fictions (James *Notebooks* 40). In monographs on the author Richard Salmon and Michael Anesko both focus on James’s resistance to publicity. In their readings, the interview is the most heinous manifestation of this cultural trait, although both acknowledge the important imaginative function such resistance offered the writer (Anesko 12, Salmon *Publicity* 191). This latter point also helps to explain the existence of published interviews with James. Four have been identified to date, one of which was, surprisingly, conducted by Julian Hawthorne in 1905. They generally express the writer’s own suspicion of the form (Scharnhorst 19 and note 1 below).

Critical discussion of James’s attitude towards interviewing and the culture of publicity overwhelmingly emphasises metaphors of light (Rubery *Novelty* 121-22, 126-27, Salmon “Signs of Intimacy” 163, 169-175). While such emphasis upon James’s focus upon the invasive look is certainly born out by his work, I argue instead for the affective importance of voice in understanding James’s attitude towards the interview. Matthew Rubery indeed offers a fascinating reading of the short story “The Papers” (1903) which conceives of “intimacy as a form of speechlessness defined in opposition to the confessional voice of the interview” (*Novelty* 136). I want to extend this observation on the close connection between vocality and intimacy in a slightly different manner by exploring James’s depiction of the affective, aural aspect of reading and literary appreciation. As I will show, this is a depiction that is distinctly tied to gender dynamics for the author.

On 16 November 1886 Henry James wrote to Lowell to express his condolences over the scandal. The letter is quoted at length to convey the tone of James’s correspondence:

(James to Lowell, 16 Nov 1886)

James's letter is an outpouring of sympathy that quite overwhelms the reader. His tone swings between fiery condemnation and anguished declarations of compassion. The first sentence begins with angry denunciation only to move rapidly towards a personal, affective and dramatic response, in which James is the one in need of consolation, and then quickly into a reformulation wherein Lowell is the consoled party. Such rapid modifications in tone and in the target of this surfeit of emotion continue throughout the letter. James's response is of such empathy that it is he who weeps, even while encouraging a philosophical response in Lowell. Similarly, James repeatedly emphasises the gravity of the crime, only to moderate its magnitude, in complicated syntactical phrases and attention to the fine gradations of response.

The author re-used the trope of tears when writing to Charles Eliot Norton, a mutual friend of both he and Lowell, on 6 December 1886. James stated, "I wept for Lowell, after Julian Hawthorne's infamous trick – until I received his Harvard speech. Then indeed I continued weeping – but it was with pleasure and admiration" ("To

Charles Eliot Norton” 6 Dec [1886] *Letters* 147).¹¹ Here tears are the sign again of an outpouring of emotion, although so quickly are they transformed from painful to pleasurable that they seem to leave, like teardrops on paper, a visible residue of suggested impropriety or disproportion in the letter. In both letters (themselves intimate correspondences) we seem to have an effusion of tears, language and emotion.

This emotional effusion, which borders on the hysterical, carries a not-quite suppressed feminine gendering. Indeed, in much of his work James explores this stereotype, with particular attention paid to the emotional and political efficacy of female speech. In *The Bostonians* (1886) Verena Tarrant’s ability to move her audience when speaking explores connections between female emancipation, inspiration and affective speech. In a book that attempts to portray the conversational culture of mid-century, *The Bostonians* is saturated with instances of female speech, whether through public lectures, the semi-public speech of the salon, drawing room conversations and Matthias Pardon’s success at “drawing out the ladies” in his interviews (I.191). So too the book is dominated by interviews in the older sense that, as Peter Gibian notes, are privileged in the domestic female novel of this era as the site of intense emotion and significant conversation (26).

In James’s earlier novel, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881, revised extensively in 1906), the action also revolves around conversational dexterity and women’s agency. The novel abounds with (very different) examples of mistresses of the art of conversation in the tradition of the salon, whether Madame Merle’s near-perfect speech, Mrs Osmond’s “American Corinne,” or Isabel’s verbal agility as a married hostess presenting a societal persona. Conversational adroitness and reticence are aligned with a woman’s reputation.

¹¹ During the scandal Lowell gave a speech at Harvard’s 250th anniversary celebrations, which lamented the newly abolished Greek entrance requirement for undergraduates (“The Oration and the Poem” 6). Given that much of the new readership of newspapers in this period were precisely those who had benefited from the widening of education (the Mann Reforms, the Lyceum movement, etc.) but who had not been classically trained, such support was in danger of alienating many readers, as commentators noted (“Lowell on Greek” 2).

Countess Gemini's loose morals are apparently re-staged through her chattering style of speech and Henrietta Stackpole, New Woman journalist for the *Interviewer*, becomes a figure of some mockery.

However, the novel also resists such easy categorisations. Madame Merle's private life is found to be just as scandalous as that of Countess Gemini's and despite James's irony, Henrietta Stackpole is also a symbol of the future, a future in which women's agency is greatly expanded. This agency is explicitly indicated through the status of female speech itself. Asked why she does not leave her husband, Isabel replies: "I can't publish my mistake. I don't think that's decent" (III.113). When Henrietta notes that, "You won't think so always," James yokes the publication of female speech not only with more conventional associations of the shame and exposure experienced through society gossip and divorce court reporting, but also with the transforming financial and social situation of women (III.113); the year in which the novel was serialised in Britain also saw the passing of the Married Women's Property Act. Henrietta's own ability to extract financial value from the choice word might be gauche but it sits in telling contrast to Isabel's own situation. Married to the aesthete Gilbert Osmond, characterised by his elegant, but morally bankrupt, conversation, Isabel's curtailed agency is depicted in part through her deployment of her husband's speech style. Notably too it is Osmond who expresses the most overt condemnation of Henrietta's person and it is her voice that he fixes upon: "She talks as a steel pen writes ... Her voice is in my ears; I can't get rid of it" (III.116). While James might have declared the novel to have "too much" of Henrietta in his New York Edition preface, while she might have "no sense of privacy", be "vulgar," and talk "too loud" and look "too hard"

she nevertheless offers a welcome alternative to Osmond's line of immorality-with-decorum (New York Edition I.xix, *Portrait* I.109, I.117, I.117, I.120).¹²

Although the audibility of speech, interviewing or otherwise, becomes an important metaphor for female agency in James, he also uses it to think through transforming norms of masculinity and male intimacy in relation to the culture of publicity. Gilbert Osmond's persona indicates another important aspect of adroitness in conversation in this era: for James and others it was inextricably tied to aestheticism.

The most significant figure in this linkage was of course Oscar Wilde. A troublesome character for James, Wilde had become inextricably associated with the interview and the witty, and easily quotable epigram, after his American lecture tour of 1882.¹³ Wilde's later success as a playwright (in contrast to James's failure) and his important dialogic essay "The Critic as Artist" cemented this reputation. This success, as critic Regenia Gagnier has argued, was closely connected to his ability to invert the utilitarian language of the press and to create seductive, artificial prose (19). Certainly, the beautifully turned, irreverent phrases of Wilde's interviews and theatre dialogues offered an ethical counter to the pomposity of journalistic claims to facticity. However, they simultaneously offered exemplary material for those same pressmen: they were easily circulated, sensationalised and consumed by the newspaper reading public. While Gagnier doesn't discuss interviews per se and her interest is in literary style, rather than conversation itself, her argument is important as it hints at why conversation becomes so closely tied to questions of aesthetics, masculinity and publicity in this period.

Gagnier's main argument sought to consider aestheticism in light of the different publics who consumed it (7). Such an approach has proven generative. In *Professions of Taste* Jonathan Freedman extended Gagnier's reach to place James's own resistance to,

¹² In re-drafting the novel for the New York Edition, James also underlined the associations between Henrietta and modernity, coarsening her portrait (e.g. I.131).

¹³ See as well Hofer and Scharnhorst, eds. *Oscar Wilde in America: the interviews*, Shelley Salamensky and Michèle Mendelssohn, *Going Wilde*.

and complicity with, the market within similar posturings by Wilde and other aesthetes in Britain and America. So too work by Richard Dellamora, Michèle Mendelssohn, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Alan Sinfield, Hugh Stevens, and others, have helped to link aestheticism, male same-sex desire, commodity culture, scandal and publicity in the emergence of the category of homosexual (man) in the fin-de-siècle and in analysing the wide cultural reverberations of Oscar Wilde's 1895 trials.

Wilde's trials marked a seismic shift in the cultural interpretation of male same-sex intimacy and aestheticism. In doing so they also transformed the way in which male same-sex desire could be voiced, something that scholars of James have pursued with alacrity both before and after the ruptures of 1895. Peter Coviello uses James's phrase the "unspeakable past," written in 1914, to describe a more general difficulty in approaching nineteenth century sexuality from a temporal distance (1).

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has also influentially read the silences in James's fiction in terms of Wilde's "love that dare not speak its name" and certainly in short stories such as "The Beast in the Jungle," "The Middle Years" or "The Figure in the Carpet" it is the *unspoken* emotion that dominates (*Epistemology* 182-212). Within these stories, James stages the act of interpretation, of reading, as always frustrated and met with silence. The text being read is often a person, usually an older male author, whom the younger narrator positions as authoritative and yet singularly fails to interpret. Notably too, reading in James's model is depicted as a private conversation with the author, which is a special realm constantly threatened from outside.

This might indeed be the practice of interviewing itself, which transformed private conversation into "damnable doings." Sedgwick's epistemology of the closet, with its reliance on creating a space of restriction and its rhetoric of disclosure might seem to parallel the powerful fictions of access on which the interview premises. However, we should guard against the seductive power of the parallels: the secret of the

interview, or public exposure in general, is not necessarily sexual, nor, for James is male same-sex intimacy always erotic. More productive is Sedgwick's later attention to affect, particularly that of shame, which offers a more compelling backdrop against which to consider public and private speech and (not necessarily erotic) male intimacy in James's work (*Touching* 35-65).

Listening to the Lion

In order to examine these ideas in more detail, I turn to James's short story "The Death of the Lion." James depicts reading here as a private conversation between author and reader, a conversational space in which "hearing" the text, is offered as a potentially idealised and emotional alternative to the glare of the interview. "The Death of the Lion" was first published in 1894, in the April edition of the London-based *Yellow Book*. It was revised for the New York Edition, vol. XV in 1909. Its inclusion in the *Yellow Book* is intriguing given the publication's associations with aestheticism, its somewhat sensational courting of publicity and James's own dislike of the "horrid aspect and company of the whole publication" ("To Mr. and Mrs. William James" 28 May 1894 *Letters* 482).

The new publicity surrounding authorship is central to "The Death of the Lion" and James strongly satirises the propensity of journalists and society hostesses to promote the celebrity reputation of the author while simultaneously neglecting his or her work. It is notable that at the house party of hostess Mrs Weeks Wimbush, in which author Neil Paraday is the "prime attraction, a creature of almost heraldic oddity," none of the society guests, who profess such admiration for the author, actually read any of his work (26). Instead:

in the hall I come upon ladies, in attitudes, bending gracefully over the first volume. I discreetly avert my eyes, and when I next look round the precarious joy has been superseded by the book of life ... Somebody else presently finds it and

transfers it, with its air of momentary desolation, to another piece of furniture. Every one is asking about it all day, and every one is telling every one where they put it last ... I have a strong impression too that the second volume is lost – has been packed in the bag of some departing guest; and yet everybody has the impression that somebody else has read to the end. You see therefore that the beautiful book plays a great part in our conversation.” (41)

In this passage the book features as an important sign of the author’s reputation; it circulates like money within the group, conferring value upon the holder. The contents of the book, its literary worth, is important only in the abstract as each member of the group publicises his or her literary taste in attending to the book. The term “beautiful book” satirically merges the commodity function of the work, which turns on the book’s visibility in the marketplace and as a symbol of taste, with its less tangible aesthetic power as a reading experience.

While the interplay of visibility, desire and reading is explored through the narrator’s relationship with the American autograph-hunter Fanny Hurter, the story also promotes a less conventional model of hearing and male-only intimacy. Throughout the story hearing is positioned as an uneasy alternative to sight. Specifically, a model of literary appreciation based not on the eyes, but on the ear, is explored. When the narrator first visits Paraday, the author offers to read aloud a précis of his next novel. This is to be the first of many instances of reading aloud, of overhearing, and references to breath and air in the story.

Acknowledging that, “I quite held my breath as I listened,” the narrator compares the book scheme to a “great gossiping eloquent letter” and notes that Paraday’s:

reading of the epistle, at any rate, made me feel as if I were, for the advantage of posterity, in close correspondence with him – were the distinguished person to whom it had been affectionately addressed. It was a high distinction simply to be told such things. The idea he now communicated had all the freshness, the flushed fairness of the conception untouched and untried: it was Venus rising

from the sea, before the airs had blown upon her. I had never been so throbbingly present at such an unveiling.” (13)

In comparing the *précis* to a letter the narrator rehearses the, by now familiar, notion of the letter as an intimate communication that conveys conversation. In being read aloud, the emotional effect of the text becomes almost indistinguishable from the fireside communion represented by the epistle. Here being read to becomes a deeply emotional, aesthetic and erotic experience.

The second half of the passage moves from the impact of voice to a more visual aesthetics. The *précis* is likened to the goddess of beauty in the scene frequently depicted by artists and, in the final word quoted above, the reading also becomes an “unveiling”. While the effect of the vocal experience is emphasised, it is conveyed through visual terms. The passage indeed continues with one final sentence that reinforces this transition: “But when he had tossed the last bright word after the others, as I had seen cashiers in banks, weighing mounds of coin, drop a final sovereign into the tray, I became conscious of a sudden prudent alarm” (13-14). Not only is the word described in terms of light, but the narrator’s conception of the literary value of the piece is figured through comparison with cash and in the process, reduced to its monetary value on the marketplace. The metaphor of the “bright” word leads inexorably towards the shiny coinage and value system of the marketplace. In presenting this figurative transformation, James subtly indicates the dangers of reducing the reading experience to the terms of the visual.

We might, however, interpret the “prudent alarm” quoted above not merely as testament to the danger of the marketplace but as a more illusive gesturing towards the erotic or affective appeal of the experience of being read to. The aestheticism, the trope of unveiling and the communion represented within the passage offers an affective experience that lends itself to being read as homoerotic or paternally protective. The

desire or same-sex intimacy that after 1895 needed to be closeted, is more easily expressible in the aural.

This is precisely the gesture that repels the syndicated interviewer Mr Morrow. The journalist declares to the narrator a desire to see Paraday's study for, "if we could talk things over right there where he sits I feel as if I should get the keynote" (22). Although as an interviewer Morrow repeatedly professes a desire to talk with Paraday, to hear "any expression of his views," and to publish them in "Smatter and Chatter," and emphasises aurality in his term "keynote," he is horrified by the narrator's suggestion that they read the author's book aloud (18). The latter insists that: "one scarcely does read Neil Paraday till one reads him aloud; he gives out to the ear an extraordinary quality, and it's only when you expose it confidently to that test that you really get near his style. Take up your book again and let me listen, while you pay it out, to that wonderful fifteenth chapter" (23-24). Morrow responds with a "straight glance" before storming out (24). Considered in tandem with the previous occasion of reading aloud, we could easily conceive of Morrow's fast exit as a rejection of an erotic challenge.

In offering a reading session, the narrator attempts to divert attention from that most visible of nineteenth century private spaces – the author's study – to the book. In doing so he declares the pages to be full of "revelations" and "testimony," utilising a lexicon of exposure. While the reading activity being promoted troublesomely conflates book and author, wherein the former can offer revelatory insight into the latter, at this moment it offers a preferable alternative in the eyes of the narrator to a chat with the author (who has retired feeling ill) or scrutiny of the study. It also proffers an affective, potentially erotic same-sex experience as an alternative to exposing the private room. The process of reading aloud or listening becomes "a little act of sympathy" and an alternative to the glare of publicity, but one also tied to unspoken feelings (23).

Later in the short story, Mrs Wimbush speaks of her own admiration for Paraday:

she devoured everything he wrote. And then he read like an angel. Mrs. Wimbush reminded me that he had again and again given her, Mrs. Wimbush, the privilege of listening to him.

I looked at her a moment. 'What has he read to you?' I crudely enquired.

For a moment too she met my eyes, and for a fraction of a moment she hesitated and coloured. 'Oh, all sorts of things!' (39)

Again, the passage emphasises the aural dimension of reading, but it also becomes coarsened. Listening becomes not "a little act of sympathy" but an act that threatens to devour the author as much as his work, just as Mrs Wimbush devours his limited time. While the narrator might try to undermine the hostess's claim, and the prose hints at (sexual) jealousy, even the act of listening becomes tainted by publicity's representatives.

This degradation is further emphasised in the reading circle that takes place at Mrs Wimbush's house. Paraday is to give a reading of his *précis* for the assembled guests. When Paraday becomes too ill to take part in the reading his place is taken by Miss Collup, a writer who embodies the superficial nature of authorial celebrity, writing under the male pseudonym Guy Walsingham. The reader and the narrator are not present, they only overhear the event: "I heard a shrill voice lifted in a prolonged monotonous quaver. The famous reading had begun" (49). At this moment, another author, Dora Forbes (in fact a pseudonym of a male writer) arrives and asks, "*Shall* I spoil it if I go in?" (49). The narrator encourages him to enter and the literary spat produced is "almost a scandal" (50). Hearing the novel becomes, not a personal correspondence, but a public and sensational event to be reported in the press. Towards the end of "The Death of the Lion," listening to the author reading aloud has been transformed from an affective communion to something more sinister, complete with gender-inversions.

At the close of the story the manuscript of the *précis* has been lost by careless houseguests and as Paraday's health declines, medical advice requires an "absolutely soundless house" (50). Publicity has been the death of Paraday just as it has corrupted

both the aural and the visual form of reading. Here silence, the absence of the aural, becomes the only means of eluding the harmful effects of publicity.

Although James ultimately undermines the ear's ability to offer resistance to the glare of publicity, his exploration of aurality does encourage a more nuanced perspective from which to consider the interview. It is, after all, the attempt to obtain an interview that provides the narrator with the personal, intimate experience of being read aloud to. While we might perennially associate James with the yoking of the interview to the glare of publicity, his exploration of the affective and aural aspects of writerly communication and literary appreciation offers a fascinating means with which to reconsider the form from a very different, and productive, perspective.

The New Woman and the Interviewer as Medium

It was not only within his fiction that James explored the possibilities of the aural. From 1897 until his death the writer dictated his works to an amanuensis. He literally spoke his works in existence, including every syllable, letter and punctuation point (Bosanquet 34). This “free, involved, unanswered talk” had visible stylistic results; James’s lengthy and opulent “late style” (what he termed “diffuse”) was attributed to the inspiring effect of dictating as opposed to writing (34). The words were “more effectively and unceasingly *pulled* out of [him]” in dictating (34). The stylistic equivalent of the affective effusion discussed earlier, the expansive sentences carry a tinge of gendered garrulousness and his body as inhabited by an undefined inspiration.

In this example there is a more obviously inhabited figure: the listening amanuensis who transcribes the voice of the master. The medium in this case was Theodora Bosanquet, amanuensis and secretary to James from 1907 until his death. Bosanquet noted in her memoir *Henry James at Work* (1924) that the “business of acting

as medium between the spoken and the typewritten word was at first as alarming as it was fascinating” (34). The implicit comparison between female spiritual medium and amanuensis is not coincidental. The role of amanuensis becomes akin to the spiritualist, engaged in an activity with illicit and occult overtones.

A common figure in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a host of critics have illustrated the strong associations between the spiritualist and feminism in Britain and America.¹⁴ The Fox sisters, Madame Blavatsky, Hester Dowden and other spiritualists, help to illustrate the intertwined and gendered nature of spiritualism, mediumship, speech and authority at this time. As mentioned earlier, by the end of the nineteenth century women were entering the workforce as secretaries, journalists and other professionals. As the New Woman figure gained prominence in the fin-de-siècle, the interview became a crucial form for enabling and promoting conversations about the social position of women. Female journalists interviewed other pioneers and representative New Women for magazines such as Annie S. Swan’s *The Woman at Home*, the *Woman’s Signal*, *Young Woman*, *Woman’s Life* or in America, *Woman’s Journal* amongst others, as James was no doubt aware. A decade before Nellie Bly travelled around the world in seventy-two days, Henrietta Stackpole makes repeated independent trips across the Atlantic to find subjects for her writing. So too *The Bostonians* had aligned the “woman question” with conversation, and also spiritualism (Verena is a trance-speaker, mesmerised by her disreputable father), in James’s portrayal of 1870s New England.

The female spiritualist is an important figure for understanding the wider cultural anxieties around the interviewer at this time and the textual voice of the interview. While not obviously associated, both spiritualist and interviewer are connected by the widespread contemporary fascination with exploring the borders of proper and improper knowledge, individual consciousness, and the permeability of minds and gendered bodies

¹⁴ See Basham, Owen, Braude and Oppenheim.

across realms. In her book *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* Pamela Thurschwell discusses Theodora Bosanquet's role in these terms. Thurschwell situates Bosanquet's roles as New Woman (university educated, sometime journalist, committed campaigner for women's rights), amanuensis and spiritual medium, alongside James's story "In the Cage", and the "male homosexual panic" of the 1890s, to explore transformations in perceptions of consciousness, intimacy and the violable mind to great effect (86-114).

Thurschwell is not alone. A plethora of works have appeared since the 1990s which model spiritualism and the occult on wired, and later wireless, communication networks in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Roger Luckhurst's *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* and Helen Sword's *Ghostwriting Modernism* offer absorbing studies that read across the new technologies of telegraphy, telephony, electricity and the "marginal sciences" (Luckhurst *Telepathy* 2). Although not all discuss the interview form, their focus on spiritualism links the very networks that were key to the interview's production and circulation with wider reconceptualisations of personal and public knowledge.

More recently and more broadly antebellum scholars such as Emily Ogden and John Lardas Modern have productively linked study of spiritualism (particularly mesmerism), secularism, science and literature together by the notion of enchantment, or more specifically, "credulity." In doing so they animate discussions of the wider epistemological crisis in this period around subject and objecthood, rationality, errant knowledge, communication between minds, bodies and in the public sphere. A widespread term of abuse in the period before the Civil War targeted at everyone from female mesmerists and fiction readers, to religious enthusiasts and Darwinists, to be credulous suggests an individual possessed of excessive belief, of too much knowledge, that itself was often linked to the female body. Despite seeming far from the interview at

the fin-de-siècle, credulity has important ramifications for our discussion: contemporary anxiety around the interviewer-as-medium needs to be understood within a longer historical narrative of spiritualism, rationality and the body.

Interviewing the Dead: Stead and the Disembodied Voice

Two decades after the Hawthorne-Lowell affair another interview scandal was cabled around the globe. In 1909 Stead conducted an interview with the spirit of William Gladstone. The general response was one of mockery and the story dismissed by many as quackery or a stunt by a dried up sensational journalist. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the interviewer and the spiritualist are closely aligned in this period.

W. T. Stead also plays a central role in Luckhurst's study, for the connections between journalistic communicative networks and spiritual contact that his person embodies. Other Stead scholars, including Justin Sausman and John Durham Peters, have also explored these links (Sausman 149-165, Peters 167-171). Stead himself was to regularly draw comparisons between new technology and spiritualism: an article in *Borderland* explains, "A medium is like a newspaper, the intermediary of communication between the general public and those who do things, say things and think things" ("The Other World from the New World" 304). Annie Besant, reformist journalist and close friend, was also interviewed in the same volume and described newspapers as the "spiritual apparatus" of a country ("Theosophy: Interview with Mrs. Besant" 399). It was not, however, in the specialist quarterly *Borderland* that Stead published his famous interview with Gladstone (the title had closed in 1897), but in a daily newspaper. Stead was also well known for surrounding himself with women, whether journalists, spiritualists or the spirit of Julia Ames. Coverage of the story was to link these features, depicting Stead as effeminate, hysterical and credulous, as we shall see.

The 1909 interview was particularly notable given its interlocutors and topicality. Gladstone had been asked to comment upon fellow Liberal David Lloyd-George's controversial "People's Budget" which proposed levying taxes on the wealthy in order to fund social welfare schemes. Given the budget had yet to pass, the interview was seen by many as an attempt by Stead to sway politics. In fact, it offered an even more radical challenge to the systems of demarcation within which ideas of voice and the public sphere functioned at this moment.

In November 1909 *The Daily Chronicle* commissioned an interview between Stead and a subject from the afterlife. The *Chronicle* prefaced its publication with a disclaimer and a warning to readers to use their "common sense" ("Spirit 'Interview'"). Following that warning, it printed a lengthy "stenographic report" of the interview, which focuses on Gladstone's views on the People's Budget. Before commencing the conversation proper Stead emphasises both the business-like manner of Julia's Bureau and the strict process for obtaining the interview. He discusses the plethora of people involved in the interview, including the medium, transcriber and interrogator, most of whom were women. Stead emphasises their specialised roles and professional conduct. The description of the interview as a "stenographic report" by the *Chronicle* mocks Stead's own attempts to bolster the authority and professionalism of the occasion by comparing medium with secretary and spiritual contact with inter-office memoranda or factual journalism.¹⁵ Other newspapers were to pick up on these comparisons too.

The interview itself was widely reprinted; indeed the lengthy quotation of remarks and their speedy circulation around the globe is remarkably similar to the coverage of the Lowell interview. The latter was often prefaced with a note of its inauthenticity before being reprinted; the ghostly interview was given the same treatment.

¹⁵ The same month also saw the British *Fortnightly Review* publish the second of two articles by Stead regarding his attempts to contact the dead "When the Door Opened," in which he compared the difficulties of transcribing communication with the dead to transcription problems found in parliamentary reporting (874).

The *New York Times* was thus to proclaim the interview to be a “farrago of nonsense,” and yet reproduced a lengthy section in their Sunday edition of 21 November, complete with photos (“Gladstone’s Ghost Talks with Stead” 4, “Stead’s Interviews with Dead Statesmen” SM2).

The same paper also noted that it “is at least remarkable how closely the views of Gladstone’s spirit resemble those of Stead,” continuing that there was “nothing in the interview which in the remotest degree suggests the style or thought of the real Gladstone” (“Gladstone’s Ghost Talks with Stead” 4). Such declarations suggest that the authentic voice of Gladstone may be identified despite being transmitted across realms and into print. Stead is castigated for his failure as an interviewer to act as a transparent medium, rather than for his attempts to act as an interviewer of a spirit. Numerous commentators also raged against the supposed bad grammar of the piece, affronted, it would seem, less by Stead’s claim to interview a ghost than by the visible signs of unprofessionalism aligned with transmitting speech into print. While small comments in a perceived larger “farrago of nonsense,” these remarks do indicate an anxiety in the contemporary evaluation of the interview process around the authority of interview speech.

This is also evinced in the *Daily Mirror*’s treatment of the story. Prefacing the remarks with the rather banal “The interview then began, a voice saying:” it then quotes at length (“‘Ghost’ and Budget” 3). Surrounded by articles addressing the Greek mutiny, disagreement between the Prime Minister and the admiralty, and an incident involving a suffragette, there is little differentiation between the presentation of these news stories and the report of an interview with a ghost. The latter two stories print remarks from private correspondence and statements obtained by interview, and even the scare quote that surround the “ghost” in the Stead article heading elides into the quotation marks surrounding words of the subheading in the admiralty story (“Prime Minister and

Admiral” 3, “Suffragette’s Apology Refused” 3). It is remarkable then how indistinguishable the presentation of the ghost interview is here from stories modern readers might find less strange. The utterances of the dead are here as quotable as those of the living.

Lord Curzon wrote to the editor of the *Times* to lament precisely this element of the scandal. That a “notoriously hysterical journalist” should not merely be able to “cite the authority, but to quote the suppositious accents of the late Mr Gladstone in favour of the financial propositions” in a newspaper causes him great anxiety (“The Budget” 10). The distinction made between citation and quotation indicates the perceived authority of the voice, or speech, of the individual in the public sphere. Curzon’s characterisation of Stead as “hysterical” also draws upon and reinforces associations already discussed between an excess of emotion and gender, spiritualism and women, and indeed the sensational press and effeminacy, at this time.

Curzon then follows this up with a declaration of outrage that such “abominable and almost impious charlatanry should be foisted on an ignorant and credulous public” (10). Invoking a rather low opinion of the public – this is not a view of the public as critically engaged, but as of an uneducated, perhaps emotional mass – the statement indicates an anxiety that such quotation will sway this gullible public. It is an argument about rationality and about proper and improper knowledge. Curzon effectively concurs with Stead’s arguments of 1886 about the affective power of voice in the public sphere, but distrusts the public response.

The political dimension of the scandal was emphasised when the interview was quoted abroad. In Australia Curzon’s attack was reprinted extensively. In America the *New York Sun* followed Curzon in strongly criticising what it perceived as a shameless attempt to manipulate politics by a “necromantic reporter” (“Mr Stead’s Telephone to Hades” 8). Others took the whole thing less seriously. In Honolulu, (Hawaii having been

recently annexed by America), the English-speaking *Evening Bulletin* responded with a good dose of satire while poking fun at American journalism: “Talk about American great newspaper enterprise in a crisis! // The British have passed us as if the whole American combination were tied to a post” (“Stead’s Great Stunt” 4). The article goes on to suggest that Stead’s methods might be also useful for settling American political arguments.

Satirical or serious, gossip or politicised debate, the national and international coverage of the story indicate that the interview was a troublesome form in the new century, sitting as it did at the heart of a nexus of issues around private and public communication. Stead’s interviewing of the dead was sensational in part because it merely emphasised the extra-visual, affective and vocal aspects of communication upon which the interview premised itself. Stead’s act, while not embraced by mainstream newspapers, emphasised the imaginative parallels between extra-rational spiritualism and the interview voice that many of his contemporaries wished to ignore.

Though Steven Connor was making a fair point when he noted that, “The recent dignification of spiritualism risks distorting its subject in so far as it allows one to forget, or as it were, forget to take seriously, the shrieking silliness of the whole business” (“The Machine in the Ghost” 205), the common contemporary yoking of new communicative technologies and spiritualism that these studies foreground is essential for understanding the interview form in this period. The excessive audibility and emotion of the interview voice and its ability to speak errant knowledge meant that the interview was more than “shrieking silliness” to nineteenth-century readers. The credulous female reader of fiction, so worrying at mid-century, had been replaced, by 1900, by the credulous reader of the interview.

We should also not make the mistake of drawing a line between this moment and our own times. Interviewing the dead is a recurrent (if sometimes less than serious)

practice across the twentieth century: in the culture of mourning that followed the First World War interviews with the dead proliferate, in the nineties James Merrill and David Jackson interviewed a host of dead authors for the *Paris Review*, a magazine well-known for its author interviews (“The Plato Club”). Similarly, while not discussing the dead, chapter three develops many of the points highlighted here through examining the importance of spatial relations, presence and absence in the interview form. Before this, however, we must consider a different kind of presence: that of personality.

Celebrity, Portraiture and Modernism's "Impossible Interviews"

In the late 1920s *Vanity Fair* began to publish a series of imaginary interviews that combined unlikely pairings to humorous effect under the title "Impossible Interviews". The visually arresting illustrations of Miguel Covarrubias which accompanied the short text (by Corey Ford) emphasised the humour of proposed encounters between Gertrude Stein and Gracie Allen, for example, or Schiaparelli versus Stalin.¹ One of these interviews featured Sigmund Freud and Jean Harlow and plays upon the juxtaposition of serious academic and frothy starlet (fig. 1). Freud's couch takes on libidinous associations as Harlow reclines seductively. This image, bringing together the celebrity interview and Freud's psychoanalytical encounter, implies that the secret of the unconscious, and what we might call the "secret" of the celebrity's hidden personality, is ultimately a sexual one. It also makes suggestive comment upon the nature of celebrity; Harlow's eyes have been transformed into sinister black holes, inferring she is all image, a mere shell and empty of the inner psychological richness upon which Freud's theories of the individual premise themselves.

¹ Covarrubias (1904-1957) is a fascinating and under-studied figure whose work included designs for advertisements, caricatures for middlebrow magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, book illustration, artistic collaborations with Harlem Renaissance writers (he was featured in *The New Negro* (1925)) and even set designs for Josephine Baker in Paris. Later he focused his attention on the ethnographic study of Mexican art (see Heinzelman and Mears).

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 1 Miguel Covarrubias, “Impossible interview: Dr. Freud vs. Jean Harlow” (29).

This illustration is a productive place to begin thinking about how the interview acts as a kind of portraiture, promising to convey a likeness of the individual’s personality through the published dialogue. The play on surface, depth and revelation in the above

image, the representation of celebrity and (a psychoanalytic model of) selfhood, the relationship between dominant image and brief text, provide an arresting summary of the issues that are key to understanding how the form acts as a portrait of the interviewee and engages directly with the fictions of access upon which the interview turns.

In examining these issues, this chapter takes as its focal point the decades of the 1910s and 1920s. While chapter one triangulated voice, emergent global Anglophone media networks and affective responses to the interview, this chapter explores the notable shift in the early twentieth century away from depictions of orality to representations of the interview as a visual form. Granted, the visual and representative aspects of the interview were prominent in the late nineteenth century. It was during this period that the photographic portrait had reached its zenith, when the trope of invasion was often linked to the technologically-assisted eye and when halftone printing made illustrated interviews more commercially viable. Nevertheless, the advent of the Hollywood star, which also saw the rise of the fan magazine, celebrity interviewing and the popularising of the silent film, offer particularly productive ground for thinking about portraiture, visuality and representation in the interview. Moreover, the transformations in understandings of the relationship between surface representation and “hidden depth” and the nature of consciousness itself, which the popularisation of psychoanalytical thought had wrought in this period, were also applied in the interview, with significant effects on the perceived nature of the form as a mode of portraiture.

The mass-market, mass entertainment associations of the (film star) celebrity interview in this period are also important for explaining an anomaly in the employment of the interview that only becomes apparent in the era after the Second World War. In discussing little magazine the *Paris Review*, inaugurated in 1953, Christopher Bains notes the large number of authors associated with modernism who were interviewed for the magazine. He comments that:

the *Review* shaped and re-enunciated not only a genealogy of modernism but also its mythology. This strategic re-centering of literary discourses around the men and women themselves contributed valuable information on the genesis of individual works. To a real extent, *The Paris Review* took modernism back from the critics and universities, rendering it to the writers, giving them a central role in shaping the reception of their work. (Bains 760)

While Bains's assessment is certainly a valid one, it also inadvertently gestures to an enigma in the years prior. Despite an outpouring of interviews with modernist writers and artists after the Second World War, in both mass and little magazines, the years prior to this offer a notable absence of interviews with these individuals. This absence cannot be accounted for by a restrictive definition of celebrity in this era that rules out the writer – Arnold Bennett's trip to America in 1911 was widely covered by the press in interviews and articles – nor entirely by the coterie reputations of many of these writers before mid-century. While the celebrity interview proliferated in newspapers and magazines in the early years of the twentieth century, such proliferation was not associated with those publications and authors who have come to dominate our understanding of this era. The modernist little magazines are notable for their exclusion of interviews and authors such as Woolf, Eliot, Pound and others, gave few, if any, interviews at the time.

In fact, as this chapter argues, this lack can be explained precisely through reference to the emphatically visual qualities of the interview as used in mass-market publication in this period. By focusing on the interview's formal function as a type of portraiture within this specific context, I offer a reading of the form across a range of publications that use the visual possibilities of the interview to different effects. This also offers an innovative perspective on debates around modernist participation in periodical culture, celebrity and mass entertainment, and market economics, so central to scholarship on modernism since the materialist turn of the 1990s. In doing so this chapter opens up new ways of thinking about modernist practices and authors,

particularly their intriguing enthusiasm for what I shall term the “cloaked” interview, which, as shall be demonstrated, relies on a logic of the interview that is deeply reliant upon, but strongly rejects, the visually-fixated interview of the fan magazine and mass-market publication in this period. Scrutiny of the function of the interview as a type of portraiture in this era contributes to debates much wider than mere discussion of a hitherto neglected form.

This chapter proceeds in three distinct stages. The first section examines the most common interview trope of this period, found in a diverse range of publications, whether newspapers, magazines or anthologies published in books. What we might term the “revelation” trope utilises the play on visible surface and unseen depth in order to suggest the reader is being offered access to the “secret” of the interviewee’s private personality. Such a trope, as we shall see, turns on the form’s promise to convey the hidden truth behind the already-known, visible, public portrait of the personality and in doing so it questions, while simultaneously reinforcing, the nature of visual representation.

These issues are explored through reference to the writings of two transatlantic female journalists, the descendants of Henrietta Stackpole. Betty Ross, London-dwelling American expatriate and self-styled “Queen of Interviewers,” and the queen of queer gothic modernism, Djuna Barnes, had very different career trajectories and their subsequent literary reputations have diverged considerably. Ross is unheard of today while Barnes has been enthusiastically embraced by scholars keen to diversify the modernist canon. However, in their interviewing practices they offer suggestive comparisons which both reinforce and trouble traditional oppositions between mass-market journalism and modernist little magazine aesthetics.

The second section focuses more specifically on the interview’s function as portraiture in the wider realm of celebrity and, more specifically, in the Hollywood fan

magazine that turns upon the nature of the celebrity image. More particularly, it explores how wider debates about the mechanisation and standardisation of modernity associated with Fordism, Taylorism and the cinema played out in the star discourse and in the interview itself. An interview with film actress Mollie King in 1917 forms the basis of this discussion.

The final part of this chapter changes tact and examines how the interview, when it does occasionally appear in modernist magazines, functions as a cloaked interview. In little magazines as diverse as *Close Up*, *The New Age* and others, the interview is a strikingly non-visual form. The visual portrait is stripped out and instead the focus is upon the ideas conveyed. If it suggests any characteristic portrait to the modern reader, it is the disembodied floating brain of a 1950s B-movie. It is only when compared with the celebrity interview of the same period that the nature of these modernist interviews becomes so identifiably strange. In doing so, not only does this discussion offer a new and productive reading of modernist portraiture but also illustrates how rear-guard modernist little magazines are before the late 1920s in resisting the visual potential of the interview. As we shall see, this was to have huge import for the interview in the coming decades.

Interviewing the Sphinx

In 1919 Isaac Marcossion's part-memoir, part cultural-analysis, *Adventures in Interviewing* was published in New York. A year later it made its way across the Atlantic to largely positive reviews. In the book Marcossion recounts his experiences as an American interviewer, first in the US and later, during the war, in the UK. Marcossion's role as the adventurer who delved into the private realms of the offices, studies and clubs of

powerful men is glamorised.² It is this entry into the private realm of the club, the inner sanctum, the theatre dressing room, or the artist's studio, that frames the majority of interviews in this era and throughout its history. Marcossion's book was popular (and still holds an inflated rank in the scant critical appraisals of the interview) and indicates the contemporary public appetite for this kind of interview. In discussing the portrait then, we must begin with the frame. In examining interviews from this period, the emphasis placed upon the method of obtaining the interview and the trials experienced by the interviewer is notable. Such a framework establishes a very particular notion of what the interview might offer by way of a portrait of the interviewee.

From this perspective, the career of Betty Ross provides a useful case study. Like Marcossion, she was born in America and travelled widely. Ross had trained at the newly established Columbia School of Journalism and early in her career was a staff writer and self-identified "Sob-sister" at the *New York World* (*Heads and Tales* 16, Ask and Gershanek 334). Harboursing a desire to interview "the celebrity with his soul undressed," she left New York to travel the world (Ross *Heads and Tales* 15-16). Queens, writers, politicians and film stars were her subjects, interviewed for numerous mass-market publications on both sides of the Atlantic. Ross also explored the possibilities of new media: she was one of the earliest radio interviewers in a series called "Peeps at People" (*Reporters in Petticoats* 169). Settling permanently in London in 1939 she also reviewed Spanish and South American films for the magazine *Films and Filming* in the post-war period and was involved in various programmes for the BBC.³ Already then we can see how Ross's

² Marcossion's account also makes much of the backdrop of war. He frequently contrasts his behind the scenes perspective with government censorship of the press, which was first deployed on a wide scale during the First World War. The secrets offered in Marcossion's interviews might very well be state secrets. The import of censorship, surveillance and the interview are discussed further in chapter four.

³ The Ross files held at the BBC Written Archives indicate an unremitting campaign on the part of Ross to get on the air, despite being described variously (and entertainingly) as [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS], and even as having an [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] personality, in inter-office staff memos (RCONT1/Betty Ross/Talks/File 1:1931-1948 and File 2:1949-1962).

career was one of great mobility: her engagement with journalism and interviewing was one of geographical diversity, not to mention diversity of medium, subject and topic.

Ross's interviews are generally of a sensationalist bent, exemplary of the cultural of celebrity that had blossomed since the 1880s. Actors on stage and screen are frequent subjects, as are writers, heads of state and musicians. Most significant about these interviews is not, however, the diverse choice and treatment of subjects, (although this is important in an emerging "fan" culture, as discussed below). Rather, it is their preponderant emphasis on the travails of the interviewer that is notable for our purposes.

Throughout her career Ross promoted herself as the "Queen of Interviewers" and a marketable entity and celebrity. One overblown puff (which Ross utilised on her own publicity material) commented, [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS].⁴ Notably, Ross utilised the concept of the Adventuring Interviewer, like Marcossan and Nellie Bly before her, as a major component of her self-promotion. Not only did she travel widely for interviews but she advertised the fact, emphasising the dangers in her accounts (such as trying to travel to Transjordan to interview the Emir Abdullah) and referring to herself not as an American but a "citizen of the world" (*Heads and Tales* 19). Ross, like Marcossan, didn't interview celebrities when they arrive in her hometown; instead she travelled to obtain interviews.

The emphasis on travel not only highlights the glamor of the interviewer's profession, it also sets up a particular mode of viewing in the interview, which, from the second half of the nineteenth century was strongly linked to photographic realism. Contemporaneous observers and subsequent critics have often identified photography as offering the most mimetic form of representation: Nancy Armstrong's influential study of the relationship between photographic innovation, nineteenth-century philosophical

⁴ Quoted in "Betty Ross 'The Queen of Interviewers', pamphlet document in BBC RCONT1/Betty Ross/Talks/File 1:1931-1948.

conceptions of visibility and Victorian realist fiction suggests precisely this. Similarly, Carol Armstrong has identified the positivist logic utilised in photographic illustration of scientific books in this period (358). While the notion that the Victorians understood photography as solely offering a mimetic form has since been challenged by scholars (including Carol Armstrong) keen to illustrate how some writers and practitioners understood the photograph as complicating notions of perspective and representation, the idea persisted (North *Camera Works* 25).⁵ Susan Sontag has eloquently identified the consequences of such a notion: the photograph fosters an “acquisitive relation to the world,” which promotes a notion of the world as visually available and comprehensible through that visibility (111).

The link between the exploring interviewer, determined to discover new lands, and the visual mode represented by the acquisitive photographer should be apparent. Just as the photograph offers the world up for a form of viewing which implies understanding, so too the travelling interviewer offers up the interview subject to be seen and therefore understood by the reader. Crucially, both the photographer and the interviewer utilise a mode of travel more focused on leisure than exploration, despite the adventuring interviewer trope. Sontag describes the photographer as “supertourist, an extension of the anthropologist, visiting natures and bringing back news of their exotic doings and strange gear (42). In the same way the interviewer is a tourist seeking the interview personality as “new land to explore” (*Heads and Tales* 17).⁶ The puff describing Ross as interviewing the Sphinx draws on these connections, positing a widely photographed tourist destination as an interview subject. The mythic status of the

⁵ Richard Rorty has since universalised this mode of thinking in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*: “The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a great mirror, containing various representations – some accurate, some not – and capable of being studied by pure, nonempirical methods. Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have supported itself (12).

⁶ The most famous example of this is surely journalist Henry Stanley’s pursuit of Dr. Livingstone, sent to find and interview him by the *New York Herald* in 1869 (see Rubery “A Transatlantic Sensation”).

Sphinx, and its incomprehensible silence, is reducible to a snapshot interview, easily filed into the photograph album.

The “new land” did not always have to be a foreign clime. The London *Strand* had popularised drawing room tourism interviews in series in the 1890s. These “Illustrated Interviews” with famous individuals – politicians, actresses, writers and others – were accompanied by photographs of the object-stuffed Victorian interiors of their houses. Figure 2 captures in rich detail the interior of the subject’s living space. This is one of a group of nine photographs of the painter Sir Frederic Leighton’s house, typical of the series. Here specific emphasis is placed on the sumptuous interior, which, “positively surpasses description” (How 127). A catalogue of luxurious objects are also listed, including a stuffed peacock, part of the Parthenon, eye glasses and golden lyres, as well as description of the artist’s extensive collection of paintings by Reynolds, Tintoretto, Gainsborough and others. The assumption that the visible world can be fully described, captured, and perhaps even possessed, by the photographer and viewer is underlined through such emphasis upon the material object. While the view is not of foreign lands, but the inside of an upper class London dwelling, the visuality of the interview and the epistemological assumptions behind such visuality are similar.

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 2 Harry How, “Frederic Leighton’s Drawing Room” (131).

This trend continued into the 1910s and twenties, the adventuring interviewer was just as likely to emphasise travel to geographically proximate but socially closeted realms in the Progressive and Edwardian eras as he or she had in previous years. These could be the dining rooms of society's elite, or incursions into Whitechapel to interview or photograph street traders, which aimed to unveil the poor underbelly of London. Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* and Charles Booth's sociological work *Life and Labour of the People in London* are the best-known examples of the latter, but Stead's child-prostitution campaign and Ida Tarbell's muckraking articles also drew on interviews to expose shocking practices. Part of the reason that the interview was deployed to such different ends and on such different subjects was its success in purporting to unveil a hidden world and portrait.

In mass-market newspapers and fan magazines it was and still is *de rigueur* to begin an interview with a lengthy description of how the interviewer tracked down the subject and managed to get past the theatre or studio gatekeeper and into the sanctified, secret realm beyond. James satirised this scene in his short story "The Death of the Lion" when the narrator met Mr. Morrow. The convention has been central since the early days of the interview; when Edmund Yates interviewed Alfred Lord Tennyson for *The World* he began with the now-familiar invasion of privacy trope: "the Laureate has built himself, if not 'a lordly pleasure-house,' at least a mansion of welcome solitude away from the haunts of the crowd and safe from the intrusion of the curious" (23). Later, he refers to Tennyson's "better-known house at Farringford, whence the poet has been almost driven by the vulgar curiosity of mobs of tourists" (24). So concerned with setting up the trope, of recording the reader's metaphorical advance into the study where "all that is most interesting in this house centres" and to the man himself, Yates neglects to record the words of the subject himself (25). This was an interview effectively comprised only of frame.

