PERSONAL FRAMEWORKS AND SUBJECTIVE TRUTH: NEW JOURNALISM
AND THE 1972 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the reportage of the New Journalists who covered the United States 1972 presidential campaign. Nineteen seventy-two was a key year in the development of New Journalism, marking a peak in output from successful writers, as well as in the critical attention paid to debates about the mode. Nineteen seventy-two was also an important year in the development of campaign journalism, a system which only occurred every four years and had not changed significantly since the time of Theodore Roosevelt. The system was not equipped to deal with the socio-political chaos of the time, or the attempts by Richard Nixon at manipulating how the campaign was covered. New Journalism was a mode founded in part on the idea that old methods of journalism needed to change to meet the needs of contemporary society, and in their coverage of the 1972 campaign the New Journalists were able to apply their arguments for change to their campaign reportage. Thus the convergence of the campaign reportage cycle with the peak of New Journalism's development represents a key moment in the development of both New Journalism and campaign journalism.

I use the campaign reportage of Timothy Crouse in *The Boys on the Bus*, Norman Mailer in *St. George and the Godfather*, Hunter S. Thompson in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, and Gloria Steinem in "Coming of Age with McGovern" as case studies for the role of New Journalism at this moment in literary journalism history. As writers who rejected the mainstream press's requirement for objectivity, the New Journalists occupied a unique role in the campaign coverage by offering different agendas and more personal frameworks than the mainstream media. I examine the framework of each of these writers' reportage, and how their secondary agendas shaped their consciously personal narratives of the campaign. These secondary agendas and personal narratives give the New Journalists' reportage a lasting meaning and cultural significance beyond the initial context of reporting on the campaign, and beyond the victory of Nixon, whom all four of the New Journalists analysed in this thesis opposed.

As my examination of Crouse's, Mailer's, Thompson's, and Steinem's New Journalism about the 1972 campaign establishes, this microcosm represents a key point in the development of New Journalism. The research and analysis in this thesis argues that the field of study devoted to New Journalism needs to re-think some of the ways the mode

has been written about. There are assumptions in the critical discourse that have been consistently accepted but which should be questioned further. It is crucial to an in-depth understanding of the mode that New Journalism scholarship reassess some of the ideas that we have become certain about and make sure they actually fit the aims and output of the New Journalists at the time. The importance of understanding the role of personal frameworks and secondary agendas in campaign journalism reaches beyond New Journalism and, as I argue in the conclusion to this thesis, has been demonstrated to be keenly relevant by the role of the press in the 2016 presidential election and the striking similarities between the 1972 and 2016 campaigns.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BB</i>	<i>The Boys on the Bus</i>
<i>CAM</i>	“Coming of Age with McGovern”
<i>FLCT</i>	<i>Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72</i>
<i>OAER</i>	<i>Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions</i>
<i>SGG</i>	<i>St. George and the Godfather</i>

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Because many of the New Journalists make frequent use of ellipses in their writing, I have left the originals as they appear in the texts, and have indicated my abbreviations as an ellipsis in square brackets, i.e. [...].

Introduction: Re-examining the Rise of New Journalism

A Change Needs to Come

Since its inception, New Journalism, the distinct mode of literary journalism which began in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, has been a subject of uncertainty and contention among scholars. Modern scholarship tends to endorse a version of New Journalism and its development that close examination reveals to be much more complicated. This thesis examines the New Journalism covering the 1972 U.S. presidential election, as a microcosm of the mode at the apex of its development. Nineteen seventy-two was a key year in the development of New Journalism. It was a high point for critical attention to the mode, while debate over its role in the world of journalism raged, and the socio-political chaos that fuelled the motivations of many of the New Journalists was heightened by turmoil both abroad and domestically. This thesis uses the campaign reportage of Timothy Crouse, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, and Gloria Steinem as case studies for the role of New Journalism. Though their journalism ultimately did not prevent Richard Nixon's landslide victory over George McGovern, their role as New Journalists on the campaign represents an important part of New Journalism's development. What matters in terms of their role in the history of literary journalism is not that they did not affect political change, but rather their significant contributions to the shifts happening in journalism at the time, and their intentional employment of personal frameworks to address secondary agendas beyond reporting the surface-level facts of the campaign.

As a route to this analysis, this introduction first sets out the key terminology necessary for a discussion of New Journalism. It then gives an overview of the development of New Journalism in the 1960s and early 1970s, and of the state of literary criticism and understanding of the mode at the time. My analysis of this period is crucial to understanding the context in which the New Journalism explored in this thesis was created. The unpacking of this period includes an examination of the role of objectivity in twentieth-century American journalism as it relates to the New Journalism's rebellion against mainstream mandates. In particular, I pay close attention to critical theory regarding the use of journalistic frameworks, and arguments over the feasibility of objectivity and the role of subjective angles in 1972 journalism. The function of the angle in the reportage of the New Journalists on the 1972 campaign will be examined in this

thesis through an illumination of the role of their secondary agendas in their conscious application of subjectivity to the personal frameworks of their journalism.

Part of the problem in modern scholarship in this field arises from the conflating of “New Journalism” with “literary journalism”. As John C. Hartsock claims in his 2008 foreword to a new edition of Norman Sims’ *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, prior to the publication of the original anthology in 1990, “almost all scholarship was written in the shadow of the New Journalism movement and thus influenced by it” (vii). Hartsock’s point here is that there was literary journalism prior to the New Journalism movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, and that there continued to be literary journalism which did not fall under the label “New Journalism” after its development, but that this distinction has not always been made in scholarship (vii-viii). He points to the development of the field of literary journalism studies as expanding beyond studies of New Journalism to encompass the larger “genre” of literary journalism (x-xi). Likewise Sims, in his preface to the 1990 edition, states that the collection’s aims were, first, “to establish through a few historical studies that the New Journalism of the 1960s was preceded by a substantial American experience with literary journalism in the twentieth century, and second, to bring some of the insights from contemporary theory to bear on the works of literary journalists since the early 1900s” (Preface xiii-xiv). Sims’ aims were representative of what John J. Pauly observed as the state of literary theory: “Critics today read nonfiction texts (ever more closely) as instances of a more generic form, called *literary nonfiction* or *literary journalism*” (111; emphasis in the original). By the time that Sims wrote his history of literary journalism, *True Stories*, in 2007, literary journalism studies had developed to the point where New Journalism was relegated to one chapter as part of a wider context. This is indicative of the way that, as the field of literary journalism studies has broadened, New Journalism has been analysed as a subset of literary journalism studies. This relegation has required a consolidation and even simplification of a period of time and mode of writing that was built on resisting rules, consistency, and singular definitions.

While certainly New Journalism is a kind of literary journalism, it has specific qualities and aims that necessitate that it be examined as a distinct mode. To discuss New Journalism solely as a variety of literary journalism, and therefore to deny the “new” aspect of its label because of its place in the larger history of literary journalism, is to focus only on its technical aspects and not the socio-political context that was just as vital to the mode. As Pauly asserts, “It is not so easy to extract the new nonfiction from the

turmoil of the 1960s,” and yet the socio-political issues that were of vital importance to the New Journalists and their goals for journalism “have now been exiled to the subtropics of scholarly discourse” (111). Pauly’s position is that the development of literary journalism studies has diluted the cultural significance of New Journalism, and he claims: “Our critical discourse forged it into a literary canon and, in the process, disarmed its politics. We no longer hear it as a call to arms” (111). This argument suggests that modern examinations of New Journalism have not given enough weight to the role of the socio-political atmosphere of the 1960s and early 1970s on the development of the mode; and, furthermore, to the impact that New Journalism had on the American popular culture. It is this thesis’s intention to reassert that role and that impact.

Defining That Which Resists Definition

The definitions and boundaries of New Journalism have historically been fluid and uncertain, with the language used to discuss it often fluctuating from writer to writer. Even the name “New Journalism” was not consistently used during its development. As Ronald Weber stated in 1974, “the term ‘New Journalism’ is anything but a precise one,” and those who used it at the time often had different qualities in mind (Preface 9). Weber argued that New Journalism was a “vague and slippery” term but still “the convenient label for recent developments in nonfiction writing” (Preface 9). Nor does it seem that a collective understanding of New Journalism as a label has become more concrete in the forty-plus years since Weber’s claim. In March 2015 Sims pointed out the continued lack of a solid definition, and remarked on a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* which identified Gay Talese as a pioneer of “literary journalism”: “I’ve never been a fan of using the term New Journalism to refer to literary journalism outside of its original 1960s context, but I can’t remember seeing an actual New Journalist such as Talese identified simply as a literary journalist” (“Is It Even Possible” 1). Sims’ comment points out that though New Journalism should not be a label applied to all literary journalism, it is odd not to apply it to a key New Journalism writer like Talese. This suggests a level of uncertainty regarding what can be categorized as New Journalism, and what the name refers to, which has persisted in modern criticism. Sims’ hope that the definition could perhaps be sorted out at the 2015 conference of the International Association for Literary

Journalism Studies (IALJS) was not fulfilled. The panel¹ devoted to the attempt to define the broader “literary journalism” did not come to a single definition, and the general consensus of those at the conference was that New Journalism, and more broadly literary journalism and literary journalism studies, do not *need* a concrete definition (Abrahamson et al.). New Journalism needs to be talked about, to be debated, but the very nature of what it is means that it cannot be pinned down by a single definition.

This gives an indication of the fundamental difficulties in defining writers and writing which have actively resisted definitions. An understanding of the terminology used in this thesis is therefore important to establish from the outset. The label used by critics and writers to describe what New Journalism is varies. It has been alternately called, for instance, a “genre,” “style,” or “form”. “Genre” is problematic because (as an examination of the literature which falls under the New Journalism label clearly demonstrates) there are writers applying New Journalism techniques to any number of different genres, from the political writing focused on in this thesis, to sports writing, biographical profiles, and cultural and lifestyle writing. “Style” is equally questionable because while, as this introduction will examine, there are stylistic aspects that works of New Journalism often share, there are no elements of style which are completely agreed upon or always used, particularly in New Journalism’s developmental stages in the 1960s and early 1970s. Looking at the New Journalism focused on in this thesis makes the inapplicability of “style” as a label for New Journalism abundantly clear. For instance, Mailer’s style is radically different from that of Thompson. “Form” comes closer to being a suitable label, because it implies that New Journalism has certain recognizable technical aspects without strictly constraining the writing to a particular kind, and without broadly categorizing all New Journalism as the same style or genre. However “form” is also problematic because New Journalism was written in different forms from the short form of the newspaper article to the long form of books like Mailer’s *The Armies of the Night* (1968), and magazine articles which could fall anywhere in-between.

That New Journalism resists being easily labelled is fitting, as many of the articles analysing it in the days of its creation and development struggled to define exactly what it was, and in fact never settled on a single or clearly delineated definition. The most appropriate terms for describing the particulars of New Journalism which distinguish it

¹ The panel was made up of established literary journalism and New Journalism scholars and included David Abrahamson, John Hartsock, Sue Joseph, Isabell Meuret, Bill Reynolds, and Nancy Roberts.

from other types of journalism are “mode” and “method”. Mode encompasses the sense of a distinct approach to journalism, while allowing for the variations in form, genre, and style that different New Journalists utilised. Method is sometimes useful to more particularly describe *how* they went about their reporting rather than *what* they produced. For instance, Thompson’s method of in-depth research produced *Hell’s Angels* (1967), which was a work in the New Journalism mode of writing. These are the terms that I will be using to refer to New Journalism for the purposes of this thesis. They connote the way that New Journalists applied their attitudes towards journalism, literature, and the socio-political climate of the 1960s and early 1970s to a range of reportage that took different forms, covered different genres, and used different styles, and yet shared similar goals, as this thesis will discuss in further depth.

In order to consider what New Journalism is, we need also to be able to discuss what it is not: that is, the journalism that New Journalism developed in response and opposition to, the more conventional approach to journalism in the United States in the middle twentieth century. The way that this more mainstream kind of journalism is described seems to vary in part based on the attitude of the writer and their perspective on its relative value as a method of reportage, with some calling it “standard journalism,” others “old journalism,” “traditional journalism,” “original journalism,” or “straight journalism”. Calling it “standard journalism” is questionable because it implies that this mode of writing is the normal mode for journalism to take, with New Journalism then being “non-standard” or some kind of journalistic aberration. Calling it “old,” “original,” or “traditional” journalism is equally dubious because, as New Journalists and their critics alike point out, journalism evolves. The least problematic term seems to be “straight journalism” as this connotes the “just-the-facts” nature of the mode with none of the literary techniques and experiments of New Journalism. Therefore for the purposes of this thesis I will be referring to the mainstream journalism of the 1960s and 1970s which was not New Journalism as “straight journalism”.

Literary journalism is a similarly tangled label. It is sometimes used interchangeably with New Journalism in the critical theory of the 1960s, particularly in the early days of New Journalism when it had yet to gain a sense of solidity as a legitimate mode and to develop a commonly used name. However, a failure to distinguish between New Journalism and literary journalism does not take into account the journalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was often literary, a point acknowledged by New Journalists themselves. Using literary journalism and New Journalism as

interchangeable terms does not distinguish the ways that New Journalism is actually doing something different and, in some respects, new. Though New Journalism is very broadly literary journalism, not all literary journalism is New Journalism, and the mode must be analysed separately. The uncertain and shifting nature of these terms and definitions was part of the way New Journalism developed from the initial call by individual writers for a new method of writing journalism to an outpouring of writers discovering the mode. This culminated in a fervour of literary criticism and debate between advocates and detractors which was at its peak in 1972 and had a significant impact on the way both New Journalism and straight journalism were conceptualised.

The Decade-and-a-Half-Long Birth: A Historical Context for Literary Criticism of New Journalism

The development of New Journalism was not a straightforward process, and pinpointing an exact beginning has historically been as fraught as attempts to define the mode. Nonetheless, an understanding of the context in which the mode was shaped is vital to comprehending the particular literary climate in which the New Journalists covering the 1972 campaign operated, particularly since, as an historical overview of writing about New Journalism makes clear, 1972 marked a zenith in the development of New Journalism. To that end, this thesis will first provide a historical overview of the literary criticism regarding the development of New Journalism from the late 1950s up until the end of 1972.²

A common misconception about New Journalism is that it was invented by Tom Wolfe, or at least that Wolfe was the first to define and widely champion the mode. For instance, Sims claims that Wolfe “was credited with giving the form its name,” as does Marc Weingarten in his *Who’s Afraid of Tom Wolfe: How New Journalism Rewrote the World* (2005), in which he states: “Wolfe codified this new reporting tendency with the name ‘New Journalism’ in his 1973 anthology” (Sims, *True Stories* 220; Weingarten 7). Kevin Kerrane begins his introduction to *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism* (1998) as a response to Wolfe’s view of New Journalism, as if Wolfe’s was the definitive historical conception of New Journalism (17). Later in the

² Much of the New Journalism cited in this section can be found in Ronald Weber’s 1974 anthology *The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy*. This anthology has been used extensively here because it is a comprehensive collection of the key writings on New Journalism from the 1960s and early 1970s.

anthology itself, Ben Yagoda suggests that one of Wolfe's "innovations" is the "appropriation of point of view – long a fictional technique but rarely used by journalists" (Introduction to "From *The Electric Kool-Aid*" 169). As this introduction will later cover in greater detail, the creative use of point of view was not particular to Wolfe nor was he the first New Journalist to employ the technique. Yagoda's claim that "This became a well-established convention; Wolfe did it first and best" does not fit with contemporary responses from the 1960s to the artful use of the narrator by other authors of New Journalism (Introduction to "From *The Electric Kool-Aid*" 169). While it is true that Wolfe was an important figure in both the early stages and the continued evolution of New Journalism, his essay on New Journalism came at least a decade after other writers had begun to identify what was lacking in straight journalism and what made the new mode of writing different, interesting, and important.

The 1950s is where critical writing about New Journalism actually began. Though not using the label "New Journalism," Norman Podhoretz's 1958 article "The Article as Art" was clearly advocating the development of the kind of mode represented by New Journalism. Podhoretz was critical of both the novel and straight journalism, but he put his faith in the future of writing in magazine articles (133). He pointed to the changes already taking place in journalism, observing that "now and then a writer whose interests and talent go beyond the merely journalistic can be forced into very exciting pieces of work by the necessity to demonstrate the continuing importance of his special concerns by throwing them into the buzz and hum around him" (133). He was clearly highlighting here specific aspects of writing that exceeded the mode of straight journalism. He was not yet championing an existing alternative method, but advocating for the development of a new one, declaring: "What we need, it seems to me, is a return to the old idea of literature as a category that includes the best writing on any subject in any form" (136). Nonetheless, his comment demonstrates that the mode of writing that would become New Journalism was beginning to be conceived at least a decade and a half before Wolfe's famous articles in 1972.

Podhoretz's article was one of the earliest to suggest the need for a new method of journalism, which would evolve into New Journalism; it was soon followed by more frequent significant discussions in the early 1960s. Herbert Gold's anthology *First Person Singular: Essays for the Sixties* (1963) was prefaced by an introduction in which he championed the best method of writing as that which comes from the "novelist-essayist" ("How Else" 151). Gold went on to claim that a changing mode of writing had

been taking place in “recent times” (“How Else” 151). Like Podhoretz, he called for the development of a mode of writing of which he saw flashes here and there in particular pieces by certain writers (such as James Baldwin, Saul Bellow, Truman Capote, George P. Elliot, Norman Mailer, Warren Miller, Mary McCarthy, and Harvey Swados), rather than defining or championing an already established mode (“How Else” 150).

In his 1964 article “What Are the Communicators Communicating?” John Tebbel described straight journalism as out of touch with the needs of the modern reader, and the world in general, and called for a change to more personal writing:

Obviously [straight journalism] has failed, or is failing, to do what it is supposed to be doing—that is, interpret the world to the people who live in it. I say “obviously,” recalling the complaint of an editorial writer for one of the world’s great newspapers, who remarked to me the other day, “I’m beginning to think nobody really knows what’s going on anywhere.” If this is the conclusion of an experienced foreign correspondent and professional communicator, the confusion of newspaper readers generally can only be imagined. (“What Are” 177)

Tebbel’s argument here regarding the disconnect between reporters and the world on which they report points to an early sense of the importance, for advocates of the new mode, not only of the stylistic aspects, but the need for reportage to be more in tune with the changing socio-political issues at the time. Tebbel mainly outlined the pitfalls of the current mode of journalism that he saw as needing to be addressed, rather than advocating for an emerging new mode. But he did note a new kind of writing being done in magazines and remarked: “There have been profound changes in the field of magazines, and the end is not yet in sight” (“What Are” 183).

Also in 1964, Brock Brower published an essay called “The Article” in the anthology *On Creative Writing*. Brower promoted articles written using literary techniques as demonstrating the superior method that should be taken up by all writers, whether journalists or not. He depicted a mode that was still on the edges of existence: “Of all extant literary forms, I’m afraid the general article asks the greatest general sufferance of us right at the moment, because it is concurrently in its dotage as journalism and in its nonage as literature” (137). However, there is the distinct sense that articles which successfully took up the literary mode were no longer the rare occurrences they had been when Podhoretz was writing in 1958, and indeed were becoming more common as more writers discovered the value of the mode and developed the skills to write in it (Brower 139-140). Brower stated that “some of the better writers have independently hit

upon their own means of articulating reality” and in a few cases “the article has begun to appear with both a voice and an independence within it” (139-140).

Brower’s article represents the beginning of a shift in writing about New Journalism as promoting the ongoing rise of an existing mode rather than calling for the formation of a new one. Criticism was not quite at the stage of defining or naming the mode, but it was edging towards doing so. Brower described a mode on the cusp of existence which needed only the continued efforts of talented practitioners and the increased opportunity for publication. The restrictions of publishers and publication outlets were two of the largest barriers to the establishment of New Journalism at this stage, as Brower concluded: “Few, including most magazine publishers, have any real desire to test the machinery inside” (148). According to Brower, “The dead language of journalism has kept the article a corporate instrument in America far too long, but if it can finally achieve the sanctions which so naturally attend fiction, it will emerge as the one form with enough space to contain the risks of actual existence” (148). From this point, New Journalism rapidly became more visible, not just as regards writers using the mode and publications giving space to it, but also in an explosion of critical thinking and writing discussing why it was important for the mode to continue to rise to prominence, and how to think about and define it.

It was also around 1965 that the term “New Journalism” first began to be used to describe the method of applying literary techniques to journalistic nonfiction. Wolfe noted in *The New Journalism*:

I have no idea who coined the term ‘the New Journalism’ or even when it was coined. Seymour Krim tells me that he first heard it used in 1965 when he was editor of *Nugget* and Pete Hamill called him and said he wanted to write an article called ‘The New Journalism’ about people like Jimmy Breslin and Gay Talese. It was late in 1966 when you first started hearing people talk about ‘the New Journalism’ in conversation as best I can remember. (“Seizing the Power” 37)

It seems particularly strange that Wolfe is so often credited with giving a name to New Journalism when he himself clearly described not only the mode of writing but even the name “New Journalism” as existing before his 1972 essays and did not himself make any claims to it. The term certainly gained enough traction to begin to be used frequently by 1966, a good six years before Wolfe’s essay. Notably it appeared in George Plimpton’s 1966 interview with Truman Capote, who helped the mode gain attention with the success of his book *In Cold Blood*, which was serialized in 1965 and published as a book in 1966.

Ideas about the application of literary elements to journalism were still very diverse at this time and the interview saw Capote trying to separate his method of writing, which he called the “nonfiction novel,” from the kind of writing practised by New Journalists (Capote 190-191). Even Plimpton, himself a journalist, labelled the mode “the so-called New Journalism” (Capote 190).

That New Journalism had a label that was beginning to be used with more consistency in the latter half of the 1960s shows a solidifying understanding of it as a mode of writing. Dan Wakefield used it more positively than Capote and Plimpton in his 1966 article “The Personal Voice and the Impersonal Eye,” though without the additional titular formality of capital letters: “The important and interesting and hopeful trend to me in the new journalism is its personal nature” (46).³ It is relevant to note that though Plimpton capitalized New Journalism and Wakefield did not, their pieces came out at around the same time and in fact the Capote interview was published in January 1966, several months before Wakefield’s article in June (Capote 188; Wakefield, “The Personal Voice” 39). The implication of the capitalization of New Journalism in the earlier Capote interview but not in Wakefield’s article is that ideas about New Journalism and specific definitions of the mode were still very recent and in flux, even amongst those who attributed that name to it. Still, by this stage in writing about New Journalism, Wakefield was clearly defending an existing mode rather than calling for something new. He noted not only specific writers working alone, such as Mailer, Brower, Talese, Thomas B. Morgan, and Wolfe, but entire publications which supported the mode (most notably to Wakefield here, *Esquire*), claiming: “American magazines have opened up a great deal from the standard cut-and-dried formula-article approach that was generally the rule in the post-war era and into the early fifties” (“The Personal Voice” 41).

At the same time that New Journalism began to gain traction and success as a mode, and there was an increase in critical writing in support of it, a backlash also began to appear, as Wakefield noted (“The Personal Voice” 43-46). Supporters of New Journalism did not ignore the backlash, but produced a number of responses to it. As representative of the backlash, Wakefield used Dwight Macdonald’s “Parajournalism, or Tom Wolfe and His Magic Writing Machine,” a critique of Wolfe and his collection of essays *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (“The Personal Voice” 44). Wakefield

³ In 1966, Wakefield also published a collection, *Between the Lines: A Reporter’s Personal Journey through Public Events*, in which he further addressed his views on the current state of journalism and the influence it had had on his own writing.

described Macdonald's criticism as a personal witch-hunt, commenting: "Mr. Macdonald seems to have appointed himself to play the Inspector to Wolfe's Jean Valjean in an endless Tale of Two Articles. Macdonald has also set himself up as a combination detective, prosecutor, and judge over modern journalism" ("The Personal Voice" 44). Moreover, Wakefield argued: "Macdonald attempts to eradicate Wolfe, the *Herald Tribune*, *Esquire*, and some other rival journalists by the invention of the term 'parajournalism,' which of course is bad journalism, or not the kind, one assumes, Macdonald writes" ("The Personal Voice" 44). Wakefield suggested Macdonald's intense criticism of Wolfe and these publications was motivated by hypocritical professional jealousy and revealed: "He does not mention the fact that he has written for *Esquire* himself for more than five years, or that he is a regular movie critic for that magazine" ("The Personal Voice" 45). Macdonald was used as representative of critics of the new mode and Wakefield implied that criticism of New Journalism at the time was largely a combination of professional envy that a new mode might supersede the old straight journalism, and a knee-jerk reaction that judged and rejected the new mode using the guidelines of the old. And indeed Macdonald's 1965 article on Wolfe seems determined from the outset not to engage with the possibility that there is fact within the use of literary techniques (223). This is representative of the early backlash against the mode from those who could not reconcile the combination of journalistic fact and literary techniques which was still so new for that period of time.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the proponents of New Journalism became increasingly vocal and focused in their arguments. Seymour Krim's 1967 article "The Newspaper as Literature/Literature as Leadership" not only defended New Journalism as a mode but proposed that it was the superior method and would replace fiction as "the *de facto* literature of our time" (183; emphasis in the original). To support this radical assertion, Krim pointed to the steadily increasing number of publications which were printing New Journalism: "consider the fact that at least 30 underground weekly and biweekly newspapers—from such respectable rebels as *The Village Voice* and the Los Angeles *Free Press* to the latest *Rat* and *Oracle*—have sprung up like bayonets in the last 10 (especially the last five) years out of the same soil that once produced little magazines" (183). Similarly, Nat Hentoff's 1968 article declared, with a nod to Bob Dylan, that though personal journalism was rare in the 1950s "the times, they have changed—though not the paper of that name nearly enough" ("Behold the New Journalism" 49). Hentoff's article boldly trumpeted the rise of New Journalism, even with its title – "Behold the New

Journalism—It's Coming After You!" (49). A year later in 1969, however, Jack Newfield was notably less boldly declarative, stating:

I am not suggesting here that the new journalism is a substitute or replacement for the more orthodox variety. Although I am an advocate of the newer writers and publications, I understand that they cannot realistically become anything more than a corrective, or example, or gadfly to media corporations as powerful as *Time*, *Life*, or the *Newsweek-Washington Post* Corporation. Second, the new journalism is still in its infancy, and it remains quite a mixed bag. Some of it is brilliant and important, but some of it is also indulgent, repetitive and paranoid. ("Journalism" 60)

Newfield's point here makes it clear that though New Journalism was established as an existing mode by the late 1960s, ideas about what constituted New Journalism, or what it could become, were still very broad, even among its practitioners.