By the 1890s the convention was widely satirised. The numerous fake, self and comedy interviews that proliferated in this period – Mark Twain being one of the more well-known subjects – draw heavily upon the frame convention. In the following decades, an attitude of knowingness was commonly deployed. A good example of this manoeuvre is visible in Ross’s article “A Silly Symphony: In a Hand-Knitted Bath-Tub with the Four Marx Brothers”. The article begins at the stage door of the Broadway Theatre, focusing on the difficulties the interviewer has in obtaining access to her subjects. Ross’s cover story involves a surprise visit from a cousin who has just arrived from out West with a meat pie sent by a maternal aunt. Unsurprisingly, the man at the stage door is sceptical:

“They all put that; but they’re phoney. Y’see when guys has got their monikers blazin’ on Broadway, they gets a flock of relations – all bozos. Most of ‘em after a hand-out for a cup of Java. When it’s a dame, you can bet your aunt’s false teeth it’s a job in the chorus she’s after – if breach o’ promise ain’t on her mind. Us guys back-stage gotta keep out all the bad eggs.”
“Not a bad egg, a meat-pie. It won’t keep. Poor Auntie — ” (*Heads and Tales* 109)

Ross emphasises the acting talents and sneaky tactics required by the interviewer in order to access the protected sphere of backstage and the dressing room. Her inclusion of the dialogue and her transcription of the man’s slang and accent create a sense of entering foreign territory. This is an exotic private world, separate from the public spaces and familiar experiences of the reader. The dialogue also highlights the difficulties of infiltrating the inner sanctum by having the usual tricks listed. The gatekeeper is wizened and therefore Ross’s witty response and ultimate success is all the more dramatic.

By framing the interview with this discourse of exploration, incursion and revelation, the text sets up high expectations regarding the interview portrait itself. These frames support the mass-market commodification of the personality in the interview and imply that the subject is collectable, consumable and fully knowable through the

representation the form offers. Whether or not the subject is described or quoted, the interview's fictions of access imply that the form will offer a textual portrait.

While Ross spent much energy reinforcing the logic of the interview frame, another female interviewer was queering these fictions of access. Like Betty Ross, Djuna Barnes was an American and started off her career as a journalist in New York. Like Ross she also lived for many years in Europe – Paris from 1921 and later London. Unlike Ross, Barnes was to repudiate her journalism and interviews in later life on the grounds of their inferiority to her other writings. Also unlike Ross, she is also primarily known not as a journalist but as a modernist writer, particularly through her novel *Nightwood*, which was published in 1936, with a preface by T. S. Eliot. While her engagement with the interview form in the 1910s and later does make Barnes a suggestive figure for thinking about the relationship between modernism and the interview, something to which we will return, the degree to which wider implications can be drawn from her case must not be overstated: while her position within the modernist canon has improved in recent years, her idiosyncratic critical history and interviewing style resists straightforward extrapolation. Nevertheless, Barnes's sophisticated understanding of how the interview frame works with the dialogue, and the type of viewing practices it encourages, is suggestive for the scholar of the interview.

Before moving to Paris in 1921, Djuna Barnes worked as a journalist in New York. There she interviewed numerous actors and comedians, as well as participating in stunt journalism. In her use of the interview Barnes embraces the notion of the interview as a performance of personality, whether that of the subject or the journalist. The critic Barbara Green has seen this as a particularly gendered performance: “a perilous encounter dominated by scopic investigations that code exploration and speculation as masculine. Far from exhibiting the feminine discourse of gossip, these interviews are

staged as difficult inspections and interrogations” (171). Green’s book, which reads Barnes in relation to the suffrage movement, concludes that in her interviews Barnes attempts to remove herself from a position of spectacle – engendered by her sex – and into the role of masculine spectator. Ultimately, for Green, Barnes is thwarted in this attempt.

While Green’s reading is born out by some of the interviews authored by Barnes, by rendering the opposition in terms of a male/female divide, Green limits the scope of Barnes’ evaluation, as other critics such as Daniela Caselli and Rebecca Loncraine (in an unpublished thesis) have noted.⁷ Green’s reading fails to take into account the more complicated inflections of the (female) interviewer role in framing visibility at this time, illustrated in the discussion of Ross above. Rather than examining the specularity of female gender, these interviews explore the spectacle of identity itself. Crucially, they also experiment with the specific viewing habits encouraged by the visual interview.

In 1915 Barnes interviewed matinee idol Lou Tellegen. The interview, like others she conducted, is notable for its emphasis on the theatricality of the form. It announces itself to be “A one-act encounter” and is written in the form of a script, with Barnes nicknamed “Pen Performer” (Barnes “Lou Tellegen” 153). Numerous comments in parenthesis note the actions or mannerisms of (primarily) Tellegen, recalling the stage direction in a play-text. As is the case with the Ross interview, the scene is framed by reference to the interviewer’s travels into the interior and privacy of the backstage realm. This is a “vaultlike cellar, cold, dark, clean ... there is a slight opening in the wall, which at this point has gone from cement into brick. A light shines from the opening, spilling its yellow flood halfway down the stairs” (153). As the interview begins, there is a “rise of the curtain” and the actors are “discovered” (153). Through the rest of the interview the

⁷ Nancy Bombaci also takes up these issues (161-85).

description of setting and interviewee focuses on parallels with the theatre as well as exterior, visible detail.⁸ This is an interview that focuses on the specular.

The conversation itself also emphasises theatricality and visibility. The majority of the conversation is rapid back and forth, often the Pen Performer's interactions equal Tellegen's answers in length. He also often responds with questions, banter, puns and charm, which do more to entertain than inform; this interaction resembles dialogue from a play more than it does an interview; indeed Caselli memorably describes the interview as "[p]oised between a Wildean comedy and Beckett's *Three Dialogues*" (21). The conversation itself circles around notions of "hypocrisy" and artistry. What Pen Performer refers to as the "hypocrisy of interviewing" is discussed, although Tellegen decries her phrase: "that's where you're wrong again. There is no such thing as hypocrisy. You ask questions I'm not supposed to answer, and then I answer them as I'm supposed not to" (Barnes "Lou Tellegen" 156). Pen Performer disagrees: "If interviews were like that, it would turn out all right. But the interviewer never asks what he wants to, because he never gets the real truth" (156). Tellegen's response is to fail to answer Pen Performer's next question as to what he is like offstage. In doing so he does answer the question as he is supposed not to, but we are left unclear as to whether this was a question the interviewer wanted to ask. This is a radical questioning of the form of the interview itself as a positivist mode. Any answer, any representation, is unknowable and incomplete.

Towards the end of the interview Tellegen discusses the spectacle of bullfighting. The passage is interrupted by careful discussion of his recourse to conversational props, in this case cold cream and nail polish: "The toreador makes a move – so (*moving the nail polish to the right of the cold cream jar*). The bull acts on that move – so (*following up the move of the nail polish with the cold cream*)" – and so it continues (157). Such props, tools of the

⁸ For discussion of the theatricality of celebrity and its relation to the interview, see chapter five.

theatre and femininity, reinforce the emphasis on theatricality and surface, just as the commentary reminds us of the aside or the stage direction in a play-script. This is also an interview that escapes the textual; the deictic references indicate the failure of the dialogue to encompass all that happens in the interview itself. The fictions of access are under pressure and even though the specular is involved in the process of reading, it is the prominence of the extra-textual and theatrical in this interview that highlights the form's visual limits.

Just as the limits of the interview are indicated, so too Barnes plays with ideas of personality, specifically gendered personality in this case. By juxtaposing bullfighting, associated with a heightened form of spectacular masculinity (one that has become particularly equated with the masculine modernism of Hemingway and others), with the feminine accoutrements of the dressing table, Barnes could easily be co-opted into a Butler-influenced reading of the performativity of gender. However, in the Barnes interviews, this is part of a wider demand on the reader to question whether anything remains beneath the visual performance of personality.

In *Djuna Barnes and Affective Modernism*, Julie Taylor makes the significant point that, despite the form promising otherwise, this interview “does not emerge as a site of self-revelation but as simply another stage” (12). Indeed, Taylor views the frame description as reinforcing such a reading: “The labyrinthine and revelatory dynamics of the description, the move from depth to surface, from dark to light, are parodically suggestive of the hermeneutic ambitions of the interviewer” (12). This interview is in fact much more suggestive about the viewing practices encouraged by the interview, than it is about Lou Tellegen.

In the description that creates “labyrinthine and revelatory dynamics”, Barnes makes the interesting comparison of the cellar to “the better class of, let us say, Parliamentary minds” (153). Such an association encourages the reader to make

connections between material setting or surface and the interiority of the interview subject, on which the interview has long relied. Yet in doing so, any connection between interior and exterior is exposed as potentially untenable. The clause “let us say” suggests that any association is incidental, spur of the moment, rather than particularly apt. The particularity of “Parliamental” meanwhile implies a certain degree of thoughtful appropriateness. The reader is left to puzzle what the connection might be, and indeed what exactly might characterise a “Parliamental” mind. The reader is at once encouraged to make connections while the text simultaneously implies the futility of such action. It is the text’s playful emphasis of this tension that makes for such an interesting piece of writing.

But it is more than this. By emphasising the interplay of theatricality and visibility, Barnes illustrates how central the logic of making the private public, of giving that which is hidden primacy over the visible, is to the interview form. The interview is, as illustrated by Ross, framed as a complete portrait and the product of visual colonisation; it renders the world visible and therefore knowable. However, Barnes highlights how the form also turns on the assumption that that which is hidden retains more value; in effect, the invisible is privileged (as it is in Freud’s model of selfhood). The interview simultaneously promotes specularity and denies its ultimate valence as a method of comprehension. The Sphinx, it seems, will always be inscrutable.

The Hollywood Interview

Moving from frame to portrait, the sensational interview of the burgeoning Hollywood celebrity culture in this period helpfully articulates some of the tensions inherent in the interview, a genre that could be considered the archetypal form of celebrity culture.

Found predominantly in mass-market newspapers and magazines aimed at a diverse

readership, the interview was a useful strategy for promoting the film celebrity, the writer, or the impresario across a large and often international news network. Such expansive reach did not, however, necessarily result in diversity. While celebrity culture, like the interview, would seem to emphasise individuality and uniqueness, in fact, critics of celebrity have been keen to point out that its economy also “requires that uniqueness be exemplary and reproducible” (Braudy 5). Richard Dyer made a similar point in his influential study of stars: they “articulate both the promise and the difficulty that the notion of individuality presents for all of us who live by it” (*Heavenly Bodies* 7). It is in the interview’s function as a portrait that this tension is often exhibited.

The Hollywood interview appeared with the advent of the silent film star toward the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Richard deCordova has elegantly traced the emergence of the star system in this period, identifying the combination of the films themselves and the extrafilmic discourses of the publicity departments, fan magazines and commentators as producing the phenomenon. Publications such as *Pictures and Picturegoer* in the UK and *Moving Picture World*, *Photoplay* and *Motion Picture Magazine* in the US sprung up to report on the new industry in the years immediately before and during the Great War. Within such publications, the interview with the Hollywood star was an extremely common format. The interview’s popularity was closely linked to the tropes discussed above, for these were precisely the issues also associated with the star image: its play on a discourse of concealment and manipulation of notions of visibility, presence and surface. Just as significantly, the film star interview also makes evident a crucial negotiation between the poles of the individual subject and the reproducibility of the star system. This tension is at the heart of how the interview portrait itself functions. As shall become apparent, with the early film star the interview had found a perfect bedfellow.

Hollywood film studios did not initially encourage publications to print interviews with actors. Prior to 1907 most actors were not credited in films; studios and actors alike were reluctant to release names, explained variously by the potential rise in salaries this might have caused, the lack of prestige associated with film (as opposed to stage) acting at the time, or the threat it posed to the cinematic illusion (deCordova 81). The latter point is taken up by deCordova in his analysis of the transformations wrought in the years following, wherein individual, named actors were promoted across film (the Florence Lawrence streetcar stunt being only the most famous). For deCordova,

the truth of the human labor involved in film was constituted similarly as a secret, one whose discovery would be all the more precious and pleasurable since it would emerge out of ostensible attempts to conceal it. The picture personality became the site of this truth, and consequently, the biggest secret of all” (82).

Here the film actor, rather than the film, becomes the site of the secret, in the language of concealment and revelation that we have already seen utilised so particularly in relation to the interview frame. The logic of the picture personality, or film star, is also that of the interview portrait.⁹

Looking at articles in industry and fan publications of this period, it is notable that they focus repeatedly on how filmic effects are produced within a discourse of disclosure. Articles provide the reader with a peep backstage and relate “insider” knowledge, including how film is developed, how captions are produced, how make-up is used. Others expose the tricks of the industry through changing the perspective: on-set photographs destroy the *mis-en-scene* of the film to show how “snow” is in fact cotton batting and rain produced by a watering can (“Things Are Not Always What They Seem” 16). The magician’s tricks are revealed for the reader, the illusion replaced by knowledge

⁹ deCordova distinguishes between the picture personality and the star by the greater extent of publically available information about the latter’s private life, which he sees as changing the emphasis from the professional personality to their life outside (98).

of the skill and labour involved.¹⁰ As we shall see, the interview, through its fictions of access, implies that it will stage an act of exposure while in fact working to reinforce the illusion.

Nevertheless, as deCordova indicates, it is the film star who represents the major secret of the industry. The personality of the star hovers between innate identity and spectacular illusion, playing on the juxtaposition between surface and depth. Similarly, the filmic portrayal and the wide circulation of his or her image, emphasises visibility and accessibility while similarly promoting the idea that the personality of the star is a puzzle to be solved. Fan magazines themselves encouraged such a logic, utilising ghost-written autobiographies, anonymous insider confessions, biographies and gossip pieces, as well as the interview form, in order to portray the unique secret of the star's hidden self. Yet such pieces also express a frequent anxiety about the validity of this potential revelation. Haunting the articles is the threat that the secret to be revealed is not the hidden "truth" of the star's personality, but that the star is ultimately reproducible. The unspoken fear is that all stars are the same.

In the British fan magazine *Picturegoer* the June 1921 edition carried an article entitled "One Star after Another," which addresses this issue. The interviewee, Cecil B. De Mille, director and impresario for rising stars, explicitly denied the sameness of the star system. He proclaimed, "[f]ortunately for the kinema, every personality is in some way different from every other personality. There are subtle shades of dissimilarity with all artistes. Otherwise it would only be necessary to attend the picture theatres once to see every type of player" (Wilkie 10). The comment might seem a tad disingenuous on first reading, coming from a man with a vested interest in both identifying the type that

¹⁰ Compare also description of the tricks of double exposure in Bruce (14-15), the developers' work in Charles Carter, (8-9), or the film set as viewed from the air in "Shadowlands Critical Gossip – About Plays and Players in Current Pictures" (50).

makes the rising star and the success of the Hollywood film industry; however, that the issue is raised in this context does indicate its contemporary significance.

Certainly this was the case. The apparent mechanical reproducibility of modern life, expressed most famously by Walter Benjamin and exhibited in the theory of Taylorism and the technological innovations of photography and film, seemed to threaten the integrity of the individual.¹¹ The Hollywood star system and celebrity culture were seen by some commentators to be the most visible representation of this drive towards reproducibility and the erosion of the individual. As deCordova explains, “If, as Walter Benjamin argued, mechanical reproduction results in the loss of the aura of the real object, then the star system might be seen as a peculiar attempt to replace it” (146). For deCordova, this attempt will always fail, “the dialectic of presence and absence remains, engaging the spectator in a play of signification that revolves around a series of closely related and often overlapping antinomies – illusion/reality, proximity/distance, public/private, and surface/depth” (146). Notably, these antinomies are precisely those we have been discussing in relation to the interview portrait.

Meanwhile, Joseph Roach argues that the star aura “arises not merely from the singularity of an original, as Walter Benjamin supposed, but also from the fabulous success of its reproducibility in the imaginations of many others, charmed exponentially by the number of its copies” (177). Roach’s observation is helpful for explaining why the interview both proliferates within the star system and why the star portrait, apparently so keen to promote the individual as unique, is so dependent upon typology. DeMille too alluded to the premise that the star system operates on the assumption that a single film viewing is not enough to establish identity; similarly, scholar Sharon Marcus argues that “even as celebrity confects a fantasy about peerless inimitable presence, it turns individuality into a tissue of citations,” or what deCordova refers to as “the enunciating

¹¹ Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility.”

subject” (“Salomé!!” 1003, deCordova 112). We could perhaps augment deCordova’s list of antinomies with the binary “original/reproducible”.

In her book *Movie-Struck Girls*, Shelley Stamp discusses how viewing practices of early serials exploited this notion of the reproducibility of the star image. Using the example of serials such as Pathé’s *The Mystery of the Double Cross* (1917, dir. Gasnier and Parke), Stamp discusses how viewers were offered multiple means of accessing the serial story at any one time: in newspaper tie-in stories, in star interviews, in photo-summaries and other extrafilmic discourse (102-53). Stamp also discusses how the first instalment of *The Mystery of the Double Cross* opens with a prologue that actively encourages the audience to think about the star image of the actress Mollie King, who played the leading role (103). In the prologue the audience are presented with Mollie King, at home, at the moment she receives a letter offering her the part she is to play in the film. She then locates, on her bookshelf, a volume containing the story of the film and begins to read. A shot of the book page then frames the moving images of King in the process of reading, before she is shown to transform into the role, by means of a costume change. The viewer then is actively encouraged to think about the process of transformation involved in creating the cinematic illusion and King’s presence and identity as both related to and separate from the character she plays.

In order to draw these ideas together, let us take an example and explore how they operate in one interview to provide a portrait of the Hollywood starlet. The October 1917 edition of the *American Photoplay* magazine includes an interview with Mollie King, written by John Ten Eyck, with photos by White. “Mollie of Manhattan,” was a stage actress who graduated to films, including *The Mystery of the Double Cross* and another Pathé serial, *The Seven Pearls* (1917), before leaving the profession to marry. The interview begins with a reference to the reproducible story of the star:

The most popular picture of a great actress puts her in an apartment which at least three-fourths of her following will describe as swell; surrounds her with all the torture of luxury that a picture property man can get together; and provides her with a gently melancholy line of thought on the old home and old friends, all far, far, away. (17)

Such an opening invokes the narrative of the type, in this case, “it’s lonely (but luxurious) at the top.” Here the fans, the publicity man, the great actress and her “melancholy line” are seen as reproducible, as formulaic as the fairy tale. Unsurprisingly, the type is invoked, only to be rejected. Ten Eyck jokily laments, “Beginning an at-home story about Mollie King, we are cramped in our style” (17). Mollie is not the norm, instead she is identifiably individual by her departure from this type. She might reside at the “top of the Ansonia, one of New York’s most celebrated apartment hotels”, but King’s domestic set-up is surprisingly unexceptional as she shares the space with two siblings and her mother (17).

The details of King’s home life provided here present the actress within a familiar situation to which readers can relate. Nevertheless, this model domestic sphere that the article emphasises throughout is typical of narratives of film celebrity (in and out of interviews) of the period prior to the mid twenties. Before the scandalous events of the early twenties – the Fatty Arbuckle rape trial in 1921, William Desmond Taylor’s murder in 1922 and Wallace Reid’s death by drug overdose in 1923 – the industry had been keen to promote the film actor as model citizen, as a rebuff against accusations of the immorality of (stage) acting, and concerns over the healthfulness of cinema (deCordova 102-3). While after 1922 the cat was out of the bag so to speak, before this, as the interview with Mollie King shows, the common extrafilmic discourse tried to deny that the secret of the film star was necessarily sexually exceptional. In this article, a tension between scandal and propriety, between societal transgression and norms, between original and reproducible, ostensibly comes down on the side of the latter.



Fig. 3 John Ten Eyck, “Mollie of Manhattan,” Photographs by White (16).

Nevertheless, the suggestion of a sexual secret is utilised very obviously in the images that accompany the article, wherein the images gradually become more sensational, intimate and suitable for the boudoir. Unlike the potentially reprehensible sexual secret of Henry James, this is socially condoned, if suppressed, desire. The first page shows the star in clothes suitable for public – she is posed formally, she wears a hat and veil, she is modestly covered in heavy, dark fabrics and wears a single strand of pearls at her neck (fig. 3). While King is also shown partaking of that most glamorous of star hobbies, motoring, she wears the appropriate hat, gloves and a military-inspired duster with thick, wide cuffs. By contrast, the second page draws the reader into a more intimate, less public setting. King poses on a window seat in her home in silk pyjamas, embroidered with an oriental flower design. Her ankles are bare and her pose tantalisingly reveals the white skin of her instep, adorned by heeled slippers. On the

following pages she plays the piano in a lace-accented lounge-suit with a bow at the breast, she poses again on the window seat in a net evening gown that shows off her bare shoulders (fig. 4). The heavy curtains and upholstered seat frame her body while gauzy net curtains veil the view from the window, mirroring the play between surface and depth, secret and revelation that forms the appeal of the star and the interview. So too the intricate ironwork of the grill underneath the window seat hints at the interplay between access and unavailability, between display and caging. The photos toy with the reader's expectations, promising revelation of a star's sexual secret while never quite delivering. These are images that flirt with surface, just as they flirt with presence, proximity and originality.



Fig 4 Detail from John Ten Eyck, “Mollie of Manhattan,” Photographs by White (19).

Dialogue is also offered as a privileged means of access to the individual's personality; the interview, of course, premises itself as offering a portrait through conversation. The majority of the text is narrated by Ten Eyck, with the occasional nod to the star's opinions – “she prefers,” “Miss King thinks” (19). In fact King's speech isn't quoted until the third page. This is of course practically unsurprising given that, as discussed in the previous chapter, interviewers often relied on memory, or shorthand, before the advent of the personal tape recorder in the 1950s.¹² However, the moments where King is quoted are themselves thematically significant. Take for example the King view on screen and stage acting. Ten Eyck relates King's preference for stage acting:

because – she says – she can bring herself to her role at every performance, and deepen and widen her conception at every repetition. She believes that a great part does not become a great part until it has been played many times, and bears the polish and finish of long study and scrutiny – months, perhaps of continuous playing.

But the screen has other advantages that the stage hasn't and never can have. Miss King thinks that every great part should eventually be played upon the screen, for the spoken drama's tragedy is its short life, while the screen's greatest asset is its immortality. And second to this is its great breadth of appeal.

She spoke in a very awed voice, and with her hazel eyes wide with suppressed emotion as she said: “I never play a part I'm not thrilled with that thought. I do the very best I can because I know I am creating something that has the power to creep into every corner of the world, and live, and live, and live until I am old and deaf and toothless – and oh, how well I try to do every little scene!” (19)

The passage has been reproduced at length in order to convey something of the tensions evinced between reproducibility and singularity. They also offer a comment upon the relationship between ephemerality and permanence in the star image (which we often experience as alienation when we see a photograph of the aging star) and which contemporary writing on the cinema often explored.¹³ While it would seem at first that

¹² The Dictaphone was to become a sensational plot device in Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* in 1926 and reminds us of the parallels between the detective and the interviewer. Nevertheless recording time was limited to around ten minutes until the forties.

¹³ *Celebrity Studies* dedicated an entire issue to the aging star: “Back in the Spotlight: Female Celebrity and Aging” 2:1, (2012).

King's conception of stage acting reverses the usual figuration of the stage performance as unique artwork versus the technologically reproduced film performance, the reference to "polish and finish" recalls Benjamin's aura, or what Joseph Roach has recently termed the "patina" of the image, places the stage performance firmly back into the category of traditional, temporally-oriented artwork (*It* 154). The singularity of the film performance, meanwhile, would seem to be its downfall.

However, this needs to be balanced against the emotionally charged expression of film's "immortality" in the interview. King's declaration, which claims for the tenth muse its universality and existence outside of human time, is expressed in overblown terms. Significantly too, this emotional apex utilises the language of the film star herself. The direct quotation mingles with the emotional response of King; her expression of "awe" becomes a moment wherein the reader is offered the most intimate affective and linguistic relationship with the star. Quotation is a marker of authenticity in the interview, a marker of least mediation and, here at least, also marks the moment of the most visible introduction of clichéd and ornate literary language. Even at this level of form, the tensions between individual and type, between depth and surface, presence and absence interact to create a complex portrait of the Hollywood star.

The inscription of voice within the Hollywood interview of the teens and twenties was of course powerfully shaped by technological limitations other than the lack of tape recorders. The stars we have been discussing acted in silent films. While visibility and spectatorship are obviously key in understanding the celebrity phenomenon, the absence of speech that characterises the Hollywood star in this period places the interview in an unusual position. While writers' reputations are based on words, and an interview with them is easily read as a further accretion of these words, the Hollywood interview offers a very different example. If the interview purports to relate personality

through the medium of speech, how do we read these interviews with film stars whose public presence is silent?

We've already seen how quotation functions in King's article, as offering intimate access to the star. In the previous chapter, we also saw how voice captured in the interview is presumed to record personality for the historical record or, conversely, the gossip mill: we will know each better as a person through their slang, speech patterns and idiosyncratic phrases. It is significant then that the celebrity interview, while recording the subject's speech, still privileges visuality – whether in the interview frame, or in the interview itself. In the same issue of *Photoplay* as the Mollie King article, a “photo interview” with Douglas Fairbanks appeared. Four pages of photographs depict the actor's active and physically demanding job. The interviewer follows Fairbanks around (taking notes) as the actor leaps from second storey windows, pulls horse-carts, drives at 80mph, balances on fences, and completes numerous other stunts (Alfred A. Cohen 36-39). In line with wider mass-market magazine practices in this period, the photos dominate: to the extent indeed that Fairbanks's conversation is limited to captions of quotes pasted around the edges. Here the conversation of the interviewee is almost irrelevant. Personality is conveyed through photography, it is the visual aspect of the star that dominates and the words, or voice, of Fairbanks are to a great extent, surplus adornment.¹⁴ While we might expect the voice of the silent star to be the central focus of the interview, in fact it is often presented as a surfeit; it is towards the visual that the reader is continually directed.¹⁵

¹⁴ Although the focus of her discussion is very different, in her study of Josephine Baker's celebrity, Anne Anlin Cheng makes a fascinating connection between publicised images of Baker's glamourised racial skin and Alfred Loos' theories on architectural adornment (23-33). See also Jules-Rosette (13-46).

¹⁵ While the relation between text and image in the interview is not discussed extensively in this era, the relation between film image and the text of the intertitle is a common topic for journalists and reviewers. Given the ease with which one can map such debates back on to the (albeit static) star interview suggests that the form offers similarly productive, though hitherto overlooked, ground. See Laura Marcus's *The Tenth Muse* for a useful guide to developments in writing about the cinema in this era.

The Modernist Interview

As the previous two sections demonstrated, the mainstream interview in this period encourages the reader to focus upon the visual realm. This is particularly marked, and particularly successful, in the interview with the Hollywood star. However, the period that saw this form of interview portrait proliferate also witnessed the development of an alternative model, that of the “cloaked” interview. So-called because the interviewee appears to be hidden from view, the cloaked interview doesn’t encourage the reader to delve beneath the surface, but instead to focus attention on the words and ideas of the subject. In this form of the interview the visual is considered to offer a suspect form of knowledge. Found particularly in modernist little magazines in the interwar period, it can also be referred to as the “modernist” interview. Precisely how this interview portrait functions and what exactly this suggests about the relationship between modernism and celebrity and modernism and mass-market publications, will form the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Modernism has often been characterised by its resistance to nineteenth-century realism and the mode of visibility this might be seen to encourage, as well as to personality itself. T. S. Eliot’s call for an “escape from personality” in his epochal essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) is perhaps the most famous but by no means the only (Rainey 156). Painter Clive Bell was to reject portraiture for being dominated by its likeness to its subject, rather than being sufficiently engaged with his notion of “significant form” (qtd. in West 187). So too on stage avant-garde dramatists and theorists such as Edward Gordon Craig and those associated with the Bauhaus were exploring ways of overcoming the human form in the most embodied of the arts (Taxidou 10-42).

Similarly, Virginia Woolf's famous essays "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1923) and "Modern Fiction" (1919/25) take to task "materialist" writers such as H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett (who gave numerous interviews) for their emphasis upon details such as dress, houses and railway carriage upholstery, which creates weighty books but fail to capture the "luminous halo" of life (Woolf *E3.33*). The interview's penchant for cataloguing external details and its associations with journalistic objectivity in the nineteenth century aligned it with literary realism and also suggest why modernists, who spurned so many nineteenth century forms of representation, might reject the (visual) interview.¹⁶ However, as Barnes queering of the fictions of access demonstrated, any alignment between realism and the interview is unstable at best.

The associations of the interview with celebrity and high-readership publications, discussed above, might similarly offer an explanation for modernist rejection of the form. Modernism has often been read as opposing the perceived feminisation and ascendancy of mass culture in this era, which was particularly associated with the specific visual availability offered by (American) films and celebrity. Many authors expressed anxiety around what they saw as the writer's transformed role in relation to this altered marketplace, wherein the perceived structural unevenness in relations between the writer and their publics might limit the author's agency (which I discuss more extensively in chapter three). In recent years modernism's oppositional stance to the (mass) marketplace and personality has been productively questioned by scholars. Critics such as Lawrence Rainey, Jennifer Wicke, Joyce Wexler, David Chinitz and Mark Morrison, amongst others, have demonstrated that authors' practices often covertly embraced the very economics of the marketplace they purportedly eschewed.¹⁷

So too, in relation to personality and portraiture, back in 1987 Maud Ellmann declared that Eliot and Pound "both advocate impersonality ... yet both resist its

¹⁶ Connery *Realism* 5-6, Shi throughout and Schiller 94-95.

¹⁷ See also Ardis and Collier, Radway, Dettmar and Watt, Catherine Turner, and Willison et al.

implications, too. Their theory diverges from their practice, but the theory also contradicts itself and they often smuggle personality back into their poetics in the very terms they used to cast it out” (2-3).¹⁸ Similarly, critics such as Laura Marcus, Max Saunders, Jaime Hovey and Sean Latham have illustrated how much modernist writing was in fact deeply, though often secretly, engaged with personality and portraiture through life writing. As Saunders comments, many authors are “in denial” of the biographic “and also that their critics were in denial that the modernist had enough investment in the biographic to be in denial of it” (456).

In the realm of celebrity studies Aaron Jaffe’s influential book *Modernism and Celebrity Culture* was published in 2005 and was soon followed by a flurry of studies examining modernist writers’ engagement with celebrity (Goldman, Jaffe & Goldman, Hammill, etc.). The interviews of several American writers of this period have also received a degree of scholarly attention, particularly through the University of Mississippi Press series of interview anthologies with authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and others.¹⁹ Timothy W. Galow’s recent *Writing Celebrity: Stein, Fitzgerald and the Modern(ist) Art of Self-Fashioning* makes very interesting use of the newspaper and mass-market magazine interviews given by Gertrude Stein and Fitzgerald to explore ideas of celebrity in their works.

Although such work offers exciting and productive ways for thinking about modernism’s reliance upon strategies of representation, publicity, celebrity and the economics of the marketplace, the modernist interview demonstrates a strong resistance to the visibility of the interview portrait as commonly utilised at this time. By exploring how modernist writers and little magazines engage with the interview in a manner strikingly opposite to its use in celebrity and mass-market culture, we can learn much

¹⁸ See also Nicholls (251) and Burke (66) for further discussion of Eliot’s impersonality through this lens.

¹⁹ See Bruccoli and Baughman, Bruccoli, and chapter six below. The volume of Charlie Chaplin interviews, by Kevin J. Hayes, in the press’s Filmmakers’ Series is also interesting in light of these issues.

about the possibilities inherent in the interview portrait and nuance our understanding of modernism itself.

The first thing to note about modernist interviews is that, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the number is limited before the 1940s. Woolf gave none in English, Joyce few, Eliot no extended interviews, Pound only a couple.²⁰ Wyndham Lewis flirted with the form, but only sporadically.²¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein were, it is true, widely interviewed on the publication of *The Great Gatsby* and the latter's 1934-35 reading tour of America (reminiscent of the interviews that accompanied the travels of writers such as Dickens, Wilde and Twain on their tours of America). Nevertheless, such enthusiastic embrace of the publicity interview was not widespread amongst their colleagues. In order to explore the features of the modernist interview, the remainder of this chapter concentrates upon interviews not necessarily with modernist writers, but rather those (limited number) published in modernist little magazines.

The New Age (1907-22) was a weekly published in London, contributors included Ezra Pound, Katherine Mansfield and T. E. Hulme. In 1917 long-serving and prolific contributor Carl Erich Bechhöfer (sometimes Bechhofer-Roberts) authored a series of interviews with various public figures. Bechhöfer, who was born in London and began his career at the *New Age* while still a student (in Germany), was well travelled, spoke Russian and German, and was to author numerous books on a wide range of diverse subjects (Robert Sullivan n.pag). His interviews are significant for being almost solely a record of conversation. They offer virtually nothing by way of visual detail and focus instead on theoretical points the interviewer wishes to clarify in the interviewee's ideas. These are interviews that features discussion and thoughts; at times they read like a transcript of a clichéd academic discussion, with the interviewee opining and explaining

²⁰ One French interview with Woolf does exist (Blanche); Djuna Barnes interviewed James Joyce in a peculiarly impressionistic style for *Vanity Fair* ("Joyce"); for Eliot's interviews see Loucks, Gallup and Ricks *Eliot* (195-97); for Pound see Ricks *Pound* (232).

²¹ See Pound et al. for a list of Lewis's interviews.

to the interviewer and reader. They could not be further from the celebrity interview in terms of portraiture.

The third interview in the series is with Catholic thinker Baron Friedrich von Hügel, a naturalised British citizen of Austrian birth. It begins with the declaration, “I told Baron von Hügel that I greatly desired to hear some of his opinions upon the philosophic significance of the war” (Bechhöfer *III* 585). While the interviewer acts to introduce the subject, there is no hint of the quest motif, no establishment of a surface/depth perspective. Similarly, there is little notion that the interviewer has a personality distinct from that of representative pupil or transcriber; he could be anyone. This is a meeting of men for the purposes of highbrow, intellectual discussion.

The interview continues: “Baron von Hügel very kindly said that he would try to make clear three or four of the most important points, and he thought he could approach them best by a consideration of the outlook in Russia” (*III* 585). For the next two columns the Baron’s speech is quoted without interruption. His words are formal and academic, he orders his ideas in terms of points he wishes to make and pronounces upon the role of the individual, the church and nationality against the backdrop of war. On finishing his lecture, the interviewer asks his second and final question. While demonstrating a flash of precociousness in noting that “Baron von Hügel said this was a stimulating question,” this is his final appearance in the interview (*III* 586). The remaining column is entirely taken up with the Baron’s views and the article finishes with the subject’s words.

This interview offers little by way of portraiture. There is little sense of a frame; the specifics of the time of day, location and context are not defined. We get no clues as to the subject’s appearance, accent, or mannerisms; the reader is left only with the word of the speaker and very formal words at that. The process of reading is also an intellectual feat. The typeface is tiny and arranged in two packed columns, the paragraphs

are long and no photographs or illustrations accompany the text. Reading the interview is an experience akin to studying a philosophical treatise and without the inclusion of the interviewer “I” and his two questions, it could indeed be such a text.

This disembodied form is not limited to discussions with philosophers; it is also used in Bechhöfer’s interviews with writers. The fifteenth interview with Robert Bridges, although utilising more reporting of opinion than direct quotation, still follows the logic of a debate. The subject makes “points” sharpened with anecdotes, he opines, he answers objections (XV 250). This is again the interview of ideas, not portraiture. With G. K. Chesterton, it is the subject who refers to the location of the interview, though not for descriptive purposes but to illustrate a point about Socialism (XVII 404). This is a series that promotes the interview of ideas, steering clear of portraiture.

Such a tactic is seen across little magazines, where interviews do appear. In August 1914 Ezra Pound was interviewed for the Russian magazine *Stretlets*, by Zinaida Vengerova, a Russian critic and translator. While the interview does describe Pound’s physical features and “penetrating, never smiling eyes” and makes several references to the space of the encounter, the focus is upon the ideas that Pound espouses and promotes (477). The first two pages contain quoted speech by Pound, who attempts to explain the difference between Vorticism and Futurism in response to the interviewer’s desire to describe him as an English Futurism. Defending himself from this label Pound:

points out a phrase [in *Blasf*]: “Marinetti is a corpse.”

“You see?” he says.

Yes, I see. Their paramount desire is to separate themselves from yesterday’s slogans, to erase them (477).

The words of the interview subject are not offered as a portrait of the individual, but rather as evidence against which to convict. The interviewer demands that the words be read against Pound. This is not a record of a conversation, but rather a critical attack

made after the fact. The interviewer re-appropriates Pound's own words in his absence; she denies the valence of his own self-expression and own self-portrait. The remainder of the interview (a further eight pages) is devoted to the interviewer's scathing critique of Vorticism and Pound's work. Portraiture here is undercut in favour of critical assault.

Pound's interviewing activities are also visible in another little magazine, *Poetry*. In an article by F. S. Flint in 1913, he prefaces Pound's manifesto "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," with comments about the movement that have been gleaned from an interview. Flint states, "as I was unable to find anything definite about [Imagism] in print, I sought out an *imagiste*, with intent to discover whether the group itself knew anything about the 'movement'" (198-99). Here the form has been used in order to elicit information and ideas, in a similar manner to the *New Age* interview, but the identity of the interviewees are not specified. In *Poetry*, the very form itself has been dispensed with on publication. The interview is a tool with which the author is able to gather information and report back on their group character, commenting that they displayed "earnestness" and "*snobisme*". The questions asked, answers given and the specifics of the interaction have been relegated to pre-publication research (200). While Pound would seem to have been willing to give interviews, in part for their promotional value, the little magazines seem more resistant to utilising their potential for conveying a portrait of the individual.

Such a surmise is supported by the use of interviews in other modernist magazines. The interview is often referred to as a source of information, but it is not utilised as a form that conveys a portrait of the subject. Notably the question/answer format is utilised by some magazines, which print collections of writer's replies to specific questions. *Chapbook*, *transition* and the *Little Review* are three such examples, all of which circulated standardised questionnaires to writers, printing the results in their pages (Monro, Jolas 233-45, *Little Review*). The latter included their questionnaire (or what

Wyndham Lewis referred to as an “examination paper”) in the final number of the magazine (*Little Review* 49). The questions asked respondent’s attitudes towards art and the future and the responses, from a rostra of illustrious modernist writers and artists, were published in a section entitled, perhaps sardonically, “Confessions.” Interestingly, while the title promised revelation, the format itself emphasised the informational aspect of the interview. The potential of the interview to offer a portrait of the subject, in all three examples, is rejected.

In 1927 *Close Up*, an avant-garde little magazine dedicated to the treatment of film as an aesthetic form, was born. Given that it deals with precisely the same industry as the visually focused interviews of the mainstream publications, *Close Up*’s use of the interview form makes an intriguing case study. Edited by Kenneth Macpherson, Bryher and H.D., the magazine ran from 1927 to 1933. Besides the editors, contributors included Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, Dorothy Richardson, Sergei Eisenstein, Man Ray and others from America, Britain and the Continent. In 1930 Macpherson also directed his own film *Borderline*, which starred African-American singer Paul Robeson, his wife Eslanda, H. D. and Bryher. The film was experimental and influenced by the techniques of Eisenstein and director G. W. Pabst.²²

In the December 1927 edition, the magazine announced that, “An interview with Fritz Lang was erroneously announced for this issue. This month the director interviewed is G. W. Pabst” (“Error” 4). Intriguingly, this is the only reference to the article being an interview; the title page does not refer to an interview, neither does the article title. “*Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (The Love of Jeanne Ney) And its Making An UFA Film by Pabst” gives little indication that this will be an interview with the director.

While the article does summarise responses to questions put to the director, the simple

²² For further discussion of *Close Up*, see Laura Marcus’s ‘*Close Up* (1927-33),’ and *The Tenth Muse*, as well as Donald et al.

“Pabst said” is as much as we get of an introduction to the man. His views on his cutting method are quoted, but any notion of the text being the result of a conversation or offering a portrait is subsumed by the focus upon the film itself. This is not a portrait of the (auteur) director, but a portrait of the film. The article contains a long description of the film’s plot and visuals and it discusses the practicalities of how the film was made. However, unlike the Hollywood articles discussed in part two above, in *Close Up* the discussion of praxis is not framed in a discourse of revelation. Behind the scenes photographs are included, but the reader’s attention is drawn to the type of lamp used or the difficulties of lighting scenes when filming on location (plates 6-8). The interview form’s potential to offer a portrait of the director is not invoked; this is not a disclosure of secrets, but a record of technical information.

Four months after the Pabst cloaked interview, Bryher interviewed Anita Loos, the successful Hollywood screenwriter and novelist. In contrast to the Pabst piece, this article announces itself to be an interview. In format this is the more familiar interview: the subject is a celebrity, the interviewer’s voice is audible, the interview announces its location.²³ It also spends a great deal of energy announcing its own embarrassment with the form: “We wanted to meet Miss Loos herself but having very firm ideas on the subject of an author’s right to be private, we should not have ventured to insist upon an interview for merely selfish reasons” (Bryher 12). Similarly, the interviewer notes parenthetically, “Is anything worse than landing in a foreign country and being asked to give concise statements on questions that require profound study?” (14). While according to some conventions of the form, the interview also rejects the surface/depth discourse. We are not encouraged to delve into the private world – we are in the semi-public space of the hotel lobby, not Loos’s hotel room, nor a private house. Neither are we to expect that these statements offer deeper “profound” knowledge; they might merely offer

²³ For Loos’ position in interwar celebrity and literary culture, see Hammill *Women, Celebrity* (55-75).

sound bites. Notably too, we are offered no portrait of Loos; while her opinions are related, quotation is limited and with it, the authenticity implied. Description of her appearance is also non-existent; we are merely told she gives off an impression of “great vitality and wide interest” (15). Despite this being an interview more in keeping with the Hollywood interview on first reading, in fact it too avoids the visual emphasis so associated with the celebrity version of the form.

With all of these examples, we can identify a resistance, if not a downright rejection, in modernist little magazines to the viscosity of the interview as exhibited in mainstream publications. Although modernist rejection of the interview might be accounted for through associating the form with literary and photographic realism, Barnes and Covarrubias both demonstrate the limitations of characterising the form as such. Indeed, in aligning the interview with Freudian psychoanalysis the pair playfully highlighted the fictions of access upon which both might be said to rest.

Although neither Barnes nor Covarrubias aggressively pursued these aesthetic experiments with the interview in subsequent years, Covarrubias’s own career trajectory is suggestive for the direction the interview would take in subsequent years. He published several volumes of caricatures, illustrating variously *Vanity Fair* articles, including the “Impossible interview” series, an edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1928), Zora Neale Hurston’s *Mules and Men* (1935) and Alain Locke’s *The New Negro* anthology, which had grown out of the sociologist Charles S. Johnson’s wider project to use the Harlem Renaissance’s artistic flowering to galvanise the African-American civil rights cause. Covarrubias later turned to anthropology, using interviews as the basis of his published studies on Bali (1939) and Tehuantepec, Mexico (1946) (David Levering Lewis 95). He utilised the interview in settings artistic and sociological, playful and serious, sceptical and positivist, tacitly acknowledging the form’s manifold possibilities. He was not the only one to do so: over in Britain in the 1930s writers, editors and publishers were exploring

the interview's position in a rapidly transforming disciplinary setting and a stratifying marketplace. It is to this that we now turn.

“How Writers Write”: The Study, the Marketplace and the Interview

A Sunday morning walk through any residential district will reveal the head of the family “reading the paper” in each front window; in the poorest quarters the *News of the World* is read on the doorstep or in bed; the weekly perusal of the *Observer* or the *Sunday Times*, which give a large proportion of their contents to book-reviews and publishers’ advertisements is in many cases the only time that even the best-intentioned business man or schoolmaster can spare for his literary education. (Q. D. Leavis 3)

But what, you may ask, is a middlebrow? And that, to tell the truth, is no easy question to answer. They are neither one thing nor the other. They are not highbrows, whose brows are high; nor lowbrows, whose brows are low. Their brows are betwixt and between. They do not live in Bloomsbury, which is on high ground; nor in Chelsea, which is on low ground. Since they must live somewhere presumably, they live perhaps in South Kensington. (Woolf E6.472)

In the late 1920s and early thirties the “battle of the brows” was being fiercely fought in public and private, in newspapers, periodicals and cartoons, on the airwaves and at dinner parties on both sides of the Atlantic. In England in 1932 Q. D. Leavis published her influential account of the literary marketplace *Fiction and the Reading Public*, which stratified literature into brows. In the same year, Virginia Woolf composed, and didn’t send, a letter to the editor of the *New Statesman* on the subject of the middlebrow. As decades of critics have pointed out, the interwar years in America and, more acutely, in Britain, saw huge shifts in the way in which the public and particularly the reading public were conceptualised. Just as the notion of the middlebrow has been fruitful for a wide range of scholars interested in various contextualising modernist achievements, exploring writers hitherto neglected by literary studies and examining popular literature, it is the

“betwixt and between” aspect of middlebrow literature, its hinterland position, that will be of most use in conceptualising the interview form at this moment.¹

Less discussed, but vital for understanding the interview, is the general prominence of space in accounts of the middlebrow. Pervading the battle of the brows is a stratification of the marketplace. In Leavis’s passage quoted above the attention to space is sustained: the varying districts of the city, the manner in which readers occupies space – strangely framed heads, doorstep readers, bedroom readers – and the space of the newspaper page come together to offer a heavily stratified account of the reading public, but also one that is attuned to the significance of boundaries, thresholds and modes of occupation. So too in Woolf’s arch account, the literary sphere is rendered in terms of the geography of London.

It is this attention to space that forms the starting point and through-thread of a chapter that interweaves discussions of middlebrow magazines, individual interviews, disciplinary divisions, book history and figurative space to demonstrate not only how significant spatial relations were for cultural theorists in the 1930, but how important a textual site the interview has been for conceptualising the literary marketplace and its related spaces.

On the simplest level, the physical house and, even more specifically, the site of the study, are vitally important spaces for the interview. While true of American interviews, this is even more the case in England which as a country was so culturally-invested in the idea of the private house, as critics such as Sharon Marcus have indicated (*Apartment Stories* 83-116). In the twenties and thirties, as the domestic servant shortage continued, as inheritance tax rose, as the international style of architecture and furniture design developed and as the metropolitan’s suburbs stretched out ever further, the

¹ For the most extensive bibliography of work on middlebrow fiction, see the website of the Middlebrow Network: <http://www.middlebrow-network.com/Bibliography.aspx> (Hammill et al).

private house and its interior became a more problematic structure while being retained as an important signifier of character in literature and the interview.²

While the space of the house is important for the form, so too the interview – like the passages above – deploys particular understandings of less concrete notions of space and spatial dynamics in significant ways. The space of the page, the space of production and the space of publication are recurrent zones or spheres in the interview that are rigorously delineated and defended in terms of public and private property. Linking publicity, privacy, architecture, mass media and bibliographic material in her absorbing study of Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, *Privacy & Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, Beatriz Colomina has demonstrated how understanding space in this era necessitates the interweaving of these elements. Colomina could have as easily been offering a model for thinking about how the interview operates at this time. Attending to these interlinked spaces is also to attend to distinctions made between privacy and publicity, the study and the marketplace and literature and journalism.

In order to explore these issues, this chapter focuses on the London-based weekly *Everyman*, the quintessential middlebrow publication according to Leavis. More particularly, the periodical's lengthy series of interviews "How Writers Work," delineates the private space of the study as an important site from which to reflect upon the position of the writer in the marketplace in this period. What also makes the *Everyman* series intriguing is the diversity of writers interviewed by American émigré journalist Louise Morgan. Authors now considered modernist, whether those associated with the Bloomsbury Group, whose presence in the series is considerable, or the heiress Nancy Cunard, circulate alongside popular and now largely forgotten writers such as Gilbert Frankau and Warwick Deeping, who bore the brunt of Leavis's snobbery in *Fiction and the*

² See Deborah Cohen's *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* for a general discussion of interwar interior design (186-98).

Reading Public. The series offers in miniature a fascinating view of the literary marketplace across the brows.

Later made into a book published by Chatto & Windus, the interviews, and their archives, are also valuable for evincing how crucial the space of publication and production – whether in the study, the publisher’s office or at the printers – are in shaping cultural boundaries of privacy, publicity and authorial persona in the marketplace. Such analysis also demonstrates the significance of attending to space when understanding the ways in which the interview operates. Notably too, by attending to the reception of Morgan’s book, published the year before Leavis’s study, we can identify a brief moment in 1931 when the interview is positively situated “betwixt and between” criticism, literature, gossip and irrelevance in the literary marketplace. Shortly afterwards, as the stratification of the reading public was perceived to deepen and disciplinary boundaries were strengthened, the interview was to lose its mobility in the literary sphere, a transformation from which it is still recovering.

In *The Sense of an Interior*, an engaging study of authors’ interiority and their domestic interiors, scholar Diana Fuss “challenges the too easy bifurcation between literal and figurative space”; such a statement could easily refer to the interview itself, a form that turns upon the common ground of the literal and figurative (4). In reading the spaces of the interview too easy bifurcations between journalism and literature, production and publication, modernist and middlebrow, or sociology and criticism in the twenties and thirties are also productively challenged.

***Everyman* and “How Writers Work”**

When Q. D. Leavis pointed to *Everyman* as a familiar example of the middlebrow periodical in 1932, she was not to know that it was soon to be a casualty of the Great

Depression, left to languish in footnotes and asides in subsequent book history studies.³ The weekly had originally been an offshoot of J. M. Dent's popular *Everyman* book series. Launched in 1906 the series consisted of an expansive collection of classic works made available to the public at the inexpensive price of one shilling a volume (until 1916). The price was kept down thanks to Dent's bold decision to print in large runs and his investment in purpose-built printing works and binders (McLean 36-37). In 1912 a magazine of the same title was launched, in part to advertise the series. The magazine having folded in the aftermath of the Great War, in 1929 Hugh Dent revived *Everyman*. Similar in style, content and readership to its rival *John O'London's Weekly*, *Everyman* never reached its rival's high figures of 100,000 copies a week.⁴ The paper lost money and in 1932 it was sold to Sir Robert Donald, then in 1933 to Angus Watson on Donald's death and then back to Dent in the same year, before it was discontinued.

During its limited runs, the twopenny weekly was aimed at a similar audience to that of the continuing book series: the expanding reading public who had benefitted from the educational reforms of the late nineteenth century and had a desire to improve their knowledge and social position. The "Letters to the Editor" are particularly passionate – in the early summer of 1931 for example, readers and contributors extensively debated the claims of Joyce, and later Eliot, to be considered literary innovators or merely "enjoying a great joke at the expense of the literary critics" through their deployment of a difficult style (Rowland 733). By contrast contributors included Wyndham Lewis, Vera Brittain, D. H. Lawrence, Siegfried Sassoon, Arthur Quiller-Couch, Gordon Craig, Richard Aldington, John Grierson, H. E. Bates, J. B. Priestley, Rose Macaulay, Edmund Blunden and Vita Sackville-West. Articles also abounded on individuals such as the Sitwells, Friedrich Nietzsche and Rainer Maria Rilke, Havelock

³ The title was revived in 1952, but discontinued again after nine years.

⁴ See Jonathan Wild "Insects in Letters": *John O'London's Weekly* and the New Reading Public"; also, Patrick Collier, "*John O'London's Weekly* and the Modern Author." See also Q. D. Leavis (10, 21).

Ellis and Sergei Eisenstein. Hemingway and Woolf were positively reviewed and Henri Barbusse's *Under Fire* was serialised in the magazine, accompanied by the Vorticist-inspired designs of John Hargrave, leader of the Green Shirt Movement for Social Credit in the thirties (fig. 2).

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 2 John Hargrave's illustrations for "Under Fire: The Story of a Squad" by Henri Barbusse (448).

Such debates, articles and contributors were tempered in the publication by the inclusion of articles entitled "How to Form a Library" or "Write a Best Seller in Seven Weeks." These mingled with reader competitions, advertisements for self-help books, dictionaries and writing courses. The publication emphasised the commodity function of literature for its readers through complementary editorial and advertising pages. Books and learning were presented as leading to better job prospects and social status. *Everyman*

magazine, like its counterpart book series, simultaneously promoted the material worth of reading and writing and offered its readership access to subjects and writers of considerable note.

Everyman offers a fascinating site for exploring relations between the spaces of composition, publication, production and reception.⁵ In the late twenties and early thirties, *Everyman* was a vibrant and heterogeneous space where, for a brief moment, diverse authors, subjects and values came together.

It is in the interview series that these negotiations are most obviously played out. One of the most extensive of its time, the *Everyman* interview series was conducted by Louise Morgan Theis (1883-1964). A graduate of Vassar College, she had left her husband in 1923 and moved to London to marry fellow-American Otto Theis, literary editor at *The Outlook* and later editor, translator and literary agent. In 1929 Morgan joined *Everyman*, acting as editor from 1931, when editor C. B. Purdom went on sick leave, until the journal closed. She and her husband were close friends with Nancy Cunard, and through her, Wyndham Lewis, Richard Aldington and others.

Given their friendship with Lewis and Cunard, it is not surprising that the Theis' relations with the Bloomsbury coterie were cool. This is especially true in the aftermath of the publication of *The Apes of God*, a book that *Everyman* had helped to publicise by interviewing Lewis twice. In 1961 Morgan privately noted [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] and when inviting Morgan to a party in 1932 William Plomer wrote [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (LM 26/647; LM 14/312). Despite the apparent antipathy for the Bloomsbury set in general and the Woolfs in particular, it would seem that Morgan did attend. Virginia Woolf recorded in her diary

⁵ In offering such diversity of content and contributors, *Everyman* presents, in a very different way, no less an interesting site from which to consider Bloomsbury's engagement with mass media than British *Vogue*. The latter's publication of articles by Woolf, Huxley, Bertrand Russell and others when under the editorship of Dorothy Todd (1922-1926) has garnered a degree of attention from critics such as Brenda R. Silver, Jane Garrity and Christopher Reed "Design for (Queer) Living" and "A Vogue That Dare Not Speak its Name".

that “In came Louise Morgan, the interviewer, nerve drawn, lined, crimson, agile” (D4.84).

In spite of her private feelings, Morgan did successfully solicit contributions from those affiliated with Bloomsbury and other literati. In the interview series too, entitled “How Writers Work,” the Bloomsbury coterie and affiliates was surprisingly well represented: Aldous Huxley, Somerset Maugham, Bertrand Russell, Vita Sackville-West and Frank Swinnerton all appeared. Morgan had even requested an interview with Woolf, but the writer declined with the declaration that [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (LM 18/409). The interview series also included a more diverse range of subjects; W. B. Yeats was interviewed as was Sinclair Lewis and Rose Macaulay. The series also included popular authors, some of whose names have not remained as prominent through the years, including Norah Hoult and Henry Handel Richardson. The writer, as conceived of in the Morgan series, was a many-coloured beast.

The Space of the Study

Morgan, like most interviewers, focuses much of her attention on the writer’s study. As we have seen, interior design is commonly offered as a testament to the subject’s personality and Morgan’s interviews are no exception. However, the interwar period had witnessed profound changes in house design, modes of occupation and interior design, and battles over public taste were often fought out in decor. The private sphere of the author’s study becomes in this era a key site for directing the public’s taste in design and literature.

In a 1914 interview with Wyndham Lewis the interviewer noted that his room is “obviously designed for the destruction of melancholy,” with its “lawless scarlet” doors, cubist patterned curtains and “dreamy blue” carpets described as “evidence of the

revolutionary spirit” (M. M. B. 14). Here the artist’s room is a visible sign of disposition for the interviewer, but Lewis is more interested in the public’s taste:

The modern city man spends half his life in a “Futurist” office, half his life in a quiet “Passéist” villa in the suburbs ... You can look out of the window there and imagine yourself a subject of George III. Which, then, for the City man is the real thing – the bustle of his active life or the peace of his private life? On the walls of his villa he will have pictures no doubt of green meadows, mill-wheels, dairy or other maids, oxen ploughing and one or two facetious prints. That is to say that, at home, with his pipe and slippers, he becomes just a stomach, an invalid bag of mediocre nerves, a silly child. In his office he is probably a very fine fellow – very alert, combative, and capable of straight, hard thinking. So he is really a “Futurist” after all. (M. M. B. 14)

Here the reprehensible qualities of the modern city man are those associated with the decor of the suburban house: the fashion for antiques in the pre-war period, the paintings and reproductions of rural pre-industrialised idylls. The divorce between the “Futurist” and “Passéist” modes of being is illustrated, for Lewis, by the split between the domestic and professional decors.

Intriguingly, Lewis’s division between the “hard thinking” Futurist and the enervated Passéist was also evinced more broadly in perceptions of the public in the interwar period. As Patrick Collier has noted, two distinct meanings of “the public” circulated in this period; on the one hand, deriving from an enlightenment definition, “the public” connoted a rational, politically effective citizenry (*Fleet Street* 19-20). On the other, the work of Walter Lippmann, Edward Bernays and other cultural commentators influenced by psychoanalysis contributed to a new definition of a more diverse, broad and, crucially, easily manipulated public, which co-existed and increasingly supplanted the older notion.⁶ By the late twenties, the optimism Lewis displays towards the public’s potential is replaced by a more widespread anxiety about the atomisation of the public

⁶ Walter Lippmann’s 1922 book *Public Opinion*, a masterful attempt to consider the impact of mediated mass communication, applied psychoanalytical theories to conceptions of the citizen and the public sphere, exploding the notion of the rational, well-informed citizen. A year later Edward Bernays, Freud’s nephew, published *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), which detailed how promotional strategies could take advantage of the irrationality of the public. See *North Reading 1922* (67-81).

sphere, the standardisation of the modern condition and the sheer number of books published.

Crucially, the characterisation of these debates in terms of interior design is not limited to Lewis's early example. In 1929 ex-British *Vogue* editor Dorothy Todd and sub-editor and Bloomsbury art critic Raymond Mortimer had published *The New Interior Decoration: An Introduction to its Principles, And International Survey of its Methods*. Mass produced fake antiques should be rejected in favour of contemporary design: "if we do this we can retain in our privacy that individuality which modern conditions are suppressing in our public life, and which the vogue for period decoration has been expelling even from our homes" (7). Even in Leavis the suburban dweller is the middlebrow reader par excellence and Woolf's middlebrows can be identified through their penchant for bad antiques (Q. D. Leavis 209, Woolf *E*6.475). This increasingly common linkage between decor and critical ability was to have a profound effect upon the manner in which the writer's room was read.

Moreover, the frequent criss-crossing of this boundary between public and private spaces was to denote the writer's study as an increasingly publicised space. An anxiety found in numerous publications in this era concerns the invasion of publicity into that supposedly most private and protected of rooms, the writer's study, and its cousin, the artist's studio.⁷ In the era of publicity, the studio or study could be faked and decor chosen simply to bolster a public image. The supposedly private space of the author's study was in fact a highly visible and loaded site of public debate. It is in the interview, which commonly positions the study as central to the subject's portrait, that these debates are most visible.

⁷ The artist's studio differs slightly from the space of the study of course – the former often the scene of sociability, of visits from potential clients or buyers and less obviously associated with privacy. Nevertheless as the setting for creative work and as a very publicised setting, the two are comparable.

An interview between Morgan and Lewis offers just such an example. In 1930, on the publication of *The Apes of God*, a savage attack upon the literati, Morgan interviewed “Wyndham Lewis: The Great Satirist of our Day.” Morgan’s narrative demonstrates a profound anxiety about the ability to discriminate between genuine and fake in the modern world: “The genuine artist has never had an easy time, but his difficulties are more monstrous now than they have ever been, for art nowadays is not only commercialized but (worst of all) fashionable” (231). *Apes of God* is praised for exposing these pseudo artists. Morgan’s statement plays into an anxiety over the effects of advertising and publicity upon the “true” artist’s ability to find an audience. The flood of printed matter onto the market in the first decades of the twentieth century had engendered alarm in many authors and critics about the possibility of the work of the genuine artist being submerged in the sheer weight of new books. The inability of the individual to read all of these titles meant that the advertising campaign and the reviewer became crucial in refining the selection down to a manageable portion.⁸ However, neither was a sure arbiter of taste, nor a guarantor of genuine artistic worth. In such a quagmire, Morgan’s interview offers Lewis as the man fulfilling precisely this function.

Having presented Lewis as the discriminating guide, Morgan takes this a stage further and offers Lewis as an example of the genuine artist. Crucially, it is his surroundings that provide the evidence. He has a different room for each of his activities – studio, study, office – and for Morgan each “points to perfection the difference between the pseudo and the genuine artist” (231). Morgan describes his “office” at great length (231). It is a chaos of paper, canvases, colours and odd items used apart from their original function.⁹

⁸ Something Lewis was to explore more systematically in her discussion of “middlemen” (19-32).

⁹ Lewis was interviewed ten months earlier for *Everyman* by Dr. Meyrick Booth. The interview focuses similarly on the mass of objects surrounding Lewis, the “species of literary searchlight” in “Our Sham Society” (707).

Crucially, it is use-value that determines Lewis's position as a genuine artist for Morgan. She is careful to explain that the "room exists not for itself, not for show, but as the most convenient workshop possible for its owner" (231). The artist's studio is here no longer the straightforward key to personality that many interviewers supposed. Under the glare of publicity utility becomes the key to determining authenticity for Morgan. Lewis creatively uses a barrel as a table, not because it might make for good publicity, but because his books are then easily accessible from his chair. In Morgan's portrait, Lewis's rooms are the genuine article and, as a consequence, so too is he.

Reading Lewis through his rooms is not therefore a straightforward act of interpretation; its difficulty lies precisely in being able to distinguish the valuable detail from the wealth of promotional material. In the case of this interview and others in her series, Morgan focuses upon the practical use of objects and decor, troubling any simplistic link between room and personality. The rooms in Morgan's interviews are not for display but are inhabited.

Across the series this is shown most obviously in the photographs that accompany the interviews, procured either from the subjects themselves or taken especially for Morgan. The photographs repeatedly show the author in situ in his or her dwelling: whether the author's study or the drawing room, these are not the empty rooms of the *Strand*, but occupied by the author, family members and pets. Thus the Rose Macaulay interview in 1930 includes a photograph of Macaulay curled on a couch, feet up, with the caption "Miss Macaulay in her study" (Morgan "Macaulay" 391). Photographs are accompanied by descriptions by Morgan, thus we learn that Sylvia Townsend Warner might have exotic "Spanish red" cushions and walls of "Egyptian yellow and red" but the flat was chosen for its being "quiet" (Morgan "Townsend Warner" 229, 230). These are rooms portrayed in terms of their use by inhabitants.

The interviews themselves also focus predominantly upon practical details. The questions themselves generally circle around issues of methodology. The writer is asked about whether they use a pen, pencil or typewriter, how interruptions affect them, what time of day and location suits best and how much revision they do. Thus we learn that W. B. Yeats works in the late morning, that Bertrand Russell writes 3,000 words a day, that Sinclair Lewis writes directly on to a typewriter with two fingers and Edgar Wallace uses a Dictaphone for stories and articles, a fountain pen for plays and revises on typewritten copy (“Yeats” 127 “Russell” 522, “Sinclair Lewis” 136, “Wallace” 805). While such questions could seem trivial, they testify to an interest in the act of creation as physical.¹⁰ They illustrate an interest in how the author occupies space, whether that is the study, the page, even (rejecting Bergson) the space of the day.

Many of the interviews also included a facsimile of a manuscript page alongside the photographs. These are always examples of handwritten manuscripts, even in those cases of authors who proclaim to write entirely on the typewriter. While graphology was popularised in America and Europe in the twenties, the interviews do little to interpret handwriting as a sign of personality. Instead, they are presented as examples of the author’s occupation of the space of the page, the physical testament of their labour. In an increasingly technologically mediated world, the reproduction of these facsimiles also sanctifies (and commodifies) the manuscript. Like the photographs and the practical questions, these facsimiles reinforce the notion of the author as a labouring, living body occupying space.

While displaying a repeated interest in the conditions of production, these interviews evince a related concern with the effects of technology upon the writer’s private sphere. Again and again the interviews demonstrate an anxiety that technology is

¹⁰ Hannah Sullivan’s *The Work of Revision* is an important example of why the circumstances of the labour of writing can have more than local importance for critics. Although Sullivan relies heavily (and to my mind troublingly) on interviews as source-documents, her main premise, that changes in revision practices in the modernist period had specific aesthetic results, is fascinating.

invading this space. The interviews repeatedly question authors as to what constitutes a distraction from writing. In the hubbub of modern life and the public incursion into the private study, these interviews exhibit a real ambivalence about the value of isolated literary production and technology's ability to preserve or assault the confines of that realm.

The study also becomes a particularly contested site in both these interviews and wider culture. The rationalisation of the workplace wrought by the innovations of Fordism and Taylorism and the removal of certain kinds of work from the house since the mid nineteenth century left the writer in the study as a peculiarly visible anomaly. The Morgan series is representative of a contemporary strain of response to the study in its emphasis upon the room and writer in the terms of rationalised industry. The interviews catalogue authors' habits, classifying preferences for Remingtons and Dictaphones that utilise modern technology to ease the labour of writing as contrasted to those devoted to the pencil, which becomes a suggestively artisanal device. Similarly the attention to working hours and patterns needs to be understood in relation to the standardisation of the working day. Even if the eight-hour working day was far from universal, its impact is felt in these interviews. Some writers justify the labour of their literary endeavour through reference to productivity: the number of words written in a day and the price achieved for the finished "product" proliferate. Edgar Wallace discusses his study in terms of an executive's office, linked by private telephone to his secretaries, whereby the toil of typing up is separated from the activity of creation, rationalising the writer's time and effort (805).

A common reading of this cataloguing of methodology would be to understand it as attempting to apprehend the source, or space, of inspiration. So identified, the author, like the film star discussed previously, could be rendered as reproducible as the Ford car. Certainly such manoeuvres should be understood in part as an attempt to do so. In

conceiving of the study in terms of the factory floor such a move also attempts to legitimise writing as work; writing becomes production and the writer a producer, who along with the supposedly lesser contributions of his secretary and editor further down the factory line, manufacture the book. While this strain of thought is clearly visible in these interviews and in wider conceptions of the author in the industrialised age, it carries a corollary notion. The attempt to conceive of the writer as reproducible worker emphasises the inexplicability of inspiration and its apparent resistance to standardisation. The attempts to catalogue the writer's methods highlight a lacuna between writer and work. Literary labour becomes unique, special, unfathomable. By emphasising standardisation the writer and their work become privileged.

Such a manoeuvre depends on inspiration being apparently amenable to classification, while ultimately resistant. In the interviews this might take the form of Wallace's emphasis on rationalised production, but it also takes the form of an often knowing resistance to such a reading – Aldous Huxley's admission that he writes with a typewriter on his knees in a comfy chair and completed his first novel in “complete darkness” or Sylvia Townsend Warner's wish “that I could tell you I wrote standing on one leg. Then you'd have something really entertaining and original to say” (“Huxley” 263, “Townsend Warner” 229). In fact this latter attitude is just as easily co-opted into the same argument, emphasising as it does the model of standardisation against which the author is identified. In either form, by conceiving of the writer and study in terms of industry production, inspiration is rendered, and rendered unique, through its negative spatialisation. Inspiration is a fetishised lacuna, a space defined by virtue of its unlocatability. The supposed privacy of the house in which the inhabitant can express individuality, extends only partially to the publicised and professionalised study. The cataloguing of the study and – as we shall see – the spatialisation of the author in relation to the marketplace in the interview simultaneously isolate and obscure artistic inspiration.

This awareness of the marketplace when discussing the study, is a more general feature of Morgan's series. The parallel between study and factory had also resulted in cultural anxieties around the relation of art and commerce, as critics from Walter Benjamin to Joyce Wexler have pointed out. The relations between study and marketplace, as well as study and factory, constitute a particularly fraught spatial dynamics in this era and the *Everyman* interviews, which mediate between, offer a fruitful site for considering these issues.

Gilbert Frankau, an extremely prolific British writer of popular fiction and poetry, was interviewed by Morgan in 1930. The target of Leavis's hostility, Frankau was a best-selling author on both sides of the Atlantic, beloved of review publications such as the *Bookman* for his storytelling abilities. His public persona was generally confident and anti-elitist. In the mid twenties he had been involved in a public dispute with Leonard Woolf over the status of the highbrow, the latter's riposte entitled *Hunting the Highbrow* (1927). Frankau's interview is also confident. Entitled, "Should the Writer be a Business Man?" The subheading makes this assertion of authorial professionalisation even more explicit:

Frankau, one of the most successful living writers of "best-sellers", declares boldly in this interview that he considers the art of writing as a business to be undertaken as methodically as that of the salesman. He denounces what he describes as 'all that artistic bunk about the poor writer in the garret' ("Should the Writer" 165)

Such a sensational start perfectly exhibits what Wexler describes as the two versions of authorship circulating at this time: one the model of the professional businessman, the other the (romantic) genius (xii).¹¹ Wexler points out that writers such as Joyce, Conrad and Lawrence "used the myth of the artist to further their professional careers";

¹¹ See also Janice Radway's related discussion of the two concepts of the book – as a commodity and as an "emanation of the author" – competing at this time (137).

Frankau's rejection of such a myth positions him firmly against the strategies used by these writers (xii).

This opener is immediately followed up by the interviewer's acquiescence that it is impossible to distinguish between a musician or novelist and a stockbroker "[n]owadays" (165). Morgan, it would appear, is very much on side. Not that Frankau needs much encouragement as he elaborates upon the necessity of an artist to follow the model of the businessman. He likens the writer to the producer of cigarettes and biscuits: "A man must know how to sell what he produces" (165). It is also his job to keep a finger on the "public pulse" by reading reviews so that he can produce books accordingly (166). For Frankau it is the market that dictates authorial production and his conception of authorship is not one of the individual remaining aloof from the business of the marketplace; instead he publically relishes his interactions in the sphere.

The desire to fashion this particular persona is evident throughout the interview; Frankau is very keen to emphasise his own links with trade and his refusal to distinguish between books and other commodities is cemented through reference to the family cigar firm.¹² Despite later boasting of his education at Eton, he rejects any association with the gentleman of leisure through repeated mention of this symbol of trade. In fact the gentleman of leisure, or the landed aristocracy, becomes the class against which Frankau implicitly aligns himself against (165).

Both Morgan and Frankau co-operate in presenting an image of the author that does not see art and commerce as antithetical. Frankau points out that Dickens and George Eliot were both highbrow and bestsellers in their day; however, he also points to how circumstances have changed since the mid nineteenth century.¹³ Frankau discusses the modern day competition faced by authors in the form of the movie and the dance

¹² Frankau's *Self-Portrait* also reads as a man obsessed with money: the details of his and his acquaintances' financial circumstances proliferate.

¹³ See Keating and Gross for general discussions of these changes.

club in trying to hold the reader's attention: "My job is to *make him read instead*" (italics in original, 165). In a period of uneasy discussions around the threat technological innovations posed to reading, Frankau's lack of anxiety is notable. While his popular subject matter and high sales figures protected him from obscurity, Frankau also willingly embraced transformations in publishing, marketing and celebrity culture to promote his books.

Like the majority of interviewees in the series, Frankau is asked numerous questions on the practicalities of writing. For a publication so keen to emphasise the career potential of writing and to educate its readers accordingly, such focus on practical details is extremely fitting. The interview offers Frankau as the model of successful author to emulate, utilising explicit details of his work habits and character traits freely. The habits of the writer are readily discussed by Frankau in terms of the professional producer at work.

Although Frankau is happy to discuss writing habits, his attitude towards other subjects displays more reticence. Late in the interview he comments, "I do find it a most curious thing – I don't understand it – but the public is interested in what you think and say and do and feel" (166). A few lines later Frankau acknowledges that he dislikes reviews that criticise his personality rather than his work (170). These two remarks seem somewhat at odds with Frankau's own willingness to discuss the methodological minutiae. In fact, they demonstrate his own important distinction between the individual and his work: this is not the romantic mode of authorship, which depends upon the personality and emotions of the poet for the creation of literature, but a more mechanical, impersonal relation between producer and product. Frankau's rejection of the "artistic bunkum" of the romantic mode of authorship leaves him apparently unable to account for why readers and reviewers might be interested in his personality and its role in forming his work.

Frankau's interview offers an excellent, if extreme, example of the emerging model of the professional author in the twentieth century. However, this is not the sole version of the author's relation to the public sphere promoted within the "How Writers Work" series. In other interviews Morgan and her subjects offer models more in line with the Romantic poet, which position the author in a very different relation to the marketplace. Three months after the Frankau interview, Morgan published an interview with Warwick Deeping, bestselling author of *Sorrell and Son* (1925) amongst other books. Frankau and Deeping are somewhat similar figures: both survived active service in the First World War, began by writing poetry and later turned to fiction where their output was prolific and sales high; both too were immensely popular between the wars, both had their novels adapted for film. Both novelists were also to share the dubious honour of being decried by Leavis as examples of the middlebrow author (and in Frankau's case verging into the category of lowbrow) and their reputations have declined since mid century (Q. D. Leavis 66-67). Despite such similarities, they offer vastly different models of authorship in their interviews and thus relations between the spaces of privacy and publicity.

The same year that Deeping's interview was published in *Everyman* a newspaper competition voted him a novelist likely to endure the vicissitudes of time (Glover 18-19). Writing since the turn of the century, Deeping's novels had been generally well received by reviewers and sold well: his sales figures were a rare example of "literary justice" for one reviewer (M. A. S. 27). The Morgan interview acknowledges this, beginning along similar lines to that with the more confident Frankau. The headline speaks of bestsellers and the opening sentence states that the typical modern writer tries to look like a business man. The nod to commerce indicates a system of valuing authorship based upon sales and accords with Frankau's views. However, this scheme of valuation is set up only to be immediately contradicted. In contrast to the typical writer, Deeping "looks

and acts the part of the creative artist as it has been understood for centuries until the machine age began to mark us all with the same stamp” (Morgan “Deeping” 621). This is to be a portrait of the artist set in opposition to the professional businessman.

In Morgan’s interview Deeping is offered as an author in the romantic tradition, specifically of Wordsworth and later Tennyson. Deeping is photographed in his garden and described as stooping, which gives him a visionary touch, as if carrying on the tradition of the “absent-minded, gentle, careless, ‘inspired’” author (621). He writes for himself, not for money or the public.¹⁴ He requires solitude to write – his wife helpfully protecting him from the “pest” of intrusion (621). He also loathes literary parties, preferring to keep in touch with the common man. Furthermore his advice is for the aspiring writer to “remain oneself”, avoiding the contamination of education, thus evoking the enlightenment rhetoric around the *tabula rasa* (621). The portrait has become almost a stereotype of a mode wherein author and study are firmly opposed to the space of the marketplace.

As the thirties progressed, Deeping’s reputation was to decline in large part because critics such as Leavis were to define his work through his readership.¹⁵ In a critical study of Deeping, Mary Glover identifies the writer’s increasing sense of embattlement in this decade and recourse to a repeated image of himself as gardener and respectable member of the landed gentry (53). Yet even at the height of his literary reputation, the Morgan interview attempts to create a model of authorship that resists the marketplace.

While Deeping and Frankau present antithetical conceptions of the relation between author and marketplace, they do share financial security from high sales and their sex; both men are protected from the “pest” of intrusion by virtue of these factors.

¹⁴ In correspondence over the draft interview the major request by the Deepings was to delete the mention of their income (LM 6/112).

¹⁵ For a wider discussion of the middlebrow novel and the positions of Frankau and Deeping within the marketplace see Humble (1-56).

By contrast, when Vita Sackville-West was interviewed for *Everyman*, the main thrust of the article was upon the “handicapped” nature of a woman writer’s position (Morgan “V. Sackville-West” 391). Echoing Woolf’s comments in *A Room of One’s Own* (published a year earlier), which drew direct links between material consideration, spatial autonomy and authorial production, Sackville-West asserts that while the male writer can retire to his study, “A wife has always been, and continues to be, a buffer between a man and the world” (391). Unlike her male counterpart, the female writer does not have the luxury of remaining uninterrupted.

In her book *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* Victoria Rosner makes the salient point that: “The walls of the home proffer an umbrella of privacy, an apparent ability to retreat from the general gaze, but ... the home does not proffer its protection equally to all household members, nor does its protection invariably extend autonomy to those who dwell within its doors” (5). Men, women, servants, children and dependants all had a very different relationship to domestic rooms and Rosner sees part of the modernist project as attempting to reimagine the experience of interiority through reconceiving the home (9). The tension between the apparently feminine sphere of the house and “masculine” rooms such as the library and the study, a hangover from the Victorian period, is still clearly visible in these interviews from the 1930s.

The women depicted in these interviews often comment upon having to balance the demands of managing a household against managing their professional activities. These contesting demands are often reflected and worked out through the subjects resisting inherited conventions of inhabitation. Often this is done with a degree of humour. Sackville-West is photographed in the garden with her two dogs, one on each side of her; the next page retains the format, replacing her dogs with her sons (391-92). The intrusions of dogs and sons are indistinguishable for the interrupted writer, the composition implies. Dorothy Richardson speaks of the moment she becomes “‘housy”

in the day, setting out tea; Morgan overtly asks Norah Hoult to speak of the handicaps of being a female writer; Susan Glaspell notes wryly that the “shack” is ideal for a woman who otherwise will be interrupted by the maid (Morgan “Richardson” 396, “Hoult” 133, “Glaspell” 784). In reconceptualising the study and the writer’s inhabitation of the domestic sphere, these authors, and indeed Morgan herself, are also promoting new, more flexible relations between a more inclusive conception of authorship and society.¹⁶

In 1931 the interview series was itself to go through a re-conception of its own when it was published as a book entitled *Writers at Work*. This act offers an opportunity to consider a facet of space in the interview that has been somewhat sidelined in the argument so far: the significant effects of graphic design or bibliography upon the form. In what follows, the editorial and production decisions made when publishing the volume are scrutinised in detail for the suggestive relations they posit between the interview’s deployment of space as meaning and the position of the interview anthology in the literary marketplace.

***Writers at Work* (1931)**

When, in 1931 Morgan published the anthology, it was not with J. M. Dent, but with Chatto & Windus (Chatto), who also had a history of publishing large runs of affordable books. The firm had a varied but strong list; they published Walter Besant, Bret Harte, Arnold Bennett’s plays, William Faulkner and Wilfred Owen. They also supported the growing interest in literary criticism: F. R. Leavis and William Empson were on their list and Q. D. Leavis’s own *Fiction and the Reading Public* was published by Chatto. The firm

¹⁶ While gender is the most significant context for re-conceiving of inhabitation, similar points could be made around financial resources. Interviews in hotel rooms and discussions of travelling abroad to live cheaply indicate that experiences of inhabitation can be as powerfully affected by monetary considerations. Interviews with Richard Aldington, Sinclair Lewis and Edgar Wallace all exhibit a similar reconceptualisation of the space of the study based on such factors and in doing so they offer variant readings about the relationship between author and marketplace.

also published several important books by Bloomsbury figures, many of whom would also publish with the Hogarth Press, including David Garnett's poems, Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1919), Clive Bell's *Art* (1914), Roger Fry's *Vision and Design* (1920), *Transformations* (1926) and others. They also published Wyndham Lewis, including *Hitler* (1931), Aldous Huxley, including *Crome Yellow* which satirised Lady Ottoline Morrell and her circle, and Sylvia Townsend Warner, all of whom appeared in Morgan's volume.

The choice of Chatto would have been in some senses over-determined, even had the firm not approached Morgan with the idea. Many of *Everyman's* regular contributors and interviewees published with the firm, as did friends including Lewis and Aldington. The latter, along with Cunard, also socialised extensively with Charles Prentice, who led the firm between 1919 and 1934 along with Ian Parsons (Aldington *Pinorman* 86-89). Frank Swinnerton, who was interviewed by Morgan at the beginning of 1931, was also the publisher's reader for fifteen years.

Morgan's volume was eventually published under the firm's new Dolphin imprint. Proposed in 1930 by Aldington, a close friend of Prentice, the imprint was to be "a series of short books at a low price" (Aldington *Pinorman* 46). The books, although small (around 17,000 words each), benefited from thick textured paper, wide margins, and a uniform cover illustration and dust jacket by artist Edward Bawden (fig.3). Other books in the series included *Wyndham Lewis* by Roy Campbell, (commissioned and typeset though withdrawn before publication), *Proust* by Samuel Beckett, *Vulgarity in Literature* by Aldous Huxley, *London Street Games* by Norman Douglas, and others. Morgan's slim volume appeared in the autumn of 1931 at a price of 2/- . Three thousand copies were printed.¹⁷

¹⁷ Chatto and Windus Archive, (CW B/2/20, *Stock book 9*). I quote from the Chatto & Windus Archives held at the University of Reading Special Collections, hereafter referred to as "CW", followed by relevant catalogue information.

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 3 Cover (without dust jacket) designed by Edward Bawden for *Writers At Work*.

Morgan's official contact with the firm seems to have begun in May 1930 when she wrote to Oliver Warner, Swinnerton's successor at Chatto, to ask if he could arrange for her to interview Strachey, R. H. Mottram, A. A. Milne and T. F. Powys (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). Clearly her request was successful, Milne and Mottram agreed. Indeed, her archive testifies to all the published interviews being well-received by the authors, adjectives such as [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] recur and Poet Laureate John Masefield went as far as to comment that [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (LM 12/257).

Ten months later Warner wrote to Morgan suggesting an anthology of interviews. In her reply of 31 March 1931 Morgan commented, [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). Morgan's estimation of the textual changes necessary when transforming the magazine interviews into a book seems to have been higher than that her publisher, in fact very little rewriting was done. The eventual production decisions and the criteria upon which the interviews were selected were to be more significant.

The publisher's files indicate that Warner, Prentice and Morgan discussed the selection of interviews right up until the week the manuscript was delivered, but early on there was a degree of consensus: Wyndham Lewis, Sinclair Lewis, A. E. Coppard, Maugham and Aldington appear consistently in draft lists. However, outside of this core group opinions differed. One list, which appears to be Prentice's but circulated amongst the three, is heavily marked and considers Townsend Warner, Q, Compton Mackenzie and Swinnerton, while firmly rejecting Havelock Ellis, Sackville-West, Huxley, Milne, Walpole, Frankau, Mottram and Macaulay. Warner appears to have disagreed over Wallace's rejection, [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). By the beginning of June the publishers seem to have placed the burden of choice on Morgan, who was asked to supply the interviews she thought best. When doing so she explicitly rejected Russell, Maurois, Macaulay and Mackenzie.

The interviews eventually anthologised did not ally themselves with or against a particular coterie. Those who appeared on the core list were all present, plus Townsend Warner, Wallace and W. B. Yeats. In choosing the selection Morgan, Prentice and Warner somewhat reduced the diversity of authorial personae offered by the magazine series. Frankau's notion of the author-as-businessman has been removed and the list instead offers a selection of interviews that support a more rarefied image of the artist based on notions of literary cache and cultural eminence (albeit including Wallace, whom

Leavis despised). The list of familiar names suggests that considerations of posterity were more in mind when making selections for the book than for the magazine, with its much more demanding schedule.

The case of W. B. Yeats supports this: Morgan had been attempting to arrange an interview with the poet for a number of months while drawing up the anthology list and both publisher and author seemed keen to include Yeats, even before the interview had taken place. His name appears repeatedly on the lists beside a question mark, with Henry Handel Richardson suggested as an alternative. When finally the interview did take place, at the beginning of June, Morgan was [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] about it (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). The meeting had been quick – twenty-five minutes due to a location mix-up and Morgan felt the tone of the interview was [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). She requested the firm make the final decision between the two. Given that Yeats is certainly the most renowned of the authors included in the anthology today, his equation with Richardson, a largely forgotten Australian female writer who was even then labelled [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] by Chatto, might seem surprising (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). The decision, however, to include the less successful interview testifies to a desire to publish authors with an assured cultural position, ahead of model examples of the form. The place of the author within the marketplace is felt in the interview anthology.

Morgan herself displayed a certain degree of disregard for the material of the book. When sending the manuscript to Chatto in June she encouraged the publishers to make suggestions: [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). Morgan's remark repeats the common denigration expressed by modernist authors for journalism marks it as distinctly separate from the space of literary production. If writing can be labour, so too it can be separated into good and bad

labour, with journalism marked as the latter. Throughout her correspondence Morgan also uses the deprecating description [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] to refer to the anthology: a book of journalism is considered a slight achievement, even if Morgan also expresses a degree of pride (she desired one but worried that a dedication might seem over-the-top (CW 44/13/*Letters from Louise Morgan (Theis)*). For Morgan, the interviewer might inhabit the book, but she is the tenant rather than the owner of such a space.

Little or not in size or content, the published version of the book transforms the interviews through bibliographic and design elements. Chatto had a reputation for design excellence in this period, largely thanks to Prentice, an Oxford classics scholar and a Scot with an eye for detail (Warner 19-22). As the eminent typographic designer Ruari McLean stated in 1958, Prentice had raised the firm “to that position of pre-eminence in the design and production of the ordinary plain reading book which it still holds. Prentice’s books have a quiet and unpretentious excellence” (84). Chatto also employed the Edinburgh-based firm of T & A Constable, who themselves had a reputation for quality, as their printers. This design and production quality, seen across the Dolphin imprint, transforms the interview on the page.

J. M. Dent had also had a reputation for design innovation. In 1906 the *Everyman* book series had been publishing using the latest in technological advances; they were set on the still-novel Lanston Monotype typesetting system and used Monotype’s newly introduced Old Style font. They also made a nod to the contemporary hand-printing vogue, introducing pseudo-Kelmscott Press title pages and endpapers (McLean 10-12, 36-37).¹⁸ This design was to remain unchanged until 1935 as the *Everyman* series was held

¹⁸ The influence of William Morris, the Kelmscott Press and other Arts and Crafts inspired imprints were still acutely visible in book design in this period. Even authors associated with a decisive break from Victorian culture engaged with these designs throughout the twenties. As Jerome McGann has pointed out Ezra Pound himself was to allude repeatedly to Morris’s work through the graphic design of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* and various editions of the *Cantos* in the twenties (128-41, 155-161). Even in the interview by M.

up as an example of how to make good cheap books (37). The magazine had also benefitted from these advances until sold by Dent. The paper was relatively high quality for a cheap weekly, the font a new interpretation on a classic (Caslon was re-cut for the new typesetting companies at the beginning of the twentieth century) and the layout eye-catching, if not innovative, with big headlines, three columns, photographs, illustrations, and the occasional full-colour front cover (fig. 4).

Given its prestigious design lineage, it is unsurprising to note that Morgan's anthology was a beautiful, if inexpensive, volume. Equally unsurprising, but noteworthy, are the changes wrought on the interview layout in the volume. The design of the book emphasises the value of the book for posterity. The colourful headlines and subheadings of journalism are removed, replaced by a discreet title (figs. 4 and 5). No longer are we told that Townsend Warner is an "excellent amateur cook," or that the interview "with her will come as a surprise to the countless admirers of her work," for example (Morgan "Townsend Warner" 229). The advertisements that often appeared alongside the interviews are replaced by wide white margins. The manuscript facsimiles and photographs are also removed. The overall effect is to reduce the particularity of the interviews as specific occasions in specific locales. The interviews become more demure in tone, more disembodied.

M. B. the designer utilises a design font for the headline that is reminiscent of Morris patterns, thus emphasising Lewis's position as a modern incarnation of the pre-Raphaelites.

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 4 Louise Morgan, “Sylvia Townsend Warner: A Writer Who Follows None of the Rules” (229).

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 5 Louise Morgan, *Writers at Work* (26-27).

It is the removal of the photographs that has the most pronounced effect. The materiality to which the photographs attest is lost, whether the physicality of the author's appearance or the objects surrounding them. So too the sense of inhabitation is greatly reduced. In the interview with Townsend Warner in *Everyman*, a photo shows the author happily cooking in her kitchen, garbed in an apron (fig. 6). The effect was not only to underline the author's remarks about her love of cooking; the caption and photo, which had playfully positioned Townsend Warner in the archetypal female role, commented implicitly upon the figure of the female writer and, with hindsight, Townsend Warner's own bisexuality.¹⁹ Given also that the shortage of domestic servants in this era had resulted in women's magazines widely promoting cooking as a chic leisure activity, the *Everyman* article makes a knowing nod to contemporary media (Humble 124-25). By contrast, such manoeuvres are lost in the book version. Instead the white space of the interview is the space of the reader's imagination.

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 6 Detail from "Sylvia Townsend Warner: A Writer Who Follows None of the Rules" (229).

¹⁹ Townsend Warner was also sharing a house with Oliver Warner and his wife at the time of the interview, and intimately involved with Prentice (Harman 80-81).

The title of the book also transforms the emphasis from exploring the practicalities of “How Writers Work” to a suggestion on a more passive portrait of the writer at work. The articles nod towards the aspirational desires of their readership; the title “How Writers Work,” reinforces the notion that the author’s role is one of methodology and technique, of how they inhabit the space of the workroom, page and day. The book, however, de-emphasises this, focusing instead upon the troublesome negative-space of “inspiration.” In the preface Morgan underlines this, the interviews were instigated “with the object of discovering their methods of work and possibly some clue, however remote, to the nature of inspiration” (*Writers* vii). She also concludes that there are no general rules for authorship: some write best “in the turmoil of affairs,” others in seclusion and, while techniques can be honed by practice, an author is born, not made (vii, vii-viii). Although Morgan’s preface illustrates her interest in methodology, it does so to depict the non-standard, non-rational nature of inspiration. Writers might labour, but for Morgan the anthologist, literary labour is privileged and unique.

The relationship of the interview and the author’s other works is also emphasised by the preface. Morgan explains that the interview had the “imprimatur” of the author (viii). The reader is thus encouraged to read the volume as contiguous to the individual oeuvres of the authors: this is a sanctioned publication, a rendering of personality that has been authored by the writer and should be valued accordingly. This is also supported by a publisher’s announcement at the back of the book which states that a limited run of editions signed by the author are available and “intended for the pleasure of the collector” (n.pag). While the term “pleasure” suggests a collector drawn by appreciation of elite culture, the phrase also invokes the possibility that the collector’s aim is to purchase an item that will accumulate value.

Recent critical studies of modernist writers’ engagement with the marketplace have identified similar strategies employed in more well-known cases. In *Institutions of*

Modernism Lawrence Rainey used the example of *Ulysses* to persuasively argue that authors utilised limited print runs and collector editions to position the modernist book as a scarce market commodity, as an investment which offered to its purchaser a deferred value which was more financial than cultural. So too, Aaron Jaffe has utilised the term “imprimatur” to speak of the commercial and cultural cachet invested in the signature of the modernist author in their covert uses of strategies of publicity that they overtly rejected (*Culture of Celebrity* 20).

Yet this is a strategy being employed for a book of interviews in this case, not *Ulysses*. Its use teases the critic, hinting at surprising parities between these texts in 1931, parities which are less visible today. While the standard critical account of modernist writers opposing journalism has been greatly nuanced by the work of Patrick Collier, Leila Brosnan and others, it is notable that, as a volume, Morgan’s interviews are largely divested of their form by publisher and reviewers.²⁰ Chatto’s advertisements for *Writers at Work* avoid the term “interview”. In the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) on 16 July 1931 the announcement lists the forthcoming book as a collection of a “study of methods” (“Messrs. Allen and Unwin” 558). On 3 September they are “sketches”, on the 17th “intimate studies” (“Mr. Aldous Huxley’s new book” 660, “Chatto & Windus. [Ad 1]” 703). On the 24th a review by Swinnerton is quoted as a blurb, which classes the collection as a “proper book to be read by those who are interested in the aims of modern writers” and on 8 October they are described as “portraits” (“Chatto & Windus. [Ad 2]” 716, “Chatto & Windus. [Ad 3]” 769). Instead of the descriptor “interview”, various euphemistic terms associated with drawing are employed. This is a telling move, at once affirming the book’s status as a creative endeavour, and implying that the interview form, thanks to its associations with journalism, fails to reach such a status. Appearing next to advertisements for fictional work by Aldous Huxley and William

²⁰ Collier *Modernism on Fleet Street* and “Woolf, Privacy and the Press,” and Brosnan.

Faulkner amongst other writers, Morgan's offering is positioned so as to de-emphasise its form.

The interview, like the covert strategies of marketing used by modernist writers, becomes bad writing here. The journalistic origins and compositional form of *Writer at Work* are elided in order to render the interviews suitable tenants for the Dolphin book. Yet by acknowledging their inhabitation, the interviews offer a compelling site from which to explore the contours and interiors of the author's study and the marketplace.