This nebulous sense of the boundaries and definition of New Journalism as a mode of writing is seen in varying ideas about what kind of writing the name New Journalism applied to. This is demonstrated by Theodore Solotaroff's 1969 introduction to *Writers and Issues*. In the system of journalism he defined, Solotaroff placed New Journalism in the "serviceable report" category, which he described as

bound by a journal's requirements of space, approach, tone, and reader interest and by the writer's own economy of energy, which prompts him to go no more deeply into a question than he can handle smoothly and efficiently. The effect is to stay on the surface of the subject, to straddle its issues ("on the one hand ... on the other") to withhold complexity and commitment. (164)

Solotaroff was very critical of this mode and labelled it "superficial" (164). Ironically, his description of the category he called the "necessary inquiry" seems more in keeping with the definitions of other supporters of New Journalism:

the necessary inquiry is one that the writer, quite literally, has to write, or what comes to the same thing, has been saving up to write. Occasionally, an editor may offer an assignment that prompts it, but, once underway, the essay is not written to his specifications but to those that arise from the confrontation of the writer and the issue, and from the inquiry that he is conducting with himself. Thus such essays are typically personal, idiosyncratic, searching, unexpected, urgent. They eschew the narrow and the superficial approach; while they are fully informed, to the point of overflow, they are willing to go off the deep end, for their purpose is to touch

bottom. The prevailing effect is that of a fullness of awareness placed in a fresh and significant perspective. (165)

This description would make a reasonable definition of New Journalism, suggesting that Solotaroff's criticism of "the new journalism" was a disagreement over terminology rather than over the mode itself (164).

It is worth noting that Krim, Hentoff, Theodore Solotaroff, and Newfield all used New Journalism as a name for the mode of writing they described, though Hentoff, Solotaroff, and Newfield did not give it capital letters. This indicates that by the end of the 1960s, the label New Journalism had become widely accepted by those writing about it, despite different ideas as to what precisely the name described. That the term was not yet concretely established, however, is illustrated by the fact that *Esquire* was seen as a key New Journalism publication and yet *Esquire* editor Harold Hayes in his 1969 introduction to *Smiling Through the Apocalypse: Esquire's History of the Sixties* dismissed New Journalism as a label, calling it a misleading name used by ambitious writers seeking to be considered "young, rich, powerful and attractive" (159). Hayes was not here being critical of New Journalism per se, but of writers attributing the name to their work as a means of singling it out for attention as something different. There was certainly still criticism aimed at New Journalism from those operating outside of the mode, such as Benjamin DeMott's 1969 article "In and Out of Universal City". Unlike Macdonald's earlier criticism of New Journalism as fictional "parajournalism," DeMott's article engaged not with a discussion of the level of fact in New Journalism but with the stylistic aspects of the mode, seeing it as formulaic and simplistic (DeMott 272).

In place of the earlier theorising about New Journalism, the early 1970s increasingly saw a critical conversation responding to either specific examples of New Journalism or to literary criticism of New Journalism from both opponents and supporters. Gay Talese's 1970 introduction to his own collection of New Journalism articles, *Fame and Obscurity*, directly addressed criticism of New Journalism at that time. Talese, like Wakefield, specifically singled out Macdonald and his criticism as representative of opponents to the mode, flatly stating: "I do not agree" ("Author's Note," 35). Talese then offered a justification of the role of fact in New Journalism. Conversely, Gerald Grant's 1970 essay "The 'New Journalism' We Need" suggested that some

criticism of New Journalism was vital, because a blind acceptance of everything claiming the label “New Journalism” would lead to bad reporting (265).⁴

In addition to an increase in critical debate, the beginning of the 1970s also produced more consistent attempts to define New Journalism. A panel discussion in 1970 with Hayes, Talese, Wolfe and Professor L. W. Robinson (an editor, two writers, and a journalism scholar, respectively) discussed both what constituted New Journalism and what its future possibilities might be (Hayes et al.). David McHam’s 1971 article “The Authentic New Journalists” tried to define the mode while aware that its nature was nebulous, pointing out that “even before New Journalism is firmly identified subtle changes are taking place” (121). Donald Pizer’s 1971 essay “Documentary Narrative as Art: William Manchester and Truman Capote” presented a detailed analysis of the successful elements of what he called “documentary narrative” rather than New Journalism. Gloria Steinem offered views on the history and future of New Journalism from the perspective of a practitioner in her 1971 interview with the American Society of Newspaper Editors (“Gloria Steinem: An Interview”).

Hayes’s 1972 article “Editor’s Notes on the New Journalism” represents how quickly ideas about New Journalism grew. When he had written the introduction to *Smiling Through the Apocalypse* three years earlier, he had been reluctant to use the label “New Journalism” or to attribute a particular style or movement to the kind of writing that he praised (“Introduction” 159). In his 1972 article, though still not a fan of the label, he observed: “The New Journalism has now become so established that it is apparently recognizable whenever and wherever its practitioners seek to perform it” (“Editor’s Notes” 260). He pointed out the increased attention to New Journalism by critics and proponents alike and that “In the past year, at least three journalism historians have called on these offices to shed light on this brand-new school of journalism” (“Editor’s Notes” 260). Hayes’s article shows that changes to attitudes towards both journalism and New Journalism were happening rapidly in 1972, and that more critical attention was being paid to New Journalism as a mode of writing. This growing recognition is particularly important to grasp in relation to the journalism considered in this thesis, because it means that the New Journalism written in 1972 was appearing at the very time that the mode

⁴Similar criticism from the time included Daniel J. Balz’s 1970 essay “Bad Writing and New Journalism,” expressing a deeper concern about technically unskilled writers rather than sloppy reportage. Likewise Herbert Gold’s 1971 article “On Epidemic First Personism” suggested that what might be successfully done in New Journalism by a skilled writer should not be applied to all journalism written by less capable writers.

had a rapidly increasing opportunity to have an impact on both straight journalism and on society.

Indeed, debate about New Journalism reached a peak in 1972, which, as this thesis will illustrate, was key to both the New Journalism and the straight journalism which covered the presidential campaign that year. As New Journalism became more established and popular, more critics wrote articles disagreeing with proponents of New Journalism, such as Lester Markel's scathingly disdainful 1972 article "So What's New?". It was at this point in the development of New Journalism that Tom Wolfe really entered the scene as a commentator on the mode. His articles "The Birth of 'The New Journalism': An Eyewitness Report" and "The New Journalism: A la Recherche des Whichy Thickets" (reprinted in his collection *The New Journalism* as "The Feature Game" and "Like a Novel"), were published in *New York* magazine in February 1972 (Wolfe and Johnson 7).⁵ Wolfe was so outspokenly insistent not only about the superiority of New Journalism but about the negative qualities of other methods of writing that his articles seem to have incited more critical reaction to New Journalism than before and had a polarising effect. Michael J. Arlen offered a response to Wolfe in his article from May 1972, "Notes on the New Journalism". Arlen was heavily critical, not of the mode itself entirely, but of Wolfe's proclamations, declaring: "It's probably easier than it should be to dismiss [Wolfe's] articles" and that they "had most of the defects of the form he was extolling—the pop sociology, the easy cultural generalities—with few of the compensating attractions" (244). This is indicative of the backlash Wolfe and his ideas about the importance of New Journalism received. Not long after, responding to both Wolfe's and Arlen's sides of the debate, Newfield wrote another article on New Journalism in which he expressed frustration with all the current opinions ("Is There" 299). Wilfrid Sheed was also heavily critical of Wolfe's championing of New Journalism as a label in his article "A Fun-House Mirror," though he did not unconditionally extend that criticism to all New Journalism. Wolfe addressed the backlash to his *New York* articles in a piece in *Esquire*, "Why They Aren't Writing the Great American Novel Anymore".⁶ Both Sheed's and Wolfe's articles appeared in December 1972, after the presidential election that this thesis focuses on, but they are

⁵ The versions of Wolfe's articles in *The New Journalism* collection are nearly identical to those of the original articles, with the difference that he cut the final four paragraphs of "The Birth of 'The New Journalism': An Eyewitness Report" and incorporated them in an expanded form in the third section of the book, "Seizing the Power" (Wolfe, "The Birth"; Wolfe and Johnson 7).

⁶ Included in his anthology as "Seizing the Power" and "Appendix" (Wolfe and Johnson).

representative of the cultural and literary environment in which New Journalism about the election was written. At the time of the 1972 election, New Journalism, though more established than ever before, was still not a mode which was widely understood and accepted, and it was being more openly and fervently debated than ever.

As a label, “New Journalism” was more established by 1972, with McHam, Steinem, Hayes, Markel, Wolfe, Arlen, Newfield, and Sheed all using it as their name for the mode, with capitalized initials. McHam even pointedly noted this, writing “there is something going on that has been called capital N, capital J New Journalism” (112). Hayes’s “Editor’s Notes on the New Journalism,” meanwhile, reinforced the recent and rapid increase in attention given to New Journalism. Even when some of these writers were criticising New Journalism or disagreeing with the validity of the label, they still used it. This demonstrates that though precise definitions and ideas of the essential qualities differed, New Journalism had reached a peak of relevance in 1972 that made it a mode established enough to have a commonly agreed upon name.

This range of critical writing from Podhoretz’s early call for a new method in the 1950s to Wolfe’s renowned defence of the mode in 1972 represents both the critical and social landscape in which the journalism about the 1972 presidential election was created. Though a concrete definition of New Journalism was never decisively settled on, key elements emerged across the texts which contributed to an overall understanding of what constituted New Journalism. The concepts and ideas which were formed and debated in these articles offer an important interpretation of the context from which journalism in 1972 was both written and read.

A Tempest of Thoughts: The Variable Key Elements and Themes of New Journalism in the ’60s and ’70s

Now that a chronology of New Journalism theory leading up to the 1972 election has been established, it is imperative to consider how the New Journalists’ attempts at defining their mode reflected its development in response to the literary and cultural landscape of the time. The chronology of writing about New Journalism from the 1960s and 1970s shows continual attempts to define and ascribe particular stylistic and technical attributes to it. A single definition was never clearly accepted, and the elements important to the mode varied depending on the particular viewpoint and intent of the writer doing the theorising. Nonetheless certain aspects continually surface in these articles as key to

the way that New Journalism was understood. In focusing on these elements, this introduction will establish an understanding of aspects of New Journalism which strongly relate to the writings of Crouse, Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem that will be examined in this thesis, and are important to understanding the context in which these writers developed.

The aspect of New Journalism which perhaps receives the most attention is its use of literary techniques, which is one of the most visible ways that New Journalism distinguishes itself from straight journalism. And, though definitions of New Journalism from this period are fluid, the application of novelistic techniques to facts was a consistent element. In an early consideration of what was valuable about the emerging mode to writing, Gold proposed “a superior variety of journalism, performed by a writer with a sense of pace and rhythm in prose and a vivid mission in his sense of life” (“How Else” 152). To Gold, the application of literary techniques to journalism came from novelists turning to writing journalism (“How Else” 152). This was a viewpoint shared by Capote, himself a novelist who turned to nonfiction. Capote described his initial conception of the new mode of writing as “a narrative form that employed all the techniques of fictional art but was nevertheless immaculately factual” (189). Though Capote labelled his own work a “nonfiction novel” rather than journalism, this is a definition which nonetheless is applicable to New Journalism (189). Capote emphasised the importance of literary techniques to the nonfiction novel by noting that just because a piece of journalism is novel length does not make it literary journalism if it does not have the necessary stylistic elements (190). Of course, this point is also what Capote used to separate himself from journalists using literary techniques, of whom he was very critical. In response to a question on what he thought about New Journalism, Capote claimed journalists like Breslin and Wolfe “and that crowd, they have nothing to do with creative journalism—in the sense that I use the term—because neither of them, nor any of that school of reporting, have the proper fictional technical equipment” (190). Capote’s separation of himself from the New Journalists was predicated on the belief that “to be a good creative reporter, you have to be a very good fiction writer” and that “It’s useless for a writer whose talent is essentially journalistic to attempt creative reportage, because it simply won’t work” (190-191). While Capote’s separation of journalists and fiction writers was based on a bias against journalists, what is significant here to the key elements of New Journalism is the idea that the best kind of writer is skilled at both reporting and at applying fictional techniques to that reporting.

Writers without Capote's bias against journalists took up the need for literary writing in journalism with just as much verve. Krim, a newspaper and magazine journalist, described as redundant a past pretence of what form literary writing could take: "pretense in the sense that so-called 'fine' writing was once a world apart, in a BOOK, while newspaper prose was supposed to 'line somebody's birdcage' in Hamill's words" (173). Krim argued:

there is a definite advantage to the newspaperman in recreating reality if he uses every conceivable literary avenue open to him; for his job, depending on the intensity of his sense of mission, is to penetrate ever more deeply into the truth of every story—and this can only be done if he has the instruments of language, narrative know-how, character-development, etc., that until now have always been associated with fiction. (173)

Thus once the pretence of status was set aside, the elements of fiction could be used by journalists to create more literary (and, according to this argument, better) journalism.

Wolfe's 1972 discussion of the use of literary techniques in New Journalism is particularly noteworthy for an understanding of ideas about the role of these techniques in the mode at that time. This is not because he represented the thinking of all writers (he did not), but because of the attention paid to his comments and the flurry of controversy over the mode they provoked. According to Wolfe, the foundation of the concept of New Journalism came from the idea that journalism could be written like novels:

in the early 1960s a curious new notion, just hot enough to inflame the ego, had begun to intrude into the tiny confines of the feature statusphere [sic]. It was in the nature of a discovery. This discovery, modest at first, humble, in fact, deferential, you might say, was that it just might be possible to write journalism that would ... read like a novel. *Like* a novel, if you get the picture. ("The Feature Game" 21-22; emphasis in the original)

Wolfe expanded upon the idea of journalism that uses the techniques of fiction in his next article, “Like a Novel”. He described his own first New Journalism article, the 1963 article “There Goes (Varoom! Varoom!) That Kandy-Kolored (Tphhhhhh!) Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby (Rahghhhh!) Around the Bend (Brummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm). . .,” as a discovery of a different way of writing:

It showed me the possibility of there being something ‘new’ in journalism. What interested me was not simply the discovery that it was possible to write accurate non-fiction with techniques usually associated with novels and short stories. It was

that – plus. It was the discovery that it was possible in non-fiction, in journalism, to use any literary device, from the traditional dialogisms of the essay to stream-of-consciousness, and to use many different kinds simultaneously, or within a relatively short space ... to excite the reader both intellectually and emotionally. (“Like a Novel” 28)

Wolfe’s advocacy of literary techniques in New Journalism championed the aspect of the mode which was one of the main sources of condemnation by critics who were unable to accept the idea that literary techniques could be applied to factual reporting.

But there was actually consensus amongst those attempting to define New Journalism that it needed to be factual. New Journalism is neither simply literary nor simply fact, but the skilful combination of both. Talese emphasised the importance of both the factual information and the fictional techniques in New Journalism, and seemed to propose that the best of both fiction and nonfiction resides in the combination in New Journalism: “It allows me to be creative and yet factual. That’s what I think is exciting about nonfiction these days. You can do all the novelist can do—you just have to do a *hell* of a lot of research. You have to know your people very, very well” (“Gay Talese” 97; emphasis in the original). This suggests that in order to write nonfiction using literary techniques, as in New Journalism, an even deeper knowledge and understanding of the facts of the subject were needed. And regardless of what critics of the mode said, Talese noted that underneath the literary techniques of New Journalism was “reporting that fortifies the whole structure. Fact reporting, leg work” (Hayes et al. 69). He reiterated that what his and other New Journalists’ work captured was a more comprehensive picture of the truth, that while all of the facts were verifiable, “verifiable facts aren’t enough for me. I’m sure they’re not enough for Tom [Wolfe]. Not enough to get a fraction of the truth. Or not even that we are getting at the whole truth, but we are closer to the telling on a much broader scale, with the techniques of fiction” as opposed to the much narrower view of facts offered by straight journalism (Hayes et al. 70). Moreover, as Talese pointed out, despite criticism that New Journalism was fictionalised, he never had anyone that he wrote about attack him for being untruthful, because he was “very careful with my facts” (“Gay Talese” 88).

Printed in public outlets just as straight journalism was, New Journalism was equally available for open consideration of the facts should there have been a question about its accuracy. Along this line Krim suggested that the very nature of the relationship between a journalist and the public keeps the writer in check when it comes to facts (174).

The writer cannot deviate too wildly from the truth, or it will be noticed – “There is a resiliency between what he [the reporter-writer] writes and the public, and if he takes risks either imaginative or moral he does not do it in a vacuum or in the eye of posterity; he is bound to be reacted to with a bang in the present” (Krim 174). The eye of the public is not exactly a failsafe method for ensuring factual journalism, as it depends on the public knowing what is true and what is not. This becomes even more complicated when the public expects what they read to be true because of the medium and context of publication, as will be further examined in this thesis (particularly in the chapter on Thompson). However, Krim’s point is significant because it pointed out the general expectation that journalism would be factual, and that this expectation was no different for New Journalism than for straight journalism. Of course New Journalism was not only being published in newspapers, and writers such as Capote who published books and in magazines faced different expectations. Nonetheless, as much as Capote emphasised the necessity of the skills of a fiction writer in order to write a nonfiction novel, he also stressed the importance of being factual, stating: “One doesn’t spend almost six years on a book, the point of which is factual accuracy, and then give way to minor distortions” (202). Capote’s definition of his method of writing was self-serving, but it is very clear that both the facts and the way that they are presented were key elements to the new mode.⁷

Despite the insistence of its supporters that facts were a core element of New Journalism, critics most often attacked it for fictionalising the truth, as for instance Macdonald labelling it “parajournalism” (223). This sort of claim suggests that whatever journalistic facts underpinned a work of New Journalism, they were obscured by the literary techniques applied to them. New Journalists contended that the opposite was true. For example, Steinem believed that journalists such as herself were at times “self-indulgent” but that “At least we’re honest” – an interesting retort to the idea that New Journalism’s involvement of the writer in the piece distorted the truth (“Gloria Steinem: An Interview” 77-78). Steinem turned this criticism on its head by suggesting that self-indulgence was also self-awareness and that New Journalists said outright when they did

⁷ Capote’s own work did not live up to his ideals. He maintained that *In Cold Blood* was entirely factual, but many critics pointed out factual inaccuracies. For instance, Phillip K. Thompson’s 1966 article “In Cold Fact” concluded that “Art” had “triumph[ed] over reality, fiction over nonfiction” (171). As Eric Heyne observes in “Towards a Theory of Literary Nonfiction,” this has led some critics to argue that *In Cold Blood* should therefore be labelled “fiction” (481). This does not invalidate Capote’s claims for what an ideal nonfiction novel should be, but it does illuminate the potential difficulties in merging the novel form with factual reporting.

not know something or when a statement was something they thought as opposed to something they knew – an insightful step ahead of straight journalism (“Gloria Steinem: An Interview” 78). As Steinem explained, “what’s so insidious about *The New York Times* is that they would never say ‘We don’t know’ or ‘We’re not sure’” (“Gloria Steinem: An Interview” 78). Wolfe suggested that accusations of New Journalism not being factual came from a lack of understanding of the new mode, a lack of understanding he had shared on first encountering New Journalism writing, assuming that the writer had made up things like dialogue (“Like a Novel” 24). Of this reaction, he commented:

The funny thing was, that was precisely the reaction that countless journalists and literary intellectuals would have over the next nine years as the New Journalism picked up momentum. *The bastards are making it up!* (I’m telling you, Ump, that’s a *spitball* he’s throwing ...) Really stylish reporting was something no one knew how to deal with, since no one was used to thinking of reporting as having an esthetic dimension. (“Like a Novel” 24; emphasis in the original)

The implication was that in being “new” New Journalism was also unfamiliar, which provoked criticism and controversy because of a lack of understanding of how to deal with it. Furthermore, as Wolfe pointed out: “The most important things one attempted in terms of technique depended upon a depth of information that had never been demanded in newspaper work. Only through the most searching forms of reporting was it possible, in non-fiction, to use whole scenes, extended dialogue, point-of-view, and interior monologue” (“Like a Novel” 35). This suggests not only that fact was as important as literary technique to New Journalism, but that the use of literary techniques would not be possible without extremely well-researched and detailed knowledge of the subjects reported on.

This debate over the ability to include personal perspectives and still produce factual journalism is key to understanding the position of the New Journalists and the role of their reportage in the journalism of the 1960s and 1970s. Arguments for personal perspective, the inclusion of the narrator, and subjective writing flew in the face of the standard practice of straight journalism. In the mid-twentieth century when New Journalism developed, objectivity was one of the core tenets of straight journalism. In 1923, the American Society of Newspaper Editors drafted the “Canons of Journalism,” a code of ethics for the publication of journalism (Stephens 255; “Code of Ethics”). The code proclaimed under the heading of “Impartiality” that “Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free

from opinion or bias of any kind” (“Code of Ethics”). This established towards the beginning of the twentieth century a journalistic dictate that required pure objectivity. However, the code did have a clause which allowed for more opinionated writing in the case of “so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing the writer's own conclusions and interpretation” (“Code of Ethics”). While the use of the adjective “so-called” suggests a level of illegitimacy, the allowance of opinion in advocacy articles or articles which proclaimed upfront their personal subjectivity signified a precedent for the kind of writing practised by the New Journalists on the 1972 campaign.

Despite this specific latitude, the code’s insistence on objectivity established a frame of reference for journalism being normally unbiased. Mitchell Stephens describes the rise of the use of the term “objectivity” by twentieth-century American journalists “to express their commitment not only to impartiality but to reflecting the world as it is, without bias or distortion of any sort” (258). According to him, this insistence on objectivity was particularly important in the United States, where “this commitment is central to the modern reporter’s self-image” (258). At the same time, he asserts that the commitment to objectivity was “impossible to fulfil” and argues “No one who proposes to communicate facts about an event will be able to treat those facts entirely dispassionately and evenhandedly—to treat them as if they were *objects*” (258; emphasis in the original). That there was a requirement for objectivity in the journalism of the United States in the mid-twentieth century and yet that pure objectivity was inherently impossible, created a tension between expectations of journalists and what they actually achieved. According to Stephens, after the code’s establishment of the objectivity requirement, “The impossibility of journalistic objectivity has not prevented it from being elevated to the status of commandment: Thou shalt tell the news ‘straight’! Thou shalt not taint thy news columns with biases of any kind!” (259-260).

It is this tension and this impossible commandment against which New Journalists openly rebelled. In 1972, the debate about the function of objectivity was important not just to the New Journalists but to its role in journalism as a whole. Despite the seeming impossibility of pure objectivity, Gaye Tuchman argued in 1972 that “Newspapermen must be able to invoke some concept of objectivity in order to process facts about social reality” as well as to meet the professional standards of other journalists and news organisations since an obvious lack of objectivity was grounds for criticism of the validity of a piece of reportage (660-661). The requirement of a seemingly impossible standard

led reporters to standardise a number of practices in their reporting in order to be able to point to objectivity:

They may claim to have (1) presented conflicting possibilities related to truth-claims, (2) presented supplementary evidence to support a “fact,” (3) used quotation marks to indicate that the reporter is not making a truth-claim, (4) presented the most “material facts” first, and (5) carefully separated “facts” from opinions by using the label “news analysis.” (Tuchman 676)

This suggests that the formal structure and style of straight reporting in 1972 were functions of trying to achieve objective reporting, or at least, as Tuchman argued, “*strategies through which newsmen protect themselves from critics and lay professional claim to objectivity*” (676; emphasis in the original). However, these techniques demonstrated attempts at objectivity rather than objectivity itself (Tuchman 676). The possible flaws in these strategies, asserted Tuchman, included:

that such procedures (1) constitute an invitation to selective perception, (2) mistakenly insist the “facts speak for themselves,” (3) are a discrediting device and a means of introducing the reporter’s opinion, (4) are bounded by the editorial policy of a particular news organization, and (5) mislead the news consumer by suggesting that “news analysis” is weighty, ponderous, or definitive. (676)

Both the strategies used to achieve the appearance of objectivity, and the flaws in these strategies, are elements that were criticized by the New Journalists in their arguments for changes to the straight form of journalism, as discussed earlier in this introduction. And yet, as Tuchman stated, despite the “discrepancy between the ends sought and those achieved” with regards to objectivity, the “strategic ritual” of reporting techniques seeking an appearance of objectivity was still the standard procedure of mainstream media (676). This prompts the thought: if pure objectivity is an inherently impossible goal for a journalist, the choices they make in their reportage in pursuit of that goal are indicative of the angle from which either they or their publication wish the truth to be framed.

The effect of these flawed standards of objectivity in political reporting was already being debated in 1972. Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw argued in a 1972 article that “In our day, more than ever before, candidates go before the people through the mass media rather than in person. The information in the mass media becomes the only contact many have with politics” (176). Though McCombs and Shaw stated that evidence supporting the ability of mass media to “deeply change attitudes in a campaign

is far from conclusive,” the prevalence of mass media as the main source of political information during the campaign underscores the significance of campaign reportage as a source of information, and adds importance to the choices made by the reporter in framing that information (176). Though the media might not be able to control how the reader felt about information, they had a significant level of control over *what* information was given to readers, in what proportions and with what focus (McCombs and Shaw 177). McCombs and Shaw conducted a study based on the 1968 presidential campaign and the perception of what voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, believed to be the key issues of the campaign as compared to those highlighted by the mass media (177). The conclusions of McCombs and Shaw’s study suggested that the media did “appear to have exerted a considerable impact on voters’ judgements of what they considered the major issues of the campaign” and yet that this influence represented a “*composite* of the mass media coverage” that combined what voters were told by various media sources (179-184; emphasis in the original). Furthermore, McCombs and Shaw argued that “the political world is reproduced imperfectly by individual news media” and yet collectively the mass media’s impact on the voters’ perception of key campaign issues “strongly suggests an agenda-setting function of the mass media” (184). This underscored the significance of an individual reporter’s bias, whether intentional or subconscious, as it contributed to the political narrative of the media. This debate was key to the kind of reporting that the New Journalists practiced and advocated for, which allowed for conscious and upfront acknowledgement of bias rather than ignoring it.

Issues regarding objectivity and bias were not resolved in the 1970s, and continued to be points of contention. For instance, Stephens’ analysis of the establishment of the objectivity standard in his *A History of News* (1997) highlights its continuing impact (258). Stephens proposes that contrary to the ideals of the standard, the journalist is a filter rather than a “mirror” of facts, which inevitably introduces bias: “The view with which their audiences are presented will vary depending on where in this large world journalists direct their small allotment of attention. [...] Journalists’ supposed objectivity is further compromised by the narrative frameworks they impose on their stories [...]” (258). Notable scholar Robert Entman in a 1993 paper addresses the issue of framing as it applies to formal scholarly discourse in communications studies and describes it as “essentially involv[ing] *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation,*

and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (52; emphasis in the original). In particular, Entman proposes: “This portrait of framing has important implications for political communication” (55). Much as Tuchman contended in 1972, Entman ultimately argues that journalists do not have a cohesive understanding of frameworks and therefore do not deal with the subjectivity that framing reinforces (56-57). This thesis applies the concept of frameworks to the New Journalists’ rejection of objectivity and championing of personal perspectives. The use of frameworks in campaign journalism and the role of the journalist’s bias, whether subconscious or conscious, will be particularly relevant to the analysis in this thesis of the New Journalists on the 1972 campaign and their deliberate use of subjective frameworks to promote secondary agendas in their reportage. The development of New Journalism was not a move towards a rejection of facts, but a conscious and intentional use of personal frameworks aimed at being even more factual.

But the goal of New Journalism was not merely to be factual. It tried to go beyond the surface-level facts, with many New Journalists conducting in-depth research into the subjects they covered. In the face of a lack of understanding from critics, Wolfe highlighted the actual importance of facts and thorough research to New Journalism:

It was more intense, more detailed, and certainly more time-consuming than anything that newspaper or magazine reporters, including investigative reporters, were accustomed to. They developed the habit of staying with the people they were writing about for days at a time, weeks in some cases. They had to gather all the material the conventional journalist was after – and then keep going. (“Like a Novel” 35)

This emphasises the claim that in addition to literary techniques, in-depth research and factual reporting were equally important to New Journalism. In-depth research sometimes was believed to mean “participatory research” though this was a controversial area even among supporters and practitioners of New Journalism, with some praising journalist participation and others decrying it as a loss of objectivity.

One writer strongly against participatory journalism was McHam; in 1971, he saw participatory journalism as a negative product of the youthful counterculture: “The young ones may adopt the more participatory attitude out of naivete [sic], poor training, improper motivation, inadequate guidance, lax newsroom discipline and/or a variety of other commissions and omissions” (112). He suggested that straight journalists criticised New Journalism because they saw it as representative of the participatory journalism of young writers (112). He criticised these young writers as characterised by “inept

traditional approaches, imperfect methods, and, most serious, the inability—intentional or otherwise—of the press to respond to its readership as fairly and responsibly as it professes” (112). His stance was that writers who adopted these fallible methods were not representative of New Journalism even though they might claim that label, arguing that the mode was “not necessarily activist or participatory and it is not necessarily practiced by untrained, inexperienced, undisciplined would-be journalists” (112). Whether or not participatory journalism was accepted from within New Journalism, McHam’s point that it was used by critics to condemn the mode in general certainly seems to have been correct. DeMott, for instance, labelled New Journalism “Involvedese” and suggested that it was simple and formulaic (272-273). The critical viewpoint of participatory journalism has implications for the reception of the 1972 campaign New Journalism focused on in this thesis. This is particularly the case because both Mailer and Thompson were known for their participatory journalism, and their articles would have been viewed from this perspective.

Though critics of New Journalism, and even some supporters such as McHam, wrote about “participatory journalism” as a negative aspect of New Journalism, those who praised participatory journalism did so with gusto. Hayes, for instance, seemed to revel in the idea, and described the writer as “the only hero” and part of *Esquire’s* collection *Smiling Through the Apocalypse* as “concerned with the private lives of our writer kings” (“Introduction” 158). To Hayes the involvement of the writer in the events covered was part of what lent this kind of journalism its power to connect with the things being reported in a meaningful way for the reader, and he claimed of *Esquire’s* writers: “It is doubtful whether even so egocentric an author as Ernest Hemingway saw himself as central to events as have some of the writers through these years, [...] keeping witness in the truest sense, and all readers were the richer for it” (“Introduction” 158-159). The idea of “keeping witness in the truest sense” suggests a level of wholly accurate and truthful reporting achieved only by journalists writing directly and in-depth about first-hand experiences. Newfield took this point even further in his article “Journalism: Old, New and Corporate,” arguing that a completely truthful work required participation:

The evidence now seems overwhelming that the closer a serious writer gets to his material, the more understanding he gets, the more he is there to record those decisive moments of spontaneity and authenticity. He gets inside the context and sees scenes and details that distance and neutrality deny to the more conventional reporters. He does not have to write about impersonal public rituals like ghost-

written speeches, well-rehearsed concerts, and staged and managed press conferences. He is there to see and react to the human reflexes exposed late at night that illuminate a man's character. (65)

This is particularly relevant in the context of this thesis, as the in-depth nature of the reporting being done by Mailer, Thompson, Crouse, and Steinem enabled them to write about the candidates of the '72 election beyond their carefully staged public appearances. And, in fact, when highlighting significant works of participatory journalism, Newfield cited some previous work by these authors, pointing out both Mailer's *Armies of the Night*, which he described as "seminal" and "the most praised example," and Thompson's "powerful" *Hell's Angels* ("Journalism" 65).

As divisive a topic as participatory journalism was, it was fittingly also one highlighted in Wolfe's controversial 1972 articles. Wolfe saw it as the best way to get an in-depth understanding of the subject being reported on. In *The New Journalism* he described the development of participatory journalism as consisting of "feats of reporting that were extraordinary, spectacular" and those who wrote it as "a breed of journalists who somehow had the moxie to talk their way inside of any milieu, even closed societies, and hang on for dear life" ("Seizing the Power" 41). Of particular note to this thesis, one of the books that Wolfe highlighted as representing such reporting at its best was Thompson's *Hell's Angels*: "the all-time free-lance writer's Brass Stud Award went that year to an obscure California journalist named Hunter Thompson who 'ran' with the Hell's Angels for eighteen months – as a reporter and not a member, which might have been safer – in order to write *Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gang*" ("Seizing the Power" 41). In contrast to the idea that participatory journalism creates biased journalism, Wolfe suggested that this was not the fault of the method of journalism but of a lack of capability by the particular journalist who failed to remain unbiased ("Appendix" 67-68). Wolfe was quite clear that he believed in-depth reporting was a skill that not all reporters were capable of ("Appendix" 68). Wolfe's articles, of course, were highly controversial, and his unapologetic championing of contentious aspects of the mode seems likely to have been at the heart of both the controversy and the subsequent attention paid to his articles.

Closely related to the debate over participatory journalism was disagreement over the use of a first-person narrator. The arguments against the use of first-person narration were very similar to those against participatory journalism. These included the idea that

first-person narrators placed too much focus on the writer rather than the subject and that first-person narration made a piece entirely too subjective. As Talese put it:

you yourself become the focal point of the piece, and everything reacts to your writing about yourself as a person who is going out and having things happen to him. Norman Mailer, for example, did it in going to the steps of the Pentagon—the piece he did for *Harper's* that later became a book. When Mailer writes about himself, he does well, he does beautifully. But we do not get depth, we do not get a sense of other people in great depth. (“Gay Talese” 96)

The example here of Mailer's focus on himself as the narrator in *The Armies of the Night* is indicative of the method that he used in his later New Journalism, as will be examined in this thesis, and it is interesting that though Talese praised Mailer's beautiful writing about himself, he viewed Mailer's use of the first-person as detrimental to his analysis of those around him. This suggests a potential tension between the way literary techniques were used in journalism, and the reporting being done. Furthermore, though viewing New Journalism from a distinctly different perspective as someone who previously wrote novels rather than journalism, Capote actually echoed Talese's views of first-person narration: “My feeling is that for the nonfiction-novel to be entirely successful, the author should not appear in the work. Ideally. Once the narrator does appear, he has to appear throughout, all the way down the line, and the I-I-I intrudes when it really shouldn't” (Capote 195).

First-person narration was a distinctive New Journalism element which went against the rules and assumptions of straight journalism. And yet Wakefield claimed that writing without a personal viewpoint was actually detrimental to the content of journalism and suggested that readers:

have grown increasingly mistrustful of and bored with anonymous reports about the world, whether signed or unsigned, for those who have begun to suspect what we reporters of current events and problems so often try to conceal: that we are really individuals after all, not all-knowing, all-seeing Eyes but separate, complex, limited, particular “I's.” (*Between* 1)

This suggests that the ability to use first-person narration was not only a characteristic of New Journalism that separated it from straight journalism, but that it was one of the factors that gave New Journalism the potential to connect more personally with readers. Furthermore, Wakefield argued that by not using first-person and trying to obscure the viewpoint of the writer, the facts of the article themselves could become skewed:

there is more than a pretentious convention at work here. The convention of saying “we” instead of “I” may be, on the level I was speaking of, merely a matter of taste, but it quickly becomes a matter of manipulation, when, for instance, the editorial tells us that “we are all disturbed by Candidate X’s proposals on medical care.” We are, are we? Do you mean all you guys at that Republican (or Democratic) newspaper? Do you mean that the doctors as well as the patients are disturbed? The rich patients as well as the poor? Young people who have never been sick and don’t give much thought to medical care, and middle-aged men with ulcers? Or do you mean “all right-thinking people,” and are you implying that if I am not disturbed about it I am not among the right-thinking “we” and that I don’t exist at all unless I believe as you do? (*Between* 5)

Wakefield’s argument regarding the manipulation of the use of first person plural has ties to the impossibility of objectivity and the role of framing in journalism. His juxtaposition of the almost sinister quality of the hidden bias of the first person plural against the acknowledged subjectivity of a first-person narrator is key to one of the ways that New Journalists attempted to position themselves as actually more truthful. The implication is that New Journalism offered a vital and clearer portrayal of political issues, because it did not obscure the viewpoint of the writer, as will be examined in further detail in this thesis.

For those who supported the use of first-person journalism it offered the writer a valuable level of direct personal connectedness to the reader. Hentoff, for instance, saw the use of the first-person narrator as a hallmark of the difference between the restrictions of straight journalism and the opportunities of New Journalism:

During my early years as a journalist, I wrote many long pieces without a single “I” in them. In traditional journalism, it was bad form to put yourself in. You might be accused of lack of “objectivity,” and stripped, like Dreyfus, of press cards, copy paper, and big, soft black pencils while your former colleagues jeered, “He thought he was more important than the story!” (“Behold the New Journalism” 49)

According to Hentoff, New Journalism changed this, which resulted in better and more personal journalism (“Behold the New Journalism” 49). Hayes likewise pointed out that just because some writers could not handle first-person artfully did not mean that it could not produce superior works by those who could; of the idea that Mailer should write without himself as a character in his articles, Hayes argued: “Why should he? That’s his great art” (Hayes et al. 73). The nebulous consensus among practitioners of New

Journalism after the mode had developed for a few years seems to have been that first-person narrators were fine when used by a skilful writer and distracting from the true subject of the piece when used by a less skilful writer. The fact that there was an option to use a first-person narrator in New Journalism was one aspect that set it apart as a more freely creative mode than straight journalism.

Indeed, one subject on which most commentators, whether opponents or supporters of the mode, agreed was that, for good or for bad, New Journalism was attempting to do something different from either straight journalism or novels. Where this idea came into conflict in different examinations of the mode was whether or not what New Journalism was doing was “new” and of substance or if it was merely a façade of flashy style and was still at its core the same as straight journalism. Further complicating the concept of newness was the idea that, even if it was different from straight journalism, New Journalism was a return to the literary journalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and therefore not technically “new”. Even supporters of the mode acknowledged that the application of literary techniques to journalism was not a new invention. Steinem, for instance, suggested that New Journalism resembled journalism before it became mass-produced and simplified: “because before the advent of the telegraph machine, news stories were done in essay form, or short story form, or some literary form” (“Gloria Steinem: An Interview” 77). Like Steinem, Brower viewed the new mode of writing as a return to the original mode of the essay and claimed: “this is not a new thing, but only a resurrected approach” (140).

This was also one of the most obvious points for critics of New Journalism to attack, as Markel did in his article “So What’s New?”. Markel, as a former editor of the epitome of straight journalism, *The New York Times*, was clearly biased against New Journalism. He contended that obviously “the ‘New Journalism’ is really not new” and asserted that: “As for the newness of the concept, surely reporting in detail and in depth reaches far back in literature [...] Clay Felker rejects the phrase as inaccurate and conducive to malpractices” (257-258). Markel’s article was published in January 1972, and included a barb at “Mr. Wolfe” which marks this as the sort of attack that Wolfe responded to in his *Esquire* article at the end of 1972. In the article Wolfe addressed the question of whether or not New Journalism was actually “new” in great detail. Interestingly, given that the idea that it was new was something which critics frequently disparaged Wolfe and other New Journalist supporters for believing, he did not argue that it *was* new, and observed

that this point was usually only brought up as “a rhetorical question that says: Of course it isn’t. I have never seen anyone stick around for an answer” (“Appendix” 57).

Moreover, though critics often condemned Wolfe for claiming the New Journalism sprung up fully formed in the 1960s, he pointed to some of the journalism of the 1940s (such as the articles of John Hersey, Capote, Lillian Ross, A.J. Liebling, and Al Stump) as “the direct ancestry of the present-day New Journalism” (“Appendix” 61). Far from suggesting that New Journalism originated in the 1960s, Wolfe acknowledged that its origin occurred in a nebulous period of time (“Appendix” 62). Likewise, Krim not only believed that there was clearly a new mode of writing prior to the movement in the late 1960s but suggested that it was being created in response to a perception about the restrictions of creativity to fiction that were a product of modern conventions (175). He pointed to novelists such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe, and William Faulkner as among those writers who:

in spite of the bookish glamor attached to their names, were in the most radical sense *reporters* whose subject matter and vision was too hot or subtle or complicated or violent or lyrical or intractable or challenging for the massmedia [sic] of their period. They had to make up their own stories, based on what they observed and felt, and publish them as loners who leanly stood for personal integrity and subjective truth in opposition to the superficial “objective” journalism of their day. (175; emphasis in the original)

What is most interesting here is the idea that New Journalism was not just a return to older modes of writing as had been observed by other writers, but that attitudes towards what is acceptable or valued in writing seem to oscillate, and that “new” movements are at least in part a movement away from the restrictions that have been imposed on writers. That the novelists Krim noted were seeking to write truthfully but personally, as the New Journalists were, also suggests that though popular attitudes towards writing fluctuate, these characteristics are those which are intrinsically the most valuable. It furthermore has implications for the role of the writers discussed in this thesis to address the presidential campaign in opposition to the way that it was portrayed by mass media and straight journalism.

There was, of course, a vested interest on the part of New Journalists in framing New Journalism as something “new” and “different” in the eyes of the public. Capote’s insistence that *In Cold Blood* represented a completely unique “serious new art form,” for example, was plainly self-interested, as he pointedly denied other novel-length

journalism the same status of the “nonfiction novel” (188; 190). Theodore Solotaroff offered an explanation for this with his claim that society was preoccupied with the idea of “the now,” the “post-” everything, the “obsession with contemporaneity” as he called it (163). This could explain the titling of New Journalism as “new” despite the acknowledgment of many that it was not in fact entirely “new” but rather a resurgence of writing techniques lost to journalism in the twentieth century. If the culture at the time was obsessed with the contemporary, it made sense for the New Journalists to give their movement a name that appealed to the cultural zeitgeist. What emerges from the debate over whether or not New Journalism was “new” is the sense that applying literary techniques to nonfiction reporting was not the defining characteristic that made it “new”. The “newness” came from the application of this method of reporting to the massive socio-political upheaval happening in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the sheer number of writers who saw the relevance and importance of the mode to contemporary society.

The Medium of the Mode: New Journalism Publications

It is essential also to consider the outlets in which the writing of the New Journalists was published, as these differed significantly from those of straight journalism. A distinct shift in the type and variety of publications being produced in the 1960s and early 1970s developed alongside the development of New Journalism. As Tebbel remarked in 1969: “There is no doubt that magazines have improved in editorial content during the sixties, both in the writing and in the attempt to deal constructively and perceptively with the social issues that are the preoccupation of our time” (*The American Magazine* 258). Newfield and Greenfield noted in 1972 that print media had an opportunity to create new publications and that potential was being utilised:

Print is unlimited. There are no licenses, no set number of outlets. The emergence of a challenge to the political and cultural mainstream is not just a potentiality; it is a fact. The existence of important print voices born within the last twenty-five years—*National Review*, *Ramparts*, *Playboy*, the *Village Voice*, *New York* magazine, *Commentary*, *Rolling Stone*, *Washington Monthly*—shows that print diversity flourishes. (121)

A contextual understanding of the significant publications from this period is particularly necessary because many of them existed in the 1960s and 1970s in different

forms from today, as in the case of *Esquire*. At the time, *Esquire* was a bastion of New Journalism, publishing culturally relevant and politically significant in-depth articles. Its origins, as Tebbel noted in 1969, had been very different: “*Esquire*, which started out to be a sex magazine, has wound up being a periodical largely devoted to an examination of contemporary social problems” (*The American Magazine* 264). The magazine developed in the same socially-conscious cultural climate as New Journalism. It was even credited by some with being at the forefront of the development of the New Journalism mode, as Wakefield claimed: “American magazines have opened up a great deal from the standard cut-and-dried formula-article approach that was generally the rule in the post-war era and into the early fifties, yet I think special credit must be given to *Esquire* for leading the way to many of the newer, freer, more imaginative forms of nonfiction” (“The Personal Voice” 41). Critically, in light of the debate over New Journalism’s role in truthful journalism, though Wakefield praised “*Esquire*’s editorial attitude” that “seems to be anything goes as long as it is interesting and true,” he gave equal weight to its attention to veracity: “The magazine has a research department, and every fact in every nonfiction piece is checked and verified. The license they offer writers is not for distortion of facts but experimentation in style” (“The Personal Voice” 41). This praises *Esquire* not just for being a magazine that published New Journalism, but one with a commitment to thoughtful and factual writing, proposing the New Journalism published in it should be evaluated as serious journalism as opposed to nonsense or fiction. As one of the first, most established New Journalism publications,⁸ *Esquire* was the home for the initial experiments of both Talese and Wolfe (Talese, “Author’s Note” 37; Wolfe, “Introduction to *The Kandy-Kolored*” 31). Hayes, editor of *Esquire* from 1963 to 1973, described in 1969 the modern *Esquire* as “formed out of a reaction to the banality of the Fifties” (“Introduction” 155). Working against this conservatism of the past, Hayes wrote: “At *Esquire* our attitude took shape as we went along, stumbling past our traditional boundaries of fashion, leisure, entertainment and literature onto the more forbidding ground of politics, sociology, science and even, occasionally, religion. Any point of view was welcome as long as the writer was sufficiently skillful to carry it off [...]” (“Introduction” 155-156). Hayes established *Esquire* as a publication that actively worked to publish the kind of articles that were not being produced by straight journalism.

⁸ McHam and Newfield also credited *Esquire* as one of the first and most significant New Journalism publications (McHam 112; Newfield, “Is There” 300-301).

It is worthwhile noting in addition that *Esquire* printed both Mailer's early and influential New Journalism article "Superman Comes to the Supermarket" (1960) and Wolfe's late-1972 response to the criticism of his controversial articles at the beginning of that year, "Why They Aren't Writing the Great American Novel Anymore" (Wakefield, "The Personal Voice" 41; Wolfe and Johnson 7).⁹

In 1955, Mailer co-founded another publication key to New Journalism in the 1960s and early 1970s, *The Village Voice*. In fact, according to co-founder John Wilcock, it was Mailer who came up with the name for the paper, "after we'd all mulled over endless lists of banal titles". *The Village Voice* was founded as a newspaper that captured the bohemian culture of Greenwich Village (Wilcock). Initially it struggled to gain legitimacy in the face of rumours that it was a communist publication (Wilcock). The *Voice* overcame these initial struggles to become an established publication by the end of the 1960s. For instance in 1969, of publications that printed New Journalism, Newfield called *The Village Voice* one of the "older, and now established ones whose roots go back into the wasteland of the 1950's" ("Journalism" 63). The idea that the *Voice* was old and established because it was founded in the 1950s seems somewhat facetious on the surface given that Newfield was writing a mere 14 years after the founding of the paper. However the idea was not that it was technically an "old" paper, but that it existed before New Journalism became an established mode, and that it was older than the papers and magazines that sprang up after the advent of New Journalism in the 1960s. Indeed, far from being old and crusty, Wakefield called *The Village Voice* "that Emporia Gazette of the hipster set" (*Between* 233). This places it in the fashionable sphere of the social climate, and the reference to the notable *Emporia Gazette* connotes socially relevant and significant writing. As Theodore Solotaroff declared: "though I tend to believe what I read in both the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*, it's sometimes hard to believe that they're published on the same planet, much less in the same city" (164).

Another major New Journalism publication in the late 1960s and early 1970s of particular importance to this thesis was *Rolling Stone*, the home of both Thompson's and Crouse's original articles on the 1972 election. Though *Rolling Stone* had only been established in 1967, its readership had grown rapidly; according to Newfield, in 1969 it

⁹ In 2008 *Esquire* even named "Superman Comes to the Supermarket" as one of their "7 Greatest Stories in the History of *Esquire*" alongside CJ Chivers' 2006 "The School," Tom Junod's 2003 "The Falling Man," Richard Ben Cramer's 1986 "What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?," Talese's 1966 "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold," John Sack's 1966 "M," and Wolfe's 1965 "The Last American Hero Is Junior Johnson. Yes!" (*Esquire* Editors).

had 200,000 subscribers, 40,000 more than *The Village Voice* (“Journalism” 60). Newfield placed *Rolling Stone* in “the current generation of underground and antiestablishment [sic] papers” (“Journalism” 60). Paul Scanlon, a managing editor at the magazine in the early 1970s, remembers the journalists who wrote for *Rolling Stone* as “a gifted bunch of renegades who had served apprenticeships in places like the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Post*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and the *Wall Street Journal*” (2). This portrays the magazine at the beginning of the 1970s as a home for writers who did not fit at more established straight journalism publications. The magazine played a significant role in the development of Thompson’s New Journalism, by allowing him the freedom to write without the publishing restrictions of other magazines. For instance, regarding one of his most famous works, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Thompson claimed: “The American print media are not ready for this kind of thing, yet. *Rolling Stone* was probably the only magazine in America where I could get the Vegas book published. I sent *Sports Illustrated* 2500 words—instead of the 250 they asked for—and my manuscript was aggressively rejected” (*The Great Shark Hunt* 106). Thompson was speaking here not only to the freedom *Rolling Stone* gave him in regards to the length of his articles. The “kind of thing” that Thompson claimed most American print media was “not ready for” was the “essentially fictional framework” that he found himself utilising in the articles that became *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (*The Great Shark Hunt* 106). Thus the freedom afforded by *Rolling Stone* allowed him both the space in which to write and the freedom in which to experiment with the application of traditionally fictional elements in his reportage.

These publications and others like them – such as *Harper’s*, *Life*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, and *New York Magazine* – were significant because they gave New Journalism venues in which to develop and become a legitimate (if still controversial) mode of writing. Moreover they evolved in contrast to the practices of straight journalism publications like *The New York Times*, just as New Journalism itself developed in contrast to straight journalism. As the New Journalists proclaimed the importance and relevance of their methods, they also decried those practices and publications that they saw as out of touch. *The New York Times* featured prominently in the writings of New Journalists such as Talese, Hentoff, Newfield, Steinem, Theodore Solotaroff, Arlen, and Wolfe as the bastion of straight journalism. In these portrayals, *The New York Times* represented not just the technical rules of straight journalism that New Journalism flouted, but also the lack of socially and politically conscious writing to which New Journalism was

responding. In 1960 Hentoff claimed that the *Times* was in a state of decline (“The Soft”).¹⁰ As evidence he noted that after pressure from the white-supremacist governor of Alabama to retract an article in support of Martin Luther King, “In an extraordinary – and shameful – display of cowardice, the *Times* retracted the two paragraphs without explanation as to the specific facts therein it had presumably found to be untrue” (“The Soft”). Unlike those publications that changed in the 1960s, *The New York Times* appears to have remained consistent in this regard. In 1969 Newfield claimed:

A textbook case of the differences between the old journalism and the new, [sic] might be found in rereading the back issues of *The New York Times* and the underground and campus press during the student movement at Columbia in April and May of 1968. The *Times*, prizing objectivity, underplayed the police violence, misstated facts, ignored the substantive issues in dispute, slanted news stories in favor of the Administration, and editorialized emotionally against the students. (“Journalism” 57)

That straight journalism publications of such prominence as *The New York Times* were so removed from the cultural atmosphere represented a potential gap in the political journalism of the 1972 campaign that was filled by the New Journalism, as will be examined in this thesis.

The New York Times was portrayed by the New Journalists as representative of the standard of straight journalism publications in the 1960s and early 1970s, and an anonymous ex-*Times* reporter claimed that there was no incentive for *The New York Times* to change:

This new passive approach to reporting can be carried on by the Times [sic] in the metropolitan area without any serious repercussions in readership or reputation among the general population for the simple reason that the Times has no local competition to show it up. Most of the other papers follow the Times in their flimsy manner. Therefore, the Times’s omissions are hardly ever noticed, except by those concerned with particular areas or topics no longer covered. (“The Times: All the Pap”)

It is clear that the styles and content of New Journalism did not fit in publications like *The New York Times*, which is why the publications that encouraged and promoted New

¹⁰ Hentoff was questioning what he called the “massively/vacuous editorials” of *The New York Times* as early as 1958 (“The New York Post”).

Journalism became so significant in the social context of the 1960s and early 1970s. Talese, who famously covered the *Times* in-depth in his book *The Kingdom and the Power*, described his writing in the 1960s as showing “a shift from the ‘old’ journalism that I had practiced at *The Times* to the freer, more challenging approach that *Esquire* magazine permitted and encouraged under the editorship of Harold Hayes” (“Author’s Note” 36). This seems likely to be one reason why magazines like *Esquire* were credited with the establishment of New Journalism, because by allowing writers to write articles however they wanted, they gave New Journalism the space to grow from being just one writer here or there using literary techniques to a mode in its own right. This legitimisation was particularly consequential to the ability of New Journalists like Crouse, Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem to be able to cover the 1972 election in the New Journalism mode and have their reportage play an influential role in the shape of the campaign coverage as a whole that year.

There’s Something Happening Here: The Socio-Political Role of New Journalism

New Journalism had its most sustained period of development in the 1960s and early 1970s, and writing about the mode from that period supports the idea that it became culturally relevant in the midst of and partly in response to an increasingly chaotic social climate in the United States. Hayes described the beginning of 1960 as being a time of relative calm, when the largest national issue was a pervasive but vague fear of the Russians, and the most pressing domestic issue was unrest caused by race issues that were then still “largely a regional problem” (“Introduction” 155). However, just as New Journalism developed in rebellion to the “banality” of the straight journalism of the fifties, Hayes described the topics it dealt with as increasingly turbulent:

we began to form the habit of searching for the right questions. If two superpowers have superbombs, how does one protect itself from the other? Should churches practice segregation? Should Arthur Miller be jailed for refusing to name those of his friends who were Communist? Was reverence due cherished institutions of American life, or irreverence? What evil lurked in the heart of Eisenhower, what virtue in the heart of Alger Hiss? (“Introduction” 156)

This gives a sense of some of the issues concerning U.S. society at the beginning of the 1960s, and the idea of “searching for the right questions” about these concerns offers an example of one way in which New Journalism might be read. The mode was not just

reporting the facts but getting deeply into the larger concerns and arguments they represented and relating those insights back to the readers.