Stefan Collini has recently illustrated the significance of Chatto's publishing decisions in the thirties and after the war for the professionalisation of literary criticism at mid century. While focusing on links with university institutions, the import of Collini's research suggestively links Morgan's scrutiny of the author's methodology and the space of "inspiration" with work by William Empson, F. R. Leavis and others to define methods of criticism (636-53, and throughout). The promotional materials from Chatto indeed suggest that the Morgan book be read as a "study of methods," a view supported by Swinnerton's review. The distinctions of subject matter, format and publishers' classification between *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (originally a 15,000 word piece), the Dolphin critical essays and *Writers at Work* are less striking than modern critical orthodoxies might lead us to believe (Collini 641).

Indeed, literary studies by F. R. and Q. D. Leavis, amongst others, draw upon, if not the interview in the study, certainly the sociological interview model. This period had seen sociological usage of the interview becoming more publicised. In the USA, the rise of the Chicago School to prominence in the 1920s, and the hype around the publication of Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown* (1929) was raising the profile of the interview as a sociological tool. In England Beatrice and Sidney Webb had also promoted the use of interviews to collect information on social conditions. Beatrice Webb broadcast the BBC's first speech on "The Art and Craft of Interviewing" in 1929, discussing the

interview as a “method of social study” and its use by Royal Commissions and Charles Booth (348). Discussed not in terms of the craft of journalism, but sociology, the speech demonstrates the important and growing contemporary associations between one particular type of interview and social mapping in this era.

Given the scientific mode of Q. D. Leavis’s treatise – her desire to stratify, to catalogue – was part of a wider effort to establish English studies and literary criticism on an authoritative footing, it should perhaps come as no surprise that, like the little magazines in the previous chapter, she uses data from questionnaires distributed to authors by mail.²¹ The sociological method is being used to buttress Leavis’s study of the space of the literary marketplace. While Morgan’s literary interviews never align themselves with the sociological model, the very notion that they might be promoted as a “study of methods” indicates that the form could sit “betwixt and between” emerging disciplinary divisions.

For a brief moment in 1931 a book of interviews could inhabit a space that spanned not only the space of journalism and creative writing, but also the emergent sphere of criticism. In fact, sales of Morgan’s book were small: a year after publication, half were dismantled and used for packing (CW B/2/20, *Stock book 9*). Only half fancifully, we might imagine the quires of Morgan’s ravaged book being used to pack Q. D. Leavis’s 1932 *Fiction and the Reading Public. Writers at Work* and *Everyman* were to become victims of transformations in the literary marketplace and the institutional and disciplinary landscapes of the 1930s. The interview was to languish outside the literary critical fold until the 1950s. Nevertheless, the publication of this book of interviews provides a unique, but suggestive site for considering the spaces of the study and

²¹ In his study of the history of sociology, Wolf Lepenies makes the interesting claim that overall the Leavises’ literary criticism was better sociology than sociology itself in this period (183). Tracing a line back to Matthew Arnold, Thomas Huxley and John Stuart Mill, Lepenies sees Webb and both F. R. and Q. D. Leavis as direct inheritors of this particularly English tradition of literary criticism as “concealed sociology” (177).

publishing fields at the critical moment when modernism was being welcomed into the English departments of the Anglo-American world. Moreover, by attending to these interviews, the specific institutions of *Everyman* and Chatto are inhabited with objects, typefaces and a surprising collation of apparently disparate groups of people and texts.

As the thirties progressed, the sociological associations of the interview for writers were to grow. Although very different in origins and aims, the Mass Observation Project in England and the Federal Writers' Project in the USA familiarised groups of writers in sociological methods, including interviewing, and variously knitted together divergent impulses, such as the documentary movement, surrealist interest in the mass unconscious, folklore, sociology and literature.²² While these projects influenced individual writers and led to a more sustained interest in oral history projects in the postwar era (Studs Terkel being only the most obvious example), it was the development of the sociological interview into a prominent tool of surveillance in the 1940s and fifties that was to transform the interview's associations, spatial and otherwise, for writers.

²² On the former see Hubble; on the latter, many manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project are available via the Library of Congress website (*American Life Histories*).

“And tell me, where is Watergate?”

Dialogue and Interrogation in the Postwar Interview

She has agreed to do the interview but only by e-mail: in this way she has politely refused the role of subject and reverted to the more comfortable role of writer. She will be writing her answers—and, to be honest, tinkering gently with the phrasing of some of my questions.

So the true setting of this interview is not the book-lined walls of her living room, where we sit having mint tea, but screens: Malcolm’s twenty-one-and-a-half-inch desktop Mac, with its worn white keyboard; my silver seventeen-inch MacBook, my iPad sometimes. (Roiphe “Janet Malcolm” n.pag)

So begins an interview with American nonfiction writer Janet Malcolm for the *Paris Review* in 2011. While, following on from the previous chapter, we might note the technologically-created screen-space so privileged in Katie Roiphe’s second paragraph, it is Malcolm’s – at times infamous – reputation as a writer committed to confronting her sense of the ethical crises at the heart of the relationship between journalist and subject that interests me here. That little “to be honest” knowingly gestures out to Malcolm’s strident claims for the immorality of this relationship.

In her controversial and oft-quoted opening to *The Journalist and the Murderer* Malcolm pulls no punches:

Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people’s vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse (3).

In prose full of allusions to “treachery,” “libel” and “deception,” Malcolm makes a parallel between “the deliberately induced delusion, followed by a moment of shattering revelation” of the journalist-subject relationship and Stanley Milgram’s now notorious

1961 psychological experiments into the nature of obedience (4). While Malcolm's characterisation of the journalist's role has proven extremely controversial, it is not the stakes of the comparison but the terms themselves that are key to my argument. In the late twentieth century parallels between cross-examination and the interview seemed obvious. To a contemporary audience a cluster of associations – surveillance, inquisition, publicity, cross-examination, confession – link the interview and the law. Indeed, after Foucault, the disciplinary significance of publicity can no longer be in doubt (Foucault *Discipline* 9).

However, this parallel between the interview and cross-examination has not always been so readily apparent. The odd nineteenth-century critic might have described the interviewer as an inquisitor but on the whole the comparison was commonly with a Peeping Tom. It was only in the years after the Second World War that this perception dramatically shifted. In the 1950s the interview dialogue became associated with courtroom conversation; in doing so it took on a particular ethical import. The interviewer was no longer the deferential guest, enthusiastic fan or invasive insect, he – and the re-masculinisation of the interviewer in the postwar period is notable – was now the public prosecutor. Malcolm's journalist might be a thief and a fraud, but her analogy relies on a significant mid-century shift in the perception of the form that equated the interview with the trial. It is this transformation, and the attendant re-conception of dialogue within the interview, that marks the focus of this chapter.

In the 1940s the quintessential interview style might be represented by the phenomenally successful radio broadcasts of Mary Margaret McBride in America, and Roy Plomley's *Desert Island Discs* in the United Kingdom.¹ The interviews are deferential, friendly, a cosy chat amongst friends. They utilise the ability of radio technology to create a sense of intimacy between speaker and listener. In America, programmes such as *Vox*

¹ For *Desert Island Discs*, see Plomley, Plomley and Drescher, and Lawley; for McBride, see Ware.

Pop: Sidewalk Interviews, and *We, the People* also used interviews with Joe Ordinary to boost ratings and even the staid BBC produced the popular *In Town Tonight*, which included brief interviews with celebrities and notable characters.² This was the interview conceived as entertainment, as comfortable conversation.

Of course commentators also noted the medium's use by demagogues to create something other than an intimate atmosphere. In contrast to FDR's appropriation of an intimate tone in his "Fireside Chats," Hitler's "savage howl" invaded the home with an oratory more suited to the political stage (Woolf *D5*:169). The rantings of Father Coughlin, the wartime broadcasts of William Joyce, Ezra Pound and others leant the medium a sinister cast. Nevertheless, in the 1940s the interviewer – rather than the firebrand – is usually "courteous to a fault" (Hendy 233). How much this changed in the second half of the twentieth century is illustrated by one puckish journalist in 1984: "One can imagine Roy [Plomley] with Richard Nixon: 'And tell me, where is Watergate?'" (Twisk 31). Between the 1940s and the Frost-Nixon interviews of 1977, the interview was dramatically transformed across new and old media, with enormous repercussions for the way writers conceived of and employed the form. In order to understand the reasons behind this shift and its deeper implications, we need to attend to the changing political, legal and cultural dynamics in the postwar period.

Ezra Pound offers a difficult first case study; his status as eminent poet, his arrest for treason in 1945 and his incarceration for insanity (1946-58) are unique. Despite this, his treatment, very much in the public eye, does offer a specific example of wider cultural trends which were to profoundly alter perceptions of dialogue and the interview: the psychiatric interview, the (threat of) cross-examination, state surveillance and the newspaper interview coalesce in the case of Pound. While Pound was never publically cross-examined, while writers interviewing him were nothing if not deferential in person,

² See Loviglio for a discussion of the Joe Ordinary interview programmes and Hilmes for a thorough introduction to transatlantic radio broadcasting. For British broadcastings, see Briggs.

his situation offers some important suggestions. Specifically, it offers insights into how perceptions of dialogue within the form led to the interview becoming a symbolic and legal battleground for negotiating a constellation of ideological disputes around privacy, the power of the state, individual autonomy and the moral authority of the press and the writer in this period.

The second case study focuses upon the transformation of the interview in 1956. The precise date reflects the importance of one programme in marking a decisive break with the deferential interviewing that characterised the pre-war press. Journalist Mike Wallace hosted *Night Beat*, broadcast first in New York and later nationally, that attempted to engender a robust dialogue between subject and interviewer. Subjects' opinions and positions were interrogated in depth by a well-informed interviewer with the express purpose of stimulating critical political debate in the public realm. The backdrop of the Cold War, the experiences of McCarthyism, the Suez Crisis and increasing state and private surveillance were to have a significant impact on the way that the interview dialogue was conceived. As we shall see, it was the interview's ability to enact politically challenging dialogue that made it so valuable to Wallace and his contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic.

The final case study returns to the realm of the writer and specifically to the impact of technology on perceptions of dialogue as the tape recorder became widely available. While the tape-recorded word took on associations of surveillance and control in this period, the recorder demonstrated that speech itself was distinctly different from prose. The tape recorder was at once a profoundly threatening device and also artistically freeing. The aesthetic experiments of avant-garde writers such as the Beats and the writers and artists associated with, first France and later the East Village and the St. Mark's Poetry Project, often drew specifically upon tape-recorded dialogue. It is no coincidence that these writers were to become widely-known through their extensive

interviews, conversations and appreciation of the spoken word. Within this wider countercultural masculine milieu, in a period in which homosexuality was still criminalised and censorship battles raged, the interview, with its connotations of control and interrogation, were productively used by writers, artists and even avant-garde publishers in the battle for creative freedom. While the interrogative style dominated the mainstream media, these groups responded by creatively exploring the tensions inherent in a collaborative form that promotes individual authorship.

The ensuing argument is concerned particularly with dialogue in the interview. Dialogue is a conversation between two people at its simplest (whether spoken or written), however, the conventions around dialogue have been extensively explored by linguists, literary scholars, philosophers and others from Classical times forward.³ In his survey *Dialogue*, Peter Womack reviews various understandings of dialogue from Plato to Bakhtin, from dialogue as “the intensely apprehended thing that lives just beyond the limits of the written” to dialogue as symbolic of the humanities at large (3). The philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, whom Womack discusses, made precisely this point in *Truth and Method* (trans 1975). For Gadamer dialogue refers not only the Q&A of meaning, an attempt to come to an understanding of what each interlocutor is saying, but also a model of reading. The reader, bringing “fore-meanings” to the text, enacts a dialogue between the text and his or her own prior assumptions in order to come to an understanding.

Truth and Method explores this reading process through recourse to legal hermeneutics. The use of prior rulings on present cases places the past text and present reader in a relationship at once hierarchical and potentially liberating – the past text is seen to be a source of truth but also needs to be interpreted for a new context not necessarily envisaged by the original writer. For Gadamer, the process of reading this text

³ See Bronwen Thomas for a good summary (1-53).

is an attempt to reach agreement between the possibilities the text permits and the new interest (324). Such “dialogue” is clearly evinced in the legal decisions around privacy rights in the 1950s and 1960s in America, as judges attempted to interpret the texts of Constitutional law in light of new technologies of surveillance, mass media and political contexts.

Womack, noting that law and indeed scripture might be considered special cases, then considers the implications of such an argument for literary studies. Concluding that as a model “it depends on social mechanisms whose very *raison d’être* is to conserve what comes down to us from the past”, Womack likens this model to Eliot’s understanding of the relationship between the writer and tradition in “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” F. R. Leavis’s notion of literature in *The Great Tradition* (1948) and other classic works (133). Such a conservative model, depending as it does on a common language (and therefore cultural inheritance), would seem to deny the possibility of engaging in a dialogue with the past that can be a rupture without being a bad reading.

This understanding conflicts somewhat with the more triumphant understanding of the liberal political value of dialogue. The act of discussion, the airing and exchange of views is often taken as the enactment of liberal ideals, an idea inherent within Habermas’s theory of communicative action. Not only does this sit uneasily with this more conservative notion of dialogic reading, but the exchange of views is no guarantee that the interaction itself is trouble-free: the exchange may be structurally uneven in numerous ways and even should consensus be reached, the act of consensus itself might be problematic.

These concerns are precisely those being played out in the interview in the late 1940s and 50s. Power dynamics, freedom of expression, conformity and individual autonomy, were the issues that invested dialogue with political and cultural significance, while also transforming it into a much more contested activity than it had been in the

decades before. As the visible site of dialogue, the interview was to be the location of this politico-cultural struggle, with profound implications for understandings of the form as the century progressed. While the form's publicity-producing effects were to be continually debated, the interview was now perceived as a form authoritative and robust enough to grill ex-Presidents in lieu of an impeachment trial.

The Interview and the Law: Pound Imprisoned

In the 1940s the interview was not yet associated with legal discourse. While Ezra Pound was never publically cross-examined in court, his indictment and arrest for treason, his incarceration in a madhouse and his award of the Bollingen Prize for poetry were experienced by the Anglo-American literary community as a profoundly traumatic episode. An episode indeed which had significant repercussions for the cultural authority of the writer, the relation between the author and his or her work and, specifically and resultantly, the way in which the interview dialogue was understood to operate. What marks the Pound episode, however, is in fact the absence of explicit interrogation of the author upon the question of guilt, despite the proliferation of public and private interviews and dialogues which attempted to respond to this issue.

In 1943 Pound was indicted for treason. Pound had been broadcasting radio programmes for Mussolini's Italy since 1941 and was arrested at the beginning of May 1945. On 9 May Edd Johnson, overseas correspondent for the *Philadelphia Record* and *Chicago Sun*, published an interview with Ezra Pound. Johnson had managed to obtain access to Pound in Genoa after his internment by American forces; he was the only journalist to have an extended interview with Pound for the next thirteen years.

The interview itself is relatively short. Heavily mediated, it jumps around, discussing Pound's potential indictment for treason in one sentence and his interest in

Confucius the next. The little direct speech included is limited to those more sensational remarks of Pound, which certainly make for strong copy. He describes Hitler as a “saint,” Mussolini as a “human, imperfect character who lost his head” and styles Churchill as unjust and brutal (6). This interview contains some of Pound’s most infamous statements, which were to circulate rapidly throughout American newspapers.

The interviewer also reflects upon Pound’s sanity. In a move that was to be repeated time and again for the next two decades, quotation is followed by consideration of Pound’s mental state. Johnson comments: “Now all this might sound like gibberish, and it would be easy to write off Pound as a senile old sinner who has gone off his rocker. But Pound is definitely not senile” (6). In this interview Johnson has become medical examiner and the interview a psychiatric assessment. He has also become judge in a situation where the jury (the reading public), whose access to information is very limited, are asked to rubber-stamp his assessment. While the “gibberish” is textually visible in the form of the quoted remarks, the evidence on which Johnson bases his verdict of sanity is not presented to the reader. Pound’s sanity was of course to become a fiercely debated question, with Johnson’s judgement publically rejected by the court-appointed psychiatric experts during Pound’s later sanity hearing.

Nevertheless, in this early interview there are two specific elements that need to be noted, as they appear repeatedly in subsequent interviews and debates around Pound’s moral culpability. Firstly, questioning Pound’s sanity becomes a means of delimiting the unpalatable views expressed. While Johnson concludes Pound is not senile, the manoeuvre into this terrain has the partial effect of containment: the views are depicted as so far from the perceived norm that they need to be delimited by recourse to the language of insanity. Such a move in effect bolsters the distinctions between normal and abnormal for the reader. Secondly, Johnson records Pound’s statements but does not interrogate the author or his views during the conversation; when Johnson does reflect

upon Pound's sanity and therefore his moral culpability, it is for the reader only. The interview subject is left out of the debate: this is not an interview designed to be a psychoanalytic talking cure, nor is it a psychiatric assessment for the benefit of the subject. Instead it is an interview designed to contain.

Washington recognised the potential import of Johnson's interview when they eventually decided on a course of action; a 22 May telegram directed the Italian authorities to "Transfer without delay ... *Exercise utmost security measures to prevent escape or suicide. No press interviews authorized*" (qtd. in Carpenter 653, italics in original). Such explicit reference to press interviews indicates an understandable desire to control publicity around a case that was to attract a notable amount of press attention. Present in the background of the cable communication, however, is another type of interview: the interrogative interview conducted by the military authorities. Interviewing Pound is not simply a question of publicity, but of legal import: in trying to assess and build a case against him for treason the authorities utilised a more sinister form of the interview. Conviction for treason required, at this time, two witnesses to the act or a confession by the subject. The interview is here the interrogative interview and the witness statement – and foreshadows the cross-examination in court.

In fact, Pound never underwent such an interview. In the Italian camp and later after he was flown to the United States in November 1945, Pound was interviewed by numerous doctors for the purpose of assessing his mental state. The poet Charles Olson, who visited Pound regularly for a time, noted: "Kavka [a doctor at St. Elizabeths mental hospital where Pound was housed] keeps pounding questions at him ... [Pound] punched his fist against the wall of his other hand to illustrate the effect. He says he wakes up the following morning exhausted from trying to think back and work out the questions to his answers" (54). Here the private medical interview takes on the form of both a psychoanalytical effort to talk through one's past and a "hammering" interrogation

(Olson 68). Unlike the press interview then, and in common with the legal interrogation, the subject is grilled in the moment, rather than the words being extrapolated and scrutinised in his absence.

However, this legal interrogation never took place. At his arraignment and later at his sanity hearing, Pound remained mute throughout. The court – and the public – was left to interpret Pound’s silent body within the courtroom. On trial for his public utterances, famed for his written verse, it was the expert psychiatrists who were cross-examined in court rather than the author-subject. Again, the public, interrogative interview was deferred and resituated away from the specific locale and occasion of the subject in court. The subject was both mute and muted, contained by the discourse of insanity and demarcated from societal engagement by his own past public utterances.⁴

The trial, as numerous critics have pointed out, attaches significant value to the spoken confession as a morally cleansing and disciplinary act (Foucault *Discipline* 37-44, Peter Brooks 2). In *Troubling Confessions*, Peter Brooks has demonstrated how the status of the confession in law, specifically issues around voluntary confession and its admissibility in court, was under pressure in America in the 1950s and 1960s (the Miranda warnings were enshrined in law in 1966) (8-34). Brooks perceptively notes that confession “reveals – perhaps in a sense creates – the inwardness of the person confessing,” suggesting that, as a muted subject, Pound had no ability to define his inwardness in the courtroom (2).⁵ Yet the unspeaking body of Pound also sat in court as a troublesome reminder of a reputation built upon words.

⁴ Pound’s medical notes, held in the National Archives, are fascinating for their detailed account of his bodily functions – down to the “foul cheesy debris” coming out of his ear on 29 Jan. 1954 – which serve to highlight the lack of precision around his words. Questioned by a host of medical examiners on a regular basis, the majority of interviews (so-called in the notes) record the doctor’s impressions, rather than Pound’s words. Patient Case Folder for Ezra Pound 1945-81, Doc. 1390a, Case Records of Patients, RG418, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, National Archives, Washington D.C.

⁵ Brooks’s argument also turns upon the growing importance of individual testimony, self-disclosure and the confessional mode in the late fifties and early sixties, something that will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

Although his lawyer Julien Cornell did not bring Pound to the witness stand to testify himself, he made fulsome use of newspaper reports of Pound's arrest and forthcoming trial in order to testify to his reputation as a poet (17). Here publicity is not acting as a form of curtailment upon the subject, but rather as expressing what he is unable to say. The poet's prior work and his widely quoted responses to questions shouted by reporters as he was transferred around Washington replace the lack of words in court. In presenting Pound as such, Cornell in effect divided the poet and the man, divorcing past utterance from present body. By also pleading his client's insanity, Cornell created a further, unassailable, divide between subject and utterance: the body of Pound was freed from punishment (if not incarceration) as a consequence of experts being interrogated about his sanity. In a sense Pound was rendered legally illegible as a subject. Pound's utterances, poetic and political, were untethered from their subject by virtue of the insanity judgement and floated free from legal judgement.

The difficulties caused by this untethering are clearly visible in the cultural response to Ezra Pound's case. In 1949 the Bollingen Prize for poetry was awarded to Pound's *Pisan Cantos*. Administered through the Library of Congress, the disparity between the poetic and the legal valuation of Pound's utterances was to be the subject of a vitriolic battle in the literary sphere. In two infamous *Saturday Review of Literature* articles Robert Hillyer was to deride the decision as a "permanent disgrace," the poetry was "rubbish," Pound should have been hung, and Hillyer indicted the award sponsor, Eliot and New Criticism at large as part of a Fascist conspiracy ("Treason's Strange Fruits" 10, 28, "Poetry's New Priesthood" 7+). The majority of publications took similar stances, although some came to the committee's – and Pound's – defence; *Poetry* magazine

adopted the legal language Hillyer had used when issuing a booklet entitled *The Case against the Saturday Review of Literature* to rebut his claims.⁶

In 1950 Archibald MacLeish's *Poetry and Opinion: the Pisan Cantos of Ezra Pound*, subtitled "a dialog on the role of poetry" was published. The short piece, written by the Librarian of Congress, alludes to the classical tradition of philosophical dialogue. Consisting of a discussion between Mr Bollingen and Mr Saturday, the book purported to expose the "actual issues of what should have been a great debate" about censorship, the function of poetry and its value for society (n.pag). Unsurprisingly Mr Bollingen came off as much the more rational. MacLeish's decision to publish the dialogue illustrates a belief in the value of such a literary format and mode of interaction in this era. It also illustrates the sense that Pound's hearings and the verdict of insanity was a traumatic experience for the literary community at large and only compounded by the Bollingen Award episode.

In such discussion of trauma I am indebted here to Shoshana Felman's conception of the relationship between law, literature and trauma. In *The Juridical Unconscious* Felman identifies a tension between the trial's intent to articulate trauma and its common re-enactment of that trauma. Specifically, she draws upon the Nuremberg and Eichmann trials of 1945-6 and 1961. According to Felman's reading, the former (which ran simultaneously with Pounds' hearings) brought history, or the public, into the courtroom for the first time; the latter tried to transform private traumas into a collective public trauma. While I don't wish to suggest a parallel between the scale of these crimes and trials, Felman's reading does offer a means of understanding why the Pound case has been experienced as so troublesome for the literary community. In reading the infamous moment where the writer Yehiel De-Nur, (Ka-tzetnik 135633) fainted during the Eichmann trial, Felman emphasises the importance of De-Nur's status as an author.

⁶ For in-depth discussion of this episode, see Barnhisel (92-126).

Writers are “precocious witnesses,” testifying as the embodied public expression of private grief (96-97).⁷ Like De-Nur after him, although as accused not victim, Pound’s failure to testify verbally is compelling but legally illegible; however, unlike De-Nur, Pound’s failure to confess, makes him a much more troubling “precocious witness.”

This notion of the writer as “precocious witness” was picked up by other commentators on the Pound case, even before the Eichmann trial. In 1950 the noted psychiatrist Fredric Wertham decried what he saw as the effect of Pound’s two awards, the Bollingen and the “Insanity” (587):

here was a man whose life, work and alleged treason raised some of the most vital problems of our epoch: the security of people; the prevention of mass hatred and mass violence; the social responsibility of the writer and the artist; the relationship of a poet to his poem... Rational scrutiny of all these questions was cut off with one word; INSANITY” (593).

In this well-publicised article Wertham also reflected more generally upon the modern weight placed on the psychiatrist’s “voice of authority,” even in the sphere of literary criticism (593). Implicitly for Wertham, the poet offers an important, but imperiled, counterbalance to the authority invested in the modern (interrogating) psychiatric practitioner. Wertham’s argument was enthusiastically received.

In a somewhat muddying turn, Wertham then proceeded to analyse the legal testimony of Pound’s psychiatrists, concluding that the poet was mentally fit to stand trial. It was left to James Laughlin, Pound’s American publisher, to point out the problematic progression of Wertham’s argument. In response to the article, which Wertham had sent him, Laughlin commented that [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS].⁸ Wertham might have disputed the psychiatric assessment of Pound, but his case was based on hermeneutics more usually associated with literary criticism.

⁷ See also Felman and Laub for an extended discussion of the writer as precocious witness.

⁸ James Laughlin to Fredric Wertham 28 Feb. 1950, (1), Box 169, Folder 7, Fredric Wertham Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Whether the [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] had been established or not, Wertham's article and the wider response indicate that the cultural experience of the situation was traumatic (Laughlin to Wertham, 1). The rehabilitation of Pound's image would necessitate the divorce of the man from his poetry. Gregory Barnhisel has written at length on Laughlin's own efforts to "remake" Pound's image in this period by utilising the "aesthetic formalist approach" promoted (to different ends) by the New Critics and New York Intellectuals in order to encourage readers to ignore Pound's political views (93). Wertham's insistence on the social role of the author was an oft-debated topic in the aftermath of the war and while Laughlin and his colleagues were ultimately successful in their attempts to rehabilitate Pound's poetry, the overall result was a huge transformation in the status of the artist. As one Pound scholar put it: "The serious consequences of that decision has been the loss of poetic authority" (Redman 12).

Such difficulty in responding to Pound as anti-Semitic, Fascist sympathiser on the one hand and author of the *Cantos* and midwife to modernist talent on the other is clearly evinced in the several informal interviews published in this period. Pound hosted numerous visitors at St Elizabeths, including young poets, writers and scholars, oddballs and radical disciples, as well as more established writers and old friends. Several of these individuals wrote up their informal interviews for magazines, recalling questions asked and quoting responses, as well as providing a portrait of the incarcerated poet and his surroundings.⁹ All of these articles evince a strong desire not to engage Pound in a discussion about his political views. They also, like the Johnson interview, avoid face-to-face condemnation. In fact they remain largely silent in the face of any expression of these views.

⁹ See Olson, Pinck, Payne and Rattray.

In May 1949 Robert Payne, an English novelist, biographer and regular writer for *World Review*, published a description of his meeting with Pound after the announcement of the Bollingen Prize. Pound was “frail and small,” “the greatest of our English poets” and surrounded by a “magic circle of quiet” that blocked out the lunatic voices around him (Payne 13). Very much a seer in this piece, Pound’s poetry evinces the same classically-inspired “grave gentleness” as the man (13). Payne’s is a heavily mediated narrative which makes only passing and obscure reference to Pound’s “sins” (16). This is a portrait of the poet, not the political Pound. His “enemies” are mentioned obliquely, his incarceration figures as an example of his suffering. Questions and answers are recorded, but they touch upon past acquaintances, writing technique, scholarship, metre. The questions Payne asks are concerned with the literary world, designed to elicit information for aspirant writers and scholars from an expert: has he done any recordings, when does he write best, how does he write, what advice would he give to the young writer? This is an interview that seeks pearls of wisdom from the author-expert; this is not an interrogation.¹⁰

While Payne’s interview sidesteps the indictment for treason, it does indirectly reflect upon Pound’s mental state. Payne reassures the reader that Pound’s mind “moved with unaccountable speed – bee-like – but there was no tenseness, only an essential gaiety,” suggesting that his mental abnormality is the sign of convivial genius rather than anything more nefarious (14). Left there we might dismiss the charge of insanity completely. However, the Payne piece also performs two examples of Pound’s faulty (or failing) memory. In one Pound is asked whether there are any recordings of the Cantos:

“Who the devil wants that? One writes for the printed page nowadays. I’m agin’ it. The thing must stand on its own”

¹⁰ Pound clearly liked the interview; as part of a passage praising the value of conversation with friends, he recommended it to a correspondent based in London in November 1951 (Ezra Pound to Stephane de Yankowska, hand-emended TS, n.d. [date stamped 3 Nov 1951] Box 1, Folder 3, Ezra Pound Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

“You’ve never recorded anything.”

“No. Don’t remember it.”

In Harvard University Library I listened later, with great pleasure, to the recording he had made of three of his Cantos. (14)

In the second example Pound speaks of his love of the typewriter and “the way the characters stood out on the page; I did not ask him why the manuscripts sent to the publisher were so written over with emendations that he must have possessed a Balzacian indifference to the eyes of editors and compositors” (15). In both examples the inconsistencies are highlighted for the reader. Asked twice about recordings – themselves reminding the reader of Pound’s radio broadcasts – Pound denies their existence; asked about methodology the typewriter is used for its clarity, clarity that doesn’t extend to the page. Yet in both cases these inconsistencies are defused through recourse to a particularly literary pleasure. The pleasure of hearing the author’s voice reading his work and the pleasure of seeing the manuscript page neutralise the more troublesome implications of Pound’s madness. The cultural association of madness with genius enable Payne to sidestep the legal import in favour of dwelling upon the pleasures of the text.

It is also significant that in both these examples Payne doesn’t confront Pound. We could attribute this to politeness towards a host, to a desire not to provoke controversy, to pity for a suffering man, or indeed a combination of the three. However, it is this very unwillingness to confront, to interrogate that, I suggest, merely replicates the traumatic experience. The Nuremberg trials had brought issues of collusion to the forefront of the cultural consciousness on both sides of the Atlantic. Using documentary evidence, rather than witness testimony, the trials convicted men through textual utterances. Pound’s utterances meanwhile have engendered a permanently deferred cross-examination. This interview, like the trial, is not a dialogue but troubled silence.

In 1957, another interviewer, the poet and translator David Rattray, offered a much more condemnatory profile of Pound. The same admiration for Pound’s poetry is

evinced, but the aging poet becomes a ridiculous and morally dubious figure. While this is only one interview, it does offer a telling indication of the shift in perceptions of dialogue and the interview across the 1950s. In order to understand Rattray's interview, we need first to trace the transformation of the interview in 1956.

Mike Wallace and the Interrogative Interview

In 1964 the bestselling book *The Naked Society* announced that "Millions of Americans are living in an atmosphere in which peering electronic eyes, undercover agents, lie detectors, hidden tape recorders, bureaucratic investigators, and outrageously intrusive questionnaires are becoming commonplace, if only suspected, facts of life" (Packard 5). Such concerns about surveillance, invasion of privacy and individual autonomy had been growing since 1945. Against the backdrop of the Cold War, in the media, in legal cases and in exposés on the FBI and corporate practices, it seemed authority was threatening to overwhelm the individual.¹¹ In this climate, and against the backdrop of McCarthyism, the interrogative potential of the interview was to become hugely important. The widespread use of the psychometric test, the visibility of the cross-examination (as used by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)) and the degree of surveillance of the civilian society, had a direct effect upon the use of the interview dialogue: the tool of authority was, from 1956 wielded by journalists as a defence against totalitarianism.

Granted, the fifties also saw the launch of *Confidential*, the publication of fluffy interviews with T.S. Eliot about his love of dance, and Lillian Ross's profile of an

¹¹ Nelson offers a good summary of the historical and legal background (1-41). See also Breit for a fascinating contemporary portrayal of privacy in relation to communism, the writer and the interview (11-33).

alcoholic Ernest Hemingway for the *New Yorker*.¹² The chatty interview remained a popular media format (and remains so today). On the other hand, formal panel debates had been common on radio and television for a number of years. In America, programmes such as *Town Meeting of the Air*, *Meet the Press*, *Crossfire* and the prestigious *University of Chicago Round Table* were held up by radio networks, frequently accused of obsession with the bottom line and keen to avoid Government regulation, as demonstrating a commitment to educational and public service broadcasting. Across the pond too the BBC had experimented with ad hoc panel conversations, call in programmes and the series *In the Witness Box*. Nevertheless, though such round table formats consciously promoted a classical model of the public realm, the journalistic interview in this period had retained its more familiar soft associations. By the mid fifties, however, the interview dialogue was to be transformed.

A veteran American journalist, at his death in 2012 Mike Wallace was known primarily for his forty years of interviews for CBS's *60 Minutes*. Less discussed than his celebrated contemporary Edward R. Murrow, Wallace is a crucial figure in the history of the broadcast interview, and the interview form in general. While Wallace might have seen longest service with *60 Minutes*, it was in his earlier radio and television shows of the 1950s, *Night Beat* and the *Mike Wallace Interview*, that he pioneered a style that quickly became widespread: the interrogative interview. Reflective of a societal background that included Cold War, McCarthyism, anxieties about the "death of privacy" and the impact of mass media upon the individual, Wallace's interviews evince an important, if sensationalised, historical transformation in the conception of the form. This transformation turned upon the conception and deployment of dialogue in the interview.

¹² "T. S. Eliot gives a unique photo-interview" and Ross. The *New Yorker* had popularised the Profile, an account of the subject that drew upon research files, interviews with the subject, or his or her friends, colleagues or acquaintances, to great effect. In *Sophistication* Hammill discusses the wider magazine scene in the era just before this period; while focusing more heavily on *Vanity Fair*, she helps to position the *New Yorker* within the wider middlebrow periodical networks (161-63).

Myron Leon Wallace, like the majority of early television professionals, began his career in radio. Born in 1918 in Brookline, Massachusetts, he graduated from the University of Michigan in 1939 and began a career in local radio. Starting out as a newscaster, narrator and announcer for local radio stations in Michigan, he had a stint in the Navy before moving to Chicago where he first did interviews for the station WGN. In the 1950s he moved to New York and over the years acted on radio, television and Broadway, co-hosted a television show with his then-wife Buff Cobb, was a newscaster, announced commercials and hosted game shows.

Wallace found his forte in the 1956 television interview show *Night Beat*, broadcast at 11pm on weeknights over the New York DuMont affiliate. The hour-long show featured a pair of guests per programme and the subjects were eclectic and often artistic: Norman Mailer, Salvador Dalí, Hugh Hefner, John Cage and a string of prominent politicians. While the subjects were interesting, it was the intent behind the interviews that marked them out. Reviewing the programme in January 1957 on rumours of a national pick-up, Robert Lewis Shayon of the *Saturday Review* described *Night Beat* as “the antithesis of the conventional interview show” for Wallace’s carefully researched brief, willingness to ask tough questions and lengthy discussion with the subject (24). This was a “reaction against the usual standard of radio-television interviewing,” which the *New Yorker* characterised as “a discreet, milky, brand-selling, hear-no-evil-speak-no-evil style of questioning that veers aside from points of controversy as fast as it races through points of interest. It’s a style that was born to incite munity” (Lardner 166).

Shayon and other critics were in agreement as to the novelty of *Night Beat*: here was an interviewer who was “[a]lert and well informed,” who handled his guests through a method “a little like cross-examination and a little like hazing” which was the “most marked change of atmosphere” of the television season (Shayon 24, Seldes 26). Jack Gould of the *New York Times* was even to identify Wallace as “fulfilling the role of the

intelligent citizen with a genuine curiosity in eliciting information and understanding,” with the consequence that “his program was on the lips of the opinion-forming element of the community” (123). This prestige was cemented in 1957 when the programme won the Robert E. Sherwood Awards Special Prize “for its contribution to the understanding of freedom and justice”.¹³ These responses indicate the significance of Wallace’s transformation of the interview as perceived in this era: Wallace’s style was directly associated with promoting a critically engaged audience, a strengthened public sphere and democratic ideals of freedom and justice themselves. The style of the show and the implications of such associations will be considered in more depth below, but it is significant that *Night Beat* was considered novel and important enough for broadcasting critics, the advertising industry and opinion formers to take note.

Of course this local show (albeit in the New York metropolitan area), in a late-night slot, on a still-novel broadcasting medium, was by no means universally available. While covered by the national print media, in addition to the television series Wallace’s audience was widened by his daily column in the *New York Post*, entitled “Mike Wallace Asks”. [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] the columns complemented the *Night Beat* series with a near universal crossover of subjects, often within days of each other, each covering a slightly different angle (MW 4/*NY Post* – Booklet of Notable Columns). Later an anthology of print interviews, *Mike Wallace Asks* (ed. Preston and Hamilton, 1958) was published, which combined details from the columns and television series, increasing his audience still further.

However it was in spring 1957, when the programme transferred to the ABC network that Wallace’s impact was truly felt. Now claiming a national audience, the renamed *Mike Wallace Interview* had a thirty-minute prime time slot and its influence

¹³ Box 1, Folder “Biographical”, Mike Wallace Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Hereafter shortened to “MW.”

spread, not only across the country but around the globe. The cultural, indeed political, impact of the show was impressive: the Ford Foundation sponsored the programme during some of its run; as part of attempts to encourage Soviet-American cultural exchange Wallace went to Russia in November 1958 as the ABC representative on the US State Department's television delegate. The show also encouraged the airing of provocative issues and debate, particularly those around Civil Rights: guests included Martin Luther King Jr., Eldon Edwards, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and Orval Faubus, Governor of Arkansas during the Little Rock stand-off (which was on-going at the time of broadcast). Throughout the series issues of spying, wiretapping, government subsidising of artists and segregation were at the forefront of discussions. These were timely and provocative interviews.

The sense of scrutiny was highlighted by the visual style of the interviews. *Mike Wallace Interview* programmes followed a common pattern. Apart from a couple of exceptions, they all take place against the same stark studio set and utilise the same intimate filming techniques. While Wallace claimed that the style originated from a lack of money – “All we could afford was a couple of chairs and two tables holding two glasses of water” – it was extremely successful (Martin 112). The studio background was dark, the subject and interviewer lit with bright lights. The camera often began with a shot of the subject framed over the shoulder of Wallace: the shot visually positioned the audience as eavesdropper upon the conversation and Wallace as representative of the viewer in the studio. The camera then utilised tighter and tighter close-ups of the subject, to the point of revealing sweaty upper lips, eye twitches and physical flaws. This was not a style of filming to glamorise or flatter the subject, but rather to reveal their imperfections. The subject's face was also the only visual material on offer; no background distraction was present during the questioning. While during the introduction and commercials the camera switched to Wallace chain-smoking, at other

times there was nothing to counterbalance the intense focus on the subject's face. The lighting and camera angles created an intense atmosphere.

The interviews were framed by an introduction in a journalistic, concise, bare syntax. Often interviews began with the punchy: "Good evening. What you're about to witness is an unrehearsed, uncensored interview. My name is Mike Wallace, the cigarette is Philip Morris" (Wallace *Lili St. Cyr* n.pag). Immediately the programme distanced itself from the cosy chat or publicity-garnering interview. The reader was transformed into jury and the interview raw and immediate. While the references to the sponsor jar for the modern viewer, as do the extended commercials delivered by Wallace in the studio, the jingle was direct and simple. The introduction of the subject was similarly punchy, dramatically summarising the topics to be covered. The language was simple but dynamic and the phrasing rhythmic and repetitive, as in the case of Nobel Prizewinner Pearl Buck:

If you're curious to know what Pearl Buck thinks of American women and their husbands, why she says "Most women make their homes their graves" and why she attacks our devotion to "sex appeal" and "romance", we'll go after those stories in just a moment. (Wallace *Pearl Buck* n.pag)

John Lardner in a perceptive review in the *New Yorker*, commented precisely on the notion of "going after" the story that so prevails in Wallace's lexicon. He notes the implication "that no story has been completely extracted until it is forked out, like meat from a lobster claw, by the expert techniques" of the interviewer (164). The fictions of access have been given rhetorical teeth.

Wallace's introductions were designed to emphasise the controversial aspects of the interviews. Whether the controversy is in the ferretting out of stories, or in that born of sensational topics and uncensored discussion, Wallace's rhetoric emphasised potential discord. In many interviews, he concludes the introduction with the statement that: "My guests' opinions are not necessarily mine, the station's, or my sponsor's, Philip Morris

Incorporated, but whether you agree or disagree, we feel that none will deny the right of these views to be broadcast” (Wallace *Malcolm Muggeridge* n.pag). Wallace’s willingness to allow these potentially controversial views extended airtime was something that the critics praised and occasionally railed against. While the *Dallas Times-Herald* reviewer found thirty minutes talk between only two people to be dull, the *New York Times* considered in *Night Beat* that Wallace “made a notable contribution in widening television’s horizons in the realm of forthright discussion” (qtd. in “Mike Wallace’s Debut” 36, Gould 123). The length of the interviews and the broadcasting of adversarial viewpoints of interviewer and subject were considered as a valuable addition to move public service programming on television.

The views of the subjects were certainly scrutinised. Wallace’s favourite technique was to refer to a visible pile of research notes, quote a subject’s or his critics’ past statements and then demand a justification. Interviewing the newspaper columnist Drew Pearson on reporting from Washington, Wallace quoted the accusations made against him by politicians:

WALLACE: President Roosevelt once called you a chronic liar; President Truman called you an S.O.B. at one time, and a vicious liar at another time; the late Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar called you, "An ignorant liar, a pusillanimous liar, a peewee liar, a liar during his manhood, a liar by profession, a liar in the day time, and a liar in the night time" end quote ... What is there about Drew Pearson that inspires such bitterness, in Presidents and other statesmen?

PEARSON: Well, Mike, I can't give an objective answer on that. You don't really expect me to, do you?

WALLACE: Well, I...

PEARSON: You want me to give a self-serving answer?

WALLACE: Is there, a... obviously you'd almost have to give a self-serving answer. Could it be that you are a liar?

PEARSON: I... hope I'm not. I don't believe that I've ever knowingly told a lie, but I have made some mistakes. In the case of McKellar I made no mistake. I did make a mistake once in regard to Harry Truman, which I was very sorry for, and

for which I apologized. I'd forgotten frankly that he'd ever called me a vicious liar, because I remembered the other one so vividly (Wallace *Drew Pearson* n.pag).

The interaction is quoted at length in order to illustrate Wallace's style (the subject in this case pushing back more than usual). On film, while Wallace speaks the first quoted extract, the camera zooms in from a shot over his shoulder (with Wallace in profile) and in towards Pearson's face, who blinks repeatedly but smiles. In fact the transcript suggests a more adversarial conversation than conveyed on film. While uttering the line "Could it be that you are a liar?" the camera cuts back to a mid-distance shot of Wallace and captures his accompanying smile. This is not quite an inquisition, the camera shots reassure the viewer in this instance and the constant references to cigarettes suggested the intimate masculine environment of the gentleman's club. Yet this isn't deferential: compared to pre-war interviewing, the questions are often blunt, audacious on occasion, and certainly not always polite. This is critical interviewing that interrogates thinking.

Critics were not slow in identifying precedents for this new style. The majority noted the similarity with the courtroom interrogation, but it was John Lardner who developed this to its logical conclusion. Characterising Wallace's technique as the "perjury motif" or "the attempts to nail the subject to the wall with inconsistencies from his past," he reflects that "I have an idea that the inspiration came not only from the courtrooms but from Congress ... It's a formula with a strong flavor of committee hearings in it" (166). Lardner's comment is perceptive; he alludes to the questioning techniques utilised by HUAC and the Senate Permanent Sub-committee on Investigations during the height of McCarthyism. These committees often used an individual's past affiliations, statements and writings as potential evidence on which to question them, just as Wallace did in his interviews.

Lardner's association is also significant for the trauma the media was to come to associate with this historical episode. Before 1954 much of the reporting on Senator McCarthy's campaigns had related, rather than scrutinised, his claims (the *Washington Post* and the *Milwaukee Journal* being notable exceptions). Despite being a popular news topic and the hearings themselves often being televised, little analysis of the tactics McCarthy and others used appeared. It was after Edward Murrow's *See It Now* broadcast of 9 March 1954, which highlighted the Senator's contradictions and false accusations, that media coverage began to scrutinise the activities of the HUAC committee. One of the lesser noted but significant results of this episode was the emergence of a less deferential and more interrogative interviewing style. It is perhaps the irony of circumstances that led politicians within a couple of years to complain of reporters using the rough tactics of questioning that they themselves had instigated.

While *See It Now* has become a key moment in broadcasting history and Murrow's career central for tracing the development of news reporting from both a national and transatlantic perspective, Wallace's role in the history of broadcasting, and indeed the interview form's evolution more generally, has been ignored. This is despite contemporary critics taking note, as we have seen.

Practitioners too responded to Wallace's innovations. John F. Day, CBS News Director, sent an internal memo to all news-staff in 1957 castigating them on their interviewing style and citing Wallace particularly as an alternative. As Day commented: "our shortcoming has been in the direction of being too soft on the interviewee" ("Feebleness" 27). Picked up by *Variety*, Day's attitude towards Wallace was underlined for a national audience:

In reference to Mike Wallace who "profits from impertinence and he [sic] often asks loaded, imprecise questions", Day declared that "[w]hile we would not want to borrow Wallace's more questionable procedures, it is only fair to recognize that he can remind some of us on the importance of research on the subject of

the interview, of the importance of asking the searching, the tough question and of the value of pursuing a theme once it is opened up, even if unpredictably, by the turn the interview takes.” (“Feebleness” 27)

While Wallace’s methods could teach the news teams much, his more “questionable procedures” would seem to do much to explain the disparity between Murrow and Wallace’s contemporary reputations.

Day was certainly not the only critic of Wallace’s interviewing style. Many viewed it as unnecessarily rude; still more considered the controversy as less concerned with free speech and democratic discussion and more to do with ratings. Gould himself negatively compared the *Mike Wallace Interview* to *Night Beat* for the former’s “tendency to pursue controversy for its own sake rather than to view it as a necessary by-product of a thoughtful examination of issues and people” (123). In the pursuit of ratings, Gould suggested, the national programme lost much of its civic function.