Furthermore, Krim noted in 1967 that it was not just that the world was changing and that the truth was becoming stranger than anything fictional, but that what was considered acceptable to print and to read was opening up (177). There was no longer the need to edit or omit stories about “prostitution, miscegenation, homosexuality, suicide, psychosis among well-known people, etc.” that there once was (Krim 177). Therefore the New Journalists were to an extent freed from the restrictions regarding what could be written about and how openly it could be done. This was important because of the intensity of the strife faced by the nation and the world, as Theodore Solotaroff argued:

the Sixties have probably been the most cataclysmic decade in American history since that of the Civil War. There have been wars since then, but none as bitterly unpopular, divisive, or faith-shaking as the one in Vietnam. There have also been serious social conflicts since American’s first full confrontation with the evil of racism, but none so rife with violence, hatred, and terror as the second. (162)

Solotaroff cited these traumas as causing both dramatic social upheaval and “a vast sense of doubt [...] about what used to be called, more or less honorifically, the American way of life” (162). According to Solotaroff, “this doubt spreads throughout the America that is being transformed by the economic and social pressures of the mass society, by its modes of communication, its technology, and its ideology” (162). Not only did a plethora of issues drastically divide the nation, but the way those issues were being communicated played a huge role in their spread and consumption by the public. Parallel to this, Solotaroff also claimed that the turbulent cultural atmosphere “had a strong effect on American writing” (162-163).

This evokes the idea that social change and writing do not take place in a straightforward cause-and-effect relationship where social change creates writing, or writing causes social change, but that there is a complex dynamic back and forth wherein social upheaval influences modes of writing, which in turn inform society and contribute to the change, and so on. In that vein, Steinem believed that New Journalism had a prerogative to be an agent of social change, and she pointed to the particular significance of the changes going on in society at the time (1971) as necessitating truthful and representative journalism:

We have enormous social myths: that this country is always right or that it has the right to interfere in the affairs of other countries; that black people and other

minority groups are somehow different, or inferior, or limited or stereotyped; and that women are inferior. This is an age where myths are breaking down and, unfortunately, we're in the position to perpetuate them. So, we have to be very, very careful. We have to watch our adjectives, especially, and all our characterizations of people, and whenever they conform to popular stereotype, I think we ought to question them. It's true of everything, except white Protestant males, when you come right down to it. ("Gloria Steinem: An Interview" 80)

The 1972 election was, in other words, not just another election, but one with many vitally important social issues wrapped up in it, with the New Journalism about the campaign potentially playing a key role in influencing the public perception of the politicians who had the power to affect those issues.

The 1972 campaign witnessed social change culminate with the calls that New Journalists had been making for more insightful political reporting. The arguments of the New Journalists for the role of personal perspective in journalism were perfectly illustrated in their campaign reportage, as this thesis will demonstrate. What the articles by early proponents of New Journalism proposed was that the relevance of politics to the lives of the average reader was examined and discussed in New Journalism in a way that had not been done before in straight journalism. Tebbel in fact directly linked the need for a personal connection between journalism and society to politics with his claim in 1964 that:

The news ought to be far more closely related to our lives than it is. Government, for example, is not some remote monster down in Washington or City Hall, and what it does is not remote and impersonal. Government is *us*, every *one* of us, and what it does has its motivations and effects deeply rooted in our own behaviour. We need to understand that, and the communicators could make us understand it, if they would, but it cannot be done through the old patterns of transmission. ("What Are" 182-183; emphasis in the original)

This idea that the political climate was of vital relevance to the state of society was intrinsically linked to the writings of New Journalists. Hayes marked the beginning of the 1960s with John F. Kennedy's defeat of Richard Nixon in their televised debate on September 26, 1960 ("Introduction" 154). Theodore Solotaroff similarly viewed the 1960 Democratic Convention as the beginning of the decade (161). Particularly noteworthy for this thesis, Solotaroff singled out the importance of Mailer's writing, observing of the convention that "as Norman Mailer foresaw in his essay 'Superman Comes to the

Supermarket' [it] marked the changing of the generations, the entry of an uncertain but dynamic element into the psychic life of the nation, and the advent, in the person and aura of John F. Kennedy, of a new political style" (161). This is directly linked to the idea in this thesis that New Journalism as a mode was important because it was used to draw out and reveal ideas about the significant issues of the time, and that it was particularly capable of capturing the rapidly evolving contemporary political climate in the United States.

Commentators also noticed that the political writing found in straight journalism in the 1960s and 1970s was severely biased and did not offer a sufficiently complete picture of the political landscape. Talese, for instance, recalled meeting in 1959 a political journalist from *The New York Times* who was well liked and trusted by politicians because "he was a man who didn't tell all he knew: he was a man who could keep secrets" ("Gay Talese" 86). Talese suggests that the entrenched straight journalists covering politics were more interested in keeping their powerful relationships with politicians than with reporting the truth ("Gay Talese" 86).¹¹ Newfield argued that the bias of straight journalism had become far worse by 1969, to the point of being blatantly conservative: "Spiro Agnew was right, although for the wrong reasons. A few individuals *do* control the mass media in America. Only most of them are republicans and Conservatives" ("Journalism" 55; emphasis in the original). Newfield supported this claim by citing the 1968 election in which "sixty percent of the nation's daily papers editorially endorsed Richard Nixon, and only fifteen percent endorsed Hubert Humphrey. According to a survey compiled by the perceptive press gadfly Ben Bagdikian, eighty-five percent of the syndicated columns published across the country can be generally classified as conservative" ("Journalism" 55). This is of significant relevance to the political climate of the 1972 campaign. If straight journalism was so dramatically partisan in favour of Nixon, the potential for New Journalism to offer a more in-depth and analytical dissenting opinion was all the more vital if the public was to have a balanced view.

Even where bias was not so blatant, what politicians said still tended to be reported without comment. As Wolfe argued, "under the old system" of reporting "you're just a courier, that's all you are; you're not really reporting" because all that was done was reprinting what a politician said in quotes (Hayes et al. 71). The implication for political New Journalism was that, as an avenue for in-depth reporting and interpretive analysis,

¹¹ This point was also made by Tebbel in "What Are the Communicators Communicating?".

it had an opportunity to fill a gaping hole in the coverage of elections. Krim argued that this was not just an opportunity but an imperative and suggested that because New Journalism was able to connect with readers better and more articulately than either straight journalism or politicians, New Journalists had the power to shape the ideas of their audience and the way that society thought about issues:

what it seems to mean practically speaking is that articulate leadership has been thrust upon the writer in the authority-empty vacuum of this period; and the most effective way for it to reveal itself is in the mirror of the daily press where the intelligence and sensibility of the writer-artist can carve the very news of the world each day into a revelation that will in turn *act* upon history instead of merely reflect it. (186; emphasis in the original)

The implication for this thesis is that the New Journalists who covered the 1972 election attempted, however unsuccessfully, to do more than simply report on the campaign; they tried also to affect the outcome by shaping public perception. Of course, like the other characteristics of New Journalism that set it apart from the accepted practices of straight journalism, political writing with the interpretation of the writer present in the article was something that garnered criticism from opponents of the mode. For instance, Arlen argued, in direct contrast to the views of writers like Newfield and Krim, that the deeper meaning sometimes overwhelmed or took the place of facts in New Journalism (251). Of particular note to this thesis, Arlen claimed that “much of [the writing about the 1972 election]—for example a recent piece in *Rolling Stone* by Hunter Thompson on the New Hampshire primaries—is slipshod and self-serving” (252). Arlen did admit that this was not always the case, however, and that there were New Journalists who were not “careless” with the facts (251). Notably, he pointed to Mailer: “Mailer’s account of the march on the Pentagon [in *the Armies of the Night*] seems to have been extremely faithful to what happened” (251).

It is of significance to this thesis’s analysis of his reportage in a later chapter that Mailer was continually brought up in articles of New Journalism theory as both being at the forefront of the mode and an exemplary writer of New Journalism. Wakefield, Hentoff, Newfield, Hayes, Talese, McHam, Brower, Theodore Solotaroff, Krim, Pizer, Balz, Gold, Arlen, Wolfe, and Tebbel all held up Mailer as an illustration of what New Journalism could be at its best with his 1960 article “Superman Comes to the Supermarket” often highlighted as an early exemplum:

Whether or not his piece in that magazine on the 1960 Democratic convention—“Superman Comes to the Supermarket”—did, as Mailer himself believes, tip the scales of that whole election to John Kennedy in some mysterious, mystical, psycho-hipsterical manner, it certainly proved that a good, factual, and keenly observed account of a political convention doesn’t have to be dull. (Wakefield, “The Personal Voice” 40)

Theodore Solotaroff not only praised Mailer’s “Superman Comes to the Supermarket” as the article most indicative of the change taking place in America but even went so far as to credit Mailer’s article with “initiating as it did the vogue of personal journalism, or reportage, that was to burgeon in the ensuing years” (163). As New Journalism developed as a mode, Mailer was praised at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s for *The Armies of the Night*, which was seen as exemplary of what the mode had become. Balz argued that Mailer’s writing in *The Armies of the Night* was so outstanding that it was not something which other writers could easily copy: “Norman Mailer’s *Armies of the Night*, as most now recognize, pushed us even farther because hundreds of us had gone to the Pentagon, either as participants or reporters, and had failed to come to grips with it in any way comparable to Mailer” (290). Balz’s argument that Mailer’s abilities were built on his past experiences as a writer implies that Mailer’s coverage of the 1972 election, *St. George and the Godfather*, was something which neither a straight journalism writer nor a writer trying New Journalism for the first time would be able to replicate because they did not have the background of covering politics using the in-depth New Journalist method that Mailer did. It also suggests that Mailer’s writing in 1972 would be even more developed after the experience of writing *The Armies of the Night* than when he first addressed campaigns with “Superman Comes to the Supermarket”. The attention paid to Mailer’s previous campaign journalism is representative of the potential impact of New Journalism as a new way of reporting on campaigns; a potential which had only increased in 1972 with the growing tensions in society and the media.

From Here, the ’72 Election

As is made evident by the chronology of articles both in defence of and in opposition to New Journalism as it developed, the debate and discussion about the mode reached a crescendo in 1972. The articles and essays from the 1960s and early 1970s show that there was no concrete definition or hard and fast set of rules used to identify

New Journalism. Even identifying which writers were or were not New Journalists was uncertain and depended on the viewpoint of the one doing the identifying. What was mostly agreed upon by proponents of the mode was that it needed to be factual, it needed to have an element of literary technique, and it needed to offer a deeper insight than a surface-level account of the facts. These were factors hotly contested by opponents of the mode who questioned the integrity of the facts, and suggested these had been ignored or obscured by technique and personality. Even as this debate and the quantity of New Journalism being published put the mode in the public eye as never before, it seems evident that there was no easy way to predict the particular form of writing that a piece of New Journalism would take, and that understanding of the technical aspects of the mode by the public would be tenuous at best.

And as New Journalism provoked an uproar of debate, the public faced an increasingly tumultuous accumulation of social changes domestically, and the ever-present turmoil of the Vietnam War abroad. The presidential election of 1972 took place in this pandemonium, and New Journalism offered the kind of writing that interpreted the Democratic candidate George McGovern and incumbent Republican President Richard Nixon and their relative roles and positions in a way that the straightforward quotations and “facts” of straight journalism did not. This placed the New Journalists in a unique position in the campaign coverage, offering, as they did, different agendas and frameworks from the mainstream media. However, New Journalism was not segregated to specifically New Journalist publications, and the lack of clear defining borders to the mode and its intermingling with straight journalism created a possibility for New Journalists to influence straight journalists. As an examination of Crouse’s, Mailer’s, Thompson’s, and Steinem’s writings about the 1972 campaign will establish, this moment represents a key point in the development of New Journalism.

The first chapter of this thesis will examine Crouse’s *The Boys on the Bus* and its analysis of the campaign journalism in 1972 as a framework for advocating changes to the campaign reporting system. The second chapter will analyse Mailer’s *St. George and the Godfather*, in which Mailer attempts to use his own role and voice as an expert analyst of the Democratic and Republican conventions (according to his perception of the role afforded to him by his success with “Superman Comes to the Supermarket”) to persuade the public not to vote for Nixon. The third chapter examines Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, in which his original agenda to offer a unique viewpoint uninfluenced by personal ties was compromised by the extent to which he

actually functioned within the system with the other reporters, and by his support of McGovern. The fourth and final chapter examines one of the clearest and most effectively portrayed social secondary agendas in the feminist perspective of Steinem's "Coming of Age with McGovern". The conclusion of this thesis will then offer analysis of the effect of these texts, including what the post-election impact of Watergate (which took place and was known about *before* the election) says about the function of the press in 1972. Finally, this thesis will offer suggestions for the implications analysis of the reportage from 1972 has for modern campaign journalism, and for how New Journalism is framed in the academic canon.

Chapter One: The Outsider on the Bus – Timothy Crouse Reports on Reporting

Introduction: A Bridge to New Journalism

As an analysis of the complex origins of New Journalism makes evident, even during the peak of critical and popular attention in 1972 concepts of it varied wildly. There was no completely solid or consistent definition of what constituted New Journalism. An examination of Timothy Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus* (developed from the October 12 1972 *Rolling Stone* article of the same name) demonstrates just how in flux the role of New Journalism was in 1972 because Crouse's reportage is not necessarily the kind of New Journalism that popular conceptions of writers like Wolfe, Mailer, or Thompson bring to mind. In some ways *The Boys on the Bus* is less literary, compared to a work like *St. George and the Godfather*. It does not, to borrow from Wolfe, read "like a novel" ("The Feature Game" 21-22). It does not, for instance, follow a linear narrative, but makes jumps in the timeline of the campaign, organised as it is by topic rather than chronology. There is also much less of Crouse himself as a character or visible presence, and consequently a less personal voice than is found in *St. George and the Godfather*, *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, or "Coming of Age with McGovern". And yet as an analysis of Crouse's reportage manifests, even though he takes a dramatically different approach to campaign journalism from Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem, both the way that he positions himself and his journalism and the work that *The Boys on the Bus* attempts to do in arguing for a more mainstream use of the New Journalism mode mark Crouse as a New Journalist and his reportage an important part of the development of New Journalism in 1972. That Crouse's journalism in many ways exists on the fringe of popular conceptions of New Journalism makes it a key place from which to begin an analysis of the New Journalism of the 1972 campaign, because it is a hinge between the work of Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem, and the more mainstream straight journalism on the campaign.

What Crouse brought to the campaign as a New Journalist was a deliberate self-awareness of the role of reporters in his analysis of his fellow boys on the bus. His agenda as a journalist was to try to influence the approach of other journalists to campaign reporting in the future, and to try to encourage an overhaul of the traditional system. The framework that he applies to his own campaign reportage critiques the mainstream tenet

of objectivity as one of the failings of the system. The kind of “strategic rituals” that Tuchman identified in her 1972 analysis of the role of objectivity in mainstream reporting are not only unnecessary in Crouse’s view, but get in the way of framing political reportage in such a way that it has value to the public (Tuchman 677). Crouse’s campaign reportage is less concerned with arguing his own political agenda regarding the outcome of the campaign, than it is with influencing how other reporters go about their own framing. Crouse’s role is a bridge between New Journalism and the old system. An examination of *The Boys on the Bus* offers a more nuanced view of the space between the fringe and the mainstream in which New Journalism was establishing a position during 1972. Crouse asserts a claim about the potential benefit of an increased presence of New Journalism in campaign coverage. The underlying argument of Crouse’s analysis is that he and his fellow reporters would all produce better journalism by adopting the New Journalism mode.

Crouse’s work is also significant as a bridge between New Journalism and other journalistic approaches because of the view it offers of the ways that New Journalist techniques were already being used by mainstream or straight journalists. This has implications for understanding the increasing prevalence of New Journalism in 1972, the usefulness of its techniques in navigating the particular idiosyncrasies of that campaign brought on by the combination of socio-political unrest and the campaign manipulations of Nixon, and the possibility that some of the techniques that were valued by New Journalists were already latent in more mainstream writers to at least some degree.

The Set-Up: An Outsider’s Perspective from Inside the Game

Unlike other journalists who covered the election, and the other New Journalists examined in this thesis, Crouse was less concerned with reporting on the candidates or with the political implications of the election. The role that he played as a New Journalist on the campaign trail was to apply his in-depth view of the campaign journalism process to arguments in favour of reform, while identifying the barriers to that reform. He describes his purpose on the campaign trail as “researching an article on the press,” a role which he claims earned him the mistrust of other reporters and even a level of disdain and ostracism from some of the more conservative (BB 12). One journalist, for instance, called him a “Goddam gossip columnist” (BB 12). Despite being on the campaign trail together, the journalists did not necessarily see each other as equals, and early on in the

narrative Crouse attempts to establish himself as an outsider from both the motivations and the status of the general press corps population; thus establishing *The Boys on the Bus* as having a different purpose from other works of campaign journalism that were more interested in the politicians or the results of the campaign than in the journalism about the campaign. Crouse saw the specific process involved in campaign reporting as both unique and influential on how the journalists wrote (BB 25). Despite this, Crouse points out that “the reporters seldom wrote about this traveling around, which was so important in forming their gut feelings about the campaign” (BB 25-26). His view is that if the press was influenced by the process of the campaign, and the press influenced the view of the public and thus the results of the election, then the process of the campaign was a critical part of the election. Crouse’s agenda in *The Boys on the Bus* was to reveal the forces and people that shaped the campaign reporting system, and to apply his perspective as a newcomer to the system and as a New Journalist to arguments for how better campaign journalism could be produced.

Crouse clearly did not aim to have an impact on the outcome of the 1972 election. While the majority of *The Boys on the Bus* is focused on the events of the campaign before Election Day, and was based on an article that Crouse wrote called “The Boys on the Bus” which was published in the October 12 1972 issue of *Rolling Stone* (prior to the election), the book itself was not published until 1973, well after the election.¹² The original article is reproduced in the reportage of the first six chapters of *The Boys on the Bus*. The content of the article is largely replicated without change in the book – there is some rearrangement of paragraphs, and some minor stylistic modifications, and while the article was written in present tense the book is written in past tense. The most significant changes are expansions in the form of additional paragraphs devoted to quotes and anecdotes from other journalists that support Crouse’s observations, such as his account of Curtis Wilkie’s experience covering the primary as an illustration of the struggles faced by reporters who laboured against the constraints of the system, which was wholly new to the book (BB 11-14). That the increased space available in the book was largely devoted to other journalists speaks to one of Crouse’s main objectives on the campaign, which was to examine the other journalists writing about the election, and how both the process of campaign reportage and the framework of the mainstream media influenced

¹² Crouse also wrote a brief article for *Rolling Stone* in the December 7 1972 issue about the aftermath of the election for McGovern, “Reliable Sources: The Last Days of McGovern’s Campaign,” which is included in the book as part of the chapter “The Last Days”.

the journalism produced. This gave him a vantage point from which to point out the flaws that he saw in the system, and the significant and potentially dire effect these flaws could have on the outcome of an election, as illustrated in 1972 by Nixon's overwhelming victory. Crouse's purpose was to argue for reform to the process by which campaigns were covered by journalists, and to the kind of journalism that got published about campaigns. As this chapter will explore, Crouse uses his experiences of Nixon's and McGovern's dramatically different campaigns and relationships with the press to examine how the state of campaign coverage in 1972 demonstrates the immediate need for the reformation of campaign journalism.

His unusual approach meant that Crouse had a unique view of the campaign. That he was more focused on his fellow journalists than concerned with the outcome of the campaign provided him with a broader view of the entirety of the campaign process than a concentration on the speeches and actions of a single candidate would have allowed. Crouse was also new to campaign reporting; Thompson notes in a 2003 foreword to *The Boys on the Bus* that when he met Crouse in 1971, "he was still a student at Harvard, and his only experience in professional journalism had been as a low-paid low-ranking stringer writing occasional music stories" (viii). Once on the campaign Crouse wrote two articles on the primary elections for *Rolling Stone*, "Stalking the Campaigners in New Hampshire" in the March 16 1972 issue and "The Machine That Won in Wisconsin" in the April 27 1972 issue, prior to the original "The Boys on the Bus" article that the book was based on. However, these two earlier articles are not in the same vein of insider analysis of the campaign journalism process that he engages with in *The Boys on the Bus*. Rather, they are more concerned with the actions of the politicians, and the results of the primaries. Nonetheless, there are flashes of the kind of process analysis that Crouse later undertakes, as he focuses a significant amount of attention in both articles on the role of volunteers and campaign staff who were behind the campaigns of the primary candidates in New Hampshire and Wisconsin. These flashes are indicative of the way that he later focuses on the journalists of the campaign as a means of critiquing the process of campaign journalism, while the more substantial focus on the politics and results of the primaries is representative of Crouse's newness. The more typical method of reportage in these two original articles seems to indicate Crouse finding his footing on the campaign trail before forming the approach that he later took. That he was new to campaign reporting and looking at the process with fresh eyes contributes to the way that he

characterises himself in *The Boys on the Bus* as having an outsider's perspective on the campaign.

Additionally, the publication that he wrote for was also relatively new – *Rolling Stone* was only a little over four years old in 1972.¹³ According to Crouse:

Nobody on the campaign trail [sic] had ever heard of the magazine back in January of 1972, and it was not an easy publication to define in one or two sentences. The *Time* magazine of the Counter Culture? Well, not exactly. An underground rag? Well, it was too slick, expensive and apolitical really to claim underground status. It was really a music magazine, a hip *Variety*, that made extensive and literate sorties into all kinds of other phenomena—the drug scene, the movie scene, the literary scene, and now...national politics. (BB 311)

This is clearly Crouse attempting to establish a particular role for *Rolling Stone* and himself as a *Rolling Stone* writer, in the eyes of his readers. Though *Rolling Stone* was only four years old, it was prominent enough and successful enough to send both Crouse and Thompson to cover the campaign in the first place. The October 1972 issue that Crouse's article was originally published in was littered with advertisements from large companies, to the extent that nearly every other page of Crouse's article was an advertisement for brands, including household names like RCA, Capitol Records, Columbia Records, and Pioneer (Crouse, "The Boys" 51-57). That *Rolling Stone* had such established companies advertising in its magazine suggests a level of success that does not necessarily fit with the idea that it was unknown to others on the campaign trail. Crouse somewhat acknowledges this by pointing out that it was "too slick, expensive" to "really" be an "underground rag" but he also does not entirely reject the notion of that kind of outsider, countercultural status as at least being related to what *Rolling Stone* was about. This would have played into the view of readers of *Rolling Stone* that what they were reading was more "hip" than other coverage of the campaign.

By positioning himself and his writing in this way, Crouse is distancing himself from straight journalism. The idea that no one on the campaign trail had heard of *Rolling Stone* and yet that Crouse emphasises its significance as a source of independent insights into the campaign suggests that the lack of expectations allowed *Rolling Stone* to operate in a new and relatively original way. Furthermore, its lack of definability in many ways embodies the indefinable nature of New Journalism itself, as examined in the introduction

¹³ The first issue was published on November 9 1967 (*Rolling Stone*).

to this thesis. Even the language that Crouse uses here is reminiscent of Wolfe's in his analysis of the indefinability of New Journalism in its early development.¹⁴ Crouse's fluidity as a *Rolling Stone* reporter and New Journalist has implications for the flexibility of the New Journalism mode of writing and the way that flexibility could allow for a method of campaign coverage that was able to change to suit the fluctuating nature of the campaign as it progressed.

According to Crouse, both his own and *Rolling Stone*'s status as untested newcomers placed him outside the system, and in some ways allowed him greater freedoms by releasing him from the rules and pitfalls of the system of campaign reporting that he sought to expose. This is not to suggest that being a reporter from a New Journalist publication and Crouse's role as an outsider did not also create obstacles for him. Crouse's position both as a writer reporting on the process of the other journalists, and as a writer from a less established New Journalism publication, occasionally limits his access to certain reporters who looked down on what he was doing or on *Rolling Stone*. For example, his legitimacy was questioned by a reporter for NBC: "'*Rolling Stone*,' he said, looking at me hard. 'You underground guys—you're always knocking the establishment. Well what's wrong with the establishment? I'm gonna get that paper of yours and read what you say, and it better be good'" (Crouse, *BB* 157). This places *Rolling Stone* in 1972 as potentially still on the outside of what were thought of as established or serious publications by other journalists, and adds to the sense of Crouse as an outsider. Not only was he not covering the campaign in the same manner or with the same motivations as the other journalists, but he wrote for a publication that existed on the fringes in the eyes of the more established straight journalism reporters. And yet that Crouse tried to engage with more mainstream or straight campaign journalists and the work that they produced, and to understand it and portray an accurate account of the work that they were doing also sets him apart from the other New Journalists on the campaign. As will be expanded on in later chapters, some New Journalists like Mailer were more likely to lambaste their straight journalism counterparts without writing about what they contributed to the campaign as having any value. While Crouse is critical of the constraints of straight journalism throughout his book, he nonetheless attempts to

¹⁴ See *The New Journalism*: "This discovery, modest at first, humble, in fact, deferential, you might say, was that it just might be possible to write journalism that would...read like a novel. *Like* a novel, if you get the picture" (Wolfe, "The Feature Game" 21-22; emphasis in the original).

understand the process by which his colleagues produced the kind of campaign journalism that they did, and engage with it at a serious level.

Ultimately Crouse's outsider status did not prove prohibitive to his coverage of the campaign, or his ability to interview many of his fellow campaign reporters. In fact, his approach in *The Boys on the Bus* relies heavily on interviews and quotes from other journalists. At times this has the potential to complicate or obscure the sense of what his own opinion is, as he often makes arguments through the words of the other journalists he interviews. There is much less of Crouse as a visible presence in *The Boys on the Bus* than there is of Mailer in *St. George and the Godfather*, Thompson in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, or Steinem in "Coming of Age with McGovern". Crouse only occasionally dips in to his experiences, or adds a comment to someone else's version of events, rather than constantly inserting himself into his writing. And yet his motivations and the aims of his text were dramatically different from those of the straight journalists whose words he makes use of. According to the way that he portrays his role in the text, his outsider status placed him beyond the rules and expectations of campaign journalism and gave him the freedom to report on it from a new perspective. This allowed him to critically examine the process, which he saw as having failed to give readers a meaningful or accurate interpretation of the campaign. Using this approach allowed him to deconstruct the reporters and publications covering the 1972 campaign, and to argue for reform in the way campaign journalism was written.

The System is Lousy: Crouse's View of Campaign Journalism in 1972

Crouse highlights five main problems with the state of campaign journalism: one, that the process itself had not predominantly changed since the administration of Theodore Roosevelt (who took office in 1901); two, that the process of closely following a single candidate fostered a relationship between reporters and candidates that was too friendly or personally involved to produce useful or meaningful journalism; three, that reporters were furthermore invested professionally in the success of the candidate they followed; four, that the press had too much potential power to influence the process and outcome of elections; and five, that compounding all other problems was that the campaign process resulted in pack journalism.

Crouse's argument here is reminiscent of the earliest arguments in the development of New Journalism, that one of the problems with straight journalism was that it was

outdated and no longer capable of dealing with the issues and events of the modern world. Crouse outlines for readers the different ways that campaign journalism operated in the past, which offers some important considerations for the role that he saw campaign journalists as playing in politics, and the role that politicians had in shaping campaign journalism (*BB* 27-28). Crouse argues that though campaigns had become modernised with the advent of technology, in effect very little had changed in regards to the process of reporting on them: “most of the reporting remained superficial, formulaic, and dull. Newspapers approached campaign coverage as a civic duty, like reporting sermons and testimonials to retiring fire chiefs” (*BB* 31). Not only is Crouse arguing that the current mode of campaign journalism remained unchanged, but he is depicting the straight journalism produced by it as inferior and entirely unappealing to readers not interested in “sermons” and “testimonials”. Thus, according to Crouse, the problems of the campaign journalism process were exacerbated by what the New Journalists saw as a lack of insightful writing in the straight journalism of the 1950s and early 1960s. With this argument he is attempting to characterise both straight journalism and the current form of campaign journalism as archaic, and in need of reform. His objections to the state of campaign journalism are clearly being framed by his own status as a New Journalist, and the kind of reportage that he did, and that he valued in others.

Another of Crouse’s main problems with the form of campaign journalism in 1972 was that it predominantly involved reporters following a single candidate throughout the campaign, and in the close proximity of the press-convoy (once on trains in the past, now in the titular buses as well as airplanes) (*BB* 29). According to Crouse, there were two kinds of reporters who covered campaigns: national political reporters, who were with the campaign for only a few days at a time and covered multiple candidates, and campaign reporters, who typically followed the campaign of a single candidate for the duration of the campaign (*BB* 47). It was the latter who were primarily Crouse’s focus, and with whose potential for unintended bias he took issue. According to Crouse, the problematically close relationship between candidates and the campaign reporters had developed alongside an increased focus on primary campaigns, a lengthier duration of campaign coverage, and close physical proximity of the campaign press to the candidate, evolving into something that his analysis describes as troublingly symbiotic:

They followed the candidate everywhere, heard his standard speech so many dozens of times they could recite it with him, watched his moods go up and down, speculated constantly on his chances, traded gossip about him, and were lucky if

they did not dream about him into the bargain. They ate and drank with his staff and, in some cases, slept with his lady staffers. (*BB* 47-48)

Crouse argues that this symbiotic relationship had a substantial effect on reporters' coverage of the campaign:

At their best, they were his short-order biographers, experts on his positions, habits and character. At their worst—and the deadly fatigue of the campaign trail guaranteed that all but the hardiest of them were occasionally at their worst—they were like the foreign service officer who is sent abroad and goes native; they identified with the candidate and became his apologists. (*BB* 48)

The picture that Crouse paints of the symbiosis between press and candidate is one which he obtained from living within the system that he was critiquing. It raises questions regarding his involvement in the same system, and to what extent the potential for developing a similar collegial relationship with his subjects, the other reporters, influenced his own writing. He claims that this potential bias was a problem in the established system of campaign reporting because it produced journalism that did not acknowledge subjectivity but treated reporting as only suitable for the facts and was, according to him, “superficial, formulaic, and dull” (*BB* 31). Crouse's implication is that campaign journalism would be better served by a mode like New Journalism that was aware of its own subjectivity and allowed for its intentional inclusion. Nonetheless, based on the claims Crouse makes regarding the close proximity of candidates and reporters, it does not seem that even an approach that took bias into consideration would necessarily completely resolve the problem, though this is not a conclusion that he makes here himself.

Complicating Crouse's problem with the potential for reporters becoming too close to the candidates they covered is his related objection to the system, that reporters were professionally invested in the success of the candidate that they followed, and had a need to be on the “Winner's Bus” (*BB* 55). According to Crouse, the kind of entrenchment involved in reporting on the campaign of a single candidate created a link between the success of the candidate and the success of the reporter (*BB* 55). This then could lead to reporting which did not paint an accurate picture of the campaign, because reporters might leave out the kind of details about candidates that could adversely affect their campaign (*BB* 55). The implication is that a reporter could write in a biased way even without actually supporting a candidate, and Crouse suggests self-serving motivations to the inclusion of this bias. Partly he attributes this self-serving bias to the reporter's desire

to be where the action is, which seems to be whichever campaign is “the Winner’s campaign—a cornucopia of big stories, excitement, power, money, and a burgeoning sense of promise” (BB 55). However, Crouse claims that the problem with the system is actually bigger than this:

A campaign reporter’s career is linked to the fortunes of his candidate. If he is writing about the front runner, he is guaranteed front-page play for his articles, and as Walter Mears once told me, “Everything is measured by play in this business.” If he can hang on to a winner through the primaries, he will probably be assigned to follow him through the fall election—perhaps all the way to the White House. (BB 55)

This claim argues that the linking of a reporter to a candidate is so solid that a reporter’s career path can hinge on the success or failure of the candidate they are covering, giving the journalist a strong vested interest in that candidate’s success. Crouse uses this to build his claim that the system of campaign journalism was fallible, and that the journalism produced by it was incapable of dealing with the failings of the system. Moreover this is not something that Crouse claims about a single reporter, or even a handful of reporters, but about campaign reporters in general, and the system that they worked in.

One of the more subtle ways that the New Journalism mode surfaces in *The Boys on the Bus* is in the intermingling of Crouse’s analysis of accounts from other reporters who did have actual experiences to draw on to illustrate his points, with his own imagined accounts. He does this with a sense of being as accurate in his fictionalised account as that of any of the other reporters on the bus:

So the correspondents did not like to dwell on signs that their Winner was losing, any more than a soup manufacturer likes to admit that there is botulism in the vichyssoise. If the Winner turned into a clear-cut loser, the campaign reporter might get assigned to the new Winner. Or he might not. There was always that nagging fear that the editor might have forgotten him, that he might be destined to spend the rest of the year in some dull secondary assignment. Besides, he had spent months making a close, monomaniacal study of the candidate. He had become a very narrow specialist. He could tell you everything about the candidate from his favourite dish to the political opinions of his war buddies. If there was any justice in the world, the reporter thought, the candidate would come through and justify this fantastic expenditure of time. Otherwise, what a tragic, absurd, depressing waste... (BB 56)

The way that Crouse writes here is particularly interesting because it delves more into the literary style of New Journalism than do his relations of historical facts and anecdotes from other reporters. He has in a way taken on the emotional persona of the reporters who have developed this sense of the link between their career and the success of their candidate. His description of the psychological and emotional state of the campaign journalist almost takes on the voice of this character towards the end, and the line “If there was any justice in the world, the reporter thought [...]” is not unlike the third-person narrator that Mailer used to include himself in his journalism. And yet Crouse did not have first-hand knowledge of this kind of emotional response to a campaign, as the 1972 campaign was his first and he had not been covering a single candidate, and had not had the opportunity to do a “monomaniacal study” of any particular individual. This delving into the psyche of a campaign reporter then must be imagined based on an amalgamation of those reporters he has encountered and interviewed during the course of the campaign.

The fourth of Crouse’s main problems with the system of campaign journalism, as it existed in 1972, was that he believed it gave reporters too much power over public perception of the campaigns. In particular Crouse saw this power as having increased dramatically since the mid-1960s, and believed that it related to the increased interest of the press in covering campaigns, and the extension of the campaign journalism process by the inclusion of primary coverage, something which he observed only became standard after the 1964 election (*BB* 36). At the same time, if Crouse was correct in these assumptions, they point to one reason for the increased role of New Journalist writers in the 1972 campaign. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, many New Journalists considered the mode to be concerned with tackling subjects and issues that were relevant to the concerns of the public. An increase in public concern and attention on the coverage of campaigns would have logically made it an area of reporting ripe for tackling by New Journalists, as it was by Crouse, Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem. An increased social awareness in the context of the campaigns opened up possibilities for different kinds of secondary agendas. The potential benefit for New Journalists in the increased role of campaign journalism is not something that Crouse addresses, however, instead focusing on what he saw as the potentially problematic effect of the increased ability of the press to influence the results of the primary. He claims that by the 1972 election the role of the press had become not only to report on the outcome of the campaign, but to at least in some part influence it by screening the candidates and influencing the success or failure of candidates in the eyes of the public (*BB* 36-37). Crouse does not claim that it was as

straightforward as the reporters deciding who would win the election but still attributes a great deal of political power to the press.

This suggests that the idea of writers such as Mailer that they could change the outcome of the election was not born out of an oversized ego but of a more accepted view of the role of the press at the time. On the other hand, for a New Journalist like Mailer to benefit from this perceived power would inherently link him to the mainstream press. And yet much like how Crouse reminds the reader of *The Boys on the Bus* that he was an outsider to the system, there to observe, but not the same as the participants, Mailer viewed himself as separate from the press (as will be further discussed later in this thesis). This highlights a tension in the role of New Journalists in the campaign, as they came to the campaign with the notion of providing a different or even “outsider” perspective, and yet participated in the campaign in many of the same ways as straight reporters, and potentially benefitted from the same privileges. This suggests that despite how in many of these cases New Journalists viewed themselves as separate or different, potentially what was most different about what they brought to campaign reporting was not their role as outsiders but the mode of their writing and the more open way their personal frameworks advanced secondary agendas.

Crouse’s view of himself as an outsider may be what contributed to the development of his concept of the underlying issue that fuelled all of the other problems he outlined: the system’s inherent promotion of pack journalism. This concept was present in his original *Rolling Stone* article, but was substantially expanded in his book. Only one short paragraph is initially devoted to it in the article, which is expanded to four lengthier paragraphs and a sizeable footnote in *The Boys on the Bus*. His theory of pack journalism is instrumental to the way that he characterises his fellow journalists and the journalism they produced on the campaign. Crouse claims that the nature of the system of campaign journalism involving a group of reporters travelling, living, and working together for the duration of the campaign resulted in their influencing each other. He argues that these conditions were what “gave rise to the notorious phenomenon called ‘pack journalism’ (also known as ‘herd journalism’ and ‘fuselage journalism’)” (BB 7), and he is now widely credited with coining the phrase in studies of election coverage.¹⁵ According to Crouse, the concept was that because journalists on a campaign were

¹⁵ See, for instance, Kenneth Warren’s *Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior* (479), Jody Baumgartner and Peter Francia’s *Conventional Wisdom and American Elections* (123), and Guido Stempel’s *Media and Politics in America* (108).

working in the close confines of the press bus and the press plane, “they all fed off the same pool report, the same daily handout, the same speech by the candidate; the whole pack was isolated in the same mobile village. After a while, they began to believe the same rumours, subscribe to the same theories, and write the same stories” (BB 7-8). While socially “The pack was divided into cliques” and “The most experienced national political reporters, wire men, and big-paper reporters, who were at the top of the pecking order, often did not know the names of the men from the smaller papers, who were at the bottom,” they were all ultimately working from the same information (BB 7). One of the dangers of pack journalism for campaign reporting that Crouse underscores is that it could lead to opinions forming that become shared by the pack so that all of the reporters were operating under the same bias. One illustration of this that Crouse observed was the press’s attitude towards candidates who were “lightweights”:

A lightweight, by definition, is a man who cannot assert his authority over the national press, cannot manipulate reporters, cannot finesse questions, prevent leaks, or command a professional public relations operation. The press likes to demonstrate its power by destroying lightweights, and pack journalism is never more doughty and complacent than when the pack has tacitly agreed that a candidate is a joke. (BB 184)

This almost seems to characterise pack journalists as behaving like predators that will take down the weakest prey. At the very least it points to the press as occasionally operating with a collective mindset. This suggests that readers should be potentially critical of opinions of candidates that are seemingly shared by all or most publications, in case that opinion is a misconception born of the attitude of the pack rather than based in actual fact. If what Crouse claims was correct, pack journalism seems to have been a significant aspect of the failing of the system of campaign reporting, since it undermined both any kind of freely objective reporting and the ability of reporters to offer their individual viewpoints and assessments of the campaign.

At the same time, the way that Crouse describes the other journalists as a pack, with himself as a removed observer, subtly reinforces his outsider status. The same language that he uses to characterise the pack journalists as animals places him in the role of the more aware and more critical observer. And yet he was still on the bus, and as discussed a great deal of *The Boys on the Bus* comes from Crouse’s interviews with the other reporters, and their thoughts and perspectives are therefore a large part of his own reporting. Furthermore, Thompson’s mentions of Crouse in *Fear and Loathing: On the*

Campaign Trail '72 suggest that at the very least Crouse and Thompson were a pack of two. Thompson, for instance, once glosses over the details of a report because “Crouse is dealing with that story” (*FLCT* 162). This does not invalidate Crouse’s claims about the nature of pack journalism, but it is important to note that he was not as free of the pitfalls of the system that he was observing as his self-proclaimed outsider status might imply. As this thesis will examine in later chapters, many of Crouse’s key objections, such as becoming too attached to a particular candidate or influencing or being influenced by other members of the pack, were not inherently solved by a reporter being a New Journalist or working for a New Journalism publication.

One of Crouse’s solutions to the problem of pack journalism is for more journalists to be allowed to write independently and subjectively, and that if they did so, “there would be a cacophony of rival voices instead of the usual resounding chorus” (*BB* 308). The underlying contention implicit in Crouse’s claims about the state of campaign journalism is that campaign journalists are at their best when they are freed from the constraints of straight journalism and adopt modes of reporting that are more akin to New Journalism. For instance, in Crouse’s analysis of the coverage of McGovern during the early primaries he claims that Richard Reeves was the only journalist to do a thorough job of reporting on McGovern because he was a free-lance magazine reporter and because he was free of the straight journalism constraints of his former employer *The New York Times* (*BB* 65). Crouse’s claim stresses the importance of having unconstrained reporters in order to provide the public with the most complete and worthwhile views of the candidates. This tacitly suggests that magazines (such as *Rolling Stone*) were a freer home for journalists who wanted to write however they desired. If *The New York Times* was the “Mother,” the reserved, the square, the old-fashioned parent, magazines are positioned as the rebellious youth having finally “cut the umbilical cord” (Crouse, *BB* 65). This kind of analysis is very much an argument for an increased New Journalism influence in the way that campaign reporting was approached.

However, though the underlying suggestion of *The Boys on the Bus* is that a New Journalism approach to campaign reporting would be superior to straight journalism, Crouse’s analysis of what a new system of campaign reporting should look like is not always clear. For instance, in contradiction to his arguments against following a single candidate, Crouse claims that one problem with coverage of the McGovern campaign was that, during the primary, reporters were not attached enough to his campaign (*BB* 64). This occurred when McGovern’s movement to the head of the primary race resulted

in higher ranked journalists taking the place of newer reporters who had initially covered him (*BB* 64). Neither the reporters who had focused on the previous leader Ed Muskie, nor the reporters new to the campaign were “able to give McGovern the careful scrutiny he deserved, and which might have saved him from making disastrous mistakes later on” (*BB* 64). This seems to suggest that there is a benefit to a reporter following a single campaign, because they develop an extremely detailed knowledge of the candidate from which to scrutinize and report on them. Furthermore, it implies the value of an almost symbiotic relationship between the candidate and the reporters, as it suggests that more effective journalism about McGovern would have prompted him to run a better campaign. This is at odds with Crouse’s argument against candidates and reporters being too strongly linked. It is also in conflict with his claim that following a single campaign leads a reporter to not closely scrutinize a candidate because of emotional attachment or professional co-dependency.

Though he sets himself up as an outsider well-placed to point out the failings of the system, Crouse makes it clear that he was not the only reporter who felt that the process of campaign reporting needed an overhaul, such as in his conversation with Dick Stout, who had been reporting on campaigns since 1964 and feared the inability of both himself and his fellow reporters to do a good job: “Stout later said that he thought campaign coverage was ‘pretty bad,’ but he couldn’t think how to improve it” (Crouse, *BB* 58). Likewise, David Broder’s claim “[...] I think that in 1968, we did begin to do what we should have been doing for years, which is to talk about what we think the role of the press is. And that’s something that we still have barely begun to do” points to the kind of analysis that Crouse was doing as both a new way of thinking for the press and an important one (Crouse, *BB* 96-97). Therefore though Crouse may be exposing a broken system to his readers, at least some of those actually participating in the system were already aware of its pitfalls but at a loss as to how to change a seventy-year-old system. Crouse’s observation that most of the reporters on the 1972 campaign “were covering a Presidential campaign for the first time” is a little at odds with the idea that he brought a uniquely fresh and new perspective to the campaign (*BB* 58). However it also points to one possible reason why he saw 1972 as a time ripe for change: the relative newness of other reporters who were not personally stuck in a particular mode of reporting on campaigns. Furthermore, it suggests one reason for New Journalism having been so prevalent in 1972, and in coverage of the campaign in particular. If campaign journalists who were new to the system were more open to change, at the same time that New

Journalism was at a peak of popular and critical attention, that awareness of New Journalism may have contributed to the experimentations in campaign journalism that were happening.

Meeting the Press: Critiquing the Campaign Reporters in 1972 from a New Journalist Perspective

The potential for individuals to have power within the pack is highlighted in Crouse's categorization of some reporters as "the Heavies," about whom he claims "the consensus was that they were a lot like other reporters except that they somehow had more energy, they were more monomaniacal about their work" (BB 69). Though this description in some ways sounds reminiscent of the ways that New Journalists wrote about each other,¹⁶ Crouse does not use the "Heavy" nomenclature as a way to designate reporters whose journalism he praised, but instead to note who had a significant status within the pack (whether he saw their journalism as warranting it or not). He attributes this status to Johnny Apple of *The New York Times*, David Broder of *The Washington Post*, Jules Witcover of the *Los Angeles Times*, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak of the Publishers Hall Syndicate and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and Haynes Johnson of *The Washington Post* (BB 69-120). Crouse gives an in-depth view of these journalists, and consequently provides readers with a base of information about their motivations and beliefs, and their influence on the pack. Crouse's approach here suggests a development and application of the belief espoused in many of the formative articles on New Journalism about the importance of the visibility of the role and perspective of the journalist. That he finds elements to praise in the approach of some of these journalists also suggests that some of the elements of New Journalism could already be found in the work of some parts of the mainstream press. This either indicates an increased intermingling between the kind of writing done by straight journalists and New Journalists, or that these elements were present in what Crouse would see as good reporters regardless of how the reporter might be labelled.

That Crouse describes "the Heavies" as recognized as such not necessarily because they were the best, "Nor that they were right all the time, because they weren't," but

¹⁶ See Wolfe, for example: "they're using all the techniques of the novelists, even the most sophisticated ones – and on top of that they're helping themselves to the insights of the men of letters while they're at it – and at the same time they're still doing their low-life legwork, their 'digging,' their hustling" ("Seizing the Power" 40).

because they were “monomaniacal about their work” is a key part of what he saw as the dangers of pack journalism on the campaign (BB 69). According to Crouse, power within the pack did not necessarily mean that a reporter was actually better, or should therefore have their journalism given more weight by readers. And yet his observations indicate that he saw “the Heavies” as having significant influence at times on the journalism produced by other reporters: “Not only did other reporters read Apple’s articles for unique information, they also looked to him for guidance whenever they had to cover a story where there were no handouts, no speeches, and no easy answers” (BB 79). From Crouse’s New Journalist perspective, the counter to this kind of influence was for more reporters to adopt the New Journalism mode, which would meet his demands for more independent thinking and writing. In particular, the influence of Apple as a “Heavy” seems potentially even more concerning to Crouse in light of his problems with the nature of the kind of reporting done by straight journalists like Apple, who, as a *New York Times* reporter, seems to have epitomized many of the qualities that Crouse as a New Journalist rejected: “‘He is classically the reporter that the *Times* would have invented,’ says a fellow reporter. ‘He asks just the questions that they want asked and not one more; he doesn’t probe too deeply [...]’” (BB 77).

Apple was not the only reporter that Crouse saw as wielding a significant influence over the other reporters of the pack, however. It was a quality possessed by all those whom he described as Heavies; he also claims that David Broder of *The Washington Post* could work at any paper and “still probably wield the kind of influence that can change campaigns in their course and other reporters in their opinions” (BB 85). But Crouse’s view of Broder is far more positive than his view of Apple, because Broder was more open to New Journalist techniques and methods. Some of the decisions that Broder made in his own journalism which moved it more into the sphere of New Journalism are ones which Crouse contends should be replicated by other reporters (BB 90). This then presents a somewhat conflicting view of whether or not there should be reporters with influence over the others, or if the influence of a “Heavy” can be positive if they are writing the “right” kind of journalism. A logical but unstated conclusion to draw from this juxtaposition is that to Crouse, influencing content is troublesome, but influencing style is a good thing – if it is the kind of style valued by New Journalism.

It was not only “the Heavies” that had influence over the rest of the pack; equally influential during the 1972 campaign, according to Crouse, was the role of the wire services reporters who wrote for organisations such as the Associated Press (the AP) and

the United Press International (the UPI) (BB 19). Crouse describes them as largely unknown to the public as individuals, and yet almost ubiquitous to the extent that they provided stories for newspapers across the country who did not have their own reporters on the campaign (BB 19). Furthermore, according to Crouse the influence of the wire services reporters extended even to newspapers that had reporters covering the campaign: “the wire services are influential beyond calculation. Even at the best newspapers, the editor always gauges his own reporter’s stories against the expectations that the wire stories have aroused” (BB 19). Crouse portrays the influence of the wire services reporters as having been so large that it even caused an editor from *The New York Times* to call their team on the campaign and ask why their story lead was different from the AP (BB 22). According to Crouse, this was common if a newspaper differed from the AP or UPI, and affected how the reporters covered the campaign: “Most reporters dreaded call-backs. Thus the pack followed the wire-service men whenever possible. Nobody made a secret of running with the wires; it was an accepted practice” (BB 22). However Crouse argues that the nature of the wire service, in attempting to appeal to the broadest possible audience and therefore by necessity be “more inoffensive and inconclusive,” made this influence problematic (BB 19). Crouse clearly places the wire service reporters in an opposing category to New Journalists by noting that the “Dean of the political wire-service reporters” in 1972, Walter Mears, “didn’t go in for the New Journalism. ‘The problem with a lot of the new guys is they don’t get the formula stuff drilled into them,’ he told me” (BB 20). Overall the influence of the wire services is portrayed as indicative of the ubiquity of straight journalism in the campaign reporting system, since the just-the-facts nature of wire service reporting was the epitome of straight journalism principles.

Via the words of another reporter, Crouse offers an interesting comment on the distinction between the function of different kinds of journalists:

“He’s [Broder’s] a very conventional journalist,” said a colleague, “but by sheer perseverance he really has taken conventional journalism to a new peak; he tells you as much as a well-informed non-genius can tell you. A Broder column tells you exactly where the political situation is on that given day. It might take a Mailer to tell you what it all *means*, but Broder is almost always on the money about what has happened.” (BB 98; emphasis in the original)

This suggests that there can be value in very different modes of journalism. The idea that what Broder and Mailer did in their journalism demonstrated two entirely different

approaches to the same political situation, but that both were essential to a comprehensive view of that situation, places them on the same level. Furthermore, if both approaches are of equal value but vastly different substance, then it is not enough to read only Mailer, however artful and interpretive he might be, or to read only Broder, no matter how factual and comprehensive about the facts he might be: both must be read for a complete view of a topic.

This implies that both the New Journalism mode and the mainstream press are potentially necessary to offer readers a comprehensive understanding of the events and complex nature of campaigns. For Crouse, though he clearly values the elements of New Journalism, the mode of a particular writer can be more complex than trying to give them either the label “straight journalist” or “New Journalist” would suggest. This is an interesting approach, because it is at odds with some of the better-known claims from New Journalists, such as Wolfe’s of the obvious superiority of New Journalism as the evolved mode of journalism. And yet Crouse’s arguments seem in keeping with the ethos of New Journalism and the way that it originally developed as a mode without clear distinctions and boundaries. In that regard, Crouse’s analysis of his fellow journalists is decidedly a New Journalist approach, as in many cases he evaluates their style of writing and method of campaign journalism and picks apart what he does and does not see as working, rather than labelling them “straight” (or “mainstream” or other similar nomenclature) and dismissing them entirely. The aspects of their writing and methods that he respects and highlights as worthy of replication and praise are those elements which were typically valued by the New Journalism mode.

Crouse ultimately contends that even the journalists that he saw as taking steps towards providing their readers with more insightful, truthful journalism faced barriers to changes in the campaign journalism system (with the rare exception of those writing for New Journalist publications like Thompson and Crouse himself). One of the largest barriers was that many established publications were resistant to the kinds of change that individual reporters were beginning to see as valuable and necessary. For instance, in an analysis of Jules Witcover of the *Los Angeles Times*, Crouse claims that Witcover, “a very straight, conventional journalist,” had attempted to “inject some analysis into his stories, to interpret the campaign for his readers” but had largely been stopped from doing so by his editors (*BB* 100). Even though Crouse views Witcover as a straight journalist, he sees the possibility of Witcover developing New Journalism techniques and highlights these as the best way for his journalism to evolve (*BB* 100-109). In analyses such as this,

Crouse is both advocating for the use of techniques valued by New Journalism, and laying blame on traditionally straight mainstream newspapers for not encouraging these techniques in campaign journalism.

The idea that a journalist who considered himself more conventional could still utilize some of the key elements of the New Journalism mode is an important one because it strongly emphasises the value and even necessity of New Journalism techniques for campaign reporting. Crouse's analysis of Witcover also highlights the extent to which, even in 1972, conflicting ideas about what constituted New Journalism existed, and how this contributed to the attitude towards the mode held by journalists who did not identify as New Journalists. The way that Crouse sees Witcover as trying to write more personally and interpretively, and to abandon the "cut-and-dried formula stories," is in keeping with the qualities valued by New Journalism (*BB* 107). And yet Witcover's deploring of the "underground press" and "young journalists" is indicative of the way that opponents of New Journalism dismissed the mode (Crouse, *BB* 106-107). That Witcover could dismiss New Journalism and yet utilise some of its element suggests a disconnect between perceptions of New Journalism and its actual techniques. In a way, by highlighting the New Journalist qualities of reporters who did not identify as New Journalists, Crouse is conceptualising New Journalism as a more common mode than it might otherwise have been considered. He is subtly linking the techniques of the mode to journalists like Witcover who might have rejected the label of being a "New Journalist".

The contrast between the two methods of campaign journalism is a microcosm of the break from the conventions of straight journalism that led to New Journalism as a mode of reporting. In light of his argument that straight journalism publications kept their reporters from writing more insightful or opinionated articles, Crouse draws a distinction between the bulk of campaign journalism as done by these straight reporters, and journalists who operated outside the system and were more open to changes and new approaches to campaign journalism:

In a behemoth democracy, the mass circulation papers would always want to have straight reporters deliver up the political news, and these reporters would always be caught between the demands of objectivity, on the one hand, and the freakish stranger-than-fiction reality of the campaign plane on the other. Of course, there remained the radical solution of simply chucking all pretense of objectivity, and writing from a totally personal frame of reference. This luxury was given only to a few. (*BB* 310)

Crouse's personal tone, not always apparent in *The Boys on the Bus*, is stronger when he is advocating for New Journalism, and for the intentional use of personal frameworks, as here. He employs a language that emphasises the kind of writing that he is holding up as exemplary; the use of Thompsonesque phrasing such as "the freakish stranger-than-fiction reality" juxtaposed with the heavy weight of straight journalism's "demands of objectivity". According to Crouse, the few journalists who had the "luxury" of denouncing the rules and writing from an entirely personal perspective included the "literary people sent by magazines to cover the Conventions," such as Mailer, whom he describes using Renata Adler's assessment in *The New Yorker*: "'the reporter's basic question—what is the story and what is the point—was resolved autobiographically: story and point were whatever happened to impinge on the author's sensibility'" (BB 310). However, Crouse singles out one reporter of the few who did not adhere to the system of campaign reporting as the most significant: "the nonobjective journalist who created the greatest sensation, and the only one who covered the campaign full-time from January through November, was Hunter S. Thompson of *Rolling Stone*" (BB 311). As noted, Crouse was also a journalist for *Rolling Stone*, so his praise of Thompson and *Rolling Stone* should be read with that in mind, and with an awareness of the influence that had on how he frames Thompson. For instance, the first note he makes in the acknowledgments to *The Boys on the Bus* is to his "debt to Hunter Thompson" for convincing *Rolling Stone* editor Jann Wenner to put him on the campaign to write the original article; suggesting he had a disposition positively inclined towards Thompson from the earliest stages of his writing (BB xi). Nonetheless, his examination of both Thompson and *Rolling Stone*'s roles in the coverage of the campaign offers an important direct illustration of how Crouse proposed New Journalism could function as one of the best means of campaign reporting.