Charges of sensationalism were made by many reviewers of the *Mike Wallace Interview*. It is certainly true that the interview programmes included not only politicians and cultural commentators, but actresses, the gangster Mickey Cohen and America’s “leading strip teaser.”¹⁴ Wallace was promoted as “Mike Malice” and the more sensational aspects of a subject’s personal life were emphasised: Mary Margaret McBride was asked why she never married, Lillian Roth’s alcoholism was broached and the interview with Bennett Cerf, President of Random House (who was also publicly embroiled in a censorship dispute over publishing Pound’s poems in 1945-46) almost descended into a catfight. This might have been interviewing “with teeth,” however it was also interviewing as [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] as Wallace

¹⁴ In autumn 1958 the so-called “quiz shows scandal” also broke around the discovery that across many prime-time high-rating programmes, contestants were often rehearsed, fed questions and favoured in a bid to increase ratings. The public response was shocked and even Congress weighed in, eventually making the rigging of quiz shows a federal crime. The scandal was to damage television’s credibility and while even Murrow was (unfairly) criticised, Wallace was largely cocooned thanks to his style. The scandal made the performance of interrogative interviewing even more valuable in this era.

himself acknowledged (MW 1/Biographical, 4/*NY Post* – Booklet of Notable Columns). Such interviews were staged interrogations; nevertheless, the value of such interrogation was not necessarily diminished as a consequence.

Wallace in Britain

The Wallace phenomenon was not confined to the United States. The British reaction says much about perceptions of national broadcasting systems and styles. Given that 1955 marked the introduction of commercial television and the breaking of the BBC's monopoly, it is also a key moment in British broadcasting television history. Internal policy files held at the BBC Written Archives at Caversham provide a useful insight into not only reception of Wallace and BBC conceptions of an in-house interview style, but also into the transformations wrought by the establishment of commercial television. The BBC had begun to experiment ad-hoc with a style of harder questioning and longer interviews in 1955 and 1956. Broadcasting in Britain experienced its own crisis of faith during the Suez Crisis (late 1956), when the government clashed with the BBC over criticism of policy. The eventual disregarding of the gag-rule in 1957 also contributed towards a more critical relationship between broadcasting and government as current affairs became a topic for television and radio. Despite moves towards implementing a tougher form of broadcast interviewing, Wallace's programme was still pioneering enough to influence interviewing style on British television and radio even if, as was often the case with American programming, this was through a process of rejection.¹⁵

In the British press, coverage of Wallace's programme and interviewing style was largely limited in the broadsheets to announcements of his choice of guests when they

¹⁵ The unfortunate incident whereby an American network interviewed a chimp during a break from covering the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 simply reinforced British suspicion of American commercial television, even after the close workings during the Second World War and British recognition of a need to supply its audience with more of a range of (entertaining) programmes in a departure from the first Director General John Reith's more paternalistic, educational and Calvinist vision.

were British personalities (for example Aldous Huxley in 1958). When Wallace's style was discussed in the press it was not often positive and relied on national stereotyping. By contrast, the BBC's Written Archives testify to a professional interest in his style and general concerns over how the broadcasting interview should operate. In March 1957 (before Wallace's programme had gone national) the BBC were already taking note of his style of interviewing and the American reaction. On 27 March a lengthy summary of the *Variety* article cited above was sent to the Controller of Programmes Television by Leonard Miall, Head of Talks Television. He provided a briefing note for the newly appointed Controller, Kenneth Adams:

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

(BBC T47/136/1 "Programme Subject Content Interviews: Policy 1960-1968").

Miall's memo is suggestive in its distinction between to the general interviews [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] and the approach taken by Grace Wyndham Goldie and the Talks Television Department. Certainly Goldie was a formidable force in the department and oversaw such current affairs programmes as *Press Conference*, *Tonight*, *Panorama* and *Monitor*, nurturing such talents as Robin Day, David Attenborough, Richard Dimbleby, Huw Wheldon and Alisdair Milne. It would seem that in the U.K. general professional awareness of the limitations of traditional broadcasting interview practices made the industry particularly receptive to Wallace's experiments.

The BBC Written Archive files also indicate that the mid fifties through to the early sixties was a period of determined transformation, combined with considerable unease regarding interview stylistics across the BBC.¹⁶ In the summer of 1957, and again

¹⁶ BBC Written Archives "Interviews: Policy 1960-1968" and "Talks, Interviewers and Chairmen 1957-1962". Notably, no such interview policy files exist for before this. In "Talks" policy files the interview is

in March 1958, staff member Helen Arbuthnot conducted experiments with potential (non-staff) interviewers. Her briefing notes for candidates are interesting for the issues they pose. Amongst others, she asks the question, [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (BBC R51/863/1 “Interviewers and Chairmen 1957-62”). Internal training on interviewing was also a priority for the BBC. Slightly later the staff magazine *Ariel* issue for May 1960 contains a photo of insistent interviewer John Freeman lecturing staff on interviewing style (“Picture Coverage” 12). The pupils (who look distinctly bored) represent a large cross-section of staff: news assistants, producers, those associated with the French Service, *Children’s Hour*, the regions. Such dedication to training indicates that the issue of interviewing style was clearly a priority for the BBC.

Part of the anxiety surely originated from close public scrutiny of television’s techniques. The loss of the BBC’s monopoly with the advent of ITV brought a new sense of competition to broadcasting and the introduction of the hard-hitting interview was no doubt part of the result. Independent Television News (ITN), the consortium producing news bulletins for the commercial channel, was born in 1955 and soon began utilising a more interrogative interviewing style. The probing interview became an “ITN hallmark” in this period according to one ITV historian (Sendall 284). The most well known of these journalists was Robin Day. His interview with Sir Kenneth Clarke, Chairman of Independent Television caused a sensation for Day’s direct questions, in June 1957 he obtained the biggest scoop of the year in obtaining an interview with Egypt’s President Nassar and then in 1958 his cross-examination of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan gained huge press coverage, before he moved to the BBC the following year.

Such scoops were possible thanks to Arthur Clifford, News Editor at ITN who fought for his journalists to have interviews with politicians and those in power on terms

absent; even in 1950 a document on “Techniques of Talks Production” discusses only monologues, duologues and multi-person discussion, with no specific reference to the practice of interviewing.

less deferential and more in-depth. The breaking of the monopoly in this sense was productive for both ITV and the BBC as it made the relations between broadcasters and politicians more equal. The competition engendered between the two also caused both parties to examine their own techniques and those abroad. While Wallace was not always the originating model, his was the first and most publicised example of the interrogative style and the more general desire by the press to challenge state authority. To report but not scrutinise, if not an act of collusion with government, was increasingly identified as a troubling sign of the press's lack of independence and a dangerous development in a democracy. Wallace had demonstrated how this critical attitude might be re-affirmed through particular deployment of the dialogic format of the interview, a strategy that was to dominate interviewing in print and broadcasting for years to come.

Surveillance, Interviews and the Writer

It is against this changing backdrop that Pound's interviews need to be understood. In 1957 when David Rattray interviewed Pound he displayed much less willingness to ignore Pound's political views. "Weekend with Ezra Pound," published in the *Nation* (New York), evinces many similarities with Payne's interview. The same admiration for Pound's poetry is evident, his knowledge of European scholarship indicated and influence on younger poets tacitly acknowledged. However, this is a much more critical portrait of Pound than those by Pinck, Payne and others. Pound's frenetic state is emphasised, "jumped up" becomes almost a refrain to describe the poet's chaotic activities and conversational leaps. He becomes an almost ridiculous figure, hoarding doughnuts in paint tins, surrounded by disciples of suspect sanity themselves. Pound's anti-Semitism is also covered at length: a "tirade" is quoted (although cut short by Dorothy Pound) when Pound instructs Rattray to "tell your reader what happens when

you hock your castles to the Jews” (344). Elsewhere, Pound’s economic theories, his broadcasting activities, as well as John Kasper’s racism, Jewish conspiracy theories and white supremacy all make an appearance.

In this interview Pound’s associates and his words are used to condemn the poet. His sanity is presented as questionable and no mention is made of the Bollingen Prize. The only mention of the Cantos in fact comes when Rattray recognises them as the source for a White Supremacist pamphlet by one of Pound’s disciples (346). This is an interview that illustrates the political import of poetry and implicitly argues against separating man and work. Interestingly, despite Rattray presenting Pound as something of a crackpot and, in light of the changing cultural scene around interviewing, he doesn’t attempt to engage Pound in dialogue about these views. He, like Payne and others before him, defers interrogation. Despite having very different opinions of Pound, in fact these interviewers display a deal of similarity in their questioning of the author.

In a sense, such treatment goes against the historical grain. While Pound’s political views alienate the reader, his profound influence upon young poets still renders him authority in this interview.¹⁷ Rattray records how a black inmate begs from Pound who “[w]ithout hesitation,” and with “an abstracted air” obliges (348). Pound’s almost unthinking generosity, across the race lines so sacred to John Kasper, his most notorious disciple, is an important moment in the article. His generosity to the begging inmate becomes representative of his generosity over the years to writers and scholars. Where we might expect to see an extract from the Cantos reproduced in the midst of the article, instead Ramon Guthrie’s “Ezra Pound in Paris and Elsewhere” is inserted. The poem confronts Pound’s position: “What perversities you cultivated / could never match / those pitted now against you” (345). Littered with cryptic classical references and

¹⁷ Barnhisel also makes the salient point that New Direction’s targetting of the student market through trade paperbacks was central to Pound’s rehabilitation: “Probably no other nontextual factor enhanced his place in the American literary pantheon as much” (168-69, see also 159-73).

allusions to Pound's own *Cantos*, the poem ends by describing Pound as "*il miglior fabbro*," the phrase used in Eliot's dedication of *The Waste Land* to Pound back in 1922 (345). This is an article in dialogue with itself about the problem of Pound. Critical distance cannot elide the fact of Pound's artistic significance and influence.

Two weeks after Rattray's article was published, the *Nation* printed a letter that applauded the piece for being "just right after so much slobbering in other media about poor Ezra in the clink" (Derleth 396). The author was clearly pleased with Rattray's depiction of Pound as a crackpot and the critical distance maintained between writer and subject in the article. While "slobbering" was an increasingly derided form of interviewing – Wallace's show had been running nationally for six months by this point – "poor Ezra" was to be released from incarceration less than a year later. The efforts of T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Frost, the *Nation* and other media outlets; the general awareness that Pound had been imprisoned for far longer than others charged and convicted of treason; and the transforming sense of the threat of surveillance and freedom of speech incursions, no doubt all contributed to the change of heart.

What Pound's case does indicate is the divergence between the media interview in the postwar moment and those interviews identified with surveillance, namely the cross-examination and the psychiatric interview. When the interrogative interview did appear in 1956, it was seen as an attempt to redress invasive, potentially authoritarian power. However, this manoeuvre was to quickly transform perceptions of the interview in the media and literary culture: now the form itself became associated with surveillance. It is something of a commonplace now to find writers expressing a dislike of the tape recorder. When interviewed for the *Paris Review*, whose interviewers "usually worked in pairs, like FBI agents" writers such as Robert Frost, Evelyn Waugh, W. H. Auden, Eudora Welty and many others expressed their dislike of the tool (Cowley 9). Frost's interviewer observed that the tape recorder offered him a "threat to his freedom"

(Poirier n.pag). As Gabriel Garcia Marquez later explained: “What ticks you off about the tape recording everything is that it is not loyal to the person who is being interviewed” (Stone n.pag). This discussion of the mechanical object in terms of loyalty and freedom demonstrates the particular associations the tape-recorded interview had developed in the postwar period.

This general transformation is clearly visible in one of the most detailed and lengthy interviews with Pound, the 1962 *Paris Review* interview by Donald Hall. The interview is serious in tone, focuses on his artistic endeavours and attempts to set the record straight, but it also emphasises the fragility of Pound’s mental health. The interview becomes a means by which to testify to the damage done by state surveillance and Pound becomes the representational genius suffering for his art.

The interview is book-ended with references to the unhappy circumstances of Pound’s situation. Unlike the majority of *Paris Review* interviews, the interview is not prefaced with a manuscript page produced in facsimile. In Pound’s case the manuscript is replaced with a “Note to the Base Censor.” As the annotation makes clear, this is the:

Typescript of an explanatory note from Ezra Pound to the censor at the Pisa Detention Camp, where Pound was held after the war. The officer, in censoring Pound’s correspondence (which included the manuscripts of verse on its way to the publisher), apparently suspected that the *Pisan Cantos* were in fact coded messages. Pound is writing to explain this is not the case (Hall “Ezra Pound” n.pag)

While having the additional purpose of reinforcing a sense of superiority in the reader able to recognise and appreciate the *Pisan Cantos* as art rather than treasonous material, the reproduction of such a note at the beginning of the interview provides a framework that emphasises the political and personal circumstances around the production of art. This is perhaps unsurprising given the emphasis upon personality in the interview form; nevertheless, in this instance it also demonstrates a refusal to ignore the more troubling

circumstances of Pound's life and an overt recognition of the role of surveillance in interpreting Pound's works and person.

The interview is brought to an end with the comment: "Note: Mr. Pound's health made it impossible for him to finish proofreading this interview. The text is complete, but may contain details which Mr. Pound would have changed under happier circumstances" (n.pag). Surveillance returns in the guise of editorial control and censorship. While the *Review* proclaims itself to be a benign editorial force, the comment also emphasises the fragility of Pound's health; the implication is that this is an interview snatched from the brink of oblivion.

Hall provides a fascinating addendum to his interview in his book *Remembering Poets*, which discusses the circumstances under which the Eliot and Pound interviews were obtained. Hall's account repeatedly acknowledges the role of surveillance in Pound's reactions towards the interview. Hall comments "Pound was anxious because interviews had caused him trouble in the past and he was not sure what he said made any sense" (130). The tape recorder is described as an "instrument of torture; it put him on the block of his own, exact words" (134).

Read as a nefarious surveillance of the writer, such a totalising view of the interview, seen across numerous accounts in this period, smacks of Richard Hofstadter's famous account of the "paranoid style."¹⁸ Defined by "the qualities of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy," the style is identified as "leaving nothing unexplained and comprehending all of reality in one overreaching consistent theory. It is nothing if not 'scholarly' in technique" (3, 36-37). Speaking of a political style that determinedly rejects dialogue, and reminiscent of Pound's own megalomania and (contested) clinical diagnosis of paranoia, Hofstadter's account has

¹⁸ Interestingly the Ford Foundation's "Fund for the Republic," which sponsored the "Survival and Freedom" series of *Mike Wallace Interview* programmes, also commissioned the memo from Hofstadter which was to become "The Paranoid Style".

been drawn upon by literary scholars themselves when reflecting upon critical practices. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's influential essay "Paranoid reading and reparative reading," drawing in part on Paul Ricoeur's notion of the "hermeneutics of suspicion," harks back to Hofstadter in her assessment of a paranoid style of reading that dominates modern scholarship (142). In offering a reparative style of reading, that focuses on process – the experience of surprise, the attempt to organise fragments – Sedgwick recalls, to different ends and emphases, the process-driven experience of reading we saw in Gadamer.

If nothing else, interviews with writers proliferated from the 1950s: something that a paranoid reading fails to account for. In a situation wherein the cultural authority of the poet was declining (the suggestion in the "Note to the Base Censor" implies that the allusions of the *Cantos* are as opaque as a secret code to the general reader), the publicity wrought by the interview-as-surveillance might be welcome. So too, the interview might offer creative possibilities that can utilise surveillance for aesthetic ends.

Hall offers just such a reading in his account of the interview. Admitting that there was not one but two interviews, Hall explains that one was comprised of "incomplete sentences, gaps, great leaps over chasms, great Icarian plunges from sun to ocean" (135). The other interview, published in the *Review*, was "neat and witty and energetic with complete sentences and coherent paragraphs" (135). The sublimity of the first is transformed into the orderliness of the second. Having acknowledged the large amount of freedom he had wielded in the process of editing the conversation transcript, Hall rejects a lengthy expostulation upon the merits and ethics of performing such an act. Instead, emphasising the control of the flow of information from interviewee to reader, Hall attempts to transform the potentially negative import of surveillance as associated with the interview into something more positive. He utilises the creative potential of surveillance. Granted, he emphasises the initial romantic sublimity of Pound's genius (through references to grand landscapes and the Icarus myth) compared to the slightly

mundane result of his own editorial effort, but the implication is that the paranoia induced through surveillance forced Pound to such heights.

Other writers were to explore the creative possibilities of the recorded word more directly. With the sudden introduction of mass-produced tape recorders during the 1950s – helpfully indicated by the appearance of *Krapp's Last Tape* in 1958 – writers responded artistically to this innovation. While the invention of the telephone and radio in the nineteenth century had enabled live communication of the disembodied voice via technological means and the gramophone and Dictaphone had allowed for the recording of conversation and speech, the length of time and ability to manipulate these recordings was limited. Only in the late forties did longer recordings become possible for specialist organisations and it took a decade for affordable and mass production models to appear.

The Countercultural Interview

As a generation that came of age as writers during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Beats and those writers associated with the literary scene of New York's Lower East Side offer a fascinating study in how the interview's growing associations with surveillance and control in this period transformed it into a potent site of artistic experimentation. Contrasting themselves to the "official conservative verse culture," these writers defined themselves against the cultural and critical mainstream (Charles Bernstein qtd. in Kane *All Poets* xiv). Very much aware of oppositions between the state and the individual, the political pressures exerted upon privacy and individual autonomy, and the limits of free speech, writers and artists including Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs also experimented with the possibilities of recorded dialogue and the interview itself. In New York so too Ted Berrigan, John Giorno, Ed Sanders and other individuals associated with the St Mark's Poetry Project and with Andy Warhol's Factory, exploited the interview's burgeoning associations with authority to further their

countercultural aesthetic practices.¹⁹ While not representing mainstream use of the interview in literature, journalism or the expanding academic arena at this moment, these experiments were of crucial importance to the development of the interview for the art and literary scenes in the second half of the twentieth century.

First and foremost this was a counterculture defined historically by the sheer number of collaborative and multimedia experiments with the oral and written to which these writers and artists contributed. Live performances, conversation recordings, sound poetry and happenings abounded. These activities were part of a persistent interest in gossip and dialogue, including forums, conversations, readings and recordings, which were to have a profound impact on how the interview was perceived by artists and writers both then and subsequently.²⁰

Even a limited selection of such works indicates the extent to which this countercultural identity is now tied up with interviews: in multi-author anthologies collated in the period since the 1960s there are George Plimpton's *Beat Writers at Work*, David Meltzer's *San Francisco Beat* and Nancy McCampbell Grace and Ronna Johnson's *Breaking the Rule of Cool*, amongst many others. Single-author volumes include Berrigan's *Talking in Tranquility*, Ginsberg's *Spontaneous Minds*, *Conversations with William S. Burroughs* and *Burroughs Live*, Ferlinghetti's *The Cool Eye* and many others.²¹ Mixed format "sourcebooks" also often include interviews. While published interviews and anthologies proliferated from the early 1960s, and today many of the early recordings have been transcribed or reproduced for general sale, their significance for an artistic movement in

¹⁹ The funding bid that secured Government money for the Poetry Project's inauguration yoked together the arts and sociology: art as a means of socialising "alienated" youths, in-depth interviews by New School sociologist Harry Silverstein and an artistic programme of workshops, readings and publishing of poetry, film and writing. (Kane *All Poets* 129-51)

²⁰ Oliver Harris makes the useful point that the epistolary was an important form for the Beats, but downplays the importance of the interview (59).

²¹ Edited respectively by Ratcliffe and Scalapino, David Carter, Hibbard, Lotringer and Lykiard. See also Kane *We Saw the Light*.

which interpersonal connections were to play such a strong role was more than biographical or collectivist.

Secondly, these experiments were pivotal in appropriating interwar European avant-garde aesthetics for the American arts. Serge Guilbaut's seminal *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (1983) has shown, through attending to abstract expressionism, how the late forties saw the transfer of the centre of avant-garde activity from Paris to New York. We can also see the same lines of influence operating in the arena of sound poetry experiments, from the experiments of the Dadaists and Surrealists, through those of Henri Chopin, the Vienna Group and Lettrism, to Burroughs, Ginsberg and others during their Paris years and through to Lower East Side practitioners such as John Giorno.²²

While the interview had not been a form extensively championed by the European experimenters, Andre Breton had used the form to launch "Part One of A Surrealist Manifesto" in English in the little magazine *View*, reprinted in *Arson* in 1942 ("New York Interview" 2-5). In this cloaked interview, he harks back to Pound's early attempts to use the form to publicise a movement, as discussed in chapter two. More generally, however, Surrealist experiments in mass unconscious, automatic writing, and sound art had combined publicity, sociological and artistic impulses in numerous ways, often utilising the recording of conversation as a tool or record that easily spanned these aims. The legacy of these experiments is clearly visible in the uses of the interview by British author J. G. Ballard, as will be discussed in chapter six. However, it is important

²² There has been a resurgence of scholarly interest in sound poetry, and ties between radio, sound and literature in recent years. See Kahn and Whitehead, Connor *Dumbstruck*, LaBelle, Rubery *Audiobooks*. The relationships between technology and the literary imagination and directions of influence, has also been much debated ever since Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. See also Arnheim, Ong and Williams. In the case of the interview, new technology, whether those designed to capture conversation, such as voice-recorders, or to broadcast, such as radio and television, is often eagerly and rapidly embraced by interviewers. These technologies often boost the fictions of access by suggesting that contact is direct and spontaneous. However, as this chapter demonstrates, technology can also be used by writers to manipulate those very fictions. See also my Coda.

to note the immediate postwar effect: these avant-garde experiments invested dialogue, sound recording and, by association, the interview, with radical aesthetic practices.

The interview's increasing associations with authoritarianism and surveillance in America ensured that it became a powerful site of resistance and experimentation for the avant-garde. This sometimes took the form of an oppositional insistence upon the collaborative nature of talk and authorship. Thus when Jack Kerouac was interviewed by Mike Wallace in 1958, he consistently diffused the potential antagonism and sensationalism of Wallace's questions, insisting instead upon a more dialogic interaction (MW 7/"Jack Kerouac"). On other occasions, experiments explored how recorded conversation could be used to break down the authority of the speaker's voice.

Assessing the role of the poetry reading in these artistic communities, the critic Daniel Kane suggests that it "became not so much a space for the performance of an individual genius or windbag as a site for the ongoing fulfillment of a poem actualized in its aura/oral form as it was performed and received in communal territory" (*All Poets* 30). While the interview form, like the poetry reading, might imply the privileging of individual genius, in fact it was often used by this community to undermine and interrogate such a concept of authorship. When the poet Ted Berrigan published an interview with John Cage in 1967, the article contained material "pieced together from a series of tape-recorded interviews" with Cage, additional prose from a famous interview with Andy Warhol by Gene Swenson and additions by Berrigan himself (Berrigan *Bean* 62). Berrigan simultaneously announced that "John Cage served neither as collaborator nor as interviewee" (67).²³ While in this case the interview itself belies its apparent collaborative status, it also exposes the fictions of access around the authoritative expression of the writer for aesthetic ends.

²³ See also Wolf for more on this in relation to Warhol (100-101).

While promoting the communal and collaborative, the near constant presence of poet Paul Blackburn's microphone recorder at Lower East Side poetry readings in this period was also a constant reminder of the more nefarious associations of speech under surveillance. The ephemeral nature of speech – celebrated graphically in the aesthetics of mimeograph publications such as Ed Sander's *Fuck You / a magazine of the arts* (which printed, unauthorised, the first American extracts from the *Pisan Cantos*) and Ted Berrigan's *C: A Journal of Poetry* – was in constant tension with its permanent rendering on tape and wiretap (Kane *All Poets* 57-61).²⁴

Early important experiments with the revolutionary and creative possibilities of the tape recorder were conducted when two artist-writers met at the so-called Beat Hotel in Paris in 1959, a meeting that was replayed over and again in later interviews. The English artist and writer Brion Gysin, a former Surrealist, began working with William S. Burroughs. Later Burroughs was to credit Gysin with the invention of the “cut-up” technique in this period, a technique more widely associated with Burroughs himself. So-called because it involved the juxtaposition of different found texts, often newspaper or magazine articles, to produce new meanings, the idea had emerged from discussions the pair had about utilising the “technological approach to writing like a painter approaches his material” (Terry Wilson 191).

Burroughs, whose *Naked Lunch* (1959) censorship battles were to propel him into the media in 1962, was to pursue the implications of this technique on the typewriter. He and Gysin also experimented with the possibilities cut-ups, or “cut-ins,” might offer on tape. Two later collections, *The Job* and *Here To Go: Planet R-101*, record the artists discussing their use of multiple voice recorders to cut up spoken text, to put speech through electronic equipment to arrive “at brand new words that had never been said” (Terry Wilson 193).

²⁴ See Ellis for a general discussion of Beat little magazines.

Gysin's "Pistol Poem," broadcast on the BBC in 1960 spliced gunshots and vocal utterances together. The violent, dehumanised potential of voice is emphasised through juxtaposition with the bang of the gun. It is no coincidence that Gysin choose to emphasise the force of the vocalised word – in itself recalling the staccato violence of Hitler's radio speeches. Part of what he and Burroughs found so fascinating about the cut-up was its ability to undermine what they saw as the controlling power of the word. The interviewee's speech could now be rendered with all its hesitations, repetitions and grammatical slips. Technology enabled the interrogation and the medium identified the message.

Burroughs's "The Beginning Is Also The End," (1963) plays with just these features. It is written in the form of an interview, complete with hesitations and syntactical patterns attempting to render spoken dialogue. The ticks of a broadcast interview are also reproduced, the name of the interview subject Mr Martin is repeated at the beginning of each question, recalling the common tactic used in radio in case viewers commence listening half way through. At the end of the piece the "ladies and gentlemen" listeners are addressed directly and the interviewee is described as an actor (8). This is also very much an interrogative interview: Mr Martin's prior words are quoted against him, his contradictions pointed out and he is accused of lying (7). A far cry from the deferential radio interview, Burroughs uses the interview form and grilling dialogue itself for dramatic effect.

The potential for the recorded interview to be used to enforce certain power dynamics is certainly something to which Gysin and Burroughs were also attuned. Along with Ian Sommerville, a Cambridge undergraduate and Burrough's lover, they experimented with a machine they named Control. Identified as an "interplanetary agency," the computer could answer, or channel the answers to questions put to it; a mechanical interview subject represented the voice of alien rationality (Terry Wilson

218). While this might raise a few eyebrows, it needs to be seen as part of this wider preoccupation with the disembodied, cut-up or technologically mediated voice that so preoccupied the Paris and later New York avant-garde in this period.²⁵

Elsewhere, Burroughs discusses the pair's experiments with words and tape-recorders in direct relation to spying, censorship and the Nixon administration. In "Playback from Eden to Watergate" (1973) Burroughs identifies the power of words not in their initial expression, but in their playback in a specific setting: the words and sounds associated with defecation and intercourse do not instil shame in their first utterance, but on their public playback. Burroughs identifies shame as a form of social control: "[w]hen nobody cares, then shame ceases to exist and we can all return to the Garden of Eden without any God prowling around like a house dick with a tape recorder" (Odier 11).

Burroughs explores this idea further through the cut-in technique: the ability to study the sounds, to edit, to slow down or run the tape backwards is a form of surveillance: "as if the words themselves had been interrogated and forced to reveal their hidden meanings" (161). But this, like the literary cut-up, is a form of interrogation with revolutionary potential: anyone can do it and literature and art might be the result. In this, and other texts, he exhorts mass use of the tape recorder whereby individuals and crowds could use these institutional techniques against agencies and officials as a revolutionary weapon (17-20). For him the word itself is a means of control, and the cut-up breaks down that control.

The form that the discussion above takes is also extremely significant. Burrough's "Playback from Eden to Watergate" is itself a playback within a collection of interviews subjected to the cut-up technique. In the foreword to *The Job* he states that the book was originally conceived of as a series of impromptu interviews, but Burroughs found that in

²⁵ John Giorno's "Dial-a-Poem" project is an excellent example of this, re-created by MoMA in the summer of 2012 and available online: <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/ecstaticalphabets/dial-a-poem/>.

many cases he had already answered the question better in a previous text (24). Instead of paraphrasing, therefore, he and collaborator Daniel Odier inserted that material into the volume, in effect replaying it. “The result is interview form presented as a film with fade-outs and flash-back *illustrating* the answers” (24). Indeed, the result was a text that experiments with and undermines the interrogative impulse of the dialogue format and the primacy of the supposedly originating conversation that the interview promises to convey.

Gysin’s text too, made in collaboration with Terry Wilson, is a series of interviews. The book juxtaposes his art and photographs with excerpts of dialogue captured (only partially) on a tape recorder and rendered through typographic experimentation. The interviews are again broken up, re-ordered and infiltrated with quotations of Gysin’s own speech from other texts. In Gysin’s case too there was a “ghost in the machine”: the tape recorder that captured these interviews had, apparently, a propensity to chant, squeak and project voices of its own (Terry Wilson 27, 218). For Gysin, the tape recorder could itself cut in; undermining the straightforward authority of the vocalic body over machine, the authority of the interviewee’s words and indeed the authority of the recorded interview itself, to serious aesthetic purpose.

In the case of both Gysin and Burroughs, the tape recorder had revolutionary potential. It could be used to break down consciousness, in a manner similar to drugs – the tape recorder, even more effectively than the newspaper cut up, could circumvent the control of the word, the mind and the state. It was, according to the critic Robin Lyndenberg, a resistance strategy (416). Indeed, in this respect the countercultural experiments have more in common with mainstream media than might be expected: they too envisaged dialogue in all its utopian glory as offering a strong challenge to the power of the state.

As this chapter has argued, such a vision was only possible after the mid 1950s, when the interview had been fundamentally yoked to a legalistic, technological framework that worked to emphasise the power dynamics of the interview. The countercultural Grove Press and its publication the *Evergreen Review* provides a useful example here of how this vision was conveyed to a wider public. In his study of Grove Press, *Counterculture Colophon*, Loren Glass explains that by the mid-sixties publisher Barney Rossett not only “revolutionized the publishing industry but had also mobilized a cadre of publishers, academics, and artists in a successful effort to transform the cultural field itself by incorporating the literary underground into the mainstream” (116).

Grove had been instrumental in publishing and popularising many of these writers and their specific aesthetic interests: Gysin had published a “how-to” guide on cut-ups in the *Evergreen Review* (Gysin “Cut-Ups” 56-61). So too the magazine published a smattering of interviews, often reprinted in translation, when introducing the American public to authors such as Antonin Artaud, Juan Soriano and Celine and more local New York-based writers. The first issue, in 1957, opens with an interview reprinted from the Paris *Express* with Jean-Paul Sartre on the occasion of Hungary’s invasion by Russia; issue six includes Frank O’Hara’s description of a talk with the painter Franz Kline, whose work was a major influence on Roy Kuhlmann, the key designer of Grove covers (Glass *Countercultural Colophon* 10). Later issues included numerous interviews, with subjects including Fidel Castro and directors such as Peter Brook and Ingmar Bergman.

Aside from the radical associations of dialogic experimentation, like Burroughs and Gysin, Rossett drew upon the interrogative aspect of the interview. The obscenity trials of “HOWL”, *Tropic of Cancer* and *Naked Lunch* had made the counterculture a *cause celebre*, with Grove identified as its major publishing house. During these trials Grove successfully utilised the expert testimony of literary critics as part of its defence strategy. Unlike Pound’s silence in the witness stand, these literary trials ensured that not only

were the issues aired but that the expert witness had shifted from the psychiatrist to the literary critic. The trial over the American edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had seen Alfred Kazin and Malcolm Cowley testify. Extracts from these cross examinations formed an important element of Rossett's publicity, printed in *Evergreen Review* and quoted on book covers aimed at the burgeoning student market. The forth issue of the periodical featured "Horn on 'HOWL,'" the story of the trial, by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and included excerpts from cross-examinations (151, 156). Number 36 also printed the interrogations of Norman Mailer and Allen Ginsberg as they testified in court as expert witnesses during the Boston *Naked Lunch* trial ("The Boston Trial of 'Naked Lunch'" 40-49, 87-88). Grove Press, and the writers it championed, exploited what they saw as the potential of recorded dialogue to resist mainstream authority, in a variety of forms.

Without the transformation of the interview's association from feminised chatter in the pre-war period into an interrogative, legalistic form in the mainstream media of the late 1950s, the interview would not have become the powerful site of experimentation and resistance that it did. The story of the interview in the aftermath of the Second World War is one that is interwoven with wider narratives of transformations in technology, world politics, the status of the public intellectual, the rise of the student market, radical politics and the avant-garde and legal practice. While the interview was born in nineteenth-century court reporting, it was only a hundred years later that the dialogue itself began to be overtly measured according to the standards of the courtroom interrogation, the psychiatric examination, or the government wiretap. Only after mid century could Janet Malcolm's string of associations, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, operate effectively.

While the cross-examination has loomed large in this discussion, the confessional aspect of the interview has been somewhat ignored. In the mid 1950s the emphasis upon an interview dialogue that bolstered a critical public sphere sidelined the interview's

associations with personal revelation outside of the perception of confession-of-guilt. In the 1960s, however, with the rise of the so-called Confessional Poets and New Journalism (not to be confused with nineteenth century “new journalism”) this was to drastically change as the culture of individualism asserted itself.

Personality and Objectivity; New Journalism and the Interviewer

Nonfiction writers are second-class citizens, the Ellis Island of literature (Gay Talese qtd. in Roiphe "Gay Talese" n.pag)

The so-called New Journalism of the 1960s and 1970s reinvigorated the interview form and relations between journalism and literature. Associated with American writers of nonfiction such as Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe and Jimmy Breslin and magazine titles *New York*, *Esquire* and *Rolling Stone*, the New Journalism was broadly characterised by its rejection of "objective" news reporting in favour of a style that utilised personal points of view and techniques usually associated with fiction. More of a collection of disparate practitioners than a school, the New Journalism can still be typified by these common methods and interests. While the New Journalism did not confine itself to the interview form, its emphasis upon the subjective point of view account led to a frequently reliance on in-depth interviews. Additionally, its insistence upon exploring and foregrounding the aesthetics of reporting led to numerous experiments with the literary potential of the interview form.

Frequently depicted in terms of a fact/fiction or journalism/literature binary, New Journalism was often the subject of ferocious attacks in the American press.¹ While the particularity of the interview was typically submerged within larger questions of journalistic convention in attacks on the New Journalism, the assaults were concerned with precisely those issues fundamental to the interview: namely, the relation of the

¹ See Connery *A Sourcebook*, Frus, Fishkin, Hellmann, Lounsberry and Sims. All of these scholars grappled with questions of definition, terms, heritage and literary status in relation to the New Journalism movement.

personal perspective to the public, here couched as the subjective versus the objective, and the value of such utterances in a public realm increasingly defined by mediation and publicity. As a form then, the interview is central to both the practice of New Journalism and the terms used by its critics. From this perspective, it is no overstatement to say that the interview is perhaps the quintessential New Journalism technique.

What is even more intriguing about New Journalism's use of the interview is that practitioners draw heavily, not only on fictional devices, but also on experiments from more surprising, and on first glance, deeply hostile venues. The *Paris Review*, a little magazine in the modernist vein, might seem an obvious source of inspiration for anything to do with interviews given that it has published one of the most eminent interview series with writers in the English speaking world since 1953. "The Art of Fiction" series includes four hundred interviews and counting. However, as I shall demonstrate, the *Review* offered a model of the interviewer role that was both deeply hostile to New Journalism and, conversely, essential for the development of their aesthetic experiments. Indeed, I argue that this little magazine, rarely characterised as anything other than modernist-inspired, was fundamental to the New Journalism endeavours.

In some ways, this chapter enacts a return to the concerns of chapter two, touching as it does, not only on little magazines, but also author celebrity and public image. Tom Wolfe, Hunter S. Thompson, Truman Capote and Norman Mailer were all authors adept at promoting their own charged, and often countercultural, celebrity personae. So too the argument of this chapter follows on directly from chapter four; the Beats' aesthetic experiments with the interview form, political stance and recording practices are clearly an important forerunner of New Journalism. Indeed the lines of influence are often direct, for example Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* follows Ken Kesey, Neal Cassady and the Merry Pranksters.

This chapter breaks new ground by specifically examining the role of interviewer in the form. Should the interviewer be present in the account, or absent? Should he or she be an omniscient, professionally neutral reporter, or a highly individualised character? Should the account be entirely focalised through the subject, the interview questions elided or should the interviewer's questioning role be emphasised? These are, as we shall see, precisely the issues that New Journalism's experiments explored. Although the discussion focuses particularly on the borders (or, in Talese's memorable phrase, the "Ellis Island") of literature and journalism and how the roles of the interviewer and interviewee operate in this area, it is from a very different source that I find my point of departure.

I draw on Sharon Marcus's account of nineteenth-century theatrical celebrity, "Salomé!! Sarah Bernhardt, Oscar Wilde, and the Drama of Celebrity." Although it might seem irrelevant to the focus of this chapter, Marcus's argument is extremely useful for thinking about the dynamic between interviewer and interviewee:

Nineteenth-century celebrity was theatrical not simply in the anecdotal sense that many celebrities were actors; it was also theatrical in structure ... it combines proximity and distance and links celebrities to their devotees in structurally uneven ways. The star is one, the fans are many, just as audience members outnumber players. Stars are known to and tracked by more people than they could ever personally know or follow, just as in dramatic performance actors who move and speak onstage rarely, if ever, acknowledge spectators who watch and listen. For all their asymmetry, however, celebrity and theatricality are also organized around interdependence, since plays and stars exist only because of audiences and fans (999-1000).

While Marcus is specific in her discussion of nineteenth-century theatre and celebrity, the analogy is productive, building as it does on our understanding of the interview's fictions of access as turning upon proximity, distance, depth and surface when portraying a subject. The theatrical analogy encourages us to think about the portrayed relationships between interviewer, interviewee, writer, subject and readers, figures who may or may

not be given big or small, speaking or silence, anonymous or individualised roles in the interview.

Despite using a term that foregrounds its theatrical associations, I do not mean to suggest that the interviewer and subject are necessarily only ever inhabiting a part. “Role” can of course be synonymous with “function” and I do draw consciously upon that ambiguity. What the term does allow is a discussion that avoids relying exclusively on terms such as “character” or “reporter” that, in the case of New Journalism, are disciplinarily problematic, associated as they are with a fiction/journalism binary. Furthermore, by lifting our attention from the page and into an embodied space, the theatrical analogy encourages us to think about how the celebrity persona of the writers discussed, whether shaped through clothing, gesture, utterances, television appearances, essays or alike, contributes to the role of the interviewer or subject performed in these interviews.

Lastly, Marcus’s discussion of the asymmetrical interdependence of theatrical celebrity is pertinent to a discussion of New Journalism, not only because, as Talese notes, journalism and fiction have very different reputations. The interview itself involves a common, but rarely foregrounded, asymmetrical relationship between subject, interviewer and reader, one that varies dramatically across the form. The dynamic between celebrity interviewee and cub reporter will be very different to that between the same reporter interviewing a witness to a disaster, or the same celebrity when interviewed by a famous interviewer. The role the reader expects each to perform in these differing scenarios will change and it is scrutiny of these expectations, or cultural norms, that form the basis of my discussion of New Journalism. Before turning specifically to Wolfe and his associates, however, we need to rewind a few years to examine how a literary magazine with a limited print run was to have a far from limited effect on perceptions of

the interview and the roles of interviewee and interviewer in the years preceding the appearance of New Journalism.

The *Paris Review* and New Journalism

Founded in 1953 in the city that gave it its name, the *Paris Review* was a little magazine, following in the tradition of modernist little magazines such as *Broom*, the *Transatlantic Review* or *transition*. The Parisian, avant-garde, modernist heritage was emphasised in the publication. Work by Picasso, Cocteau, Mann and Camus was advertised or appeared in early years, as did an advert for *Ulysses* publisher Shakespeare & Co. Symposiums were held with Man Ray, Janet Flanner and Maria Jolas and correspondence between e. e. cummings and Pound was re-printed in the magazine.

One of the other major ways this heritage was emphasised was through a series of interviews that the magazine printed under the series “The Art of Fiction”.² Along with Eliot and Pound, Aldous Huxley, William Carlos Williams and Ernest Hemingway were all interviewed for the *Paris Review*, so too members of the Auden Group and French writers such as Jean Cocteau, François Mauriac, Blaise Cendrars and Louis-Ferdinand Céline were featured, along with a smattering of women writers from the modernist period, including Rebecca West, Marianne Moore and Jean Rhys. James Laughlin was also the first publisher to be interviewed – recognised for his important contribution to American modernism – and unique for his interview spreading across two issues. “The Art of Fiction” series was to be an important space for evaluating and

² The series was later to expand to include the arts of Poetry, Translation, Editing, the Diary, Theatre and Journalism, amongst others. Taking my queue from the *Review*, I refer to the series collectively as the “Art of Fiction.” While all the interviews originally appeared in print in the magazine, I cite from the open access online versions available at www.theparisreview.org/interviews on the assumption that this is how the majority of readers will access them. Reference is made to the magazine and anthology versions where relevant.

promoting modernism as a coherent, if multi-faceted, international literary and artistic movement in the second half of the twentieth century.

These interviews, beginning with E. M. Forster in 1953, addressed the issue of why writers write. They were offered as an antidote to the celebrity interview that had predominated in the interwar years and would come also to stand in opposition to the interrogative interview discussed in the previous chapter. The *Review* version was serious, lengthy and a collaborative endeavour. Rather than a straightforward question and answer, the interviews often developed over a series of face-to-face meetings, followed by written communications wherein the author was given the opportunity to revise and substantially alter answers and often reshape the interview completely.

The format was the same every time: a manuscript page was reproduced, a drawing (or later a photograph) of the author included, an introductory preface written by the interviewer(s) described the author, setting, or occasion of the interview. This was then followed by the lengthy interview itself, which focused on themes such as biography, mnemonic devices, writing habits and motivations (familiar to us from the earlier “How Writers Work” series). These were “essays in dialogue” or portraits of the artist, not gossip or vehicles for product placement (Lorin Stein n.pag). The series single-handedly increased the respectability of the interview within the literary sphere, demonstrating that the interview could be an aesthetic, serious form.

The interview’s associations with Hollywood celebrity in the early years of the twentieth century and divergence from modernist practices and academia, trends that had become, if anything, more prominent in the years following with the use of the form in *Look*, *Life* and others, had left it vulnerable to accusations of gossip that continue to follow the form today. Indeed, when journalist Francine du Plessix Gray wrote the introduction to the fifth anthology of *Paris Review* interviews, she decried “the more ephemeral personal gossip that these interviews share with TV talk shows ... Alas ... there

is no absolutely clear line to be drawn between the gossip and the meat of the artist's craft" (xiv-xv). Despite such ambivalence, the *Paris Review* interview was to play a major role in transforming perceptions of the form. As we shall see, this was largely due to its novel privileging of the subject, placing him or her in the role of author of the interview.

Such a transformation was partly the result of the *Review's* reconfiguration of the relation between the interview and criticism. The inaugural issue featured an introductory "Letter to the Editor," written by William Styron, friend of the editors and rising author at the time. Replacing the usual manifesto, the letter is playful and discusses a draft preface that Styron abandoned for being scholarly:

First, I said, "Literarily speaking, we live in what has been described as the Age of Criticism ... laden with terms like "architectonic," "Zeitgeist," and "dichotomous," the literary magazines seem today on the verge of doing away with literature, not with any philistine bludgeon but by smothering it under the weight of learned chatter." (Perfect beginning for a preface, you may note; regard the arch rhythms, the way it fairly looks down the nose at the reader.) (Styron 10).

Styron seems to be thinking primarily of the politically engaged *Partisan Review*, often caught up in the wranglings of its editorial staff, or the *Kenyon Review*, primarily a vehicle for the New Critics. Crucially, chatter here is not that of the celebrity interview, but the "learned chatter" of criticism. The *Paris Review* not only offered the interview as an alternative to criticism, but as a means through which to re-personalise literature and modernism.

Certainly this is the line taken by Christopher Bains, one of the few scholars to discuss the *Paris Review*. As mentioned in chapter two, according to Bains the magazine, and particularly its interview series, "took modernism back from the critics and universities, rendering it to the writers, giving them a central role in shaping the reception of their work" (760). In direct contrast to the "death of the author" refrain being promulgated in diverse ways by New Critics and, later and more famously by Roland

Barthes, the *Review* prized the position of the writer. Chapter four traced some of the historical rationale for de-emphasising the writer's personality and political ideologies – represented so problematically by the case of Ezra Pound – in the late forties and early fifties. While the *Paris Review* interview resisted one of the outcomes of this ideology, namely the relegation of the author in favour of the critic, it did so in a manner that has been surprisingly conducive for those trained in New Critical orthodoxy.³

One of the major reasons for this was the distinction between subject and interviewer in the series. Their roles are depicted as strongly opposed. On the one hand the “Art of Fiction” series does much to invest the author with a powerful aura in the Benjaminian sense. The treatment is lavish: portrayed with a sketch or photo; commonly described in the preface; the interview often stretched to over thirty pages; their work in progress is reified through reproduction of a manuscript page; by such means the author has, in a sense, become the artwork to be studied by the reader. On the other hand, the interviewers are blanketed out of the account like criminals leaving court. They are nameless, referred to only by role through the majority of the article. This is not the questing interviewer personality of Djuna Barnes or Betty Ross but a nameless specialist. These are interviews that emphasise their status as objective critique and in doing so position themselves as more acceptable to critics trained to apply scientific scrutiny to the text.

In addition to the distinction between author and critic-interviewer, in a somewhat incompatible stance, the collaborative aspect of the *Paris Review* interview, the often lengthy revision process and the investing of editorial control in the subject, ensure these interviews are often considered contiguous with or part of the writer's oeuvre. In an unpublished thesis on the first twenty-five years of the *Paris Review* Kelley Penfield

³ On New Criticism's journals, see Duvall “New Criticism's Major Journals”. The *Paris Review* and the *Sewanee Review* discussed swapping advertising space in each other's journals in 1954 and 1955, suggesting a perceived overlap in intended readership between the two (Series 1, Box 9, *The Sewanee Review*, The *Paris Review* Archives, Pierpont Morgan Library, NY. Hereafter designated by “PR.”)

Lewis characterises the title as “a writer’s magazine, a safe place for writers to speak of their craft without manipulation, and with the security of being able to work on, even develop their conversation into a literary document worthy of their name” (163).

Although Lewis in fact shies away from describing these documents as part of an author’s oeuvre (or several authors’ oeuvres), the lengthy discussion on authorial intention with which she concludes her study does reflect upon the manifold versions of intention displayed, the various personae promoted and the “unique work [the interview] performs” (224). Meanwhile other critics, as Usha Wilbers has demonstrated, have been keen to cite these interviews as evidence of authorial intention or method, as will be discussed at length in the next chapter (208). These interviews have become an important source of information for literary critics and the magazine a powerful player in the re-centering of modernism around its personalities, both as a foil to New Criticism and simultaneously in a manner acceptable to those same critics who privilege the well-wrought text.