Crouse's analysis of Thompson demonstrates his view of the way that journalists more removed from the standards of the system operated during the campaign, and the potential impact that these journalists had on the future of campaign journalism. He places Thompson outside the campaign press pack, not only because of the publication that he wrote for, but because of his personality and his opinions about other journalists, who Crouse claimed Thompson "wanted no part of" and had experienced on the 1968 campaign as "a bunch of swine, a collection of suspicious reactionary old hacks who cared only about protecting their leads and were hopelessly out of touch with anything interesting that was happening in the country" (BB 312). It is clear from the way Crouse

describes Thompson that he saw his role on the bus as an influence on the other campaign journalists as well. Despite Thompson's initial outsider status, Crouse claims that "some of the straightest men on the bus soon began to accept him and to read his articles" (BB 313). That Thompson was an outsider who wrote subjective journalism that strayed far from the rules of the pack is especially significant then, in light of the prominence that his journalism had among them:

they soon began to read him regularly. Thompson's best lines were quoted in *Newsweek*. "Ed Muskie talked like a farmer with terminal cancer trying to borrow on next year's crop." Hubert Humphrey was a "treacherous, gutless old ward-heeler who should be put in a goddam bottle and sent out with the Japanese current."

Chris Lydon—a *New York Times* reporter who was only thirty-three but dressed like an Exeter headmaster and wore a James Reston Memorial Bow Tie—admired Thompson and went so far as to quote him in a *Sunday Week in Review* piece to the effect that Humphrey was campaigning "like a rat in heat." (Crouse, BB 313-314)

This suggests that straight journalism and New Journalism were not wholly separate institutions, and in fact that there was a bleed-through effect of New Journalism in the kind of journalism being produced by historically straight journalists. And, as will be demonstrated in the Thompson chapter of this thesis, the reverse was also true and straight journalists influenced New Journalists like Thompson. That reporters for straight journalism publications were quoting lines from a writer who was distinctly subjective was potentially problematic. It placed Thompson's characterisations of and assertions about candidates in a very different context to that in which they were originally written, and could suggest to readers that they were purely, objectively, factual. The potential for hugely problematic ramifications from this is perhaps most clearly illustrated by Crouse's analysis of the response to Thompson's infamous "Ibogaine" article on Muskie:

In a column on the Wisconsin primary, he claimed to have discovered that Muskie was taking an obscure Brazilian drug called Ibogaine, which accounted for the Senator's zombie-like performances on the stump. Many readers, including several journalists, believed this. So in subsequent articles, Hunter telegraphed his punches by writing, "My God, why do I write crazy stuff like this?" at the end of each hoax. (BB 316)

This outlines how New Journalism's effect on campaign journalism in 1972 was particularly significant because New Journalism was still a relatively new force in

campaign journalism and neither straight journalists nor readers necessarily understood how to read campaign journalism written subjectively or with fictional elements. That Crouse claims Thompson had to moderate how he wrote by telegraphing his fictions demonstrates that not even New Journalists were free of the effects of the system of campaign journalism. Still, Thompson's prominence here as writing the kind of interpretive or subjective journalism that others wanted to write but could not or would not indicates New Journalism's potential influence on the development of modern forms of campaign journalism as they began to undergo significant changes with the 1972 campaign.

Only the News That's Fit to Print: Crouse's Analysis of the Influence of Key Publications on Campaign Journalism in 1972

One of the key ways that *The Boys on the Bus* functions as a New Journalism text is in the way that it analyses and critiques straight journalism publications, calling for reform in a way that is strikingly similar to early New Journalism assessments of the state of journalism. In addition to his examination of his fellow reporters, Crouse's dissection of the major publications operating at that time and the role they played in controlling what kind of journalism was being published about campaigns is one of the main ways that he applies his self-aware perspective as a New Journalist to his arguments for reform. This is particularly critical to the way that his journalism attempted to expose and critique the process by which campaign journalism was created, because, as seen in his analysis of the journalists on the campaign, it was the publications and their editors and owners that Crouse viewed as some of the biggest obstacles to new modes of campaign journalism. He builds his analysis around his argument that the more established, straight journalism publications kept better campaign journalism from developing for several principal reasons: that they were so entrenched in sticking to the rules of straight journalism that they would not allow for more interpretive or personal analysis; that they were more concerned with the bottom line of profits and obligations to advertisers and sales than with the quality of the journalism they produced; that they were in some cases influenced by the political bias of the owners or publication executives; and what he saw as an inferiority of daily and weekly newspapers to magazines because of the obligations brought about by the immediacy and frequency of the newspaper publication schedule. In juxtaposition to these criticisms, he holds up for praise those aspects of publications

that were more aligned to the kind of New Journalism that he was advocating – and the kind that he was himself producing as a writer for a fortnightly magazine that favoured New Journalism.

According to Crouse, older, established, straight journalism publications like *The New York Times* continued to be as resistant to new approaches to campaign journalism as they were to the development of New Journalism. This line of thinking is in keeping with the way that *The New York Times* had regularly featured as a key emblem in arguments by New Journalists against the institutionalised nature of straight journalism. According to Crouse, *The New York Times* was still as powerful and consequential in 1972: “Once a story hits page one of the *Times*, it is certified news and can’t be ignored” (BB 73). The *Times* is held up as the epitome of the failings of straight journalism and its resistance to change:

Later, after Nixon had won the nomination and launched his Presidential campaign in earnest, [*Times* journalist Robert] Semple became less enchanted with him, but found it hard to express his doubts within the narrow, hard news form of reporting preferred by the *Times*. In the fall of 1968, a mildly worded piece he wrote pointing out Nixon’s trick of declaring “moratoriums” on issues he did not wish to discuss was greeted with skepticism by the editors; they balked at running it. The *Times* was loathe [sic] to break away from the traditional, simplistic forms of election coverage, and Semple had to fight for over a week to make them accept a piece which contained so much analysis. (BB 257-258)

Here Crouse is not only blaming the *Times* for a lack of analytical campaign journalism, he is also attributing some of the culpability for Nixon’s manipulation of the press to straight journalism. It was not entirely the failure of journalists to give a more insightful and in-depth examination of Nixon in the campaign, Crouse argues, but of the institutionalised nature of straight journalism in some of the major news publications which had power in the established system of campaign reporting. By laying the blame for the continued prevalence of straight campaign journalism on the publications rather than on the journalists, while claiming that many wanted to write more personally, he is suggesting that the New Journalism mode is one that many writers would come to naturally as the best approach to campaign journalism if they were unhampered by the restrictions of the publications they wrote for.

Furthermore, Crouse argues that many of the established and trusted straight journalism papers had their publishing decisions influenced by dishonourable factors. For

instance, he claims that the *Los Angeles Times* was less concerned with the issues of journalism than with being a business, and with the printing of advertisements instead of news (BB 105). In his aim of uncovering the factors behind the publication of campaign journalism, this brings up another important consideration: what are the interests of the company behind the publication and who is paying for those interests to be upheld? In a related argument, Crouse claims that these kinds of financial concerns can be more troublingly tied to political motivations, such as his assertion that the attempts at publishing more insightful journalism by Curtis Wilkie and the Wilmington, Delaware *News-Journal* were opposed by the DuPonts, the wealthy, Republican, pro-Nixon family that owned the paper (BB 14).

Crouse also draws a distinction in his analysis between the kinds of journalism published by daily newspapers, and that of magazines which typically had a longer lead-time in their publication schedule. As a journalist for a magazine that published fortnightly, he displays a certain amount of bias towards magazines, which he saw as having more scope for the kind of personally interpretive writing that he viewed as the best approach to campaign journalism. Even so, he observes that the closely knit system of campaign reporting meant that weekly news magazines, or “newsweeklies,” relied in some instances on more prominent established newspapers to guide what they printed, and would first leak part of a story to a more established publication like *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* to gain “respectability by appearing in one of these major establishment organs” (BB 11). Furthermore, “it was impossible to tell how often the reporters censored themselves in anticipation of some imaginary showdown with a cautious editor, preferring to play it safe and go along with whatever the rest of the pack was writing” (BB 11). The idea that news magazines would leak stories to more established straight newspapers in order to legitimize their respectability emphasises the fact that established straight newspapers were still read as inherently more respectable and credible than magazines and alternative publications. At the same time, it indicates an interconnectedness between newspapers and magazines, if these different forms of publications were still reproducing the same information at the core of their articles. The idea that even news magazine writers often would “go along with whatever the rest of the pack was writing” suggests that magazine writers on the campaign were just as susceptible to the effects of pack journalism as the newspaper writers of whom Crouse was more frequently and openly critical.

Crouse praises those elements of mainstream publications that he saw as open to New Journalism practices. In his analysis of the key publications in the 1972 campaign and his unpacking of their methods, motivations, and effect, Crouse puts these publications into comparative context with each other, implicitly praising those which demonstrated qualities valued by New Journalism. For instance, he calls *The Washington Post* “a paper which vies with the *Times* to give the best political coverage in the country. Since the *Post* is located in a city which has an almost insatiable hunger for political news, it devotes an enormous amount of space to politics, and its coverage is often more thorough and colorful than that of the *Times*” (BB 85). This impresses upon the reader not only what the *Post* is like, but why, according to Crouse, it was a better choice to obtain information from than *The New York Times*. Crouse later describes the *Post* as being more receptive to New Journalismesque approaches to campaign reporting than its competitors (BB 324-325). For instance, he calls *Post* reporter Bill Greider “The most extraordinary reporter on the McGovern campaign” for writing less conventionally than many of the other reporters: “Many of Greider’s articles read like letters. They described the temper of the campaign, reflected the shifts in mood, articulated the doubt and ambiguity that the press and staff often felt in judging the day-to-day events” (BB 322-324). This openly praises a New Journalism approach to campaign reporting; that Greider’s articles read like letters directly harks back to some of the earliest moves to a New Journalism mode.¹⁷ And in contrast to the response of other papers and editors to subjective writing, Crouse claims: “The *Post* encouraged this approach” (BB 324). That a mainstream publication like *The Washington Post* could both have New Journalism techniques being used by their writers, and be positively disposed to these techniques as a publication, suggests that New Journalism was beginning to be less of an outsider mode of journalism used only by certain publications and was instead seeping into the writing of journalists in the mainstream press. That these techniques were being used in some parts of the mainstream press furthermore points to the 1972 campaign as a time that was ripe for the kind of changes in the approach to campaign journalism that Crouse was advocating.

¹⁷ See for instance Tom Wolfe’s accidental use of the mode by writing the article “There Goes (Varoom! Varoom!) That Kandy-Kolored (Tphhhhhh!) Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby (Rahghhhh!) Around the Bend (Brummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm)…” first as a set of notes in the form of a letter addressed to his editor (Wolfe, “Like a Novel” 28).

Crouse subtly weaves into *The Boys on the Bus* and his analysis of all the publications covering the campaign an argument that New Journalism offers a better approach to campaign reporting, one that is more valuable for readers as a tool to actually understand the candidates and their politics. Rather than come right out and state that New Journalism is the best form of journalism as earlier proponents did, he makes arguments that praise the kinds of writing and reporting techniques that were valued by New Journalism and eschewed by straight journalism. His analysis of Broder's struggle to be allowed to "write about what he felt were the important stories and to supply the background and analysis necessary for understanding these stories" while working at *The New York Times* effectively argues for the value of the techniques of New Journalism – the colour of the background stories, the analysis, the personal interpretation – while disdaining the rigidity of straight journalism in *The New York Times*, without actually using the New Journalism label (BB 90).¹⁸ It subtly suggests that an increased use of the kinds of techniques valued by the New Journalism mode would be of benefit to an improved system of campaign journalism. This idea is woven throughout Crouse's analysis of the key publications in 1972, the journalism that was written and published about the 1972 campaigns of Nixon and McGovern, and the role that journalism played in the way that the campaign was viewed by the public.

Crouse's Nixon and McGovern: Exemplifying the Problems of the System of Campaign Reporting

Crouse uses what he sees as the diametric relationships of Nixon and McGovern with the press to illustrate what he views as the culmination of the failings of the campaign journalism system. His analysis of Nixon portrays the then-president as someone well aware of the weaknesses of the system and the current campaign journalists, and who uses those weaknesses to control to a great extent the way the campaign was covered. Crouse's analysis of McGovern portrays someone who embodies his claim that it was problematic for candidates and reporters to become too close.

¹⁸ Crouse does not write anything in *The Boys on the Bus* that suggests that he dislikes the New Journalism label. Rather, comments like his assessment of Mears not going "in for the New Journalism" suggest an awareness of a hesitance on the part of some of the more staunchly straight journalists to embrace the new form (BB 20). As he was trying to achieve reform in the field of campaign journalism for all reporters and not just those already accepting of New Journalism methods of reportage, avoiding naming the mode would have broadened his potential influence to those who would have disavowed New Journalism out of hand.

Together these portrayals depict the 1972 campaign as the epitome of the problems of the current campaign journalism system, and provide evidence of the need for reform.

In Crouse's analysis, Nixon demonstrates how the weaknesses of the system could be intentionally exploited by a master manipulator. He characterises Nixon as dramatically more antagonistic towards the press than any president before him (*BB* 180). This characterisation is one that modern scholarship on Nixon continues to support, as, for example, in Rick Perlstein's *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (2008).¹⁹ The language Crouse uses to describe the severity of Nixon's attitude towards the press makes the president sound almost pathological in his hatred (*BB* 180). The way he describes Nixon's mindset and belief that the press was torturing him is one of Crouse's clearest uses of the New Journalism mode, as he speculates on the emotional state of Nixon and his "deep, abiding, and vindictive hatred for the press" (*BB* 180). Phrases like "The press, he believed, never forgave him for pulling the mask off its darling, Alger Hiss; so the press tortured him, lied about him, hated him" almost take on the flavour of Nixon's own personality, as if, in a novel, Crouse were using free indirect discourse (*BB* 180). An allusion to Shakespeare, "To borrow a phrase from Iago, Nixon wore his heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at. The daws had a field day," paints Nixon as a vindictive antagonist, and in Crouse's analysis his control of the press becomes not only about power but about hatred and revenge (*BB* 180). Crouse argues that not only did Nixon manipulate the press more than any president before, but that he had completely dishonourable motivations of revenge and hatred. The way that Crouse talks about Nixon's hatred of the press is perhaps the area in the book where Crouse most blatantly displays his own interpretation of Nixon's actions, and where he is going against what he saw as the straight press's standard practice of not antagonising the White House. He characterises Nixon as not just pathologically in opposition to the press, but fully aware of the weaknesses of the campaign journalism system and actively using these weaknesses to control the coverage of the campaign (*BB* 180). This is key to his portrayal of Nixon as the embodiment of the most sinister possible effect of those weaknesses.

According to Crouse, Nixon developed the strategy that he used to control the press in 1972 over the course of his political campaigns from 1960 onwards, suggesting that the stagnancy of the system was in part what allowed Nixon to develop the tactics that he

¹⁹ Perlstein argues that Nixon "rose by stoking and exploiting anger and resentment, rooted in the anger and resentments at the center of his character" and that he was driven by "anxieties and dreads" which fuelled "vindictiveness" (748).

employed in 1972 (*BB* 181-186). It also supports Crouse's argument for a system open to change and new methods of journalism in order to keep from being too predictable, too reactionary. Crouse claims Nixon learned from his experiences during the 1968 campaign how the press worked, and how he could control its coverage of him by minimising the press conferences he gave and restricting reporters' access within the White House (*BB* 189-190). Evidence to support this claim can be seen in the intimate view of the extremely detailed manipulations of Nixon's media strategy during the 1968 campaign in Joe McGinniss' 1969 book *The Selling of the President*. The way that Crouse writes about Nixon throughout his book is then potentially oddly insightful for a candidate whom he characterises as tightly self-controlled and cut off from the press. There is a level of intimacy in Crouse's insights into Nixon's motivations and thinking that his claims that the president was isolated from the press do not necessarily support, particularly as Crouse was relatively new to campaign reporting and would not have had first-hand experience of Nixon prior to his tightly controlled and closed-off campaign in 1972.²⁰ His characterisations of Nixon, and his claims about the lessons that Nixon learned and his attitude personally, must then be either largely conjecture, or based off the experiences and knowledge of other reporters who had covered Nixon in the past. Crouse however does not acknowledge this somewhat fictionalised sense of Nixon's personal character and mindset. Instead he treats these characterisations as fact, which are used to illustrate the arguments he makes about the manipulation of the press during the campaign.

Crouse argues that the press was powerless in the face of the all-encompassing extent of Nixon's control of information about him and his campaign. There was a significant difficulty in accurately or insightfully reporting on the Republican side of the campaign, since Nixon refused to make himself available to the press for questioning, and carefully controlled what information they did have access to. As Crouse points out, Nixon did not campaign as such, but kept to the controlling advantage he had as the sitting president by not giving press conferences and by mostly staying in the White House (*BB* 216). See, for example, the comments by Nixon's Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman in Theodore H. White's *The Making of the President 1972*: "“He doesn't have to campaign,’ [...] ‘he doesn't have to establish his identity. He's been exposed for twenty-five years.

²⁰ Crouse could not even get on the campaign plane of Nixon's Vice President Spiro Agnew (Crouse, *BB* 276).

[...] he's probably the best-known human being in the history of the world. For him to campaign would be counterproductive, superfluous" (224). White adds to this that "The campaign, in short, would be what the President said and did as President from the White House, not as candidate" (224). Therefore a lot of the "campaign coverage" of Nixon came from the White House Press Corps who at least had access to Nixon's Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, whom Crouse characterises as often openly hostile and antagonistic towards the press (*BB* 216). This seems particularly important to Crouse's assessment of the campaign since he was disdainful of both Ziegler as Nixon's mouthpiece and the White House Press Corps for never standing up to him: "At the briefing lectern, [Ziegler] was smug, condescending, and relentlessly evasive, often refusing to answer the simplest and most innocuous of questions. He talked in a kind of flackspeak that would have given Orwell nightmares [...] [The White House Press Corps] were such a bunch of patsies. If they bought his act, they would buy anything" (*BB* 215-217). It is interesting that Crouse's characterisations of Ziegler and the White House Press Corps, though very different, are comparably critical. Ziegler as an Orwellian nightmare becomes the epitome of nefarious government control, but describing the White House Press Corps as "patsies" suggests they are in effect unwittingly working for Zeigler.

The few reporters whom Crouse viewed as the exception to his critique of those covering Nixon in 1972 are those whom he describes as operating outside the traditional system. Most frequently in his analysis this applies to journalists who were either New Journalists, like himself and Thompson, or trying New Journalist techniques in their writing, but he does observe other reporters operating outside what he saw as the rules of the main system. Of particular note because of the gender inequality in the system (as will be discussed further in the chapter of this thesis focused on Steinem), are Crouse's observations on the female journalists covering the campaign, whose role in 1972 he saw as not fully integrated with their male counterparts in the pack (*BB* 210). According to Crouse, open criticisms of Nixon and his campaign strategy were rare (*BB* 266). Among those rare instances he highlights one of the few women reporters that he observed covering the campaign,²¹ Cassie Mackin of NBC (*BB* 266). Mackin broadcast a report on

²¹ Though Crouse's references to female journalists on the campaign are rare, he does note both their struggles to be taken seriously by their male colleagues, and the value that their journalism had as coming from a more independent viewpoint: "It was no coincidence that some of the toughest pieces on the 1972 Nixon campaign came from Sarah McClendon, Helen Thomas of UPI, Cassie Mackin of NBC, Marilyn Berger of the *Washington Post*, and Mary McGrory. Having never been allowed to join the cozy, clubby world of the men, they had developed an uncompromising detachment and a bold independence of thought which often put the men to shame" (*BB* 210).

Nixon's campaign that claimed he was making false accusations about McGovern and was allowed to do so without being questioned by the press: "Mackin concluded: 'When all is said and done, it's like Mr. Nixon says, he is the President and it is the power of the Presidency that makes it possible to stay above the campaign and answer only the questions of his choice'" (BB 266). While this is a critical claim about the effect of Nixon's power as the president on the campaign, and one which Crouse examines at length after the campaign, he observes that during the campaign "The extraordinary thing about her piece was that it was virtually unique" (BB 266).²² Crouse's assessment of Mackin offers an interesting view of the role of women reporters in the 1972 campaign (BB 267). He argues that because she had "neither the opportunity nor the desire to travel with the all-male pack" she was able to operate somewhat outside the restrictions of the system and could report from her own perspective (BB 267). Though he is not talking about New Journalists in his analysis of the women reporters, he is talking about journalists who were also outside the established system. The link to New Journalists and his own self-designated role as an outsider, though unspoken here, also suggests that one of the most valuable aspects of New Journalism to campaign reporting was that the mode was so fluid that its lack of restrictions allowed it to operate outside established systems that had become too entrenched. Crouse claims that the fact that these kinds of subjective or outsider reports were so rare in the 1972 campaign contributed to the success of Nixon's strategy of not campaigning, because it was part of what largely kept the campaign journalists from bucking the system and calling Nixon out on his obfuscations. In contrast this proposes that more subjective and independent journalism, of the kind valued by New Journalists like Crouse, could potentially have resulted in a different outcome for the campaign by being more independently critical of Nixon.

Crouse's critique of McGovern's relationship with the press, and the coverage of his campaign in 1972, is almost diametrically opposed to his evaluation of the Nixon campaign. And yet despite the vast differences between coverage of the two campaigns, Crouse's assessment argues that the way McGovern's campaign was covered is equally indicative of the problems he had outlined with regards to the current system of campaign journalism. According to Crouse's depiction, the journalists covering McGovern's campaign exemplified the problem of reporters becoming too entrenched and too close

²² A claim later made by McGovern as well in his 1977 autobiography, where he wrote that though "Privately most reporters were bothered" by Nixon's lack of campaigning and the unfair balance of coverage in the media, "Cassie Mackin's report was unique in the campaign" (239-240).

to a single candidate. This seems to have been compounded by McGovern's propensity for being too open with reporters. The effect that Crouse claims these problems had on coverage of McGovern's campaign is illustrated clearly in his analysis of the Eagleton scandal, in which it was revealed that McGovern's vice-presidential running mate Thomas Eagleton had been hospitalised several times and received electroshock therapy (BB 325-326). Crouse calls attention to the significance of the Eagleton scandal, the way that it was reported in the press, and the impact that had on McGovern's campaign (BB 325). Though acknowledging that the negative portrayal in the press of Eagleton's medical issues as a dramatic scandal contributed to the damning effect the revelation had on McGovern's campaign, Crouse does not decidedly admonish the press and holds McGovern's fumbling of the release of information as at least partially to blame:

in trying to deny a relatively harmless wire story, McGovern had branded himself with one of those little catch-phrases that voters never forget. Richard Nixon, with his hard-won knowledge of the media, would doubtless have known better than to stand 1,000 percent behind *anything* in the middle of a hot public controversy. But McGovern apparently did not. (BB 328-329; emphasis in the original)

The "little catch-phrase" that Crouse refers to here was the claim made in an official statement to the press from McGovern that he was "'1,000 percent for Tom Eagleton'" after the revelation of his shock treatment (BB 328). The juxtaposition that Crouse makes here draws a distinction between McGovern as being too free with his words and lacking control over his portrayal in the press, and Nixon, who not only gave the press little to work with but very carefully crafted his word choice down to his team not using the word "campaign" (BB 244, 328-329). There is a reinforcement here as well of the importance of rhetoric, that goes beyond the facts behind the words; that how something is reported can have a significant bearing on how it is read and understood by readers. The concept that a statement could be reported and become a catch-phrase "that voters never forget" implies a power behind what is reported to have a lasting effect on how voters view a candidate; something which may be more obvious to us in the twenty-first century but was likely much newer to Crouse's readers in 1972. Crouse therefore sees it as "hopelessly naïve" for a candidate to try to treat journalists as comrades as McGovern did (BB 333). While Nixon's completely closed-off relationship with the press is shown as manipulative and indicative of a problematic hatred of the press, McGovern's friendly attitude and openness is characterised as a serious mistake of his campaign (BB 332-333).

According to Crouse's analysis, the McGovern campaign not only illustrates why it is bad for a candidate to be too close to the reporters, but why it can be equally bad for the perspective of the journalists. His argument that entrenched reporters can have their viewpoint compromised by developing emotional ties to the candidate they follow is illustrated in his evaluation of the McGovern reporters at the end of the campaign. Crouse takes the last-minute belief of some of the reporters following McGovern's campaign that he could actually win as proof of the problematic nature of expecting a reporter to closely follow a single candidate for the duration of a campaign and not absorb the views and attitudes of that candidate and become invested in their victory (BB 348). On the press plane, "the fact that these people thought that McGovern had a chance to win showed the folly of trying to call an election from 30,000 feet in the air" he declares, and adds the assessment of another reporter regarding criticism of *Los Angeles Times* reporter Dick Cooper: "They put him in a steel capsule for three months and then bring him out and say, 'Whaddya think?' Of course he thinks McGovern has a shot. It's just a lousy system, that's all" (BB 346-347). That the system was lousy is the core of Crouse's argument. Furthermore, Crouse draws out this argument to point out that because the system coloured reporters' views of the election, "The reporters attached to George McGovern had a very limited usefulness as political observers, by and large, for what they knew best was not the American electorate, but the tiny community of the press plane" (BB 348). Effectively his argument is that the system of campaign journalism is not only fallible, but that it is fallible in a way that makes it useless to the public as a means of being insightfully informed about the campaign.

Crouse argues that this pronounced imbalance between the coverage of the two sides of the campaign had a serious impact on the public view of the campaign and thus the election itself. He claims, "Since Richard Nixon was declining nearly all invitations to share the pleasure of his company with the electorate, the only real Presidential campaign belonged to George McGovern" (BB 320). This suggests that the press's lack of ability to report on Nixon resulted in a backlash of attempting to report more thoroughly on the McGovern. The effect of this on the election is shown in the press's increased attention on and therefore scrutiny and potential criticism of McGovern, and the fact that Nixon was not challenged to the point that Watergate did not affect his campaign or tarnish his image until after the election, as will be discussed further in the conclusion to this thesis.

Conclusion: What Comes Next

The examination of Crouse's campaign journalism in this chapter illuminates the significance of Crouse's secondary agenda as a New Journalist for the shape of his campaign reportage. Much in the way that early New Journalists had sought to change journalistic practices to be more literary by elucidating what they believed to be wrong with the state of journalism and how it could be fixed, Crouse's campaign journalism addresses what he viewed as the shortcomings of campaign journalism and how these factors might be addressed in the future. The conclusions drawn by Crouse in his examination of the 1972 campaign are that campaign journalism was on the cusp of dramatic and necessary changes to both the method of covering campaigns and the journalism produced about them, and that these changes needed a greater push by the journalists who covered the campaigns. The problem with straight journalism in the campaign context, according to Crouse's arguments, was that it was a mode of reporting with rules and expectations that were problematically exacerbated by the nature of being an established system resistant to change:

There was a strain of frustration infecting the campaign reporters that nobody could remember having seen in other election years—at least not in such virulent form. Some of the better minds on the plane had begun to feel caged in by the old formulas of classic objective journalism, which dictated that each story had to make some neat point; had to start with a hard news lead based on some phony event that the candidate's staff had staged; had to begin with the five w's; had to impose some *meaning*, however superficial or spurious, on the often insignificant, or mysterious, or downright absurd events of the day. Yet if the candidate spouted fulsome bullshit all day, the formula made it hard for a reporter to say so directly—he would have to pretend that “informed sources” had said so, or actually find someone in the crowd or the opposition who would say so.

A reporter was not allowed to make even the simplest judgements; nor was he expected to verify the candidates' claims. (*BB* 305-306; emphasis in the original)

The way that Crouse writes here is strongly reminiscent of the early arguments against the standard practices of straight journalism in the late 1950s and early 1960s that led to the development of the New Journalism mode. The idea that some journalists felt “caged in” by the rules suggests a tension between the reporters and the system that they operated in. There are links to Crouse's concept of pack journalism here, both in the idea that the

caged reporter is somehow like a caged animal, and that part of that cage was the necessity that everyone in the pack behaved and wrote in the same way. Thus the benefit for Crouse of New Journalism not having any concrete rules or guidelines, of being a mode of writing in which the particular method belonged to each New Journalist individually, was that it was in theory inherently incompatible with group formulas for writing. The sense here that 1972 was a time in which reporters were most frustrated with the established form of campaign journalism furthermore offers an interesting link to New Journalism's peak in 1972, as seen in Crouse's argument that the kind of journalism required by the rules of straight journalism was no longer enough to comprehensively cover the issues concerning an increasingly questioning society.

With his analysis in *The Boys on the Bus* Crouse attempts to be a part of the greater push that campaign journalism needed to evolve, and to set the stage for a new form of campaign journalism by influencing how it was viewed by the public. Crouse asserts that external forces had already begun to have an effect on the form of campaign journalism in 1972: "The few innovations which appeared in the coverage of the 1972 election year had all come about in response to pressures from outside the profession" (BB 303). Prior to the election these forces included the campaign books of Theodore White and Joe McGinniss, and the chaos and trauma that followed the 1968 Chicago Convention (Crouse, BB 303). Crouse also sees the breaking of the Watergate scandal in *The Washington Post* after the election as being hugely influential in continuing the process of change in campaign journalism (BB 304). For Crouse, who wrote his original article and first half of the book prior to Election Day and to the public attention to Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward's landmark articles, and who faced some resistance to his objective of examining the process of campaign reporting,²³ this seems almost a vindication for his own attempts at changing the system and calling for the in-depth investigation of candidates. *The Boys on the Bus* was written and published at a time when the public and the system were more open and ready for changes to the established systems of campaign journalism. Crouse's claims are ultimately supported in hindsight by the success of his book, and by the continued changes to the form that campaign journalism took (though as the conclusion to this thesis will argue, perhaps not to the extent that Crouse would have wished). The aim of Crouse's work was not to be about

²³ See for instance NBC's rejection of Crouse as a *Rolling Stone* reporter, or his banning from Agnew's campaign (Crouse, BB 157-158, 276-277).

the politics of the election like other campaign journalism, but to make arguments that lay the groundwork for further focus and weight to be given to the kind of personally involved analysis of Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem. The function of New Journalism in the campaign as seen in *The Boys on the Bus*, then, is as a point of friction and tension for straight journalism, in order to create a greater awareness of what was being written and why, to prompt the possibility of more analytical journalism.

Chapter Two: The Novelist Journalist – Norman Mailer Tries to (Pre-)Re-Write the Outcome of the Election

Introduction: The Novelist Journalist

The New Journalism ideals advocated in Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus* are demonstrated in an extreme form in Norman Mailer's 1972 campaign journalism. Though Mailer was not enacting Crouse's principles intentionally, his campaign reportage nonetheless embodies a heightened version of them, by having his personal perspective be one of the main focuses of his writing, largely eschewing other reporters and in particular rejecting the mainstream media, and reporting on a microcosm of the election as representative of the whole. He seems to have bought in to the hubris following the success of his 1960 campaign work, "Superman Comes to the Supermarket," that he as a lone reporter could affect the outcome of the election with the strength of his journalism.

Mailer's secondary agenda in his 1972 campaign reporting was not only to report on the campaign but to influence the outcome by convincing readers of the validity of his arguments about Nixon and McGovern. His coverage took the form of a book, *St. George and the Godfather*, which focused on the Democratic National Convention in July and the Republican National Convention in August. Mailer frames his arguments about who the public needed to vote for by attempting to cast McGovern as the heroic (if beleaguered) St. George, and Nixon as the manipulative and despotic Godfather. Expanded from an article on the Democratic Convention that he wrote for *Life* magazine in July, the book was published in September 1972. As this chapter will discuss, rather than cover the entire campaign, *St. George and the Godfather* uses the Democratic and Republican National Conventions as snapshots that represent the campaign as a whole and the motivations and values of McGovern and Nixon as candidates. Mailer uses his analysis of the two conventions to impress upon the reader his views of the political ramifications of the outcome of the election, and his reportage weaves in the issues that he sees as vital. His perspective in the book, closer to the end of the campaign, is one that clearly worries about a possible victory for Nixon and seeks to prevent that by making the case for readers to vote for McGovern. In doing so, Mailer attempts to reveal what he sees as Nixon's manipulations of the media, while himself trying unabashedly to influence the opinion of the reader and thus the outcome of the election. He builds this framework from his perception that his fame as a writer, and his history as a convention

reporter, gives him a greater vantage from which to report on the campaign in a way that will have a meaningful impact on the voters and the outcome of the election.

As a work of New Journalism that actively seeks to supplant the conventional portrayal of the campaign in the straight press, and to influence the perception of readers and therefore the outcome of the election, *St. George and the Godfather* is a key text of the New Journalism of 1972. It is representative of the apex of New Journalism that year and of the development of New Journalism's role in campaign and political coverage. Of the works discussed in this thesis it covers the smallest period of the campaign, and yet the secondary agenda established by Mailer's framework is the most blatantly concerned with trying to influence the votes of readers and impact the election. At the time, Mailer was viewed by some as the progenitor of insightful convention reporting; even the traditionally straight journalism publication *The New York Times* declared in regards to the need for journalism to uncover the truth of political conventions that "Mailer started it all, in 1960" (Wills, Review of *St. George* 1). Yet oddly, despite the fact that *St. George and the Godfather* was published at the height of New Journalism, modern critical theory focuses more often on *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* and references to *St. George and the Godfather* are rare.²⁴ This is perhaps due to the overshadowing success of Mailer's earlier texts and their place in literary theory as among the first prominent New Journalism texts; such a view is supported by J. Michael Lennon's account of critical attitudes toward the text: "Reviewers were generally congratulatory, but most felt that *St. George* was inferior to *Armies* because, as Robert Solotaroff noted in the *Nation*, the former lacked the latter's 'excitement generated by a sense of new stylistic possibility'" (Introduction 14).

Additionally, Mailer's dual status as novelist and journalist has historically caused discord over how to view him and his writing, and this friction has continued into modern

²⁴ For instance Eason, Yagoda, and Tabbi all mention both *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* but not *St. George and the Godfather* (Eason 200-201; Yagoda, Introduction to "From *The Armies*" 290; Tabbi 141). Weingarten discusses *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, and makes references to Mailer's reports on the conventions, but does not mention *St. George and the Godfather* or that Mailer published a book on the campaign rather than just an occasional article, even though quotes from the book are used (248-251). The volume of Bloom's *Modern Critical Views* dedicated to Mailer neglects to include *St. George and the Godfather* on its summarised chronology of his work (Bloom, *Norman Mailer* 231-233). From the introduction to this volume however, Bloom seems to view Mailer as a novelist who occasionally wrote nonfiction, than as a journalist as well as a novelist, so the omission of *St. George and the Godfather* from his list may be from a literary bias towards his fiction (Bloom, Introduction 1-6). On the other hand, J. Michael Lennon's *Critical Essays on Norman Mailer*, which does not have the same bias towards viewing Mailer mainly as a novelist, does include *St. George and the Godfather* in its chronology of his works (41-42).

analysis of his work. As Lennon observed in 1986, “Despite the large number of illuminating interpretations of Mailer’s artistic evolution, ruling ideas, and place in American literature, no orthodox, encompassing view has yet emerged” (Introduction 1). According to Lennon the lack of a decisive and comprehensive overview of Mailer is due both to the variable forms that his writing took and a lack of agreement from critics and scholars as to how to view it (Introduction 1-2).²⁵ Historically, analyses of Mailer that viewed him as a novelist were more frequent and tended to disregard his work as a journalist, while those that focused on his journalism were less common and saw it as a development away from his role as a novelist rather than in conjunction with it.²⁶ Modern views of Mailer remain equally fractured; analyses of him as a novelist often attempt to apply a literary reading to his New Journalism texts that suggests that they too are fictionalised novels and diminishes their role as nonfiction reporting, as seen in most of the essays in the 2003 edition of the *Norman Mailer* volume of Bloom’s *Modern Critical Views*. Bloom himself asks in the introduction to the anthology “Is Norman Mailer a novelist?,” which he follows with an overview of Mailer’s work that includes only the briefest mention of *The Armies of the Night* while otherwise contextualising Mailer as a writer of fiction (Introduction 2). This could explain why *St. George and the Godfather* has been out of print since the 1980s, and is often left out of discussions of his work: though it utilises literary style, and includes fictionalised elements, it is unarguably journalism, with the main focus being McGovern, Nixon, and the election that Mailer sought to influence. There is little in the way of a story, and for all that the narrator Aquarius’s perspective is a key element of the analysis and insights in the text, he is not an intrusive character as much as a fount of socio-political information, while the focal point remains the politicians and the politics. *St. George and the Godfather* does not fit with a view of Mailer as a novelist applying himself to nonfiction subjects for largely literary purposes; instead it is journalism with a clear agenda of informing and influencing public opinion. And as this chapter will demonstrate, despite being overlooked in later analyses, *St. George and the Godfather* was an important part of the campaign journalism of 1972 and the development of both Mailer and New Journalism.

²⁵ An argument supported by Wenke’s claim that “Mailer is the kind of writer whom critics with rather limited notions of genre find difficult to understand” (69).

²⁶ This is seen clearly for instance in the selection of essays in Robert Lucid’s 1971 *Norman Mailer: The Man and His Work*.

To understand *St. George and the Godfather* in the context of the 1972 campaign, it is essential to remember that Mailer was a hugely influential figure in the fame and popular success of the New Journalism mode in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As Wolfe observed in *The New Journalism*, part of Mailer's significance was that he had previously been a successful novelist who had turned to journalism and succeeded there as well ("Seizing the Power" 42). Wolfe pointed out, however, that Mailer's critically successful work of New Journalism, the 1968 book *The Armies of the Night*, was still subtitled "The Novel as History; History as the Novel" which Wolfe claimed was due to Mailer's fear of being labelled a "journalist" ("Seizing the Power" 42). This is indicative of the tenuous status of New Journalism in 1968, as well as Mailer's mindset as an author with the dual statuses of novelist and New Journalist. Indeed, though Mailer found popular success as a journalist, and critical success among proponents of New Journalism, his role as both novelist and journalist was still contentious for literary critics in the 1960s. As Robert Lucid noted in 1970, many literary critics over the years had seen Mailer's turn to New Journalism as him neglecting his literary work and "directed questions concerning 'wasted talent' at him" (Introduction 15). Nonetheless, as Richard Foster observed at the end of 1968 after the publication and success of *The Armies of the Night*, "It is a fact, I think, that the large and responsive audience Mailer has now won at the close of the sixties would tend to agree, no doubt to the writer's chagrin, that his 'best' work has been in nonfiction" (54). It seems clear that the success of *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* played a large role in how Mailer was viewed as an author, as Jack Richardson noted in a 1969 article in *The New York Review of Books*:

The last few years have produced much talk about the new "creative journalism" and the use of novelistic techniques in reporting. Whatever these phrases meant before – and it is my impression that they meant very little – they have now acquired a definition after the vent of these two books. Mailer has created a fresh entente between the personal mode and the public record [...] (199-200)

In addition to Richardson's review having highlighted Mailer's role as a New Journalist, his claim that "'creative journalism' and the use of novelistic techniques in reporting" meant very little before Mailer's work, but "acquired a definition" and a sense of status after, credits Mailer with legitimising New Journalism. For those who shared Mailer's politics, his voice and analysis in his political nonfiction was particularly valuable; as Martin Green proclaimed in 1972, the "influence of his literariness on his politics; and the influence of his political engagement on his writing accounts for some of that

substantiality which makes him superior to most people writing today” (115). Mailer had been widely accepted as someone who could write knowledgeably about politics, and whose analysis of political conventions was of value to readers seeking information about the candidates. In 1972 with New Journalism at a peak in its development, *St. George and the Godfather* was therefore published in a very different context to 1968 when Mailer still felt the need to reference his work as a novelist.

It is from the context of himself as a writer with a history of serious political journalism that Mailer frames his reportage in *St. George and the Godfather*. The paratext of the book attempts to position it with a much different context than Mailer’s earlier New Journalism. Whereas *The Armies of the Night* emphasised Mailer’s role as a novelist with its subtitle, the paratext of *St. George and the Godfather* makes no links to Mailer’s fiction writing, and instead emphasises his role as a journalist. The front cover of the 1972 first edition of the book bills it as “In the award-winning tradition of his THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT and MIAMI AND THE SIEGE OF CHICAGO” (Mailer, *SGG*). This immediately contextualises *St. George and the Godfather* solely in relation to two of Mailer’s most famous works of New Journalism, and the back cover states that it is a “masterpiece of reportage,” indicating that it is intended to be read as wholly nonfiction (Mailer, *SGG*). Likewise, the biographical information at the front of the book highlights Mailer’s significance as a newspaper and magazine writer without ever mentioning his work as a novelist, claiming, for instance: “He has his finger on the American artery as no other writer has” and “great reporting becomes an art” (Mailer, *SGG*). The claim that he is more linked to America than any other reporter is interesting because it suggests that if what he reports disagrees with the reporting of another journalist, it is Mailer’s analysis that is of most value to the American people. Given Mailer’s support of McGovern in the face of his unpopularity as a candidate in the general press, establishing a context of Mailer being more insightful and correct than reporters who contradicted his views was particularly necessary if he wanted to convince readers to share his view of the campaign. What level of control Mailer actually had over how the book was marketed is unknown, though given his reaction to *Esquire*’s changing of the word “Supermarket” to “Supermart” in his 1960 article “Superman Comes to the Supermarket” and subsequent insistence that “his future contracts specify that no changes could be made to magazine pieces, including titles, without his permission,” it seems entirely possible that he would have had a say in the presentation of the paratext and marketing used for the book (Lennon, *Norman Mailer* 274-275). It is therefore significant

that his fiction it is not mentioned here, particularly in the light of Wolfe's claim that in 1968 Mailer dreaded being labelled a journalist. It would seem that by 1972 Mailer no longer needed to cleave to his role as a novelist, but instead presented his nonfiction in a wholly journalistic context. Both Mailer's own view of his role as the author of *St. George and the Godfather* and the way that he intended readers to view him are critical because they speak to his intentions for the book. The links to his skills and success as a journalist in the paratext are intended to give weight to his role as political reporter and commentator in the book, and suggest that he is a man who can be relied on as a reporter, and that therefore the views that he is trying to impart should be listened to.

The use of the Democratic and Republican conventions in July and August 1972 as snapshots of the campaign allows Mailer to comment on the issues he viewed as significant to the election as a whole, while using his first-hand experiences of McGovern and Nixon at the conventions as representative of their roles as politicians. Mailer originally went to Miami to cover the Democratic Convention for *Life* magazine, and parts of *St. George and the Godfather* were previously published in *Life* (Englund; Mailer, "The Evil"; Mailer, *SGG*). The text of this article is largely the same as that which appears in part one of the book, though some changes that were expansions on Mailer's thoughts were made. In addition to these smaller changes, there are chapters (eight, nine, ten, thirteen, fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen) which did not appear in the *Life* article but in the book are woven into the original text. These chapters add depth to the interpretation of politics and social issues. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this is an important aspect of the book's emphasis on the potentially dire outcomes of a Nixon victory. Finally, a small but particularly interesting addition was made to the very end of the article as it appears in part one of the book: "And if Aquarius had been a man to pray, he might have thought of the embattled God he discovered years ago. But then who had the right to ask the Lord to let America have one election which went all the way down the rails without a wreck? He shivered" (Mailer, *SGG* 89). This addition seems to indicate that Mailer was more concerned about the outcome of the election by the time that he was writing *St. George and the Godfather*, as it adds a more ominous tone.

Having had success as a political reporter previously, Mailer believed that his journalism had the ability to affect, at least in part, the outcome of elections; this is evident in Lennon's account of Mailer's reaction to Kennedy's victory in 1960, that his article "Superman Comes to the Supermarket" "had been one of the deciding factors" in the election and that while "He didn't claim to have shifted 100,000 votes directly, [...] 'a

million people might have read my piece and some of them talked to other people” (*Norman Mailer* 273). Additionally Mailer believed his article “sparked the energies of Kennedy volunteers, ‘enough to make a clean critical difference through the country’” (Lennon, *Norman Mailer* 273). Furthermore, not only did he believe that his article had contributed to Kennedy’s victory, but he claimed in 1961 that he had intended that it would have that effect when he wrote it: “it’s the first piece I wrote in my life which was written with deliberate political intention; I wanted to get a man elected and I wanted to warn the Democrats about something that I thought was terribly important. I thought there was a great danger that Kennedy’d [sic] lose at the last minute” (Mailer, “An Interview” 50). The same looming threat of Nixon in *St. George and the Godfather* had influenced Mailer’s perspective in his 1960 reportage: “I think if [the Democrats] had eased up a little bit, Nixon might have won” (Mailer, “An Interview” 50). It is reasonable to conclude that his positive portrayal of McGovern and ominous warnings about Nixon in *St. George and the Godfather* were intended to motivate McGovern’s struggling campaign in 1972 the way Mailer thought he had pushed Kennedy’s in 1960. The book as a whole was first printed in September 1972 and appeared in bookstores in October, so it was available just before the election in November (Lennon, *Norman Mailer* 456). According to Lennon, Mailer made every effort to get the book published as quickly as possible in order to have the most effect on the election (*Norman Mailer* 456). Therefore it had time to not only give an interesting and informative account of the Democratic and Republican conventions, but to attempt to accomplish Mailer’s agenda of affecting the political viewpoints of its readers, and thus the outcome of the election.

Mailer as Aquarius, the Involved Political Crusader

In his self-designated role as influential political journalist, Mailer himself is almost as much of a focus in the book as McGovern and Nixon. He is not only present as a narrator, but often as a visible participant in what he reports on. Furthermore, his internal political and sociological contemplations are a key element to how information is presented to the reader, and how he weaves in his underlying framework that McGovern needs to win the election for the good of the nation. From the first page of the book Mailer is clear that though this is a factual work of journalism he has not attempted to be unbiased: “he had not been in Miami two days before he knew he would not write objectively about the Convention of ’72. [...] He would be obliged to drift through events,

and use the reactions of his brain for evidence” (SGG 3). This suggests that the only way for Mailer to interpret the events of the convention and their implications for the election in a meaningful way was for him to filter everything through his own perspective.

To that end he utilises the New Journalism technique of being an active participant in what he writes about and a visible presence in the text. However, rather than use the first-person “I” as the narrator, Mailer writes in the third-person and becomes Aquarius:²⁷ “A slow brain, a muddy river, and therefore no name better suited to himself again than the modest and half-invisible Aquarius. Enough of Ego Liberation” (SGG 3). In becoming Aquarius, Mailer imagines himself as stepping back from his ego and his own motivations in order to focus on the ramifications of the conventions as they apply to the campaign as a whole. Jean Radford claimed that his use of his role as a third-person narrator was “part of Mailer’s belief that a writer must fully expose his authorial position to enable the reader to understand and be ‘educated’ by his work” (120). However, though Mailer is in a sense being upfront about his role in the narrative (to the extent that the reader comprehends that he is Aquarius), there is a disconnect in the choice to write through the third-person character of Aquarius rather than in the first person as Mailer. This is particularly notable when compared with Thompson, who, despite the use of his avatar Raoul Duke in works such as *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, nonetheless wrote in first person, and did not use the Duke persona at all in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* (other than to reference as his “good friend and colleague”) (44).

As Mailer notes, he is returning to a form of narration that he has used before: “So Norman Mailer, who looked to rule himself by Voltaire’s catch-all precept, ‘Once a philosopher, twice a pervert’ and preferred therefore never to repeat a technique, was still obliged to call himself Aquarius again” (SGG 3). This establishes a connection between Mailer’s other works of New Journalism (he had previously used the “Aquarius” alias in *Of a Fire on the Moon*) and *St George and the Godfather*, and gives Aquarius a history of socio-political commentary and a precedent as a credibly insightful narrator. Yagoda claims that Mailer’s use of the third-person was “undertaken in order to present himself as a figure representative of his times” (Introduction to “From *The Armies*” 290). This ties in to the claim in the paratext of *St. George and the Godfather* that Mailer “has his finger on the American artery as no other writer has,” suggesting that the use of the third person Aquarius connects Mailer more intimately to the readers’ and America’s

²⁷ The “third-person personal” as Lennon describes it (Introduction 11).

sensibilities (Mailer, *SGG*). This connection is important because his agenda of convincing readers who to vote for necessitates that they trust that he understands their socio-political needs. That he visibly takes up the role of Aquarius also clearly indicates that though going by the name Aquarius in his role as reporter, and speaking about himself in the third-person, it is still Mailer who is the voice of the book and Aquarius is not a separate or fictional character. Nor is his use of Aquarius entirely consistent; for instance, even after “becoming” Aquarius, in a discussion of the motivations of voters he slips into a description of his third person self as “Mailer” (*SGG* 6).

That Mailer and Aquarius are indivisible means that it is all the more important that their joint identities and histories contribute to a sense of legitimacy as a political commentator, because the presence of Mailer in the text is crucial to the framework of *St. George and the Godfather*. At times the book steps back from the events that it is reporting on and focuses instead on Mailer-as-Aquarius’s introspections. These introspections are key to Mailer’s agenda of influencing the opinions of his readers regarding the candidates, and his early general discussions of politics are later tied more specifically towards the ramifications of the politics of McGovern and Nixon.

By the time he wrote *St. George and the Godfather* Mailer’s role as a writer and his involvement in politics were inextricably linked, an idea that he touches on in the text when he makes a connection between the behaviour of a politician and the behaviour of a writer, that “for a politician, the love of shaking hands is equal to a writer’s love of language,” though “not all politicians love shaking hands, nor with everyone” in what he claims is an equivalence to not all writers having the same style of writing (*SGG* 161). This is particularly intriguing because of Mailer’s own attempt at running for office,²⁸ which he mentions several times in the text, including immediately after this comparison of politicians to writers (*SGG* 161). In a way this gave him the dual status of writer and politician.²⁹ It links Mailer quite strongly to a first-hand knowledge of the motivations and perspectives of politicians and suggests to the reader that he is particularly capable of giving them insights into the election. Interestingly, Mailer describes his own handshaking technique with the claim that “he comprehended that the only way to do it was to offer as much of himself as was present with every greeting” (*SGG* 161). To apply

²⁸ An account of which can be found in the collection *Running Against the Machine: The Mailer-Breslin Campaign* (1969), edited by Peter Manso.

²⁹ A status shared by Thompson who had run for sheriff in 1970. See “Freak Power in the Rockies” in Thompson’s *The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales from a Strange Time* (151-175).

Mailer's concept of a link between the style of handshake and the style of writing, the idea that he offered as much of himself as he could in his handshakes seems telling of the involvement of Mailer in his writing, both through his insertion of himself as Aquarius and the inclusion of his perspective and opinions.

In addition to insightful analysis, Mailer's view of his role as a reporter in the book is that, as was advocated by many New Journalists, he needs to be deeply immersed in what he reports about so that his writing can tell readers not only what happened but what it felt like. In the last chapter he addresses his role at the convention as a writer and a journalist, and his motivations for observing so closely those politicians he so clearly despises: "He is in Miami of his own desire to study Republicans—such opportunities do not come much more often than every four years. He does his duty, therefore [...]" (*SGG* 220). The sense is that he has observed the Republicans in their natural habitat, in a state of honesty amongst fellow Republicans, and that therefore what he describes is a more truthful representation of the nature of the Republican politicians than the face they present to the media. Therefore the text attempts to convey that should Mailer's view of the Republicans clash with another journalist's, Mailer's should be the one listened to because he is not just reporting on the conventions, but studying them, experiencing them, breathing "that other air of listening to Republican concepts" (*SGG* 220). The role that he seeks to take is one that in many ways epitomises Crouse's New Journalism arguments for more subjective analysis based on experience rather than the replication of statements by politicians.

As Mailer openly declares on the first page, he does not pretend that he is unbiased in these portrayals, however, and he is very clear throughout the text that he is not a machine with no opinions but a person whose experiences have informed his political viewpoint. For instance, he is exceptionally critical and dismissive of the Women's Liberation movement: "their anguish came out of nothing more intolerable than the intolerable pointlessness of middle-class life. (Which of course was as intolerable for the men.) So Women's Liberation might be a totalitarian movement, yes, more totalitarian than not was its style" (*SGG* 56).³⁰ Mailer's discussion of the Women's Liberation movement is one which relies heavily on his opinions and thoughts rather than an analysis of facts or events (*SGG* 56-57). He acknowledges this himself, as he pauses in his

³⁰ Mailer also criticises the word "Ms." as not making any sense, which is interesting because it was also the title of the magazine co-founded by Steinem with whom Mailer was friends (*SGG* 57).

criticism to reflect: “Now, if this was his own prejudice (all because the women booed McGovern for invoking Eve), still one had to recognize that the best [of the Women’s Liberation movement] was usually bent like a line to the worst” (SGG 58).³¹ So though Mailer has drifted into writing which is heavily opinion-based, an element of New Journalism frequently criticised by opponents of the mode, he is upfront about his bias. He does not attempt to frame his campaign reportage as objective, but rather fully embraces a factual yet openly subjective framework. This is crucial in the context of *St. George and the Godfather* as a work of campaign journalism, because it is not only attempting to be an insightful and truthful report of events, but is actively seeking to convince the reader that the opinion of the author is correct and they should listen to it and vote for McGovern. Through truthful reporting on the Democratic and Republican conventions and Aquarius’s experience of these events, Mailer weaves his own politics and his stance on McGovern and Nixon. Mailer-as-Aquarius is the lens through which the events and people in *St. George and the Godfather* are depicted and analysed, and it is Aquarius’s interpretations and thoughts on everything he sees and learns that are fundamental to the book’s attempt to support McGovern and thus ensure that Nixon not be elected.