This characterisation of the *Paris Review* has been heightened by the publication of Bains’s article in volume two of the authoritative *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*. Foregrounding its modernist ties suggestively illustrates the important part played by the *Paris Review* interview in re-balancing the status of the author and critic in the postwar period. However, the *Review* was to become far more influential in a very different field, one that has been hitherto neglected in accounts of the magazine. It is in this arena, at the cross-section of journalism and literature, that the roles of interviewer and interviewee were to become highly contentious.

The *Review*’s impersonal interviewer needs also to be understood as part of the wider epistemological crisis across the media, humanities and the social sciences in the sixties and seventies that had huge significance for journalism. Communications scholars regularly discuss the “objectivity norm” of reporting methodology, which began in the

last decade of the nineteenth century and quickly gained a “crypto-religious” status (Hartstock 65). From 1896 under the steerage of Adolph Ochs, the *New York Times* had risen to its premier position by emphasising its factual and detached reporting during the yellow journalism wars of the same decade. While this was not the only theory of reporting available, (Lincoln Steffens promoted a style of literary journalism at the turn of the century which combined muckraking with literary experiments), this “objectivity norm” was to dominate journalism in the first half of the twentieth century and still holds much sway today.

Defined by Michael Schudson as the assumption that “the journalist’s job consists of reporting something called ‘news’ without commenting on it, slanting it, or shaping its formulation in any way”, objectivity claimed normative status in the field of journalism (“Objectivity Norm” 150). Its limitations were occasionally acknowledged, most famously in 1920 when Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz wrote “A Test of the News,” scrutinising the *New York Times’* coverage of the Russian Revolution and demonstrated that the accounts were neither unbiased nor objective. Nevertheless, just as Lippmann and Merz championed the ideal of objectivity, despite criticism the objective norm retained its power in journalism.

The interview in particular was championed by journalists for its ability to collect “objective” data. As mentioned in the introduction and alluded to in previous chapters, the interview was becoming increasingly associated with empirical research. The United States Government had sponsored vast questionnaires and interview-based surveys during the Second World War and by the fifties the sociological interview had been recognised as a valid, scientific method and sociology was a flourishing academic field (Stephen Turner 35-43). While this might seem to have little to do with the interview as an aesthetic form, it is important to recognise how powerfully the interview was associated with an objective, scientific discourse and usage at this time. Crucially, the

journalistic deployment of the interview at this time was also premised on this usage; the interview was, in fact, the central method for conveying the journalist's objectivity.

Nevertheless, we also saw how this objectivity norm came under considerable pressure with the rise of McCarthyism. Similarly, in a period which had seen increasing government control of the news, plus the revelation of the Pentagon Papers, the Vietnam War and Watergate, "objectivity" had become a term of abuse in some quarters. Objectivity implied collusion with institutions and "straight" news was potentially seen as a form of participation. So too in the social sciences, the assumption that the interviewer could, or should, be a detached recorder was coming into question, as we saw in the introduction. Given the interview's association with objectivity, it should come as no surprise that the form is found right at the heart of debates about writing conventions at this time.

Several scholars have characterised New Journalism as an aesthetic response to and ideological rejection of this objectivity norm. John C. Hartstock, in an article discussing "The Critical Marginalization of American Literary Journalism" identifies New Journalism as part of a longer trajectory of "literary journalism" which is to be identified not necessarily by its use of fictional devices, but as "depending on the degree of personal participation in the production of the report, an attempt at personal engagement of one's subjectivity with what too commonly has been objectified" (72). This emphasis upon participation will be central to our discussion of New Journalism, but Hartstock's thesis is also significant.

Arguing that there are critical reasons why communication studies has historically ignored literary journalism, Hartstock likens objective journalism to New Criticism. Seeing both as the results of the increasing professionalisation of journalism and literary studies, he demonstrates that both rely on a discourse of science. By contrast, literary journalism, with its emphasis on subjectivity, is fundamentally opposed to this discourse.

Querying Walter Lippmann's famous figuration of journalistic objectivity, which acknowledges subjectivity as at work but views objective journalism as transcending subjectivity, Hartstock concludes that this "critical totalising" mirrors T. S. Eliot's concept of the poem in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (74). If, for Eliot, a poem is a new object not purely personal because it is a work of art, then for Lippmann a news report is a new object not purely personal because it is a work of journalism (74-5). While he does not mention the interview, Hartstock's argument is intriguing for uniting the critical marginalisation of the New Journalism with the critical championing of the impersonality in New Criticism that we identified in the previous chapter.

Hartstock is not alone. In her book *The Politics and Poetics of Journalistic Narrative* Phyllis Frus, also draws connections between modernism and journalistic objectivity: "Journalism shares the goal of objectivity which corresponds to the aesthetic ones elevated by the modernists" (91). Significantly, she discusses Ernest Hemingway's early journalism, particularly a curiously anonymous 1923 interview entitled "Japanese Earthquake," in which the subject is not named and the process of reporting reflected upon, as means of resisting journalists' claims to objectivity and authority. For Frus, Hemingway's journalism (much of which was first made easily available in the 1967 anthology *By-Line*) far from being the objective "cablese" critics often characterise it as, in fact marks a resistance to modernism's objective aesthetic and is a pre-cursor to the experiments of the New Journalists.

For both critics, New Journalism offers a dramatic opposition to the shared ethos of the professionalisation of (modernist) literary studies and journalism. Frus does also mention interviews and indeed long-time editor of the *Paris Review* George Plimpton within her account and in doing so yokes Plimpton to the New Journalism movement. Such a manoeuvre might appear bizarre, given the *Paris Review*'s modernist character and emphasis on the interviewer's anonymous and apparently objective role within the series.

However, I argue that it was the *Review*'s crucial and unacknowledged role in investing the interview with authority in the literary sphere and Plimpton's own various cultural activities that prompted New Journalism's interest in the interview form.

By the mid fifties, George Plimpton had relocated from Paris to New York and while it wasn't until 1973 that the magazine officially moved across the Atlantic, the shift in the *Review*'s (albeit still remarkably diverse) focus is apparent a decade earlier. By 1964 Truman Capote and Norman Mailer had been interviewed, the latter twice including one self-interview. But it was behind the scenes, on the contributor's page, rather than the contents page, that the relationship between the magazine and the burgeoning New Journalism was more strongly evidenced. Publications commonly associated with the New Journalism, including *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy*, had a much higher crossover of contributors with the *Paris Review* than the disparate reputations of the magazines might suggest.

Plimpton himself was a central figure in this respect. Wealthy, WASP, and well connected he was a colourful persona on the New York literary scene; the parties Plimpton threw in his Upper East Side Apartment, from where he also edited the magazine, were legendary. Guests included Gay Talese, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal and a string of well-known literary and political personalities. Throughout his life Plimpton was involved in diverse circles. As one obituary characterised the man:

Like Woody Allen's Zelig, Plimpton was everywhere. He was with Bobby Kennedy in 1968 when the presidential hopeful was assassinated; it was Plimpton who helped wrestle down the killer, Sirhan Sirhan. He was in Norman Mailer's apartment the night the writer stabbed his wife Adele, and he was a prominent guest in 1968 at a fundraiser for the radical Students for a Democratic Society (Homburger n.pag).

In his own right Plimpton also popularised New Journalism techniques with his bestselling books *Out of My League* (1961) and *Paper Lion* (1966). Both exemplify participatory journalism and utilise a first person perspective as Plimpton gives an account of pitching at Yankee Stadium during a baseball game and his experiences of training with the Detroit Lions at their summer camp. Plimpton's "Joe-Ordinary" amateur status (despite his rather illustrious real-world connections) is a consistent thread running through these books. This device of deploying an outsider, often naive, perspective on a closeted world was to be a common one across New Journalism pieces as Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion and Norman Mailer published their observations on the Hell's Angels, the Haight-Ashbury crowd and the march on the Pentagon respectively.⁴ When *Paper Lion* was included in Wolfe's *The New Journalism* (1973) anthology, the editor was merely acknowledging Plimpton's long-time affiliation.

In other ways the publications that championed New Journalism and the *Paris Review* were all linked through friend and colleague connections, even becoming each other's subjects. Gay Talese published on the *Paris Review* crowd: in 1963 an *Esquire* feature "Looking for Hemingway" profiled the new wave of American ex-pats in Paris with the *Paris Review* editors as his central focus. The reference to Hemingway is no coincidence, not only did it emphasise the *Review*'s modernist pretensions but it also cannily drew upon Hemingway's own high-profile celebrity persona in this era. Notably, this persona had been particularly tied to the interview format since 1950 when Lillian Ross's profile (in effect a novelised interview) "How Do You Like It Now, Gentlemen?" was published in the *New Yorker*. Ross's profile recorded her days following Hemingway

⁴ A prominent review for *Hell's Angels* likened Thompson to a "cartographer" who maps "a close view of a world most of us would never dare encounter" (Litwak n.pag.). Such mapping metaphors place Thompson in the familiar role of early social surveyor, penetrating a subculture in order to interview inhabitants and then report back to the educated mainstream. Despite being in some ways deeply resistant to the discipline, the book has also been co-opted into sociology. The 1970 Penguin edition of *Hell's Angels* was published in their sociology and anthropology series and in 2005 eminent sociologists Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey mention Thompson's work in the same breath as social survey work by pioneering sociologists Herbert Blumer and Howard Becker (708).

around New York as he drank champagne in hotel rooms, reunited with old (and famous) friends, bought coats, spun stories of his past endeavours and, occasionally, answered a question about his writing habits. Ross's profile might have scandalised readers for its portrayal of Hemingway's alcohol intake and bravado, but it was also an important forerunner of New Journalism immersion journalism and published in a magazine that was also intimately tied with the movement itself (if often through its vocal opposition). Talese's article quietly alludes to this profile in his characterisation of the publicity savvy *Review*, drawing extensive parallels between Hemingway and the *Paris Review* crowd (44-45, 106, 108, 110).

Plimpton was less than pleased about the characterisation. He wrote to Talese no less than three times to express his upset. Talese's responses are interesting for his point that the piece [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (PR 1/10/Talese, Gay/Talese to Plimpton 19 July 1963). The objectivity norm associated with photography here has been replaced by the more impressionistic painterly style of New Journalism.

Connections are also visible between publishers associated with promoting New Journalism and the *Review*. Extant correspondence from the *Paris Review* archives demonstrates that Plimpton looked to both *Playboy* and *Rolling Stone* to help subsidise the *Review*. The publisher of the latter jokingly acknowledged that it would be good to have Plimpton for his [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (PR 1/9/*Rolling Stone*/Jann Wenner to Plimpton 18 Dec. [no year]). While the *Review*'s select readership (of around ten thousand an issue) and content appears to place it in a very different publishing bracket to the masculine, high-circulation monthlies, they had more in common than we might think.

It is through the interview format that we can most clearly see the influence of the *Review* on other titles sympathetic to New Journalism practices. *Playboy* was founded in the same year as the *Review*, though only began an interview section in the sixties. The

Playboy interview is clearly modelled on the *Review* version; they are lengthy and serious and, while editorial approval was not granted to the interviewee, a collaborative approach was solicited. As editor G. Barry Golson comments in the first anthology:

The idea has been to push harder, to probe more deeply, to ask and ask questions again until the interviewer, the editor, and the subject himself agree, with tired sighs of relief, that, whatever else has happened, something like the definitive interview has taken place. (vii)

Interestingly, it is the cover of this anthology that makes the most overt link between the *Review* and the *Playboy* version (figs 1 and 2). The Penguin paperback 1977 reprints of the *Paris Review* anthologies use much white space, colourful centred type and a simple list of authors; the 1981 *Playboy* edition has a remarkably similar design. What is implicit in the editorial policy is made much more overt by the marketing department: the *Review* series acts as model.

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Fig. 1 *Writers at Work 2nd Series* 1977 Cover

Fig. 2 *The Playboy Interview* Cover

The letters pages of the *Playboy* are also intriguing for the light they shed on perceptions of the interview's status in the magazine. University of Pittsburgh students register their concern that a previous interview with the Beatles is not up to the usual "literary standards" of *Playboy* (Altman et al 9). Although this letter is juxtaposed with other correspondents who are positive about the interview, it is interesting to note the assumption of *Playboy*'s high "literary standards." The interview offers the opportunity for a "girlie magazine" to demonstrate literary achievement.

Certainly the subjects of the interviews were prominent. Martin Luther King and Jimmy Carter were interviewed (the former the subject of a large number of letters to the editor across several months), and some, such as Vladimir Nabokov, appeared in both *Playboy* and the *Review*. The two magazines also directly competed to interview Jean-Paul Sartre. In correspondence dating from 1963 Plimpton confessed that [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] while suggesting that the *Review*'s financial offer might equal any from *Playboy* and the setting would be more appropriately [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (PR 1/8/Plimpton, George 1963/Plimpton to Madeleine? [1963?]). Typed across the bottom of the letter is a note wherein he expresses his hopes that the [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] would not triumph (2). In May 1965 *Playboy* did just that.

Eight years later competition between the two "literary" magazines was still healthy. An interview with Tennessee Williams appeared in *Playboy* well in advance of Plimpton's 1981 "The Art of Theatre, No.5". *Playboy*'s senior editor Michael Laurence sent Plimpton an advance copy of their interview with Tennessee Williams. If it wasn't so professional in tone, it might imply a certain competitive smugness: [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (PR 1/7/*Playboy*/ Laurence to Plimpton, 9 March 1973). Plimpton had become a spokesman for the serious interview, helping to rejuvenate interest across publications.

The most expansive explanation by Plimpton of how interviewee and interviewer should interact was expressed in another publication sympathetic to New Journalist writing, *Esquire*, and again, Hemingway is the literary lion whose reputation is being fought over. Plimpton had written a letter of complaint to editor Harold Hayes, published in the May 1972 issue ("Editor's Notes"). The letter refers to a previous article in *Esquire* (Feb. 1972) by Denis Brian, composed of interviews with previous interviewers of Hemingway, including Plimpton and Mary Hemingway. The latter stated that Hemingway had rewritten most of Plimpton's questions (Brian 169). Plimpton not only refutes this, but accuses Brian of having misquoted him. *Esquire* published the letter in full, although footnoting it with snide responses.

Most interesting are the terms of Plimpton's argument against Mr Brian's actions; I quote at length as they indicate some very particular ideas about the dynamic between interviewer and subject:

Mr. Brian only had authority to use my words (which he taped over the telephone) provided I could see a final version to check for sense and accuracy. I required this with good reason, which is that I don't think one should be forever saddled with the responsibility for words spoken to an interviewer armed with a tape recorder. The interviewee is too vulnerable. Nuances of meaning and sense are so often lost in transcription. Questions can be misunderstood. Answers can be edited out of context. The interviewee may not be on form: he may be bored to tears with his interviewer, so that despite his best intentions his answers are flaccid and uninspired – a pale reflection of what he truly thinks. Besides, oral exchange presupposes being able to thrash around somewhat, to try out ideas, to conjecture [sic], to be flippant, or laconic – and certainly the interviewee has the right to ask for the chance to set this material in order if it is to appear under his name in a question-and-answer form. (H.T.P.H. 13)

For Plimpton the nature of the conversation demands that the journalist include the subject when shaping this material for publication. An interview is not the "cruel literalism" of the tape recording, but the (implicitly) edited, finessed product (Gourevitch ix). Indeed, Plimpton frequently likened the interview to a play in articles and when interviewed: "One's tools are very much the dramatic devices: character buildup,

surprise, argument even. The best of the interviews not only divulge something about the character of the writer but have ... maybe even a plot” (Applefield 9). While the *Paris Review* might promote a largely anonymous interviewer in print, the process of producing the interview is collaborative, an aesthetic endeavour in which parts can be fashioned, dramatic arcs shaped and the result become, quite possibly, a piece of theatre.

Interviewing In Cold Blood

We can see this more clearly by examining the interviewing process Plimpton himself used. In January 1966 the *New York Times Review of Books* published the longest literary interview in their history. The interviewer was George Plimpton, the subject Truman Capote. Capote was strongly, if uneasily, identified with the New Journalism movement through his experiments using research interviews and an anonymous, objective prose style to tell a real-life crime story in his novel *In Cold Blood* (1966).

Capote had been in the literary limelight for a number of years. Testament to his fame is the presence of an early interview with Capote in the *Paris Review*. While the magazine tended to interview writers towards the end of their writing career, Capote was interviewed in 1957, just before the publication of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and two years before the Clutter family murders, which were to form the basis of his most famous work. The 1957 interview, by Pati Hill (American model, writer and artist) and edited by Plimpton, emphasises Capote's unusual public persona: the portrait accompanying the interview by Rosalie Seidler highlights Capote's childlike features, his elfin ears and chin, fringe brushed forward, scarf wrapped around his neck. Read in dialogue with the infamous Harold Halma photograph printed on the dust jacket of Capote's breakthrough novel *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948), which caused a sensation for its erotic overtones,

the sketch and the accompanying Preface portrays a curious mix of overly sophisticated child and bitchy Queen.

The interview too reads more as an occasional piece than the overview of a career. With hindsight Capote's comments on *The Muses are Heard* (1956), his account of a tour of *Porgy and Bess* around Russia, are perhaps the most intriguing aspect of an interview in which Capote consistently (if casually) undermines Hill's authority through his conversationalist persona. Hill observes:

One of the most interesting things about the style was its unusual detachment, even by comparison to the reporting of journalists who have spent many years recording events in an impartial way. One had the impression that this version must have been as close to the truth as it is possible to get through another person's eyes, which is surprising when you consider that most of your work has been characterized by its very personal quality (n.pag).

Capote responds that he doesn't consider the style as "markedly different" from his fictional style: "However, one of the reasons I've wanted to do reportage was to prove that I could apply my style to the realities of journalism. But I believe my fictional method is equally detached." Precisely the issues that were to become central to discussions of his most well known work and New Journalism itself, Capote resists attempts by Hill to adopt a detached impersonal style. An experienced interviewer and interviewee himself (most famously as Marlon Brando's sob-sister confessor), Capote is the loquacious Southerner and Hill the young counterpart: "I like to listen, and I like to talk. Heavens, girl, can't you *see* I like to talk?" (Hill n.pag).

In 1966 when the *New York Times Review of Books* published the second Plimpton-Capote collaboration, the occasion was the publication of the hardback edition of Capote's *In Cold Blood*, first serialised in the *New Yorker* in the Fall of 1965. The "nonfiction novel," an account of the real-life murder of a Kansas family and the trial and execution of the perpetrators, was in some ways similar to Plimpton's own

participatory journalism, however it notably excluded Capote from the account. Based on his extensive research, correspondence and lengthy interviews with the major players in the murder case, Capote famously didn't use a tape recorder but memorised interview answers before transcribing them directly or dramatising them into dialogue for the book. These claims and the famed involvement of Harper Lee (a childhood friend) in obtaining interviews with the townspeople in Holcomb, Kansas, not to mention the sensational subject matter and Capote's own celebrity, merely increased the publicity surrounding the book.

It was in this lengthy interview in a newspaper with an international circulation, that these claims were given their most extensive airing. While not printed in the magazine, it is very much a *Paris Review* interview in style: serious, lengthy with an anonymised interviewer, it was heavily revised for publication. The stylistic link is acknowledged in the *New York Times* where Plimpton is credited as simply "editor of *The Paris Review*, which has made a specialty of the long, tape-recorded literary review" (n.pag). In contrast to the Hill interview, Capote's queer persona is suppressed and there is no photograph or physical description of the author in contrast to numerous photographs of the victims and murderers. Instead, giving weight to Capote's ideas, this is a critical, de-personalised discussion.

The interview did not start like that. Hitherto scattered across archives, often mislabelled and forgotten, I have now identified the original tape-transcripts and draft materials, which indicate the lengthy process through which this interview travelled before arriving at its published form. Plimpton and Capote had begun by corresponding. Capote started composing answers in a 39 cents school exercise book he had titled "The Nonfiction Novel," before a tape-recorded discussion seems to have occurred.⁵ While the tape appears to have been lost, the transcript, which records only Capote's answers,

⁵ Held in Box 4, Folder 9, "The Nonfiction Novel", Truman Capote Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Misidentified as a book draft.

is still extant, as is the draft typescript, complete with significant corrections, deletions, insertions and transpositions.⁶ The majority are in Plimpton's hand, but additional questions, with Capote's hand-written responses, are also interpolated through the piece. Such documents offer intriguing evidence of the process of collaboration and editing that produced the published interview.

Reading the transcript of the interview, even though Plimpton's questions are for the most part absent, the impression is very much of a joint conversation. Capote is heavily prompted, responding directly to Plimpton's agreements, cues, requests for clarifications or examples. This is most notable in their discussion of definitions around the nonfiction novel, creative fiction and reporting which takes up the first part of the interview and is focused heavily around practices by contemporaries such as John Hersey. Page four of the (partially corrected) transcript reads:

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

(PR 2/13/Capote, Truman/TS Transcript 4).

In the typescript draft, this passage has been transposed to much later in the interview, following a discussion about Capote's own use of the tape recorder when interviewing witnesses (itself also transposed):

⁶ Held in the Pierpont Morgan Library together with Capote's 1957 interview materials (originally misidentified as part of that interview) (PR 2/13, Capote, Truman).

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

(PR 2/13/Capote, Truman/TS Transcript 12)

The transformation in sense is not huge. The tone of the latter is slightly more self-assured, more of a coherent public statement. The context shift is more significant: no longer are we comparing Capote with his contemporaries, but discussing his own book. In the published version, this particular statement becomes the core of the interview. The introductory remarks, which appear in the typescript draft, announce that *In Cold Blood* “is remarkable for its objectivity – nowhere, despite his involvement, does the author intrude” (Plimpton “The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel” n.pag). Like Capote’s nonfiction novel, the interview drafts testify to a much stronger authorial hand (or hands) and attention to the process of production than the objective persona of the published version implies.

This was not the only version of the author’s role advocated by New Journalism. While Joan Didion’s persona is often characterised as evasive, Hunter S. Thompson’s is anything but as he memorably obtained an interview with Muhammad Ali by ambushing him in a red devil mask, and covered the 1972 election campaign from a decompression chamber (*Great Shark Hunt* 238-48, 569). Indeed, much of the highly publicised arguments around New Journalism turned precisely upon the function and role of the interviewer-author, for which great claims were made.

Before turning to these debates it is important to recognise the significant role the *Paris Review* had played in promoting the value of the interview. The *Review* had, for two decades before Wolfe’s anthology was published, been fostering a form of the interview conducive to the needs of the critical and artistic communities and one that

turned the process of interviewing into a collaborative and aesthetic practice. Against the particular postwar political and cultural environ, this was to have a stimulating effect, not only within the magazine itself, but within the broader literary scene. When writers of New, literary, participatory or Gonzo journalism, fiction, nonfiction or documentary novels, argued over definitions and the appropriate role of the writer within the account, they were building on the privileging of the interview process that the *Paris Review* had championed.

The Role of the (New) Journalist

In the preface to his anthology *The New Journalism* Tom Wolfe characterised the style as one which utilised techniques usually associated with literature and reapplied them to journalism (25). The commonly held notion that journalism should strive to produce a completely objective account of events was rejected in favour of emphasising the subjective perspective. The role of the journalist, their relationship with the subject and the manner in which the interview was “written up,” namely how it was focalised, were to become hugely contested issues with the appearance of New Journalism, which often drew upon interview material in an article to create a free indirect style which moved in and out of the subject’s thoughts, or presented an entirely first person account of events.

The 1973 date is misleading, as these debates stretched back into the early sixties with the publication of Wolfe’s *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (1965) and two articles in *New York* magazine, the *Herald-Tribune* newspaper’s Sunday supplement. Wolfe was not the only practitioner (though perhaps the loudest), and the sixties also saw publication of texts that have been retrospectively co-opted into the New Journalism bracket, with varying degrees of willingness by the authors. Hunter S. Thompson’s *Hells Angels* (1966), Joan Didion’s collection of essays *Slouching Towards*

Bethlehem (1968), Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966), Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (1968) and the work of Gay Talese are now considered classics of the form.

In his anthology Wolfe was keen to highlight the criticism he had received for utilising these new techniques, particularly for entering a subject's mind. For Wolfe, "I figured that was one more doorbell a reporter had to push" (Wolfe and Johnson 21). In a sense, the garret was reconfigured as the subject's mind and a space that the journalist must enter. In the so-called era of individuality it is no surprise that the interview's fictions of access extend to the subject's consciousness. Indeed, New Journalism's interest in celebrity often expresses itself in an extensive interview frame: Gay Talese's celebrated "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold" (1966) never gets past the frame itself to interview the subject.

In another sense, however, New Journalism disrupts these fictions when the interviewer or his or her (usually his) prose plays dress up and dons the perspective of the subject. The suggestion that the reader is being granted access to a privileged sphere where the authentic self of the subject will be revealed is potentially lost in this format. If the distinction between interviewer and interviewee is de-emphasised the fictions of access are also disrupted. These transformative ideas were to prove as controversial as the writings were popular.

Certainly, as often as it took celebrity as its subject New Journalism courted publicity. The rhetoric invoked by both Wolfe and his critics was inflamed, to say the least. Attacks on New Journalism have not been lacking, ranging from spats in review pages to academic denunciations. The most ferocious were those in response to Wolfe's articles spoofing an American institution, the *New Yorker*. Wolfe's opponent, Dwight Macdonald, was a provocative and conservative staff writer for *The New Yorker* and ex-editor of the *Partisan Review*. Using the occasion of the publication of Wolfe's *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*, in August 1965 Macdonald launched an assault in

the *New York Review of Books* (NYRB). In Macdonald's eyes the New Journalism, or what he termed "parajournalism" was "a bastard form, having it both ways, exploiting the factual authority of journalism and the atmospheric license of fiction. Entertainment rather than information is the aim of its producers, and the hope of its consumers" ("Parajournalism" 3). Macdonald expresses deep concern for the impact of such blurred boundaries on the reader and sees dangerous results for culture at large.

This attack was part of a wider cultural critique sustained by Macdonald and others in this period. While Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was not to be translated into English until 1979 the ideas of the Frankfurt School (and later the New School in New York) were instrumental in the way critics conceived of mass culture in this period. Macdonald himself was well known for his view of the precarious state of culture. In 1960 he had published the influential essay "Masscult and Midcult" which attacked the homogeneity of mass culture and proclaimed, in an argument directly descended from the brow wars of the late twenties and early thirties, that the "Midcult" marked the dangerous vulgarisation of High Culture. In this anxiety around the commercialisation, homogeny and watering down of High Culture values Macdonald was not alone. Historian Daniel Boorstin's *The Image* (1961) had characterised the modern age as hugely influenced by the advertising industry and, in an argument that looked forward to the work of Jean Baudrillard and others on hyperreality and postmodernism, typified by the "pseudo-event," of which the interview was the quintessential example.

Macdonald's anxiety over New Journalism needs to be understood within this framework. What is most alarming is "the pretension of our current parajournalists to be writing not hoaxes or publicity chitchat but the real thing; and the willingness of the public to accept this pretense [sic]" ("Parajournalism" 3). Throughout his articles, Macdonald's main focus is on the import of parajournalism on the public's ability to

distinguish between fact and fiction when both are blurred by entertainment. He criticises Wolfe's focalisation for its "intimacy of style" (4). It is attacked as a kitsch device, wherein the "parajournalist cozies up, merges into the subject so completely that the viewpoint is wholly from inside, like family gossip" (4). This rhetoric of loose morals, so familiar in our discussion of the interview, is not used to undermine the form itself. The interview and the article's perspective is not nefarious for its incursion into the realm of privacy per se but for the journalist's failure to retain a degree of outsider perspective. Unlike the protests of some commentators on the Hawthorne-Lowell scandal, Macdonald criticises Wolfe and his colleagues for keeping the interview too intimate. Implicitly, the fictions of access are not emphasised enough: without clear distinctions between the interviewer's perspective and the subject's, without the emphasis upon the boundary between frame and dialogue, the interview becomes dangerously subjective.

In his second article, published a month after Capote and Plimpton's important interview, Macdonald was to heighten his rhetoric, even comparing the New Journalist failure to respect truth with Hitler's "big lies" ("Parajournalism II" 19). At the bottom of Dwight Macdonald's attacks on Wolfe's writings was a lack of confidence in the reading public's critical abilities – abilities that, as we saw in the previous chapter, were central to Wallace's perception of the value of the interrogative interview. While Wallace might have been optimistic about the public's rationality, Macdonald was much less certain, much more inclined to fear the power of a Wolfe in sheep's clothing.

Meanwhile, Wolfe used these spats to promote *The New Journalism*. Wolfe's anthology was itself a strong act of self-promotion. While, like Styron before him, he avoided the term "manifesto," the long introductory essays worked similarly as performative texts. The anthology yoked together somewhat disparate authors to announce the existence of a group identity and a phenomenon. While many of the writers included were to repudiate their connection to New Journalism later in their

careers and some critics had difficulty identifying what precisely the writers had in common, Wolfe's anthology cemented the New Journalism's presence on the literary scene.

The identity of this movement was carefully sculpted by Wolfe to emphasise its anti-establishment credentials, but also its avant-garde innovations. Wolfe controversially announced the "dethroning of the novel," claiming that New Journalism overturns the existing hierarchy of novelist / man of letters / journalists (Wolfe and Johnson 15). Wolfe declared that the novel was not the only form to have an aesthetic element and that not all aspects of reality were addressed by novelists. Wolfe also highlighted New Journalism's sensationalist aspects and turned the conflict with Macdonald to his advantage: "By 1966 New Journalism had already been paid literary tribute in its cash forms: namely bitterness, envy and resentment" (38). The introductory essays rehashed in detail the various critical wranglings provoked by New Journalism and in doing so evince how central publicity was to both the phenomenon and its critics.

In addition to the textual battles to advertise the anthology, many of the New Journalists were highly effective at circulating a particular self-image. Hunter S. Thompson's outlaw character, high on illegal substances and liable to do something unpredictable and risky, or Capote's curious mixture of sophisticated and yet childlike veiled eroticism, were promoted by the authors and their publishers. To read such self-fashioning simply as a bid to increase sales is to ignore their more complicated explorations of the possibilities of the reporter-interviewer role at a time when objectivity was under pressure.

Famously, Tom Wolfe's particular brand of self-promotion has taken a very visual and constant form. His familiar white suits, white homburg, high-collared shirt, white umbrella and generally dandified appearance were an early trademark: no interview

complete without a description of Wolfe's clothing (Scura xi). In a later interview with the *Paris Review* in 1991, George Plimpton commented that Wolfe arrived:

wearing the white ensemble he is noted for – a white modified homburg, a chalk-white overcoat – but to the surprise of regular customers looking up from their tables, he removed the coat to disclose a light-brown suit set off by a pale lilac tie. Questioned about the light-brown suit, he replied: "Shows that I'm versatile." He went on to point out that his overcoat only had one button – rare in overcoats, quite impractical, obviously, in a stiff wind. "One must occasionally suffer for style["] (Plimpton "Tom Wolfe" n.pag).

Plimpton encourages the author to read the white suit in the same manner we might read his autograph: "a decorative scrawl which if stretched out straight would measure a foot" (n.pag). Wolfe's outfit, like his signature can be read as dramatic, vividly individualised and expressive. Wolfe, like his writing style and celebrity persona, is flamboyantly visible.

However, the white suit is an ambiguous signifier. It also suggests an alternative reading of the wearer as a ghostly figure, gesturing vaguely toward an absence or an effaced personality. Wolfe's attire is the blank text of his own lack of character; he is the embodiment of effacement. This interview and others like it do touch upon this reading. Asked whether he wore the white suit interviewing criminals for research for his novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), Wolfe comments:

I'd like to be able to say that I went attired all in white. I didn't. I always wore a suit though and usually a double-breasted suit. That was pushing my luck enough right there! I found early in the game that for me there's no use trying to blend in. I might as well be the village information-gatherer, the man from Mars who simply wants to know. (n.pag.)

The white suit is a mark of Wolfe's outsider status: the visible reminder of his otherness. The individualising trademark can also be understood as a mark of the reporter's separateness from his subject. But this is a separateness which does not carry any personality: Wolfe is the blotter, waiting to absorb self-substantiating material from his observations of others.

This white suit should also be understood as a metaphor for the wider question of the journalist or interviewer's role and their relationship with the subject. In a review of *The New Journalism*, Michael Wood acknowledged a "certain insistence on [the writers'] own personalities" (n.pag), but read this emphasis as characteristic of a:

certain elusiveness on the part of the writer. The more he puts himself forward, hopping about inside his own story, nattily dressed, bearded, drunk, eccentric, acting up, the less we seem to know about where he stands, because he has made it his job to hide his opinions, or to hint at them only indirectly, or perhaps even to have none (n.pag).

For Wood the insistence on personality by New Journalists has the effect of highlighting an absence or lack. He explicates further on the result:

with this comes an interesting obliquity, a wonderfully skilled and powerful form of understatement. A piece of gossip or dreariness or schmaltz ... is moved, brightly lit, to the centre of the stage while in the corners, at the edges, vast, scaring implications about American life quietly gesture to us, not really wishing to intrude (n.pag).

Wood offers a nuanced reading of the style wherein the reader, far from being passive or cheated, must draw the implications themselves. Wood's reading considers the aesthetic impact of the effaced personality and views it as offering the reader the opportunity of gaining a new perspective on their world.

In a review of the same anthology for the *Partisan Review* (Macdonald's old stomping ground), Alan Trachtenberg focuses again on Wolfe's writing persona; Wolfe seeming to "merge with his subjects, to be speaking their thoughts, feelings, words" (301). While Wolfe is again the effaced personality of the white suit, for Trachtenberg this is a false position. In hiding the "genesis" of the work, (the interviews and research done by the reporter), "Wolfe does not dramatize his own participation. He is almost not there. This means that along with the actual apparatus of journalism, anything like a substantive perspective is impossible to locate" (301). Trachtenberg, apparently, wants to

be able to scrutinise the means of production, he wants to be able to access the “original” interview material and draw his own conclusions. Instead, what “Wolfe gains by his pyrotechnics is an easy experience for the reader: just lean back and let it happen to you” (301). Wolfe’s effaced role, in Trachtenberg’s eyes mystifies “the presence of the author as a merely neutral recorder when he is in fact the only active producer” (301).

For Trachtenberg the New Journalism’s experiments with the reporter’s role, far from confronting the objectivity norm, in fact perpetuate it. Far from emphasising their processes of production, the New Journalism hides them. A “revealing instance of mass culture,” which promises greater truth, Wolfe’s work merely “converts experience into spectacle” for Trachtenberg; “he cheats us with illusions of deeper penetrations” (301). It is entirely appropriate, but also deeply ironic, that Trachtenberg’s laments are figured in the same fictions of access upon which the interview and celebrity turn.

Despite Trachtenberg and Wood disagreeing over the impact of what John Hellmann, in *Fables of Fact* characterised as “a conflict of a disguised perspective versus an admitted one,” both do focus upon Wolfe’s effaced personality (4). In this reading of the white suit they were in a minority in 1973; much more common was to characterise Wolfe’s white suit as evidence of a publicity-obsessed personality and as an example of the wider individualistic drive within society. In a damning assessment of what he saw as the New Journalism fallacy, John Hersey was to note: “Since perfect objectivity ... is impossible, there is no choice but to go all the way over to absolute subjectivity. The trouble with this is that it soon makes the reporter the centre of interest rather than the real world” (23).⁷

Drawing upon ideas in David Riesman’s earlier *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), Richard Sennett’s *The Fall of Public Man* (1974) and Christopher Lasch’s surprise bestseller *The*

⁷ Hersey’s article has become a familiar text in discussions around New and literary journalism; his famous defense of “the one sacred rule of journalism. The writer must not invent” saw him attack Capote, Wolfe and Mailer for their “befogging of the public vision” and the line between fiction and journalism (2, 25).

Culture of Narcissism (1979) were to be influential in promoting this idea. Lasch and Sennett both identified the erosion of public and private spheres, discussed in the previous chapter, with the latter concluding that “to know oneself has become an end, instead of a means through which one knows the world” (4). Lasch was more overt in his critique: “Cultural criticism took on a personal and autobiographical character, which at its worst degenerated into self display but at its best showed that the attempt to understand culture has to include analysis of the way it shapes the critic’s own consciousness” (16).⁸

In making his argument, Lasch turned, not to Wolfe, but to his contemporary Norman Mailer and his book *The Armies of the Night*, subtitled “History as a Novel, The Novel as History.” Narrating Mailer’s personal involvement in the 1967 march on the Pentagon and experimenting with fictional and nonfiction conventions, for Lasch the book is an example of the wider transformation of the public sphere from an emphasis on social change to self-realisation: “The writer no longer sees life reflected in his own mind. Just the opposite” (21).⁹ In order to assess this claim and its potential impact upon the interview, I turn to Norman Mailer to examine how he utilises the interviewer and subject roles across his work.

Norman Mailer: Celebrity and Interview Fictions

Norman Mailer was a prolific interviewee. Propelled into the public arena with his bestselling novel *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), two-thirds of the way into his career Mailer had participated in more than 250 interviews, including three self-interviews. Like his New Journalism colleagues, Mailer was deeply concerned with promoting his own authorial persona, through interviews, stunts, spats and cultural activities; also like Wolfe, as well as being sustained and indeed controlled by the media promotion of his persona,

⁸ For discussion of the Confessional Poets against this cultural background, see Sherwin (throughout).

⁹ Moran also makes this point (71).

Mailer's writing evinces a continued interest in the workings of celebrity, promotion and the authorial persona. While Plimpton, Capote, Wolfe and colleagues might have reached different conclusions at different times as to the value of an anonymous or effaced reporter, they coalesce both in their celebrity status and their interest in the role of the interview and the interviewer. In this sense Mailer was their equal.

Nevertheless, Mailer went further. More than any writer previously discussed, except perhaps Henry James, he exploited the interviewer and subject roles for their creative and aesthetic potential. Unlike James's purported repulsion, Mailer's attitude towards the form, to fame and to lion-hunting was, if not boundlessly positive, certainly fascinated and engaged. Like James, Mailer was enthralled by the workings of celebrity, journalism and fame. If James responded to the "Age of Interviewing" through which he lived, Mailer was a notable commentator upon the "interview society." His interviews, as well as in his extended writings, including *Advertisements for Myself* (1959) and his two Pulitzer-prize winning works, *The Armies of the Night* and *The Executioner's Song* (1979), utilise participatory journalism, take celebrity and the process of reporting as their main topics and consistently explore the interviewee or subject position within this setting.

It isn't however, Henry James, who forms the model of authorship, or authorial celebrity, for Mailer in this period. As Loren Glass has demonstrated at length, from the late fifties through the 1970s, Mailer drew heavily upon Ernest Hemingway's hypermasculine "Papa" persona in this era as he tried to establish a particular public image (*Authors Inc.* 182-5). Glass sees this manoeuvre as the death knell in the tradition of what he calls "American celebrity authorship," that saw American modernist authors espouse a form of celebrity that played upon a "dialectical tension between modernist consciousness and public subjectivity delicately bridged by a hypermasculine persona" (27). In the postmodern era, when society was no longer "based on the opposition

between art and commerce,” what Glass sees as the “specific articulation of the private authorial genius versus the mass marketplace” could no longer be sustained (27).

Glass’s argument is intriguing for its identification of a specifically modernist celebrity afterlife in American letters; this chapter has certainly seen how Hemingway’s public image and legacy has been an important source of authority around which our various interlocutors have met, if only to argue over. In the case of Mailer, both *Advertisements for Myself* and *Armies of the Night* explicitly reference Hemingway’s celebrity as a touchstone for the author.

Advertisements for Myself is a collection of short fictional pieces and occasional writings, including two interviews. The very name of the anthology speaks to self-promotion and many of the pieces reflect extensively upon authorial personality, public recognition and self-creation. In the “First Advertisement for Myself” Mailer notes that “*Every American writer who takes himself to be both major and macho must sooner or later give a faena which borrows from the self-love of a Hemingway style*” (italics in original 19). Following a lengthy discussion of this style, he continues:

An author’s personality can help or hurt the attention readers give to his books, and it is sometimes fatal to one’s talent not to have a public with a clear public recognition of one’s size. The way to save your work and reach more readers is to advertise yourself, steal your own favourite page out of Hemingway’s unwritten Notes From Papa On How The Working Novelist Can Get Ahead (21).

In a collection that reflects upon the American literary scene – “a cruel soil for talent” – Mailer presents himself, like Hemingway as oppositional to feminised mass culture (475).

In discussing his later work, following Mailer’s very public run ins with Kate Millett and the critical distaste for (and popular success of) *Marilyn: A Biography* (1973) Glass notes the retirement of Mailer’s public persona which “divested of its modernist resistance to the mainstream, no longer provides any dialectical distance from his subject matter” (194). For Glass, a deep irony is to be had in the critical appreciation of *The*

Executioner's Song for the “absence of Mailer’s authorial persona” in a narrative in which personalities “have become entirely fungible as commodities” (195-96, 196). The example of Mailer, for Glass, is the example of an author in a “postmodern world of fragmented cultural fields that offer neither the continuity for authorial celebrity nor the refuge for authorial genius” (196). While I agree with Glass that Mailer draws heavily on Hemingway’s celebrity persona earlier in his career and the modernist oppositional stance, I diverge in my reading of Mailer’s experiments with the subject role and therefore the example that he represents. In large part this is due to my understanding of the relationship between New Journalism and modernism, developed through attending to the interview form.

In *Armies of the Night*, Mailer reflects repeatedly and at length about the process of narration: “To write an intimate history of an event which places its focus on a central figure who is not central to the event, is to inspire immediate questions about the competence of the historian” (53). Just as Thompson, Capote and others were to do, Mailer includes the media portrayal – the “forest of inaccuracy” – of the event as part of his narrative (219). In his reading Glass emphasises the allusions to Hemingway that appear and draws a direct link between this and the quoted *Time* magazine account of Mailer that opens the book:

By starting with a mass-mediated version of himself, Mailer can frame his own text as a modernist alternative, justifying his repeated references to himself as the “Novelist.” Buttressed in his ego by Hemingway’s ghost, Mailer drags the disintegrating dialectic of modernism and mass culture into the emerging postmodern moment. (184)

It is a persuasive interpretation. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, while mass culture is commonly the bogeyman for critics of which Macdonald was only one of many (he is also present in *Armies of the Night*), in fact it is journalistic objectivity, itself

significantly tied to modernist aesthetics of impersonality, that forms the target for these New Journalism writers.

While I agree with Glass that “*Armies of the Night* has to be a novel for Mailer because that is the genre most culturally apposite to the magazine article with which the text opens” (184), I disagree that this necessarily marks him as a “nostalgic modernist” (Philip Beidler qtd. in Glass 184). Rather, it identifies him as a writer deeply interested in exploring the aesthetic possibilities outside of an objective norm tethered to institutionalised modernism. In emphasising his own links with Hemingway, Mailer is also aligning himself with an author who embraced the personal reporting style as early as 1923.

Mailer certainly appreciated the aesthetic potential of the interview. In *Advertisements for Myself*, it is Hemingway’s *Paris Review* interview that he quotes approvingly of as “perhaps the best piece of writing he has done since the war” (268). Mailer had published a self-interview in the same magazine in 1961. “The First Day’s Interview” is an “experiment” wherein “The subject is a Norman Mailer, a weary, cynically, now philosophically turned hipster of middle years; the interviewer is a young man of a sort the author was never very close to” (n.pag). The interviewer is keen to address Mailer-the-subject’s self-promotion of which he disapproves:

Int.: Why can’t you let the work speak for itself. Why all these...

Mailer: Stunts?

Int.: Precisely. Why must you attract attention to yourself?

Mailer: I’m weary of that now. But at the time I felt as if I were sick, and attention given to me by others was my fastest cure.

Int.: Did it work that way?

Mailer: I don’t know. One never knows. I did succeed in getting attention, and everyone takes me more seriously today, but I must wonder if I haven’t lost something. (n.pag)

Such a form also brings pressure. The interviewer demands, “Say something decent about the form of the interview,” Mailer responds with the pithy (and quotable) nuggets:

“It is natural for our time. We will talk about the kind of things one should discuss on television. We will be superficial but quick. We will not slip into the gulf of unreadable prose. We will be diverting” (n.pag). This self-interview highlights the expectations of most interviewers that the form is a chance to obtain a good headline through pressing the interviewee to say something “decent.” The quotable statements here play upon the interview’s capacity to create or convey a celebrity persona and toys with Mailer’s own reputation for being self-promoting.

This is not, however, to say that Mailer himself embraced mass culture or the interview entirely enthusiastically. Two anecdotes from *Advertisements for Myself* perform his distaste for the manner in which media utilise interviews. In “How To Commit Murder In The Mass Media – A” and “– B” the distortion of interviewers is the main focus – whether the unintentional result of needing new batteries in a tape recorder, or, in the case of Mailer’s Mike Wallace interview, a more spiteful motive (406-10). It is in *The Executioner’s Song*, however, where Mailer utilises the interview most extensively, both acknowledging its use by mass media and exploring alternative possibilities.

Critically acclaimed, this nonfiction novel, like Capote’s before it, is the result of hundreds of interviews with those individuals involved in the life, trial and execution of murderer Gary Gilmore. Like Capote, Mailer quoted conversation in his prose account that was obtained directly from interviews and also used it to inform narrative written from the first person perspective. Unlike in *In Cold Blood*, interviews also become part of the plot of *The Executioner’s Song* as publications, brokers and journalists vie over the monetary value of Gilmore interviews. In this sense Mailer’s book marks the apex of the New Journalist experimentation with the interview form, exploring its aesthetic aspect while engaging with its flourishing use by the media as both a tool of the objectivity norm and of “infotainment.”

The book is structured in two parts: the first part, “Western Voices,” deals with Gilmore’s background, the crimes and trial largely from the perspective of the local Mormon community; the second part “Eastern Voices” is focused more heavily on the huge media response to Gilmore’s request for his death penalty sentence to not be commuted and the subsequent coverage of his execution. Larry Schiller, the real-life publicist-journalist who brokered the exclusive interviews with Gilmore and acted as middle man between the Gilmore camp and press, performs a central role in part two. His negotiations over exclusives and the price of interviews are followed closely. The reader is never allowed to forget that the interview has great monetary, as well as representational, value in the media landscape.

In the penultimate chapter of the novel, entitled “To Kiss and Tell”, these values collide head-on. Beginning with a description of the process of editing Gilmore’s *Playboy* interview, the narrative then refers to an offer by *Chic* magazine for “\$50,000 for a series of nudes on Nicole [Gary’s girlfriend]. \$50,000! They were being very polite. Using the word ‘nudes.’ Maybe they didn’t know how to say ‘spread-shots.’” (1033). The chapter finally ends with Schiller’s reflections upon Nicole’s responses when interviewed by him. The importance of word choice – in editing, or the disjunction between “nudes” and “spread-shots” – is juxtaposed against the interviews between Schiller and Nicole. These interviews were essential for Schiller to be able to sell an exclusive story on the Gary/Nicole love story (a story which finds its way into Mailer’s book). They and not the *Chic* offer represent the “Kiss and Tell” story. The salacious material the interview reveals is, however, used to condemn, not Nicole, but the media, promotional and advertising industries. Nicole’s account is one uniquely uncontaminated by spin and unmotivated by money.

Following the interview, the narrative adopts Schiller’s perspective:

When it came to interviewing, Schiller knew he had met his match. Maybe there wasn't a disclosure he had gotten in his twenty years of media that hadn't been built on some part of Bullshit Mountain, but with Nicole he got along. He didn't have to use tricks that often and it moved him profoundly. He took a vow that when and if his turn came to be interviewed on Gilmore, he would also tell the truth and not protect himself (1042).

This passage, we are later led to understand, is the product of interviews between Mailer and Schiller (1053). It is also masterful in its insertion of the two small words "that often" in the third sentence. Profundity of feeling sits uneasily against the occasional use of tricks. Despite the value of Nicole's interviews, the reader still only accesses them through the tricks of the media and mediation. The fictions of access can also be easily co-opted in a world in which confession has a financial value.

In the afterword of the book Mailer acknowledges his debts to those individuals who took part in the project by agreeing to be interviewed: "Out of such revelation was this book built and the story is as accurate as one can make it. This does not mean it has come a great deal closer to the truth than the recollections of the witnesses" (1051). Despite this, Mailer aimed for accuracy (of chronology) "and not for the sake of history alone. One understands one's characters better" (1052). Mailer places his account and process precisely within the arena of New Journalism, typified by its confrontation of traditional indicators of veracity, accuracy and norms of narrative perspective. So too his impersonal pronouns vie with the fictional import of "character."

Although not planned as the "Great Novel" Mailer had been questing after for most of the seventies, *The Executioner's Song* was widely praised by critics on its publication. Crucially, the book was praised for the absence of Mailer's authorial persona within the text. As Glass points it was a "crowning irony" that the project conceived of by Schiller, the consummate publicist, "would be hailed by many as Mailer's novelistic masterpiece" (*Authors Inc.* 195). This was not the world of familiar literary characters, but one in which as we saw personalities are transformed into commodities, from which

Glass concludes that the “absence of Mailer’s own personality is partly an attempt to shield him from the process that enabled the project in the first place” (196). While it is true that Mailer did not publically rate this work highly within his oeuvre, and worried that it cemented his reputation as an excellent journalist (rather than writer), I do not read the style of *The Executioner’s Song* merely as an attempt to “shield” the author, nor as the final death knell of “authorial celebrity.” Rather, *The Executioner’s Song* is the culmination of a series of literary engagements, by Mailer, other New Journalists (and indeed even Hemingway himself), with the objectivity norm, a norm that has its roots in modernism, New Critical practice and twentieth-century journalism.

For Mailer, Wolfe and other New Journalists, the interview offered a form wherein they could experiment with notions of character creation, subjectivity and the interviewer and interviewees’ roles without opposing publicity to literature. Through exploring New Journalism’s use of the interview and its relationship to the *Paris Review*, I hope to have shown just how inextricable the form is to our understanding of the interrelation of debates around not only the disciplinary divisions between journalism, literature and the institutionalisation of both, but also our understanding of how central perceptions of the varying roles of interviewer and interviewee can be to these debates.

The next chapter continues to think about institutional perceptions of the interview, including those held by academia and trade publishing. The argument considers the nature of the data conveyed by the interview, whether that is of a marketing, prestige or informational value. While this chapter has attended to the American (and particularly the New York) literary scene, the last will open out to consider the interview in the contemporary moment: since the 1980s the interview has increasingly functioned on a global stage.

The Interview in the Age of World Literature

In *Summertime* (2009) J. M. Coetzee mulls over the nature of life writing, the writer's public persona and the relationship between the author and his work. The novel is made up of extracts from the deceased John Coetzee's diary and a series of interviews with subjects who knew the dead writer, instigated by Mr. Vincent, would-be biographer. Here the interviews provide the reader with information about John Coetzee's life and an opportunity to reflect upon the use, relevance and reliability of these interviews as interlocutors misremember, rebel against, or re-write the form. Already we can see that the interview is of interest to Coetzee.

J. M. Coetzee's own public persona is shaped around his elusiveness. For his 2003 Nobel Prize lecture, rather than giving a conventional speech he read a short story "He and His Man"; his university lectures are often given in the form of a story about a fictional novelist Elizabeth Costello giving a lecture.¹ He rarely gives interviews and has a well-earned reputation for being a slippery respondent when he does.² Partly, this stems from his implicit acknowledgement of their fictionalising status as at odds with their general usage in contemporary publishing, whether trade, academic or the global media. More specifically, he evinces a sustained interest in the ethical questions surrounding the role of the author and public intellectual.

His collaboration with David Attwell, *Doubling the Point*, is the most explicit of these projects. Interspersing interviews with an anthology of his essays, the volume offers what Attwell calls an "intellectual biography" of the writer ("Editor's

¹ For further discussion see Attridge *J. M. Coetzee* (192-205) and Poyner, ed. *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*.

² His interview with Begam is particularly notable in this respect.

Introduction” 2). Attwell’s introduction points out the “reflexive self-consciousness” of all Coetzee’s work and his deep awareness of the “problem of narrative authority” in a postmodern and post-colonial world (11). Although a fascinating collaboration, when it comes to defining the relationship between these interviews and essays, Attwell sidesteps the question. Instead, he characterises the volume as a “dramatization of what it means to narrate-in-history (11-12).

The same disinclination to define the interview’s effects is visible in other accounts of Coetzee’s engagement with the interview. In the collection *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, David Attwell, Peter McDonald, Elleke Boehmer and other critics reflect upon the import of the history of South Africa’s post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for Coetzee’s exploration of the figure of the public intellectual and related issues of authority, authenticity and confession in his work. Thus Boehmer, reads *Disgrace* (1999) as a “teasing conjunction of nonconfessional novel and postapartheid catharsis” and in doing so highlights issues familiar to us from chapter four (135). These scholars draw frequently on the Attwell-Coetzee collaboration and the volume itself is prefaced by a short interview between Jane Poyner and Coetzee, which not only repeats many of the latter’s antagonistic interview tactics – re-interpreting the questions, not answering, denying their valence or refusing to comment – but also stages many of the same issues the scholars consider in their essays. But, just as is the case in *Doubling the Point*, what exactly the relationship between the interview and the essays might be is left unclear. For Poyner,

there is a tension in Coetzee’s writing – both his fiction and essays – between the private and public spheres ... Coetzee rarely gives interviews, and those he does are characterized by his evasiveness and circumspection. Take, for instance, the interview that opens this volume (Poyner “Introduction” 4).

She continues in the paragraph that follows by noting that “Coetzee is criticized frequently for his elusiveness or silence on matters of politics and, similarly, for the opacity of his fiction” (4). The reader is left unsure as to how exactly they should “Take” the interview. Poyner, like Attwell, is as evasive as her subject. She implies contiguity between political statement, interview and fiction, without defining precisely what that relationship might be and what ramifications it might have for a discussion of Coetzee (and indeed other authors) and the “idea of the public intellectual.”

Engaging with this question is part of the aim of this chapter. However, though Coetzee might demonstrate a simultaneously hostile and captivated attitude towards the interview, his engagement is not representative of general uses of the form in the contemporary era of mass and global circulation of data. Instead the questions Coetzee and his critics highlight are used to put pressure on the ambivalences and contradictions evident in other, dominant, contemporary uses and readings of the interview. As we shall see, the fictions of access that the interview encourages have had profound and often deeply problematic implications for the way the form is utilised in the contemporary era.

Given the focus in the previous chapters on the formal qualities of the interview, it should come as no surprise that this chapter argues that the particular form of the interview has an aesthetic import, one that can help to define it as literature. Moreover, the interview’s fictions of access – constituted of formal and rhetorical features – actually encourage the reader to deny the valence of form in the meaning-making process.

In *The Singularity of Literature*, a volume that stemmed from and acts as a companion piece to his study *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*, David Attridge utilises the idea of form in distinguishing between the literary and the non-literary. While form is usually contrasted with content, Attridge argues that in fact form plays a key role in the “mobilization of meanings” within the work (109). In the case of the interview, authors and cultural commentators often deride the form while simultaneously identifying the

interview as a valuable vessel for conveying and containing extractable, useful content: the cloaked interview of modernism has returned. While Attridge does not discuss interviews as part of his general argument, I extend his point and contend that in the case of the interview, content interacts with the form itself to mobilise or “perform” meanings.³

Unfortunately, the interview form has been rendered invisible; the depersonalisation of modernism’s cloaked interview has prevailed. In a sense, the fictions of access have been too successful and consequently we deny their valence in the mobilizations of meanings. This is not just a formal problem; given the interview’s importance as a site for negotiating questions of publicity, authorship, artistic creation and alike, sidelining form often has ethical import and real-world consequences. With Coetzee in mind, this chapter explores this problem in three overlapping fields.

The first traces how the interview has been used within trade publishing. We saw in chapter four how Grove utilised the radical associations of the interview to promote avant-garde authors to a wider audience and chapter five discussed the ways in which the *Paris Review* transformed the interview into a serious, potentially scholarly, form. However, the interview has also become synonymous with the marketing and promotional departments in trade publishing, particularly since the consolidation of the book industry in the late 1970s and early eighties into media conglomerates. The author interview provided a powerful vehicle for promotional and marketing departments under pressure to deliver profits.

³ My preference for the term “perform” rather than Attridge’s “mobilize” will become apparent in what follows. Underlying my argument is an indebtedness to the extensive theorisations of the speech act, literature as an event and performativity by scholars such as Austin, Derrida (particularly *Limited Inc.*, *Specters of Marx*, the essays in *Writing and Difference*, and *Of Grammatology*) and Butler (*Bodies that Matter* and *Excitable Speech*), as discussed in the introduction. There is not the space to discuss these in depth. For a good introduction, see Loxley. For application to the interview particularly, see my “The Art of Chatter” (25-39).

In order to examine why such proliferation occurred, the British author J. G. Ballard's interviews are offered as a case study. While Ballard was a keen interviewee himself who experimented with the conventions of the form (a legacy from the avant-garde experiments of earlier in the century), I am particularly interested in examining how his publisher, HarperCollins, has deployed the interview as a marketing tool in recent years. Through this example, we shall see how interviews have flourished in this area precisely because the fictions of access both encourage and ultimately resist attempts to categorise the form as mere promotional content. The interview is irreducible to the designation of marketing materials; rather it constantly escapes into oral history, public statement, artistic practice, autobiography and alike.

The second part of my argument turns to the field of academia. The section explores how the interview has come to be central to academic publishing, whether university presses or critical journals. Interview comments (from a whole variety of situations) are widely cited in academic writings as evidence of authorial intent and yet the role of form in performing meanings – and even the genre itself – is rarely acknowledged.

The case study focuses on the University Press of Mississippi, whose series of anthologies of interviews with authors (and later filmmakers) has been running for almost thirty years and stretches to over 250 separate titles. Aimed specifically at a higher education audience, the series pioneered the use of the interview form as a source and text for academic study. An example will be offered in the form of the two collections of interviews with African-American author Toni Morrison. Widely used by scholars and teachers, the collections offer an interesting case study for thinking about the problems entailed in academia's frequent deployment of the interview as a straightforward archive of information. In doing so, I utilise a productive distinction between the archive and the repertoire made in performance studies. Hitherto neglected in wider literary studies,

attending to this binary will highlight precisely why the conception of the author interview as an archive is so problematic.

The final part of this chapter extends the discussion to a global picture: the interview within the context of world literature and transnational structures of publishing, promotion and reading. Crucially, the interview's function as a vessel for conveying prestige, akin to literary prizes with an international reputation, will be explored. Notably, the success of this function is due in part to a general failure to acknowledge the role of formal features in performing meaning in the interview. As interest in world literature as a marketing and scholarly category increases, the role of the interview in enacting cross-cultural dialogues is becoming more and more significant. As we shall see, some of the most debated issues in world literature find an important parallel in questions over the way in which we read the interview; a parallel that has much light to shed on the discipline and the form.

Orhan Pamuk, Turkish author and winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature offers a fascinating case study. In 2005 he was threatened with prison in Turkey for comments he had made in an interview published in a Swiss newspaper. The same year he also began a public relationship with the *Paris Review* interview series, which he would characterise as offering a community for the writer that was international in scope. The differing ways in which the interview can be read in localised and global arenas are discussed, with specific reference to the ethical repercussions of reducing the interview to content without form.

Overall this chapter illustrates the problems that haunt contemporary readings of the interview. So convincing are the fictions of access that surround the interview that readers commonly ignore the role that the formal structures of the interview perform in the "mobilization of meanings."

P.S.: Ballard and the Interview in Trade Publishing

Her strategy with interviewers is to take control of the exchange, presenting them with blocks of dialogue that have been rehearsed so often he wonders they have not solidified in her mind and become some kind of truth (Coetzee *Elizabeth Costello* 9).

Interviewing in *Elizabeth Costello* is part of the routine of celebrity authorship: run of the mill questions, “blocks” of repeated dialogue and “workmanlike performance” (10).

Elsewhere, in one of his few interviews (in this case for the journal *Modernism/Modernity*), when asked to speak on the aesthetics of the interview, Coetzee declared that “The literary interview has been taken over by the publishing industry as a way of marketing books, or, more accurately, of marketing the author as an interesting and engaging personality” (Rainey, Attwell & Madden 852). In these depictions Coetzee is not alone. Trade publishing’s use of the interview has been yoked to the promotion of author celebrity and the “publicity machine” of tours, literary festivals and book promotion in contemporary discussion of the form. This section looks more closely at precisely how the interview operates within this setting. I contend that while the interview is utilised by the trade publishing industry to sell books and increase authors’ “brand” appeal, its success is contingent upon the work done by the fictions of access to perform meaning.

In order to do so, the writer J. G. Ballard is used as a case study. While no one would consider Ballard’s oeuvre as representative, he offers a means of talking about a variety of aspects of trade publishing. His early work was situated at the juncture of genre fiction and avant-garde experimentation. He began writing short science fiction stories for publications such as *Science Fantasy* and *New Worlds* in the 1950s; his first novel *The Wind from Nowhere* (1961) written in ten days, was soon followed by three catastrophe novels *The Drowned World* (1962) *The Drought* (1964) and *The Crystal World* (1966). During this period he was also closely involved in the British avant-garde art and publishing scenes which had strong transatlantic ties with Surrealism, the Beats, particularly

Burroughs, Grove Press and the New York scene. Like Ginsberg and Burroughs too, Ballard often testing the limits of publishing tastes himself: the first American print run of his experimental *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970) was famously pulped on the orders of a shocked executive and, in an oft repeated story, the reader's report for an early draft of *Crash* (1973) commented that "This author is beyond psychiatric help. Do not publish" (*Crash* "P.S." 10). While extremely popular in France and Germany early in his career, it was only in 1984 with the publication of his prize-winning autobiographical novel *Empire of the Sun* that Ballard gained a large readership in the UK and wider exposure in America. Ever prolific, Ballard followed this with numerous other works of fiction and nonfiction, including a semi-sequel to *Empire of the Sun* in 1991, *The Kindness of Women*, and a memoir *Miracles of Life* in 2008. Ballard died a year later.

Unlike Coetzee, Ballard was also a prolific interviewer; the recently published Fourth Estate edition of his selected interviews stretches to a hefty 500 pages and includes experimental interviews published in short-lived publications, conventional interviews from major newspapers and television interview transcripts. Since the mid-2000s his work has been published by Fourth Estate's sister imprint, HarperCollins Perennial, which has made the decision to append author interviews to the editions themselves. In terms of exploring the juncture of aesthetic experimentation, trade publishing and promotional practice, Ballard offers an extremely useful case study.

When HarperCollins UK re-issued Ballard's bestselling novel *Empire of the Sun* in 2006 they included a section entitled "P.S." at the rear of the book. Advertised on the front and back cover, the section promised "exclusive extras" of "insights, interviews & more..." P.S. offered thirty pages of material. This included a short biographical profile, an interview, an autobiographical essay "The End of My War," first published in the *Sunday Times* in 1995, and a list of Ballard's top ten books, amongst other items. Those elements usually considered epitextual – reviews, interviews and essays – are here

included as part of the volume, or peritext. They are offered as contiguous to the text itself. But how exactly they relate to the main work is unclear.

One version of the proposed relation is very clearly spelled out in the press release announcing the (re)launch of the Perennial imprint in the United States in 2004. The P.S. section, which offered “behind-the-pages insights,” was offered as a marketing feature:

The extra content in this section will take these titles beyond traditional reprinting and offers readers added value with their paperback purchase.

Similar to DVDs which regularly include outtakes and behind-the-scenes footage from feature films, each P.S. section will be unique; the extra 16-pages will offer readers an in-depth look at both the author and their book. The P.S. section will use interviews, essays, articles, photos and illustrations to explore the authors’ sources of inspiration. P.S. may also contain topics related to the book’s subject matter and show the impact a book has had since its publication. (Leslie Cohen n.pag)

The P.S. section, far from an epistolary afterthought, is here positioned as a unique selling point for a commodity. Although literary scholars (and historically many publishing houses) have often been keen to distinguish the book from other commodity goods, the comparison to DVDs in this press release refuses to allow the book a unique status (Squires 41-47). Insisting on the book’s position as a commodity, the press release identifies the features that individuate the product. This is not a poor cousin to the cinema experience, or a cheap reprint of the publisher’s backlist, but instead offers the reader “added value,” giving them “more” (Leslie Cohen n.pag). The press release operates on the logic of value for money here and it is the P.S. section that provides that fiscal, and not overtly literary, value.

But what exactly is this “more” being offered? The press release includes quotations from three corporate book buyers regarding the section. All are, unsurprisingly, very positive and confirm the logic promoted by the rest of the article.

Susan Perry at Ingram Book Group, one of the largest book distributors in the United States, is quoted as saying that “the program provides the story behind the story in an engaging and accessible format ... conveniently located within the book itself” (Leslie Cohen n.pag). Convenience and accessibility are emphasised, in terms that may recall the pre-packaging of culture so derided by Adorno and Horkheimer, but also underlines the fiscal “value” the series offers the consumer.

Ty Wilson, buyer for Copperfields, a California chain, is also quoted: “P.S. will draw you closer to the author. I see it enhancing the reading experience without explaining the book, lending extra depth to a reader’s understanding of the work” (Leslie Cohen n.pag). The language of intimacy and depth used by Wilson mirrors the same terms used throughout the article; the marketing of P.S. utilises precisely the logic of the interview-as-revelation discussed at length in chapter two. While Wilson denies the explicatory power of the material within P.S., the perceived “added value” of the series works on the assumption that the post-script might just be the decoding key.

We could easily read the interview in trade publishing purely within the economics of consumer capitalism and as largely indistinct from the book blurb, the promotional tour and other marketing tactics. In the case of Ballard, the P.S. section of *Empire of the Sun* includes a short Q&A, entitled “A Writing Life,” which asks such questions as “When do you write?” “Silence or music?” “Do you have any writing rituals or superstitions?” (*Empire* “P.S.” 9). The short answers (respectively “Morning and early afternoon,” “Silence,” and “No.”) purport to offer personal information about habits, perhaps hints at the nature of creativity, but the limited responses, spread across a large white page, smack of a desire for quick content or disinterest on the part of the author (or interviewer) (*Empire* “P.S.” 9). Similarly, the section includes a detailed summary of other works by the author available from Perennial. They are notably described in relation to *Empire of the Sun*. Thus *The Kindness of Women* receives pride of place, for it

“continues where *Empire of the Sun* left off” and *The Drowned World* is promoted as “inspired in part by his memories of Shanghai” (*Empire* “P.S.” 29). Ballard’s other works are described and promoted via their similarities with the text in hand. While purporting to offer “insights,” the nature of this content would seem to be geared towards advertising or “upselling” the author’s other works, while simultaneously creating content easily and quickly in order to justify the perception of “added value.”

The inclusion of an interview in this section would seem to confirm that the form is viewed within trade publishing as a successful means of cheaply and easily promoting the author; and categorised as marketing material. However, I contend that this is a crude reading of the interview’s function. Part of the reason the interview form is so well-used across trade publishing, and is the corner-stone of the P.S. strategy, is precisely because it cannot be reduced to the category of the merely promotional. The meanings performed by the fictions of access resist this categorisation.

In *Empire of the Sun*, an interview is included in the subsection of P.S. titled “About the author.” Journalist Travis Elborough, commissioned to write the P.S. section, interviewed Ballard under the title “An Investigative Spirit” about his fiction. Concentrating overwhelmingly on the relationship between Ballard’s experiences in Shanghai during the Second World War and his writing, most notable about this interview is that Elborough questions Ballard on his choice to make Jim parentless in the novel, which he identifies as “one of the most significant differences between *Empire of the Sun* and your own life” (*Empire* “P.S.” 5). Such a point might come as a shock to those readers who approached the book as transparently autobiographical; in drawing attention to this distinction, Elborough plays upon the assumption that the interview offers insight and authorised private truth: Ballard offers an apparent explanation for this change (to make it more psychically true (6)). Elborough’s question encourages the reader to reflect upon the relationship between the author’s life and writing, while the form itself

promises that the question and then author's answer is salient to their reading of the novel.

Such an understanding of how the interview can operate is in fact central to the Perennial publishing strategy. Granted the press release should not be read as a simple and straightforward explanation of HarperCollins' understanding of the interview; the article is aimed, not at the individual reader, but at the booksellers who stock and market these titles to the public. The emphasis upon the marketability of this imprint is designed to appeal to those focused on the commodity value of the book. During telephone conversations with David Roth-Ey, Executive Publisher of Fourth Estate and Harper Press UK, and one of the originators of the series in the United States, he explained that the aim was to create a brand with resonance that would appeal not only to readers, but to booksellers.⁴ In the case of the P.S. launch, the strategy was successful: the dominant US chain Barnes and Noble, grouped titles in the series together on a feature table across its stores, helping to drive sales (Roth-Ey 1).⁵ While this might seem to reduce the content of the interview to its marketing function, in fact, as Roth-Ey himself pointed out, the aim of including interviews was largely to "start conversations" (1). Acknowledging that contemporary authors are under enormous pressure to "entice" readers by making themselves interesting, by offering a "Freudian hook" in the form of details of their lives as a "point of entry," for Roth-Ey the interview also instigates a dialogue about the book itself (1).

Such a notion does operate within an economy of the marketplace; word of mouth recommendation is regarded as the most successful means of promoting a book, though exact techniques for instigating and harnessing such recommendations remains

⁴ My research around the interview in trade and academic publishing was augmented by conversations – via telephone and email – with publishers, to whom I am indebted for explaining background details and clarifying editorial and publication decisions.

⁵ Indeed, it is often noted that imprints matter more to publishers than readers; for trade publishing see Squires (92), and for academic publishing see Thompson *Books in the Digital Age* (chapter 4).

somewhat elusive (Roth-Ey 1, Squires 64-65). Nevertheless, the interview is not reducible to such an economy or function. The conversations – whether the published interview, book club discussion or critical debate – might be begun for the purposes of book promotion, but they are not sustained by this aim.

One of the major indications of a more complex relationship existing between trade publishing and the interview is the popularity of interview anthologies and the sheer number published. More than marketing fodder, these collections, such as *Extreme Metaphors: Interviews with J. G. Ballard, 1967-2008*, (edited by ballardian.com editor Simon Sellers and Dan O'Hara), are often offered as an extension of the writer's oeuvre. While they often appear posthumously, cashing in on the renewed fame of a recently deceased author, they are the cousins of the flurry of letter collections that used to follow the death of a Victorian literary heavyweight (and which so infuriated Henry James). The ambiguous relationship between the interview, the oeuvre and the body of the author is never quite stable; it is this inability to draw distinct lines that ensures the interviews, and the conversations that are performed, are never quite reducible to the category of marketing.

In the case of Ballard, his on-going (and post-mortem) relationship with the interview is particularly suggestive. On original publication, the blurb on HarperCollins' UK website described the anthology in terms of Ballard's prescient remarks in early interviews which "continue to yield an uncannily accurate commentary today," as well as the now "cultural figurehead" status of some of his interviewers ("*Extreme Metaphors*, J. G. Ballard" 2012 n.pag). The blurb concluded that the volume offered "an indispensable tribute to one of recent history's most incisive and original thinkers" ("*Extreme Metaphors*, J. G. Ballard" 2012 n.pag). The notion of the book as a "tribute," as if the publication performs an act of memorialisation in collecting his own words, is an odd one – as if Ballard utters his own eulogy. However, it also places the volume firmly into the realm of

the autobiographical. Indeed, the blurb originally concluded with a section entitled “Reviews” which cited, not the collection of interviews, but newspaper estimations of Ballard’s memoir, *Miracles of Life*. While later replaced by reviews of the anthology, the publisher’s choice indicates a desire to promote not only another product, but the autobiographical and authorised status of the interviews (“*Extreme Metaphors*, J. G. Ballard” 2013 n.pag).

Reading Ballard’s purported autobiographical texts as factual documents is, nevertheless, a dangerous tactic. One scholar of Ballard’s work, Roger Luckhurst, notes that the “autobiographies” *Empire of the Sun* and *The Kindness of Women* “were seized on, in effect, as signed confessions, detached from fictional space but working as decoding machines to render autobiographically readable the body of his work” (153, see also chapter 5). Luckhurst’s point has been reiterated by other scholars and should be equally born in mind by readers of his interviews.⁶ Reviewing the volume for *New Statesman*, John Gray, (whose BBC radio interview with Ballard was collated in the edition) wrote that: “Ballard treated the interviews he gave as exercises in a literary genre in its own right – one that should not be read too literally. He used the format as much to unmask the unthinking assumptions of his interlocutors as to reveal anything of himself” (Gray n.pag). Gray notes Ballard’s use of the interview and his statements contained within them less as revelation than as a continuation of the author’s larger artistic (and political) project.

Gray’s point is significant for Ballard repeatedly deploys the fictions of access for artistic ends. Most famously, his notorious exhibition held at the New Arts Lab in 1970 included a topless model interviewing guests amongst the wrecks of crashed cars. Quickly degenerating into drunken mayhem, the exhibition was designed to test Ballard’s theory about the relation between sex and the car crash. While the fact that the model

⁶ See Baxter (chapter 4). I am also grateful to Andrew Campbell for extensive conversation around Ballard, surrealism and collaboration, which has shaped my thinking on this topic.

was supposed to appear fully naked is one of the most often commented upon features of the exhibit, the little noticed fact that she was interviewing guests is significant. In a surrealist-inspired happening, Ballard turns to the interview to experiment with the interplay of the clinical and erotic; sensational and scientific; bodily and psychic revelation. For Ballard, the interview is a form inextricably tied in to the psychic landscape of contemporary artistic culture that also forms the centre of his experimental works *The Atrocity Exhibition* and *Crash*.

This point is underlined in *Extreme Metaphors* in an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Art curator and co-director of the Serpentine Gallery in London, Obrist has also taken a particular interest in the aesthetic, curatorial and archival possibilities of the interview form within the art world. In his collection *A Brief History of Curating* (2011) Obrist offers interviews with important twentieth-century curators as “I realized that there’s relatively little literature on exhibitions, and also there is an extraordinary amnesia about exhibition history ... I thought it was urgent to start to record an oral history” (197). Aside from the archival and memorial function of the interview, Obrist has also emphasised the artistic possibilities of the interview. In 2006 Obrist instigated the *Time Out Park Nights at the Serpentine Gallery*, during which a twenty-four hour interview marathon with artists, writers and critics was held in a temporary architectural structure. In Obrist’s words, “through conversations with many different protagonists of the city to draw an incomplete portrait of it ... The idea was that it was not only about the now, but it also, somehow, addressed memory and a protest against forgetting” (*London Dialogues* 375).⁷

The interview between Obrist and Ballard offers a shared conversation between two participants interested not only in contemporary art, but also in viewing the

⁷ In an article on the interview in the art world, Daniel Miller contends that interviews, while regarded as “a derivative supplement; a cool method of enquiry into real work done elsewhere,” in fact “document procedures of networking and serve to embody one in particular” and are indistinguishable from art (9).

interview as an artistic act itself. The content of the interview focuses heavily on the influence of contemporary art on Ballard's imagination and life, from modern urban architecture to the work of surrealist painters, to his close friendship with Eduardo Paolozzi and to his own gallery experiments. So too the circumstances of the interview emphasise the artistic: the interview was published as the catalogue introduction for the London Institute of Contemporary Arts' "Beck's Futures" exhibit in 2003. This interview exists as a formal introduction to the exhibit, an archival or curatorial document, "added value" ephemeral conversation, promotional piece, and as an artwork in itself.

Given both Ballard and Obrist's larger projects, it is particularly significant that this interview specifically addresses issues of memory. When asked "Is the archive an important site for you, either physically or symbolically?" Ballard answers, "There are no Ballard archives. I never keep letters, reviews, research materials. Every page is a fresh page" (*Extreme Metaphors* 394). Patently untrue (on his death his archives were deposited in the British Library), as well as metaphorically faulty if we consider the attention Ballard displays towards the vicissitudes of memory in works such as *Empire* and *Kindness*, Ballard's statement becomes an intriguing illocutionary act. Within the framework of the art gallery and Obrist's project, however, it becomes a complex aesthetic statement, reminding the attentive reader that the interview is more performance than preservation.

The interview then, for Ballard, Obrist, and other cultural practitioners, is a form with radical artistic and cultural possibilities. The interview might well be a commonplace marketing tool for trade publishing and the promotional circuit, however, the form is never reducible to this usage. The labelling of *Extreme Metaphors* by HarperCollins as a "tribute" to Ballard might indicate a desire to memorialise (and cash in on) the dead, but it also, obliquely, recognises the possibilities the interview offers to interrogate, within a very different setting to conventional oral history, notions of memory within our culture. To further explore this, I now turn to the use of the interview within academia.

The Interview and Academia

In 1992 an interview with J. M. Coetzee appeared in *Contemporary Literature*, an academic journal. The interview is entertaining for Coetzee's refusal to cede authority to the interviewer Richard Begam. The latter's ponderous and lengthy questions frequently receive a seemingly irreverent reply: Coetzee responds with bathetic agreement, or takes the reply in a very different direction to that apparently required of the question (419–31). He often responds with a question himself, or discusses the semantics used by Begam. The reader is entertained – at the expense of Begam – but a serious point about the power dynamics and usual purpose of the interview is being staged.

Less clear, is the point (or points) being made in the aforementioned collaboration by Attwell and Coetzee. Like P.S. the interviews in *Doubling the Point* make effective use of their own never-quite fixed relationship with the nonfiction. Attwell suggests that the interviews “show the interplay of fiction and scholarship: conducted over a period of two years, they fashion the selection into the shape of a writer's intellectual autobiography” (“Editor's Introduction” 2). As well as hinting at the difficulty of defining the form (is it fiction, scholarship, or autobiography?) the remark also demonstrates a curious desire to emphasise development of thought. These are interviews that purport to capture, not the ephemeral interaction, nor the final authoritative statement, but the process of maturation. Appeals to durative status are found in many interviews that make the claim for the current interview as the most in-depth or historically valuable. So too the specifics of locale promoted by the fictions of access suggest an immediacy that will soon be out of date. Such temporal layering, explored by Ballard and Obrist, has left the interview in a curious position within literary studies: there is a strong and little acknowledged tension between the archival use to

which the form is often put and the individuality, specificity and ephemerality to which the fictions of access also testify.

In thinking about such a tension, theories developed in the realm of performance studies can be usefully appropriated here. Diana Taylor's book *The Archive and the Repertoire* opens with a discussion of the rift between "the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials ... and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge," with the former dominant in scholarship (19).⁸ Instead Taylor contends that performance studies requires critical attention be given to what she terms the "scenario," which could include 'both features well theorized in literary analysis, such as narrative and plot, but demands that we also pay attention to milieux [sic] and corporeal behaviors such as gestures, attitudes, and tones not reducible to language" (28).⁹ In the case of the interview, Taylor's concept of the scenario is useful in reminding us not only of the ephemeral and embodied circumstances of the interaction that are all too often ignored by literary scholars, but that these circumstances are themselves important mobilisers of meaning.¹⁰

Although these features are not always available to the reader of the interview – for example gesture, appearance, location, might not be stated – across the form the fictions of access play heavily on these elements, as previous chapters have illustrated. Production details, political or geographical context and personal relations between interviewer and subject frequently leave their mark upon the interview in the same way

⁸ Derrida's *Archive Fever* is, of course, the most oft-cited discussion of the archive, but for more overt discussion of the archive and the repertoire, see Phelan (3) and Schneider (100-108).

⁹ In *Theatre Audiences* Bennett demands that features such as circumstances of selection, the programme, the environ and reviews should be studied by performance studies critics, much as Genette proposed attention be paid to paratexts by book scholars.

¹⁰ While the interview is obviously a printed text, it does lend itself to being understood through the lens of performance, as I have argued. This should not be construed as a text that fails to preserve a lost performance, as such thinking puts us in danger of limiting ourselves to the logic of the archive, as Rebecca Schneider points out (100). Rather, it offers a unique site of mediation between the textual and the embodied, between performance and preservation. Although there is not the space here, Joseph Roach's notion of "surrogation" (or substitution) in memory and the role of performance in preserving and forgetting community memory on a transnational scale also provides fertile ground for thinking about the interview's use in archives of oral history (*Cities*).

that the location, actors, set design, programme and audience contribute to the play's meaning in performance. To treat the interview as an archive of authorial statements to be drawn upon as a straightforward quotable resource for determining methodology or intention is akin to reading the script: aesthetic formalism might condone such a reading, but the status of the text resists categorisation as autonomous.

Taylor's book is subtitled "Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas." In literary scholarship the interview's performance of cultural memory is all too often read as a straightforward preservation of individual authorial statements, rather than a collaborative performance. This section discusses the interview in relation to academia and considers the problems resulting from the treatment of the interview as offering extractable, preserved, content. While scholars trouble themselves about the value and nature of the interview utterance – as authorial reflection, as part of their oeuvre, or ephemeral chatter to be jettisoned by the scholarly world – the ways in which the interview resists categorisation as content, is left by the wayside. This blind spot has significant import.

This is not least because the interview has proliferated in mainstream and academic journals. Author interviews had been used sporadically as a form of critical writing since the 1950s and before, as we have seen. *Contemporary Literature*, an academic journal published by the University of Wisconsin Press, began publishing critical interviews with authors in the early 1960s. Their series of interviews with the Objectivist poets at the end of the decade, for example, included detailed commentary on specific lines of poetry (and included page references), as well as broader discussion of trends, techniques and influences across the authors (Dembo and Pondrum 216-232, etc.). Since that time, and particularly since the 1980s, the number of interviews in scholarly journals and anthologies published by academic presses has risen dramatically. While critics might decry the demise of the essay and the rise of the "extemporaneous chatter" of the

interview, the latter clearly does play an important role in contemporary scholarship (Bawer 429).

One academic publisher that has whole-heartedly endorsed this approach is the University Press of Mississippi (UPM), founded in 1970 and referred to earlier. Their Conversations/Interviews series begun in 1984 offers an extensive list of notable writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Everyone from Anaïs Nin and Betty Friedan to Derek Walcott and Isaac Asimov is represented. The emphasis is upon American authors, with strong showings from Southern and local writers, but their coverage of international authors, for example Nadine Gordimer, Jorge Luis Borges, Bharati Mukherjee and Chinua Achebe, is also extensive.

The anthologies offer a series of interviews collated from a wide range of publications, from the literary or specialist academic journals, to mass-market magazines and newspapers, and even transcripts of television and radio interviews. As the Director of the Press Leila Salisbury explained, “[e]specially, in the pre-ebook age, one of the values of these collections was the fact that they often made accessible and available material from hard to locate or out of print publications” (1).

Able to read across the specificity of individual interviews, the anthologies also encourage the reader to view the myriad of texts as expressive of a singular persona and continuous with the author’s larger oeuvre. As Salisbury commented: “By reading the interviews together, themes, overarching artistic concerns, and personality traits (or at least the face the interviewee wants to put forth to the public) emerge” (1). The repetitions, the telling of the same anecdotes, the use of the same expressions, are, in this light read as significant details in a larger crafted authorial text.¹¹

¹¹ UPM Director Emerita Seetha Srinivasan made the point that continuity or lack thereof can be significant; as she explained, the fact that Eudora Welty gave consistent responses throughout her career or that Katherine Anne Porter reinvented herself repeatedly in interviews, tells the scholar something (Srinivasan, 1).

The series also encourages a different kind of reading. The volumes open with a short introduction by the editor which, as well as explaining the scope of the anthology and ruminating briefly on the interview form, often ties specific interviews to significant moments in the career of the author. This often takes the form of reading the interview against the biographical events of an author's life (professional and private) or the backdrop of a specific political event or debate. Often an interview is identified as performing a particular form of intervention in the public sphere. In these senses the interview collections are offered not only as instances of a greater authorial text, but also as a kind of cultural history, or archive, through the individual perspective.

The books themselves attempt to tread a fine line between an academic and general readership. They are deliberately made accessible for the interested non-specialist reader.¹² A chronology is offered which includes significant (publically available) private events, but focuses primarily on those events tying the writer to the public sphere: publications, awards and prizes, honorary degrees and professional associations. This is a chronology of prestige, accolades and the writer's public persona; this is not a chronology of literary influences, manuscript revisions or theoretical debates. Within the volume itself, the interviews are presented without the formal framework of academic scaffolding. Aside from a small citation as to the original date and place of publication, and an occasional sentence of background information, the interviews are presented without notes. There is no bibliography and, perhaps most notably, the volumes are priced at an affordable \$25.00; a price more akin to a *Cambridge Companion* or other title targetted at the higher education, rather than the academic research, market.

¹² "Especially for more "cult" subjects (such as Hunter S. Thompson or the Coen brothers), we see higher sales through general channels (chain bookstores and online/Amazon), and I can only conclude that these books are going to these "general readers" and fans. Of any part of our list, these books "travel" the most widely, gaining more distribution in major bookstores and in libraries in the US and abroad" (Salisbury 1).

Despite such publishing decisions, the scholarly credentials of the books encourage the academic community to consult them.¹³ The acknowledgements follow the conventions of an academic monograph, citing the support of institutions, colleagues and grants. While some scholars have edited several collections, many of the editors are often eminent scholars in the field. *Conversations with F. Scott Fitzgerald*, for example, was co-edited by the renowned Fitzgerald scholar Matthew J. Bruccoli. The introductions also occasionally allude to the use of the collections for teaching and research purposes (indeed in the introduction to *Conversations with Eugene O'Neil* Mark W. Estrin broke with tradition and finished with a further reading guide (xxiii-iv)). While not wanting to alienate the general reader then, such academic credentials encourage the reader to view these anthologies as scholarly resources and the interviews contained within as useful critical texts.

In order to understand precisely how the content of the interview can be perceived as critical material, let us turn to the specific example of Toni Morrison. Writer, editor, teacher, speaker, reader, as well as outspoken literary and social critic, Morrison offers a fascinating case study for thinking about how the information conveyed within the interview is interpreted within the field of literary studies. As well as a long-serving editor for Random House, Morrison was a professor at various American colleges (she retired from a seventeen year stint at Princeton in 2006). While an insider, fully attuned to the practices and discourses of academia, Morrison has also consistently represented herself as an outsider to the dominant white and male critical establishment. In her lectures, articles and interviews she has also made regular public interventions directed against such dominance, which hold an unusually prominent position in critical discussion of her work. So too, scholarship around Morrison has been somewhat

¹³ Compare Salisbury: "In some cases, this interview collection and the volume editor's accompanying introductory material may be the only scholarship in book form on a contemporary figure. Thus I believe these books advance scholarship as they serve as a primary resource for the emerging scholarly assessments of these individuals" (1).

hagiographic in its trajectory, with lines of enquiry and terms of discussion largely defined through Morrison's statements. In thinking about how the interview is read as criticism, Morrison offers an ideal case study.

Before turning to scholarship's uses of her interviews, we should note Morrison's own publically expressed attitudes. In various interviews Morrison has denied the form's ability to offer an authentic or accurate account:

An interview is me trying to get to the end of it; an interview is my trying to help the reporter or student fill in the blank spaces under the questions so she or he will believe he or she has some information; it is my saying eight or ten things eight or ten times into a tape recorder in precisely the same way I've said them before ... [I] shift into automatic and let them have any shadow to play with, hoping my smoke will distract them into believing I am still there.

Because an interview is not an important thing. (Naylor 215).¹⁴

In this instant Morrison uses the interview as a platform to decry the form, characterising it as an unpleasant combination of a pressure to fill the "blank space," of preconceptions, stale repetitions and smoke screen personae. Morrison contests the premises on which the form turns; the fictions of access are lies and the interview offers neither sincere autobiographical statements, original spontaneous utterances, nor revelations. Readers might do well, Morrison implies, to take her interviews with a large pinch of salt.

The above quotation is extracted from a 1985 "conversation" between Morrison and Gloria Naylor for the academic and literary journal, the *Southern Review*, (later anthologised in Taylor-Guthrie). Naylor, twenty years younger than Morrison, addresses Morrison as the elder statesman in this scenario, while Morrison emphasises their shared identities as black American women novelists. Morrison's denunciation of the interview is followed by her contrasting the interview and the conversation:

¹⁴ Compare her response to a question about reviewers and interviewers and how they discuss her work in a 1995 interview with Cecil Brown for *The Massachusetts Review*: interviewers "always talk to me about easy stuff. They don't ever talk to me about what I really think; most of them come with a preconceived idea" (123).

But a conversation – well now – that’s something ... Not one but two people present on the scene, talking the kind of talking in which something of consequence is willing to be revealed; some step forward is taken ... We didn’t care how we “came off” or if we said something useful or memorable to anybody else – or whether what we said was good copy ... No observers (Naylor 215-16).

Announcing that the Naylor interaction “was a conversation. I can tell, because I said something I didn’t know I knew,” Morrison uses the interview as a foil against which to express the benefits of collaborative talk. Given that Morrison often speaks of the writing process as a “discovery; its talking deep within myself, ‘deep talking’ as you say,” in interviews, we might read this distinction as tied to her wider creative practice (Tate 169).

However, the nagging question of how to respond to these utterances remains. Morrison’s expressed distaste for the demands of the interview, and particularly the constraints publicity places upon these interactions would seem to relegate much of her statements to the category “not important.” Yet to do so is to take seriously pronouncements made within interviews. Her denunciations of the form and her privileging of the label “conversation” exist within situations wherein the present interaction is identified as favourable and often where she feels a personal affinity with her interlocutor.¹⁵ The negative example remains in the abstract, which makes it difficult to evaluate other texts. Furthermore, and despite her repudiations, it is notable that Morrison *is* a frequent interviewee. She repeatedly uses the interview as a platform to discuss political and social issues, even to reject various critical readings of her work. While she might claim the interview is not an important thing, the sheer number makes them difficult to ignore. How exactly scholars should respond to Morrison’s interviews is a vexed question, especially given her own performances of ambivalence.

¹⁵ Compare Naylor (215-16), Brown (121) and Silverblatt (219, 223).

Morrison has spoken at length about the role of the writer in ways that are suggestive. In a co-interview with Alice Childress, for *Black Creation Annual* in 1974, and in other interviews and writings, Morrison talks about the author's role being to "bear witness."¹⁶ When asked about the relationship between art and politics Morrison's response emphasises the writer's function as a cultural observer and recorder, which carries with it a distinct ethical import. The willingness with which Morrison enacts and reflects upon the role of cultural spokesperson in her interviews, and the number of interviews Morrison gives, perhaps suggests that the form offers her an opportunity to perform the act of bearing witness. The interview might be unimportant, but it might also be form of creative listening that plays out in the public sphere.

While the status of Morrison's interview utterances might never be finally resolvable, the notion of bearing witness or Morrison's own performed resistance to the form remind us that the interview is not a simple authorised statement, but shaped by the scenario, the interlocutor and alike. The interview is more than an archive; it is a performance. Bearing these points in mind, the centrality of Morrison's interviews to scholarship is significant and problematic. Widely used, the manner in which interviews are employed often ignores the complicated repertoire of elements that contributes to the performing of meaning.

UPM have (unusually) published two anthologies of interviews with Toni Morrison. The first *Conversations with Toni Morrison* (1994), edited by Danille K. Taylor-Guthrie was phenomenally successful for a scholarly work: 600 hardbacks and over 13,000 paperbacks (Biggins 1). The second, *Toni Morrison: Conversations* was published in 2008 and edited by Carolyn C. Denard. The first anthology opens the introduction with reference to Morrison's 1993 award of the Nobel Prize for literature; however the impact of this award is not discussed in the volume at large which, being retrospective (the first

¹⁶ *Black Creation Annual* (4), see also LeClair (121), Denard (xviii).

interview in the collection took place in 1976, the most recent in 1992) and published only a few months after the announcement can only make a passing nod to the award (vii). Nevertheless, the interviews offer, according to Taylor-Guthrie, “the opportunity to chart not only her career as an artist but also her role as an African American artistic celebrity” (viii).

Such emphasis is also visible in the Denard anthology. The focus is upon the “continuing conversation that Morrison has been having with the nation and the world now for over three decades” (ix). The impact of the Nobel is discussed in several interviews, as are Morrison’s works published after 1992, but the introduction is also keen to emphasise the sheer range of topics covered in the collection, assigned in part to her “broad profile” and active engagement in the “political and social changes in American society for more than thirty years” (ix). Both editors emphasise Morrison’s role as public intellectual, and implicitly, the role of the interview in making her visible and able to intervene successfully in public debates. The introductions here ask the reader to conceive of the interviews as important elucidations of not only Morrison’s views on a variety of topics, but also of the wider trends within literary culture since the seventies and the role the author has acted within this history. In the later chronology, the last entry (for 2007) offers a list of accolades that includes university awards, the Lifetime Achievement award and recognition as one of 21 Women of the Year by *Glamour* magazine, a Condé Nast glossy (xxiii). In this sense, the interviews are offered as a kind of record or archive of the public role of the writer in contemporary society.

Nevertheless, both anthologies also conceive of these interviews as archives of the personal. Aside from offering evidence of the personal impact of certain events (the National Book Award for *Song of Solomon* for example), both editors read the interviews as a kind of expression of authorial concerns or interests that runs concurrent with the novels themselves. For Taylor-Guthrie the interviews after the publication of *Tar Baby* in

1981 are noted as emphasising the important role African American women play in holding a community together; similarly, as Morrison began to think more about historiography when writing *Beloved*, Taylor-Guthrie sees this expressed in discussions of “truth” in interviews of the period (xii-xiii). The introduction proposes that the interviews be read not only as evidence of specific moments, but as a continuous body of work, through which can be gleaned, like *Doubling the Point* suggested, authorial “evolution” and development (xiii). Denard is even more explicit; she explains that the interviews not only give a great biographical introduction to the author but what is “also interesting in these early interviews is the nearly prophetic way that they sometimes forecast the future direction of her fiction” (xi).

The ability of these interviews to offer useful material for the critic is underlined in these volumes. In re-contextualising temporally-specific documents – journalism, conference Q&As, television appearances – into an academically framed book format, both anthologies present themselves as valuable offerings for “scholars and teachers” (Denard ix). Noting the particularity of the literary interview as a “hybrid critical genre” (Dianne Vipond qtd. in Denard ix), Denard argues that, despite critics being cautious of invoking the “intentional fallacy,” in Morrison’s case,

because of her broad knowledge of literary history and criticism and her very deliberate construction and analysis of literary artifice through teaching, editing, and writing, Wimsatt’s and Beardsley’s caution is less warranted. Moreover, if there is also qualitative value in knowing an individual’s own perception of the meaning of his or her actions, then hearing Morrison talk about her work as a novelist in this self-reflective way has a particularly scholarly merit. (x)

While hedging her bets, Denard does present these interviews as offering valuable material for critics interested in Morrison’s novels. Recalling Poyner’s response to Coetzee’s interviews, Denard hesitates over the relation between Morrison’s interviews and other writers, while ultimately arguing for their importance for scholars. More than a

cultural history or archive of the celebrity writer's persona, these texts can be read as examples of "qualitative" information about authorial intent.

In general, academic discussion of Morrison's work has made wide usage of the Denard and Taylor-Guthrie collections. While these anthologies have had an important role in ensuring scholars attend to the interviews, unlike the editors, scholars have often failed to attend to the particularity of the form itself. To take just one example: the *Cambridge Companion to Toni Morrison* (2007), edited by Justine Tally, is published by a distinguished academic press, in a popular series aimed at undergraduates. The collection makes repeated reference to the Taylor-Guthrie anthology. The volume is included in the limited "Selected Critical Readings" and five of the essays quote from the interviews (191). In her essay on "*The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*: black female experience from childhood to womanhood" Ágnes Surányi quotes two comments made by Morrison from interviews collected in the Taylor-Guthrie anthology as a means of discussing her early novels from the perspective of the author's "fascination with language" (16). Morrison's remarks are here excerpted with no acknowledgement of their origins. In the first Surányi writes, "Black style is not – [Morrison] warns us – as some writers think, 'dropping g's.'" (16). In the second instance, later in the same paragraph, Surányi writes, "the author takes care to make the language 'rich but not ornate'" (16). While in this case neither remark represents a critical crux in Surányi's argument, the ease with which such comments are re-contextualised and treated as authorised comment is disconcerting.

Later in the chapter the critic quotes Morrison's oft-cited article "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: the Afro-American Presence in American Literature," as offering explicatory information about the composition of *Sula* (17, 20). Morrison's utterances are used in the same manner to the quoted interviews. Surányi fails to acknowledge any distinction between words uttered in the context of (in this case): an interview for *Essence*, an African-American women's lifestyle glossy; an interview with *New Republic*, a weekly

magazine of politics and the arts, with a white male professor; and a scholarly article published in an academic journal that began life as a prestigious university lecture.¹⁷ While always significant, the importance of the repertoire details in the performance of meaning are particularly relevant in an author who responds so strongly to the particularity of identity politics. What a difference a pronoun makes in an interview with Charles Ruas (“your people”) and those for *Essence* (“We”) (Ruas, 118, Washington, 235, Judith Wilson, 130).¹⁸

This is not, of course, to argue that the interview has no place in academic discussion.¹⁹ John Duvall’s study *The Identifying Fictions of Toni Morrison* is illustrative of the ways in which author interviews can be productively employed in the development of a critical perspective. Drawing heavily on the Taylor-Guthrie anthology, in his larger discussion around identity, authenticity, race and the literary canon, Duvall argues that “Morrison’s comments, both on herself and on her own and others’ fictions, may be read as a series of suggestive pieces of character delineation that work intertextually” (9). In her interviews, “Morrison has provided a valuable record in the stories she has told about herself” (10). While Duvall might be accused of a postmodern-inflected move to flatten all discourse, the result in this instance is the interpretation of Morrison’s interviews as

¹⁷ Such failures to distinguish are not limited to this volume. In a literature review for *American Literary Scholarship* Jerome Klinkowitz cites two Morrison anthologies edited by Denard: the interviews and a collection of nonfiction, *What Moves at the Margins*. Praising the former as being “adept at highlighting the author’s special causes,” he doesn’t note their form, leaving the reader to assume they are also essays (353).

¹⁸ Recent excellent book-length studies on Morrison by La Vinia Delois Jennings and Evelyn Schreiber draw upon Morrison’s interviews in their discussions of cultural memory, trauma and ancestry in her fictions. In her chapter entitled “Kanda: living elders, the ancestral presence, and the ancestor as foundation” Jennings repeatedly quotes Morrison’s interview remarks in order to support sophisticated readings of *Song of Solomon*, *Tar Baby* and *Beloved* (81-136). However, in failing to reflect on the interview scenario, Jennings, like Schreiber and others, miss the complex ways in which they interact with Morrison’s critical writings and novels to perform meaning.

¹⁹ One area where attention to Morrison’s use of the interview has been more nuanced is in relation to her involvement with the Oprah Winfrey Show, thanks in part to more general scholarly interest in celebrity in recent years. Articles by John Young and Tim Aubrey, the essays in *The Oprah Affect* (ed. Farr and Harker) and Rebecca Wanzo’s *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised* discuss the impact of Morrison’s television interviews on Oprah’s “Book Club” in terms of reception and interpretation of her works. In acknowledging the specificity of these interactions when thinking about their political, affective and interpretative import, these essays recognise, at least covertly, the problems with citing interviews as straightforward sources of authorial viewpoint.

performing identity. In reading interviews, biographical statements and essays “not as the revealed truth” but as part of the “identifying fictions” of Morrison, Duvall offers insight not only into Morrison’s authorial persona but also her novels (151).

In a slightly different vein, David James’s *Modernist Futures*, a study of influence in contemporary authors, including Coetzee and Morrison, draws heavily on interviews. When discussing Morrison and artistic influence, James uses the Taylor-Guthrie and Denard anthologies extensively to argue that Morrison’s modernism is less identifiable in her engagement with Woolf, Joyce and Faulkner, and more in her experiments with how “technical pre-eminence and social commitment coincide” (165). While his argument leads James to place slightly more value on the interview as offering an opportunity for “intimate acquaintance,” and disclosures than my reading of the form would condone, his study illustrates how useful the interview can be to scholars as an important site wherein the expression of authorial intention and influence is performed (32).²⁰ Both James and Duvall offer invigorating examples of scholarship that engages productively with interview scenarios.

I want to pursue this point further and argue that attending to the interview as a form opens out new ways of thinking about Morrison’s work. As part of a chapter on “The Authorized Morrison: Reflexivity and the Historiographic,” Duvall mentions the influence of the case of Margaret Garner on Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) and the opera *Margaret Garner* (2005). On the publication of the former, Morrison announced her source in an interview with the *New York Times*:

“I was amazed by this story I came across about a woman called Margaret Garner who had escaped from Kentucky, I think, into Cincinnati with four children,” Ms. Morrison said, sitting in an office at Alfred A. Knopf, her publisher, on a

²⁰ Given our understanding of modernist uses of the form, there is something ironic in James’s use of author interviews to “substantiate our understanding of how they might alternatively adapt, appropriate and transcribe modernist procedures” (32). However, this should not negate the value of a work that resituates intention back into a discussion of modernism’s influence.

visit from her home near Nyack, N.Y. “And she was a kind of cause celebre among abolitionists in 1855 or ‘56 because she tried to kill the children when she was caught. She killed one of them, just as in the novel. I found an article in a magazine of the period, and there was this young woman in her 20’s, being interviewed – oh, a lot of people interviewed her, mostly preachers and journalists, and she was very calm, she was very serene ...

“Now I didn’t do any more research at all about that story,” Ms. Morrison said. “I did a lot of research about everything else in the book – Cincinnati, and abolitionists, and the underground railroad – but I refused to find out anything else about Margaret Garner. I really wanted to invent her life[”] (Rothstein 17).

This text attests to the kind of influence David James was keen to explore: it expresses Morrison’s relation to the Garner case and to her creative response. We could certainly reflect usefully on the import of these details, but this statement, and its wider scenario, is also suggestive in other ways.

The Garner interview itself is a powerful instance of collaborative authorship that resulted in the publication of a slave-woman’s words. It is an explicit act of bearing witness; the interviewer Reverend Bassett talks of having “listened” and “witnessed” as he relates the agony of Garner to the reader (Bassett 215). Announcing *Beloved*’s source in the Rothstein interview was an act of bearing witness to a case that had been largely forgotten by history.²¹ It was an act of bearing witness to the continued spectacular import of the black female body in the public sphere. Within the Morrison interview, the parallels between two black female interviews, even separated by over a hundred years, become a significant subtext. The interview closes with Morrison’s explicit claiming of the identity “black woman writer” as she acknowledges the politico-cultural significances of this identity (17). The parallel between these two scenarios subtly reminds us of Morrison’s own immediate response to a situation wherein to make a statement, even one published on a weekday on page 17, is to ensure a large amount of attention within a situation where her editorial freedom is curtailed.

²¹ Compare her interview with Elissa Schappell for the *Paris Review*. Morrison announces she had read “two interviews” with Garner (90).

This is not to suggest that Morrison claims equivalence in the degrees of suffering between the two interviewees, but rather that her statement performs much more than the simple acknowledgement of a source. Indeed, it transforms our understanding of *Beloved* and Morrison's oeuvre more widely, not just because we have a historical example of Sethe's story. As we shall see, the book, Morrison's publicising of the novel and her own persona become more explicitly links in a wider exploration of acts of witnessing, publicising, representing the disenfranchised, and the role of oral narrative in resisting historical repression.

In a 2010 article on the novel Heather Love draws on the sociological theories of Latour and Goffman to read *Beloved* less as a novel of deep interiority, as critics have often characterised it, but as one with a "documentary impulse" that stages the failure of restoring agency and voice to those suppressed by history, rather than their reparation (384). Noting the novel's source in a "newspaper article," Love focuses on the scene that first narrates Sethe's murder of her children, through the eyes of those who have come to capture them (384). Focusing on the objectivity of the prose, she concludes that the narrative "makes legible material processes of dehumanization" (386). Emphasising this "documentary aesthetic," Love concludes that a "flat reading of *Beloved* suggests the possibility of an alternative ethics, one grounded in documentation and description rather than empathy and witness" (386, 375).

I find Love's attention to the documentary aspects of *Beloved* productive, reminding us of the frequency with which the documentary impulse, whether in objective description, the listing of "animal" characteristics, or the appraisal of a man's worth, is associated with the dehumanising tendencies of slavery. Nevertheless, I would argue that her implicit opposition of the documentarian and the witness fails to recognise the degree to which together they form part of the novel's larger concern with narrative authority. Such concern becomes explicit if we consider, as the majority of critics have

neglected to do, the form of the “newspaper article” that plays such an important role in and outside the novel.

Immediately after the scene that Love discusses, Stamp Paid (with a nomenclature suggesting both post-office authority and slave-branding), tries to relate Sethe’s story to Paul D. via a newspaper clipping. When Paul D. refuses to recognise Sethe in the newspaper sketch, because it “ain’t her mouth,” this should not only warn us of the danger of relying on the documentary, but also stages locally the difficulties around historical reclamation, witnessing and the public record that the novel as a whole explores (154). Paul D.’s focus on the mouth evokes the same issues of mediation, oral narrative and agency that Morrison’s *New York Times* interview explored and that the Margaret Garner interview embodied for her. In a book about speech, silence and “rememory,” Paul D.’s refusal to identify Sethe in the newspaper clipping becomes more than an act of blindness, it becomes a refusal to acknowledge a story framed by the documentary, or archival, impulse.

So too Sethe refutes the document’s power to explain:

Perhaps it was [Paul D.’s] smile ... that made her go ahead and tell him what she had not told Baby Suggs, the only person she felt obliged to explain anything to. Otherwise she would have said what the newspaper said she said and no more. Sethe could recognize only seventy-five printed words (half of which appeared in the newspaper clipping), but she knew that the words she did not understand hadn’t any more power than she had to explain (161).

That the clipping would seem to be an interview, or at least quotes Sethe, is highly significant. A form that commonly invests its speaker with a subject position, that operates on the assumption that answers will follow questions, and that is frequently cited as an authoritative source, here the interview becomes a lacuna. Previously warned that “there was no way in hell a black face could appear in a newspaper if the story was about something anybody wanted to hear,” Sethe too rejects the explanatory power of

the words ascribed to her, what the “newspaper said she said” (155).

In fact explanation itself consistently fails in this novel, where to recognise or not recognise is what counts; a mouth, a “righteous Look,” a schoolteacher’s hat, a subject:

Sethe knew that the circle she was making around the room, him, the subject, would remain one. That she could never close in, pin it down for anybody who had to ask. If they didn’t get it right off – she could never explain (157, 163).

A newspaper spectacle she might become, but her explanation will always remain outside of narrative, interview or otherwise. When Morrison rendered Margaret Garner’s story creatively she claimed authority for a narrative that both is and is not constituted of Margaret Garner’s words. In doing so she placed an interview, the form through which Garner’s story was documented, at the heart of the novel only to contest its explanatory power. A repertoire of looks, recognitions and silences suggest that narrative, even oral narrative, cannot act to “rememory” or soothe the past.

In the case of *Beloved*, an interview is peculiarly situated at the heart of a novel. In most instances the relationships between interviews and fiction or essays are less direct. However, this case offers an important example of why, in treating the interview as content, by ignoring the performative, collaborative and ephemeral aspects of the form, critics run the risk not only of jettisoning half the scenario, but reiterating the logic of the archive that Morrison herself challenges. Like Coetzee, Morrison’s interviews often dramatise the political and ethical issues around narrative authority that are found more generally in both writers’ work. The relationship between interview and oeuvre might not be resolved, but the issues are dramatised. While other authors might not engage so reflexively with the form, scholars would still do well to reflect upon the interview scenario before citing their interviews.

Prestige and the World Interview

DA: What does the future hold for the 2003 Nobel laureate?

JMC: Already he is being peppered with invitations to travel far and wide to give lectures. That has always seemed to me one of the stranger aspects of literary fame: you prove your competence as a writer and an inventor of stories, and then people clamour for you to make speeches and tell them what you think about the world (Atwell “Exclusive”).

The interview from which the above remarks were taken was one of the few public statements made by Coetzee in response to the award. Unlike the majority of laureates, he did not grant an interview to the Nobel website or other news outlets in the wake of the award. Even the above, published in the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*, was done via correspondence.

In this final section, I want to explore how the interview functions on the world stage – as a perceived conveyor and translator of prestige across the globe. While Coetzee offers a fascinating case study in his exploration of the cultural, political and ethical ramifications of the public utterance and authorial persona on a national and world stage, I want to turn to an author whose first language is not English and therefore where questions of translation come to the fore.

The novelist Orhan Pamuk was born in Istanbul in 1952. His first novel *Cevdet Bey ve ogullari* was published in 1982 and he achieved an international reputation with *Kara Kitap* (1990), which was translated into numerous languages (titled *The Black Book* in the English edition). Before his 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature, he had been the recipient of numerous prizes in various Western countries. On being awarded the Nobel, the committee explained its motivation thus: “who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures” (“The Nobel Prize in Literature 2006 - Press Release” n.pag).

This notion of the “interlacing of cultures” is one that shall be tracked in this final case study of the interview. As critics increasingly reflect upon and theorise the

impact of globalisation upon writers, publishers and readers, the function of the interview within so-called world literature demands our attention.²² Examined through the lens of prize culture and world literature, the interview's peculiar status as negotiator of global value and memory will be central to this discussion.

In *The Economy of Prestige* James F. English explores the “stunning rise” in prizes made available for literature and the arts in the last one hundred years, which he perceptively identifies as “one of the great untold stories of modern cultural life” (1). More broadly he also discusses the circulation of cultural value in the contemporary world. Identifying the “Prize Frenzy” of modern culture he notes that this has developed into a situation in which “winning a prize is the only truly newsworthy thing a cultural worker can do” and the citation of such awards has become a “uniquely contemporary form of cultural biography” (21).

Against such a backdrop, in the latter part of the book English moves toward discussing the ramifications of globalisation on this phenomenon since the 1970s. As he explains, this international prize culture (examples include the Nobel, the Neustadt and the Man Booker) “facilitate[s] exchange of symbolic capital between the indigenous and the metropolitan marketplace” (271). The result can be a “*detrterritorialization* of prestige” (282, italics in original). English uses the example of Wole Soyinka, the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, in order to discuss the tension between local and external notions of value. Awarded for the writer “who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence,” Soyinka’s laureateship was criticised by some precisely for this designation of the perceived value of his “wide cultural perspective” (“The Nobel Prize in Literature 1986” n.pag). While Soyinka’s award was often taken as a nation or a continent’s triumph, and he accepted it on behalf

²² This trend is indicated through a sample of recent edited collections on world literature: on everything from performance studies (McKenzie et al), literary journalism (Bak and Reynolds), critical perspectives, not to mention the numerous anthologies, of which Norton’s six volume version is the most well-known, currently in its third edition (ed. Puchner et al).

of his colleagues and a collective tradition, many Nigerian critics felt that Soyinka did not represent the best of their national literature.²³ So too, English indicates the problematic parallels between financial and symbolic capital within our postcolonial world:

Viewed on the one hand as a necessity for the postcolonial world and an ethical obligation on the part of the major powers (a matter of genuine respect and recognition, not mere symbolic philanthropy), the investment of foreign symbolic capital in emergent symbolic markets has been seen on the other hand as a means of sustaining less overtly and directly the old patterns of imperial control over symbolic economies and hence over cultural practice itself. It is not a problem from which the prizes can hope to extract themselves: to honor and recognize local cultural achievement from a declaredly global vantage point is inevitably to impose external interference on local systems of cultural value. (298)

While there are important differences between the interview and the prize, the problem English identifies also plagues the interview.

English situates his discussion of contemporary prize culture within recent scholarly arguments around the designation “world literature.” Scholars as diverse as the late Edward Said, Franco Moretti, Wai Chee Dimock, Tim Brennan, Pascale Casanova, Robert J. C. Young, Lawrence Venuti, Emily Apter and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have reflected upon and interrogated the category from numerous perspectives.²⁴ These arguments largely pivot on the tension between the local and the global, whether that takes the form of debates over the circulation of literature, critical specialisation, models of distant reading or translation practices. For David Damrosch, in answering the question, *What is World Literature?* (2003), he concludes it is “not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading” (5). Such a mode can help the scholar to theorise global and local networks of circulation, translation and

²³ See Jussawalla and Dasenbrock for their discussion of Soyinka from a post-colonial perspective (14) and also Jeyifo (ix-xx). The number of interview anthologies with “post-colonial” authors indicates the degree to which these collections are seen to be useful contributions toward both canon realignment and marketing categories.

²⁴ For a good overview of this criticism, see Haen et al.

production. For Damrosch literature becomes world literature by being received into the space of foreign culture (283).

While Damrosch's close reading approach has been criticised, his emphasis on circulation and his specific notion of literature as a "great conversation" is very useful for our present purposes (142). Speaking on the subject of expanding or contesting literary canons, he continues, "whether we conceive of this conversation as fundamentally social *or* as essentially aesthetic in nature, following this conversation naturally leads us to an expanding study of the great figures' interlocutors" (142). As Damrosch also makes clear Goethe's coinage of the term "Weltliteratur," commonly cited by scholars of world literature as an originating statement, is known to us through a conversation (Damrosch 1-2, Moretti *Conjectures* 54). The fact of the quasi-interview situation in which this term was coined – Goethe was speaking to Johann Peter Eckermann, his personal secretary, for the purposes of posthumous publication – also hints at the centrality of the conversation metaphor and the interview itself within world literature. While the prize might be more visible in debates about the circulation of literary value across the globe and the attending ethical, political and social problems, the interview is an overlooked party that not only literalises the conversation metaphor, but usefully refocuses these problems.

As the first Turkish Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk is a particularly interesting case study for examining the relationship between the interview, world literature and the circulation of literary value on a global scale. Turkey itself occupies a unique position; often characterised as situated on the crossroads of East and West, it currently sits outside of the European Union and outside of strict definitions of postcolonialism. Pamuk's own reception has been turbulent within Turkey and his relationship with his nationality and country has been the subject of much international attention.

In mid November of 2005, the *Paris Review* went to print on an issue that contained an interview with Pamuk on “The Art of Fiction.” The interview itself revolved around Pamuk’s status as an international writer, whose work is widely read in translation, and his conception of himself as part of and isolated from particular communities and traditions, whether familial, Turkish, Western, Oriental, Ottoman, Eastern. In response to an early question about national reception, Pamuk replies:

After the mid-nineties, when my books began to sell in amounts that no one in Turkey had ever dreamed of, my honeymoon years with the Turkish press and intellectuals were over. From then on, critical reception was mostly a reaction to the publicity and sales, rather than the content of my books (Gurriá-Quintana n.pag).

By contrast, the end of the interview explores how “Turkish” Pamuk feels himself to be, having been:

born a Turk. I’m happy with that. Internationally, I am perceived to be more Turkish than I actually see myself. I am known as a Turkish author. When Proust writes about love, he is seen as somewhat talking about universal love. Especially at the beginning, when I wrote about love, people would say I was writing about Turkish love (n.pag).

This conversation, staged for an Anglophone audience between a Turkish writer and a Mexican and English educated journalist, positions Pamuk within an international setting. Questions and answers express a literary influence born of mainly Western-European literature: Faulkner, Woolf, Proust, Mann, Galsworthy, Nabokov, etc. Turkish and Ottoman forbearers are rejected in this conversation (n.pag). Pamuk announces himself to be “liberated” from the “connotations of traditional Islamic literature” through the influence of Italo Calvino and Jorge Luis Borges who allow him to “appropriate” aspects of it on his own terms for *Kara Kitap* (n.pag). This declared rejection of Turkish authors and alignment with authors overwhelming associated with world literature positions Pamuk firmly within that category.

Such affiliation is reinforced by the interview frame itself, which downplays Pamuk's relationship with Turkish culture. In the preface the titles of his books are given in English and publication dates of English translations are given alongside the Turkish. This is in direct contrast to, for example, the practice of *World Literature Today*, an academic review, which usually records his titles in Turkish and, in their special issue of Nov-Dec 2006, introduces him in the Editor's notes in relation to other Turkish authors (Clark 3). The interview translates Pamuk into a world literature author, staging a conversation in which he and his interlocutors, both figurative and literal, are associated with the global.

The series from which this interview is taken, and which we are familiar with from chapter five, is an illuminating example of how the interview can confer prestige and how such cachet is tied to a notion of value that spans nations. In the introduction to *The Paris Review Interviews vol. 1* (2006) then magazine editor Philip Gourevitch described the interviews as "constructed to stand as testimonial for the ages," "canonical" and an "international laurel for writers, a recognition of a mature life's work" (Gourevitch "Introduction" xi, vii, xi). Such statements indicate a (somewhat hubristic) claim that the series acts as an equivalent to the Nobel, the Neustadt or other international prizes.

In its other interviews the *Paris Review* displays a strong commitment to interviewing authors from around the globe, including Ha Jin, Javier Marías, Kenzaburo Oe, Chinua Achebe, Yehuda Amichai and Ismail Kadaré. However, the focus is strongly upon the writer's position as an internationally recognised author. The individuals are offered (indeed introduced to many readers) as writers who have reached a level of prestige within the category "world literature." While the writers' national or local position is acknowledged, it is their purported presence on the "world stage" and within

a community of likeminded individuals that spans national differences, that is emphasised.

Such positioning seems to have a strong appeal for many of these authors, Pamuk included. After receiving the Nobel, itself a conferrer of “world” status, Pamuk wrote an introduction for *The Paris Review Interviews vol. 2*. (2007).²⁵ In it he emphasises the value of these interviews as offering the writer membership through subscription to a particular imaginative and international community of authors: the conversations staged within these interviews encourage additional metaphorical conversations wherein those writers reading the interviews engage dialogically (in Gadamer’s terms) with the text of a conversation. The conversations and interlocutors accrete. Significantly though, this is membership guaranteed through repudiation and translation.

In his introduction Pamuk emphasises the extensive educational and emotional effect the interviews had on him as a young writer. He describes the strong impact reading William Faulkner’s *Paris Review* interview (Spring 1956) had on his development as a writer. The introduction opens with Faulkner’s remarks about the status of the artist, who is “completely amoral in that he will rob, borrow, beg or steal from anybody and everybody to get the work done ... The writer’s only responsibility is to his art” (Pamuk “Introduction,” vii-viii). As Pamuk explains “It was consoling to read these words in a country where the demands of the community came before all else” (viii). The tradition and community offered by the *Review* interview, a community not based on geographical location or national identity, but artistic interest, is extremely valuable for Pamuk in this introduction.

Such value is emphasised through Pamuk’s quasi-religious language. Faulkner’s interview is a “sacred text,” he discusses the isolation and loneliness of being a young

²⁵ While the *Paris Review* can confer prestige and provide support, the magazine and volume also draw prestige from Pamuk’s literary reputation: an introduction by, or an interview with, a Nobel Prize-winning author utilises the symbolic capital of the author for the benefit of the *Review*.

writer, cut off from his local community by virtue of his artistic identity and not knowing Turkish writers, but bolstered through an imagined identity offered by the *Paris Review* (vii). Connected through the pages of the interviews to world famous authors, Pamuk is able to learn from their experiences. “To read these interviews again after so many years – and after I have myself appeared in the magazine’s pages – is to recall the hopes and anxieties of my early writings days” (ix-x). The value of the *Review* interview as characterised here is not simply that of the international accolade, but the specific support it provides for the writer in offering contact with a likeminded, international group. Global conversations offset alienation from one’s local community.

Reading Pamuk’s novels, his official website or his memoir *Istanbul*, a somewhat different perception of the relationship between the local and the global is exhibited. In other English-language interviews too the emphasis, whether in frame or conversation, is heavily upon Pamuk’s Turkishness and close ties with the city of Istanbul. The frequent appearance of characters named Orhan Pamuk in his novels set in Turkey also encourages readers to situate the author within the setting of the narrative. Pamuk the character is embedded within these tales of Istanbul and Turkey, thus emphasising the authorial persona’s local affiliations.

Nevertheless, the particular bent of the *Paris Review* texts is somewhat at odds with Pamuk’s more general public persona. Partly this must be due to the historical backdrop against which they were created; the interview’s ability to transcend locale will become a significant factor, as we shall see. While the interview can circulate and confer prestige, staging conversations between the local and global, the ease with which the utterance travels across languages, national borders and media can also prove deeply problematic. In moving from the local situation in which they were first performed into different national or international contexts, interviews often become a site of fierce debate.

In discussing these shifts, the work of Emily Apter provides a useful framework. In *The Translation Zone*, Apter discusses the labels used by publishers, such as “multicultural,” “native” and “international,” and the problems they cause. Although these labels “can help launch or spotlight world-class writers – pulling them out of ethnic area-studies ghettos on the bookstore shelves – [they] also cling like barnacles to their reception and afford constrictive stereotypes of identity” (98). Simultaneously and somewhat at odds with this, these global publishing networks also promote a “transnationally translatable monoculture” (99). Apter’s later book, *Against World Literature*, extends the metaphor of translation, emphasising what she considers to be a blind-spot in the discipline of world literature: a failure to consider or value *un*translatability when reading comparatively. Opening her argument with reference to a staged conversation between Damrosch and Pamuk at an Istanbul academic conference in 2008, she applauds World Literature’s “deprovincialization of the canon and the way in which, at its best, it draws on translation to deliver surprising cognitive landscapes” while expressing concern about the discipline’s reliance upon the assumption of translatability (2-3). Proposing instead a “theoretical fulcrum” of “untranslatability,” Apter is keen to explore the limitations that the metaphor of translation has had upon the discipline (3). Apter’s account thus reflects upon how the “Untranslatable” might open up hitherto side-lined debates around, amongst other issues, the Western conception of authorship, the “possessive collectivism” of national canons that constitute World Literature, notions of cultural privacy and intellectual property, and the fundamentally “conservationist attitude” of World Literature, amongst other issues (321, 227).

While Apter does not discuss interviews, her attention to the Untranslatable and the local context which contributes to linguistic meaning but which resists easy translation, has an obvious parallel in the interview scenario. While the interview

utterance and interview-as-prize can be easily translated into this sphere of the transnational, the scenario remains firmly resistant to such motility. The archival bent of the form becomes dominant as communications networks circulate the easily translatable interview utterances, detached from a repertoire more resistant to translation. Although this translatability has a clear benefit in rendering the form a prominent conveyor of prestige and data, it also positions the interview at the centre of cultural deterritorialisation. New and productive meanings might be born in these acts of translation, no doubt, but these should not always render the untranslatable unread.

A major example of these problems is also an important backdrop for the Pamuk interview with the *Paris Review* and it involves another interview. On 6 February 2005 an interview with Pamuk was published by the Swiss newspaper *Der Tages-Anzeiger*. As part of the interview Pamuk and the journalist Peer Peuwesen discussed what the former saw as the clash between rival definitions of “civilised” cultures that were coming to a head with Turkey’s efforts to enter the European Union, and which led to a surge in nationalism and negative responses to his writings. In doing so Pamuk commented that “Man hat hier 30,000 Kurden umgebracht. Und eine Million Armenier. Und fast niemand traut sich, das zu erwähnen” [“thirty thousand Kurds and a million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it”] (Peuwesen n.pag; English translation qtd. in Gurria-Quintana 372).²⁶

The remarks related to the on-going conflict between Kurdish separatists and Turkish forces and to the Ottoman Empire’s genocide of Armenians in the years 1915 to 1917 and were picked up by the Turkish press. Nationalist elements of the media then instigated a hate-campaign against the author, including the burning of his books. In August 2005 Pamuk was charged under Article 301/1 of the Turkish Penal Code for having “explicitly insult[ed] being a Turk,” a crime punishable by up to three years in

²⁶ A more accurate translation of the latter clause would read “nobody dares to talk about it” and continues “So I will.”

prison, extendable by a third under Article 301/3 for it having taken place on foreign soil (Siems n.pag). The trial was scheduled for 16 December 2005.

The Turkish media and official response received widespread international press coverage. Not only was the on-going controversy given a detailed history in the preface to the *Paris Review* interview, but PEN and Amnesty initiated campaigns and Salman Rushdie wrote publically in support of Pamuk, suggesting his treatment should be considered a test case for deciding Turkey's entry into the European Union (Rushdie, n.pag). Numerous politicians agreed; bowing to international pressure, Turkey adjourned and then dropped the trial in 2006. Pamuk won the Nobel later the same year.

The point of this example is to demonstrate not only how politically significant the interview utterance can be, but how easily it can be transposed across languages and contexts. Turkey's own treatment of the interview utterance rendered the locality of the interview scenario both irrelevant in mobilising meaning, as it was Pamuk's nationality and not the site of publication that was legally prescribed, and also germane: the utterance was considered the more potent for being directed at an audience outside Turkey. In applying the Turkish penal code to the interview, the state inadvertently emphasised the distance between the local and (Western) international legal conceptions of free speech.

Certainly this was the thrust of the PEN campaign and the Rushdie article. But in circulating the contentious remark around the globe, across numerous syndication networks and news services, the international press ignored the interview as a whole. As far as major English-language newspapers were concerned, the remark quoted was the extent of Pamuk's comments at the time. Even today the interview remains unavailable in English and the original German-language interview is only available through subscription to the newspaper's archive. It is absent from the title's website, through Nexis, Factiva or other digital news databases.

This is significant if we consider the circumstances of the interview's creation more carefully. It was originally published to promote the German translation of Pamuk's book, *Schnee* (*Kar* in Turkish, *Snow* in English). The novel, set in Kars, a politically sensitive area near the Armenian border, is very much concerned with the suppressed history of the area. Like a P.S. interview, this text draws out these points, tying them to the current political situation in Turkey and, unlike Pamuk's narrative, is certainly not subtle. The remarks that caused so much controversy are on par with the rest of an interview which very much positions Pamuk as punished by Turkish nationalists for critiquing Turkey abroad. The interview was sensationally titled "Der meistgehasste Türke" ["The most hated Turk"].

While not at all wanting to defend Pamuk's treatment by the Turkey judiciary system, I would note that the global response to Turkey's reaction does consistently fail to report on the confrontational tone of the Pamuk interview as presented in the paper, and its connection to the promotion of his book. The fact that Pamuk might be accused of waving a red flag at Turkish nationalists does not excuse his villification by those same persons; but just as Turkey's failure to respect the designation "local" when applying its penal code was criticised by the international community, so here the international media entirely fails to report on the specifically local meaning that the scenario mobilised. In effectively colluding to censor the interview, the media render the scenario untranslatable by suppressing the original. While a different form than Apter had in mind, it does testify to the significance of the scenario in shaping our understanding of the interview utterance.

In tracing the interview from the political furor of the 1886 scandal to the Pamuk-Peuwsen interview we have, in one sense, come full circle. In an essay reprinted in *Doubling the Point*, Coetzee declares that a novel requires you to go somewhere, an

interview does not (205). While Coetzee's remark (one that his use of the interview form might contest) might find support amongst some authors and commentators, this chapter, indeed this project, has argued that interviews do go somewhere, that they do take the reader somewhere. World literature and international prestige are negotiated in the modern world by individualised and localised interactions like the interview. If authors are flown half way around the globe in order to take part in a face-to-face interview at a literary festival in the little town of Hay-on-Wye, in front of an audience of local, national and international visitors, which is then reported around the globe, we must grant the interview has taken on a significant function in contemporary society. If we are to grant the form such an important role, it is only fitting that we attend to the full formal demands that the interview makes upon us, acknowledging the valence of both repertoire and archive, form and contents, when reading such texts.

Coda: Interview Afterlives

Philip Roth has time and again engaged with the thematics that surround the fictions of access, and interviews themselves, across his oeuvre. His experimentation might not be as radical as that of Burroughs or Barnes but in some ways it is more representative of literature's splintered attitude towards the form. Chapter six argued for the importance of attending to the scenario of the interview as it circulates around the globe; I want to finish by reflecting briefly on the interview's "afterlives," drawing on Roth's interactions with the form to reflect on what it might tell us about how he and other authors respond to the interview as a means of shaping their posthumous reputations.

In his career as a writer, Roth has been consistently interested in questions of celebrity, self-fashioning and authorial personae, issues that have, as we have seen, often played out in the interview. His transformation into a literary celebrity had occurred with the final lines of *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), which famously resituates the entire sexually explicit narrative within the framework of a psychoanalytic confessional encounter. So too Roth subsequently used and re-used the characters of Nathan Zuckerman and David Kepesh to explore issues around the authorial persona and celebrity personality.

Roth also displays extensive interest in matters that this study has indicated pertain directly to the interview, whether thematic or formal. In *I Married a Communist* (1998), while interviews are not a major feature in the book, radio, gossip columnists and McCarthyism coalesce in a narrative that explores many of the same issues that were central to the discussion of chapter four. Elsewhere, in *Our Gang* (1971) dialogue takes centre stage as Roth explores, in Maileresque fashion, the Nixon administration and press manipulation in a political satire written in the form of a play-text. In *Deception* (1990) the multiple threads of the erotic, fictional, confessional and power dynamics

within conversation are explored in a narrative that functions without speech tags. In later novels, such as *Operation Shylock* (1993) or *The Plot Against America* (2004) Philip Roth becomes a character in his own stories as biography, history and narrative authority become intertwined. In the former, the real-life trial of John Demjanjuk exists as an important thematic foil against which the identities of Roth the author, the character and his double layer into a series of narratives that explore issues of confession, justice, surveillance, identity politics, ethnicity and publicity.¹

Moreover, in this novel, the plot also turns on interviews themselves. Journalistic interviews become the arena in which Philip Roth's double can impersonate him in the public sphere; in which Philip Roth the character can interrogate his double under the name of a thesaurus; and that function as yet another means of staging the complicated relation between truth and fiction in narrative. A series of interviews with Aharon Appelfeld – the real-life Israeli author and holocaust survivor – function as the plot device for sending the character Philip Roth to Israel and provide the narrative opportunity to reflect on the relationships between an author and nationality, political allegiance and ethnicity. These same conversations were also published in the *New York Times Book Review* under Roth's imprimatur, as the "Note to the Reader" at the close of the book announces (398). Roth's manipulation of the fictions of access further confuse the relationships between authorised utterance, narrative realism and false confession.

By contrast, in his own interviews Roth is zealous in controlling the utterances and direction of conversation. In agreeing to interviews, he usually requires final editorial control of both answers and questions. A 1971 interview with Alan Lelchuk is representative in this respect; it went through numerous drafts, which are heavy with Roth's emendations, insertions, deletions, question re-writes and heavy felt-pen deletions,

¹ Roth's archive testifies to his heavily reliance on the trial transcripts. Swathes of the transcripts are circled, annotated and extracted for use in the book (Boxes 169 and 170, Philip Roth Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Hereafter referred to as "PRoth").

as if expunging the remarks not only for publication, but also the archival record (PRoth 248/2 “Interviews and Discussions ca.1971”). Elsewhere, in sending an interview to Amazon, Roth authorised publication only if the website agreed to publish the interview in its entirety, with questions and answers remaining unchanged (PRoth 248/5 “Interviews and Discussions 1998-2000, n.d”).

In his *Paris Review* interview with Hermione Lee (who was herself to become an interview subject for the magazine in 2013), Roth also asserted his own editorial control. Lee’s introduction overtly discusses the process of drafting the interview, including their collaboration, Roth’s editorial input and the temporal gap between conversations and editing (n.pag). While Roth and Lee’s collaboration appears to have been productive and amicable (Roth suggested Lee as interviewer), Roth was much less cooperative when faced with Plimpton’s editorial suggestions.² This was despite a long professional relationship; the *Paris Review* had published his first short story back in 1958. On receiving the draft interview, Plimpton had written a lengthy letter to Roth (which he re-wrote three times before sending) asking additional questions and for access to the transcriptions of Lee and Roth’s conversations:

[REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS]

(PR 2/15/Roth, Philip/Plimpton to Roth 17 July 1984, 3-4)

Roth was not pleased. His response was to write back rejecting all of Plimpton’s suggestions and characterisations of his style, before threatening to back out of the project entirely. In the event, third parties soothed tempers and an accord was reached; the published interview included several of the suggestions and additional questions that appeared in Plimpton’s initial letter.

² PR 2/15/Roth, Philip/Roth to Plimpton, 7 Feb. 1983, 21 July 1984 and 26 July 1984.

Although the factors involved in shaping the interview are not always available to scholars or readers, attending more generally to fictions of access encourages us to reflect upon the editorial and creative processes that produced the interview, along with a more nuanced understanding of the form's collaborative, multiple-authored status. The *Paris Review* example illustrates, amongst other points about Plimpton's aims, Lee's characterisation of the collaboration and her own persona as biographer, the degree of control and proprietorship Roth exhibits towards interviews in which he participates.

Such points can have wider import when we consider the writer's own public persona, conceptions of creativity or attitudes towards his or her own work. Roth's attitude towards the interview seems particularly tied to his own awareness of the public afterlife of the form. One interviewer, writing to Roth, notes that, [REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS] (P_{Roth} 248/3 "Interviews and Discussions 1974-1983"/Henry Fenwick to Roth 12 April 1983, 1). While his interviewers frequently emphasise the scarcity of the product they are introducing, the author has not been shy about republishing those efforts.³ He co-operated with the UPM edition of interviews and has published several anthologies that include the form; *Reading Myself and Others* went through two editions (1975, 2001) and in 2001 he published *Shop Talk*, an anthology of his conversations with other novelists. These interviews, which Roth himself emphasises are largely written affairs, are treated as important written documents and promoted along with his fiction and autobiographical volumes on publication lists (*Reading Myself* 1975 xii).

Although he exploits the fictions of access for creative purposes, Roth treats his own interviews as individual, authoritative texts.⁴ He uses them not only to make public announcements but as citable evidence of his prior statements. Thus in a letter to the

³ See, for example, "Philip Roth Unmasked," Alvarez, McCrum.

⁴ His "Open Letter to Wikipedia" also made a strong public claim for the author being a "credible source" on his or her own work.

editor of the *New York Times* in 2013, Roth quotes his *Paris Review* interview extensively to contradict writer Pankaj Mishra, who had characterised Roth as “almost envious of writers in Communist Eastern Europe” when discussing the question of “How Well Does Contemporary Fiction Address Radical Politics?” (Mishra 1, Roth “Roth in his own words,” 1). The interview has an afterlife, for Roth, as an authoritative source of the writer’s views and intentions (which, given general critical use of interviews that we have noted, is justified). While the word “afterlife”, in gesturing towards embodiment, appropriately captures the promise of a form to present more than words, it is interesting to note Roth’s own attempts to be memorialised by word alone.

Were anyone in doubt as to the significance of interviews in Roth’s oeuvre, he famously announced his retirement from writing through the form. Published in French in the Parisian-based magazine *Les inRocks*, the interview with journalist Nelly Kaprièlian announced that *Nemesis* would be his last book (n.pag). The *Paris Review* would publish an English translation of the interview a month later, but Roth’s decision to “quietly” announce his retirement caused a great deal of web traffic as blogs, newspaper websites and mainstream journalism re-circulated the story.⁵ The fact it was in French recalls the discussions around of the translatability of the interview in chapter six, but also affirms Roth’s role as a literary figure and public intellectual in the French tradition.⁶ Roth’s use of the interview to make such an announcement indicates his perception of its newsworthiness, its ability to circulate, but also its perceived status as an authorised utterance. Roth plays with the form, he exploits its status as life writing, its associations with celebrity, autobiography, truth and fiction in his work; but he also zealously protects his reputation and is constantly aware of the interview’s long afterlife on the public record.

⁵ Kaprièlian, “In which Philip Roth announces his retirement,” Daley.

⁶ Casanova’s *The World Republic of Letters* provides certainly the most publicised account of the French intellectual tradition and its influence on “World Literature.” See also Martens et al for a bibliography of the interview in French culture and Jefferson for a discussion of biography and French literature.

Such points should influence our understanding of Roth's literary project and persona as a whole. In a 2014 article "Zuckerman/Roth: Literary Celebrity Between Two Deaths," Loren Glass reads Nathan Zuckerman as Roth's "way of managing the conflict between the gradual and ultimately posthumous fame associated with his modernist forebears and the instantaneous, contemporaneous celebrity that characterized his own postmodern career" (2).⁷ Glass's focus on these two temporalities maps usefully, as we have seen, on to interviews themselves, both ephemeral and archival, "originating" conversation and published document. To remind ourselves of these conflicting temporalities should remind us of the Janus-faced situation of the interview and of the important role the fictions of access have in occluding one of those faces.

As part of his argument Glass also notes a more general "analogue" for Roth's late career. Citing Ross Posnock's comparison between Roth's late work and Henry James's "major phase," Glass emphasises the temporality that inheres in such an analogue, one that "predates the modern era" (22).⁸ While Glass uses the analogy to argue that the earlier *Zuckerman Bound* trilogy is more inventive than the later *American Trilogy*, I find the comparison significant for its link between the two authors that bookend this study. The degree to which authors from James to Roth engage with the interview form indicates its importance across the century.

Scholars of celebrity, Glass included, have figured modernist constructions of, and resistance to, celebrity as a temporal pivot in the history of twentieth-century literary celebrity. However, the history of the interview illustrates that at least one form consistently tied to celebrity treats modernist usage as somewhat anomalous or rearguard in a larger historical trajectory, albeit usage that itself provoked significant and creative responses. In fact, the general resistance to the interview by modernist writers and little magazines, their disinclination to interrogate the fictions of access or read the interview

⁷ My thanks to Loren Glass for allowing me to read a version of this essay ahead of publication.

⁸ See also Posnock (5 and throughout).

as anything other than celebrity promotion, has had a long afterlife.⁹ If we read the interview, not necessarily more suspiciously, but more reflectively, we can revive a life, rather than gawping at a skeleton in the closet.

⁹ Interestingly, while the internet has become something of a graveyard of past interviews, it has seen few radical experiments with the digital medium. “Twitterview,” and real-time Q&A comment sessions have been trialled, but the majority of online interviews are either embedded videos or draw on traditional print formats. The possibilities of the medium have yet to be extensively explored.

Works Cited

A note about citing interviews

Most citation systems record interviews under the name of the subject. Such a system emphasises the interviewee's role, to the detriment of the interviewer, and effectively supports the fictions of access that this thesis seeks to examine. Applying a systematic citation method to a form that names a huge variety of endeavours – involving diverse media, collaborative relations and editorial processes – will always be problematic. Although imperfect (eliding the work of the interview subject, collaborators or editors, and suppressing any gradation between profiles, interviews and articles), I have chosen to list interviews (including self-interviews) under the interviewer's name. In part this is as an exercise in demystifying the notion that the interview is single-authored by the subject.

Where the subject is not clear from the title, this information is included in the entry. Where the interviewer is not stated, the interview is treated as an anonymously-authored document.

Anthologies of interviews with the same or multiple subjects are listed under the editor's name. The one exception is anthologies comprised of essays, short stories and other materials, by a single author, which also contain interviews. These are listed under the author-subject's name.

Archives

BBC	BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham
Capote	Truman Capote Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
CW	Chatto & Windus Papers, Random House Archive, Special Collections, University of Reading
EP	Ezra Pound Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LM	Louise Morgan and Otto Theis Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University
PR	The <i>Paris Review</i> Archives, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
PRoth	Philip Roth Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
MW	Mike Wallace Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

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