Mailer’s Nixon and McGovern: The Importance of Being Biased

Mailer’s portrayal of the two candidates reflects a desire to prevent Nixon from taking office rather than strong unequivocal support of McGovern. Mailer had long believed that Nixon would be detrimental to the state of the country, as he proclaimed in an interview in 1967 in response to being asked why he had not written much about Nixon, he did not believe him to be a threat at the time but “If he gives signs of becoming powerful again, that’ll be another matter” (“Playboy Interview” 276). By the time he wrote *St. George and the Godfather* Nixon had been elected once, and Mailer’s prescient claim that if Nixon ever became powerful again matters would be serious and he would then need to “go to work” on him had come to pass.

Mailer’s method in *St. George and the Godfather* is to portray Republicans as detrimental to the state of the nation and Democrats as the solution to the Republican scourge. The Republicans are the villains of *St. George and the Godfather* and the

³¹ The “best” of the Women’s Liberation movement according to Mailer was their support of the right to legal abortions (SGG 58).

Democrats the heroes, and Mailer characterises them this way, equating McGovern's campaign struggles to those of a character in a Hemingway story: "It was worse than the worst moments in 'The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber'—once again the protagonist was getting killed just when ready to become a man" (SGG 102). Calling McGovern a "protagonist" here sets him up as the tragic hero of the book, an attempt perhaps at lending a positive tone to the man who faced a significant decline in the polls at the stage in the campaign that Mailer wrote the latter two thirds of the book. Conversely Nixon is established as the villain as Mailer contemplates reasons for McGovern's political bad luck and includes "the fine hand of the Devil giving a stir of the broth for Richard Nixodemus" (SGG 102). In the context of the campaign the effect of characterising the Democrats as heroes and the Republicans as villains goes beyond artful writing, as it reinforces on a less conscious level why the Republicans should not be voted for and the Democrats should. John F. Keener counts Mailer's characterisation of Nixon in *St. George and the Godfather* as one of "the most provocative examples of the literary Nixon" (137). It is this type of step beyond artful writing that New Journalism was criticized for, as it violates notions of objectivity. Yet Mailer's reportage relies on this subjective framework to attempt to sway his readers' thoughts on the candidates, and alongside his acknowledgement of bias is in keeping with New Journalism arguments like Crouse's for more openly subjective analysis. The emphasis on Nixon's role as a villain in the text, and Mailer's characterisation of him as such is critical because Nixon was ahead in the polls, and as the sitting president he was a proven credible threat to win the election. Thus Mailer's effort in *St. George and the Godfather* to make Nixon unappealing to the reader was essential to his agenda, since he was working from a premise that he had the ability to significantly influence public opinion and thus sway the election.

Mailer develops Nixon's titular role of the Godfather to support his negative characterisation, tapping in to the cultural vein of his contemporary readers by alluding to the 1969 novel *The Godfather* and its film adaptation, which had been released in 1972, prior to Mailer's reportage. Mailer weaves this characterisation into the text, as a way to not only demonize Nixon but emphasise the power and control that he wields as the president. The first time this is alluded to in the text, in relation to the potential political decline of Barry Goldwater at the hand of Nixon, Mailer does not specify the Godfather role by name but implies it: "the possibility that one of Richard Nixon's favorite old Italian sayings might be 'Revenge is a dish which people of taste eat cold'" (SGG 187).

The references become more specific as the depth of Nixon's power and machinations unfolds, with Mailer's description of Nixon's nomination: "Kings, presidents of corporation, and *don capos* of the Mafia look to be installed by the man they deposed. So Nixon was nominated by Rockefeller" (SGG 205; emphasis in the original). This is followed not long after by the overt and ironic comment "the Republican Godfather was good and he was gracious" in reference to Nixon (SGG 205). The characterisation of Nixon as the Godfather implies that just because he is already in a position of power as the president, does not mean that he must be revered, for power can be held by dishonourable men. It also characterises his role as the president as one who is in control of those around him, and will do anything to maintain that control and power. As the title of the book itself indicates, the characterisation places Nixon in the role of the villainous antagonist to be defeated by the saint-like hero McGovern.

Mailer's depiction of Nixon as a master manipulator is also of one who constantly works to control how he is perceived and is therefore a man who is unauthentic. This calls into question the credibility of his public appearances and statements. Mailer describes Nixon as acutely aware of his appearance and contriving all of his actions accordingly: "He walks like a puppet more curious than most human beings, for all the strings are pulled by a hand within his own head, an inquiring hand which never pulls the same string in quite the same way as the previous time [...]" (SGG 198). During his account of Nixon Mailer makes a curious observation: "Now, he jokes with the crowd. 'I think I'm going to be nominated tonight. I *think* so,' he says charmingly. It is the first time he has ever spoken with italics in public" (SGG 200; emphasis in the original). Obviously a person cannot actually speak with italics; Mailer's comment suggests a perceived inflection in Nixon's tone, which Mailer translates to text as italics.³² Therefore it can be assumed that what Mailer is actually saying is that it was the first time that Nixon had used that kind of inflection in public. This suggests he lacked an honest personality, and typically used calculated and mechanical speech. In the face of this, Nixon's appeal to his supporters was almost mindboggling to Mailer who concludes his description of Nixon's appearance: "Yes, the loser stands talking to all of his gang of adolescent losers

³² The translation of vocal intonation to textual representation appears to have been not unusual for Mailer, who for instance said in a 1975 interview: "There's nothing more livid, more cancer provoking than the face of a distorted liberal who shrieks at you, 'You're talking about a human being!' They always italicize it—*hu-min. Be-ing*" ("The *Rolling Stone* Interview With Norman Mailer Part I" 46; emphasis in the original). This is indicative of his sense of style as a writer, that he perceived spoken words as they would be represented by text.

who are so proud to have chosen stupidity as a way of life, and they are going to win. The smog of the wad lies over the heart. Freud is obsolete. To explain Nixon, nothing less than a new theory of personality can now suffice” (SGG 202). The “wad” was the way that Mailer described the unintelligent masses that supported Nixon (*St George* 138). By characterising Nixon’s supporters negatively and reinforcing that characterisation throughout, Mailer instils the idea that to support Nixon is to be an unthinking part of the wad. The implied dichotomy is that intelligent, aware individuals would not vote for Nixon.

Mailer builds support for his argument against Nixon as a candidate by giving accounts of other Republicans which develop the idea that the deplorable nature of the party is deeply ingrained and supports Nixon’s calamitous power as president. His tone when writing about the Republicans is distinctly more aggressive than when he writes about Democrats. For instance, he scornfully annotates a Republican statement in favour of military force with: “Which genius of the Right, Aquarius wondered, had divined that a cure for cancer would not be found until there was a cure for Communism?!?” (SGG 126). Mailer does not attempt to hide that he is against the Republicans, or claim that he is impartial. He even describes his attitude going into the convention as “Like a fighter getting mean in the last days before a bout” (SGG 126). As advocates for New Journalism argued in defence of the mode, Mailer’s bias does not mean that the facts of *St. George and the Godfather* are necessarily inaccurate; that Mailer continues to be upfront about his bias suggests a level of honesty even when he reports on people he despises. Furthermore, his lack of attempted impartiality is what allows him to offer more in-depth analysis of what is said and done by the politicians, by applying his own judgements. Therefore instead of just reporting the words and actions of the politicians, he is attempting to influence how readers think and feel about them in order ultimately to influence their vote.

In order to convince readers that voting Nixon out of office is their best course of action, Mailer seeks to establish that there is a better option to be found in the Democratic Party. In his conclusions on the Republican Convention, Mailer strongly reinforces how dramatic the division between the intelligent Democrats and the mindless Republicans is:

A walk down these wide and comfortable aisles was all anyone needed to comprehend the divisions of the nation. For there was probably as much difference between Democratic and Republican faces as between the French and the English, or the athletic and the intellectual—there is no need for a list of opposites. The point

is that Democrats and Republicans belong on such a list, they are different [...] (SGG 206)

This impresses upon the reader that the gap between Democrats and Republicans is so drastic that it can be made clear without needing to go down to the level of small details. It also implies that Mailer's account can be trusted to accurately represent the overall sense of what he writes about without needing to include every single detail. At the same time, Mailer conclusively and directly states his own political bias here: "Conservative Aquarius, left-conservative Aquarius, could know at that moment he was wholly a Democrat, for in the midst of the roar of the deepest sentiments rising up in one animal growl from the happy Republican throng, he felt only the cold observation that Ronald Reagan was a moral fathead" (SGG 206). He does remain able to acknowledge that "indeed he had regard for many a Republican face. There were distinguished faces on that floor" (SGG 207). This becomes a superficial concession, however, in the midst of the dire conclusion he reaches during Nixon's nomination: "total faith in one's country might be as dangerous as total faith in one's own moral worth, even worse, for with total patriotism, one's own soul was no longer there to be lost; rather, America could be lost" (SGG 208).

In addition to impressing upon the reader Mailer's fears of what a future under the leadership of Nixon would hold, the effect of the inclusion of his thoughts and his perspective on what he reports is that it adds a layer of emotion. Rather than just reading about what happened, the reader is also given a sense of how it felt to experience what Mailer experienced at the convention:

Young Voters were there to devour balloons, burst them like bits of meat thrown into a pond of piranhas, balloons exploded in a cacophony of small arms' fire. And the Young Voters waved American flags they carried on small sticks, waved them violently. The fins of piranhas were in on a new kill. It was as of a celebration of all the murder you could shake loose in America. "Four more years," they screamed, and the sticks vibrated in the air, and the red of the flags was like a foaming of the froth. (SGG 209)

By imbuing his feelings in the text Mailer not only attempts to share the experience with the reader, but also to impart the deeper implication of these events; namely that the violent bloodthirsty imagery foretold further violence and atrocities in Vietnam. In particular in this passage, that it is the youth of the party who are embodying the bloody violence of warmongering, the "piranhas" enacting "a celebration of all the murder you

could shake loose in America,” portrays the possibility of a future in which, as Mailer feared, “America could be lost” (*SGG* 208-209). The message therefore is that in order to avoid further bloodshed, Nixon must be defeated. Mailer is using the techniques of New Journalism to make important links for the reader between the campaign and the issues currently faced by society, which is a key way that he tries to support his argument and convince the reader not to vote for Nixon.

Nixon as the Godfather is the figurehead for the bloodthirsty piranhas, the warmongers, and the wad. It is in this spirit that the final short section of the book is written, in which the convention concludes and Mailer wraps up the narrative:

Nixon stands at one end of the Convention Hall and shakes hands with each of the delegates as they walk by in file. Aquarius wonders if he should try to stand in line himself, and fulfill the last duty of this week’s long job by going all the way up to the man so that he will be able to bear witness to the historic feel of his skin, but Aquarius is not a delegate and they will probably not let him make the line, and besides he does not want to shake hands with the nice man. Even in politics, some hands are not yours to shake. (*SGG* 229)

For Mailer, who experienced tear gas in order to cover protests first-hand (*GG* 225), and who claimed earlier in the book that shaking hands was his favourite part of politics,³³ this is a powerful statement that Nixon was so deplorable to him that he would not attempt to shake his hand. It is a strong note of contempt for Nixon on which to end the book, a full stop on the message that Nixon is not the man the reader should vote for if they want a good future for the world.

In the framework of Mailer’s reportage, the solution to Nixon is McGovern, and a large part of Mailer’s positive portrayal of McGovern and the Democrats is because they are the viable opposition to Nixon. This is particularly visible in the way that Mailer comes around in the text to the idea of McGovern as the Democratic Party candidate. Though by the time of writing Mailer knew the outcome of the convention, going into it the Democratic nominee was not known due to controversy within the party over how primary votes were translated to convention delegates (Mailer, *SGG* 35). The results of the primary vote in California were contested; the California primary that year had initially been a winner-takes-all primary, in which the candidate that won the state’s

³³ “In his own mayoralty campaign, Aquarius ended up by shaking hands wherever he could, had in fact to his surprise ended up liking that act more than anything else in politics” (Mailer, *SGG* 161).

primary would receive all of the state's delegate's votes at the convention, rather than a proportional system in which delegates were allocated to each candidate based on the percent of the vote they received (Perlstein 685, 688). A winner-takes-all scenario favoured McGovern, who had won the primary but only by a narrow margin, and was challenged by Hubert Humphrey who benefited from a proportional distribution of the votes (Perlstein 685, 687-688). Because the national primary race was close, the California votes were crucial to determining who the Democratic nominee would be, and thus going in to the convention the nomination was uncertain. This had huge ramifications for the campaign, because it meant that though McGovern was ultimately nominated this was not a forgone conclusion going into the convention, and he was therefore unable to begin campaigning as the presumptive Democratic Party presidential candidate prior to his nomination (White 163-164).

The uncertainty of the Democratic Party is reflected in Mailer's own initial ambivalence about McGovern. Unlike Thompson, who was enamoured with McGovern as a candidate from the beginning of the primaries, or Steinem, who had a previous history working with McGovern (as will be discussed the next chapters of this thesis), Mailer was hesitant about McGovern's candidacy. He describes McGovern's arrival at the convention as anticlimactic, with mixed feelings about the man himself:

Nor is McGovern his kind of candidate. He respects him for his political positions, admires his hard work; he more than admires his political victories (since Aquarius by his own feeble record knows what it is to get votes)³⁴ but there is a flatness of affect in McGovern which depresses and the muted sing-song of his conversational voice might lead one to divine he grew up in a rectory, if indeed one did not know it already. (*SGG* 22)

Mailer's tone here is equivocal. The juxtaposition of McGovern's admirable political policies with the depressing tone of his voice portrays Mailer's lack of enthusiasm for him at an almost artistic level, as if he is a character whom Mailer finds uninteresting. And yet he continues equivocating in his analysis, not praising but not condemning, as if trying to find a way to get behind the man who seemed to have the best shot at gaining the Democratic nomination (*SGG* 22-23). His largest problem with McGovern initially seems to be that though he does not find fault with him as a man or a politician, "there is no excitement" (*SGG* 22). He even goes so far as to claim that "For certain, if

³⁴ A reference to Mailer's failed attempt at running for Mayor of New York in 1969.

McGovern's politics were more conservative, one would speak of him as the Democratic Nixon. For both men project that same void of charisma which can prove more powerful than charisma itself, although vastly less agreeable" (*SGG* 22-23). And yet even this juxtaposes McGovern against Nixon as the better of the two options of candidates, for though they share a void of charisma, McGovern's policies are not more conservative and he is not Nixon. In a way, it also justifies McGovern's viability as a politician despite his lack of charisma, because if Nixon is electable with the same lack of charisma but with politics that Mailer deplored, then so should be McGovern and his better policies. Mailer's uncertainty and initial lack of commitment to McGovern are indicative of the way his position as a lone New Journalist exemplifies Crouse's argument for the role of the independent journalist who is not biased by ties to either the pack or the "Winner's Bus".

Ultimately for Mailer the key point that he comes to, and which he tries to build an understanding of in his reader, is that McGovern is the Democratic candidate that they have and the only option for defeating Nixon. Using a typical New Journalism technique, Mailer takes the reader through the thought process by which he comes to accept McGovern as a candidate:

And yet McGovern also seemed somehow reminiscent of an astronaut. It was in that sense he gave of Christian endeavour, of total commitment of strength, of loneliness and endless stamina, of the tireless ability to bear interruption of his mood, and all of that same astronaut impersonality, professional gentleness, vaults of reserve, that subtle charisma so unlike the live hearth of conventional glamour, rather an incorruptible filament of charisma, which could be a halo if talking of a saint, but was invisible in McGovern until one became aware of it. For this charisma was not of personality but of purpose. It spoke of a bravery next to weightless—of course! That sense of a fine blade, stern and silver, was exactly what one felt when meeting certain astronauts. There too was the same sense of a psyche which had traveled already to a space beyond. "It would be nice, I suppose, to have a few more exciting personal qualities," McGovern had once said—it was a remark in the syntax of Neil Armstrong.

It gave focus, then, to think of McGovern this way. Indeed the image grew more comfortable as one wore it along [...] (*SGG* 24-25)

Here Mailer takes the very quality that he found so unexciting (and thus unappealing) about McGovern, his stoically quiet nature, and presents a view of it to the reader that is

designed to make McGovern more appealing. The unconventional charisma that Mailer equates to the personality of an astronaut changes the portrayal of McGovern from a boring and uninteresting candidate who it is hard to get behind, to someone who is steadfast, brave, and on the same level as American heroes like astronauts. Mailer has not changed the facts that he reports – McGovern is quiet, steady, and stoic in both depictions. But the way that Mailer shifts the tone and language with which he frames these facts creates a very different presentation of them. His use of the commitment, tirelessness, bravery, and heroism of the astronauts as a comparison to McGovern plays on the sense of national pride and feelings towards the astronauts who only three years before had landed on the moon, which Mailer had great success covering in his “A Fire on the Moon” series of articles for *Life* magazine (which became the book *Of a Fire on the Moon*).³⁵ By showing the process by which he came to grips with McGovern as the candidate he would need to support, Mailer attempts to subtly guide his reader to that conclusion as well. By sharing his emotional progress, he plays on the reader’s own feelings towards McGovern. Demonstrating how one could come to support McGovern was critical, as the national ambivalence surrounding his nomination had crept into an ambivalence about his campaign. If Mailer was to successfully help influence the ousting of Nixon, convincing the public to care about McGovern was imperative.

Part of the significance of the New Journalism format of *St. George and the Godfather* as a campaign text is that it allows Mailer to reject the standard practice of objectivity and to be openly biased about Nixon and McGovern, as well as to attempt to justify and legitimise his biases in the text. Being able to justify his biases for his readers is important because Mailer needs them to agree with him to succeed in his agenda. He is not just trying to entertain them, but to convince them that his opinion is correct and that they should share it. This is where the inclusion of himself as Aquarius is key, because it gives him the opportunity to integrate his thoughts and to present his first-hand experiences as proof that he knows what he is talking about; his bias does not come from speculation, or a filtered and sanitized press-release:

[...] Aquarius was able to take up position at last before the nominee and live in the charisma (or lack of it) his presence might convey. If there was all the warmth of a quiet and winning mood, and the sense of a vast relaxation as McGovern

³⁵ The series of three articles included the 1969 “A Fire on the Moon” and “The Psychology of Astronauts,” and the 1970 “A Dream of the Future’s Face”.

chatted for a few words with first a friend and then a sponsor, his tall body planted on legs which must have felt like posts of concrete after these two long years of campaigning, and these tense days of dealing and refusing to deal in Miami, the wealth of fatigue which came off McGovern now was happy and compassionate as the last rose-colored velvets of evening before the night was in [...] (SGG 85)

This informal, first-hand account of McGovern is like being shown a candid photograph instead of a formally approved and posed portrait. This lends the sense that the description is more accurate for its informality, that if every reader could not personally meet McGovern, the closest they could get was to read Mailer's description of meeting him. According to Mailer's narration, this intimate and candid view of McGovern was part of his own acceptance and appreciation of the senator:

and it occurred to Aquarius that if he had stood next to many politicians over the years, he had not ever before had such a splendid sense that he was standing near a man who had a heart which could conceivably be full of love—something awfully nice came off McGovern—and that was an extraordinary gift for a politician to give. (SGG 85-86)

The intimacy of this description, the closeness and sense that McGovern is somehow extraordinarily different from other politicians, more "full of love" and though not charismatic from afar certainly someone you would want to get to know, is in stark contrast with Mailer's later eschewal of even shaking hands with Nixon (SGG 229). And, as Mailer's more personally intimate encounters with McGovern such as this were part of his discovery of how one could come to support the senator, they are essential to his attempt to sway readers' opinions of McGovern.

Mailer's bias, and his intention to convince his readers that his bias is correct, is a critical element of *St. George and the Godfather* because it is not simply a matter of getting readers to agree with him for the sake of popularity, or success as an author. There were actual stakes involved, as Mailer believed in the power of the press to influence the outcome of elections. With greater space afforded to him in the September 1972 book compared to the original *Life* article in July, and the perspective and knowledge of the events since the convention, Mailer is able to comment on the progress of the McGovern campaign since the nomination. This is important, because as the subtle shifts in Mailer's tone between the article and the book indicate, McGovern's campaign was not going well and to Mailer his attempt to influence support of McGovern was therefore all the more necessary to keeping Nixon from winning a second term.

The Godfather's Control – Manipulation in the Press

An essential aspect of the way that Mailer attempts to frame his political argument in *St. George and the Godfather* as the most accurate and the one that voters should listen to is by disparaging what he sees as the typical coverage of the election in the media. Mailer's analysis of the press is decidedly more antagonistic and damningly critical than Crouse's in *The Boys on the Bus*. Though Mailer presents his own bias as a valuable guide for potential readers, his view of bias in the mainstream press is distinctly negative. He believed the press was generally manipulated by Nixon into portraying him favourably, and he sets himself up in *St. George and the Godfather* as opposing the press's belief that Nixon would win the election. Mailer shares his observations of Nixon's deep mistrust of the press, and how this fed into his control of them (SGG 170-171). For example in chapter eight, he describes an event where the press are roped off in order to not allow them to "hear any of the conversation" (SGG 170).

In the latter half of the book, frustrated and angry at Nixon's control of the press, in a rare imaginary scene Mailer details Nixon's view of the press, as "*From Nixon's Maxims*" which he claims has been psychically beamed to him (SGG 170-171). This glimpse of Nixon's thoughts describes how the press is the enemy and they must be controlled and trained like dogs, while unpredictable reporters "must be maintained in a state of chilly relations" (SGG 170-171). It is an odd section, particularly for the extent to which it is fictionalized. In earlier passages Mailer's theorising is constrained to short bursts of metaphorical language, and the frequent use of "as if". In fact it is unclear at first that the maxim is not something that Nixon actually said, until Mailer claims the unmistakably absurd "Psychotronics, the new science of the century, must be putting him on the same beam of RN Maxim Intuits that the Nixon staff was receiving" (SGG 171). Even then Mailer delivers this science-fictionesque line as if it was fact. It is not until a page later that he offers the explanation for this odd digression: "we may be confident that Aquarius only becomes fanciful when he is frustrated" (SGG 172). Robert Solotaroff's claim that "One of the most interesting struggles that runs through Mailer's career is his attempt to ground the intuitive in the factual, the mystical in the phenomenal, the psychic in the biological and the apocalyptic in the historical" suggests this fictional digression could also be Mailer attempting to give concrete form to his intuitions about Nixon's motivations and intentions (124). Still, because Mailer has previously been factual in *St George and the Godfather* and the text is presented as nonfiction, the natural

response of the reader would likely have been to assume that this section is nonfiction as well and that if Mailer claimed Nixon made the comments about the press in the maxim then he actually did so. The juxtaposition of the outlandishly fictional with the factual is reminiscent of Thompson's infamous "Ibogaine" article on Muskie (as will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis), which, as previously noted, Crouse claimed had created confusion for readers (*BB* 316). Mailer's passage is perhaps more obviously fictional for the science-fictionesque aspect of its claims, yet it is nonetheless a potentially confusing section for readers, and is a significant example of the possibility of blurring fact and fiction that lay in the New Journalism mode. Though fictionalised, it illustrates Mailer's serious point that Nixon was actually a calculating and controlling manipulator of the press. Mailer continues to include these fictionalised "Nixon's Maxims" throughout the rest of the book, to emphasise the omnipresent force of Nixon's control in the media.³⁶ Similar to the way McGovern's portrayal characterised him as a tragic literary hero, the fictional maxims serve to characterise Nixon as a shadowy presence pervasively intruding with his sinister maxims into the text.

In this context, the characterisation of Nixon as the Godfather becomes important as more than just vilifying Nixon, because it is a part of Mailer's case that the press was being controlled by him. Mailer uses the Godfather characterisation to imply that Nixon is in control of everything through manipulation and force, and that this control and manipulation extends to the media and large sections of the public. This characterisation attempts to delegitimise the way that other reporters covered the election, by claiming they were being controlled by Nixon. For instance, in a discussion of the protests in Miami during the convention, Mailer lays part of the blame for what he sees as lacklustre and disjointed demonstrations on the media's representation of the protestors, which he claimed was polluted by the media and television, "So the most serious cannot even finally know if they protest the war or contribute to the entertainment of Nixon's Epic [...]" (*SGG* 218). The suggestion that the television is portraying "Nixon's Epic" is key here, as ultimately Mailer blames the media's failures on the all-encompassing manipulative powers of the Godfather:

all [the protestors] possibly headed into the worst trap of them all which is to attack the Godfather in a Media war. Benefactor of the American corporation, spiritual leader of the military industrial complex, and only *don capo* to have survived the

³⁶ See pages 175, 192, 196, 202, 210, 217, 228 for the other "Nixon's Maxims" (Mailer, *SGG*).

tortures of the Media, he is learned in the wisdom of wise leaders, and knows how to put a foot in front of your ankle as you go forward and a knee in your seat as you back up, a ring in your nostrils to lead you and a hook in your ear for sit down! (SGG 219; emphasis in the original)

This argument implores readers to reject pro-Nixon media, while further emphasising the control over the media Nixon's role as the president (and Godfather of the Republican Party) gives him. Nixon in this depiction controls not only the media, but also the corporations and the military, and Mailer portrays this control as allowing Nixon to enslave the American public.

Furthermore, in laying the blame for the failures of the protestors on the media and Nixon, Mailer also implies that any negative media coverage of McGovern has also been manipulated by Nixon: "The art of Media war is to benefit whether your adversary does well or fails. In a strategy session at the Doral, it has already been decided that if the demonstrators ever succeed on Wednesday night in getting things out of control, then the Republicans will issue a call to McGovern and ask him to call off the kids" (SGG 219). This analysis attempts to take the blame for negative media portrayals off McGovern and any political missteps he had made, and place it instead on Nixon and his control of the media. The implication is that coverage of the campaign could not be trusted, unless it went beyond reporting what was said or what had happened and instead delved into the motivations behind the words and actions of the politicians – as Mailer and other New Journalists did. By writing Nixon as such a powerful character, Mailer tries to make the case to the reader that they cannot base their decision of who to vote for in the election on what they see in the mainstream coverage of the election.

Though Mailer believed that Nixon's control of the press was all-encompassing, he clearly mistrusted coverage of the campaign by television in particular. According to Lennon, Mailer was obsessed with the "disease of technology" and it had been a major theme in his writing since he produced *Cannibals and Christians* in 1966 (Norman Mailer 422). That Mailer deplored television as a means of communicating information is strongly conveyed by his analysis of it in *St. George and the Godfather* as meaningless, nausea-inducing, and communicating little real information (SGG 176). Furthermore, Mailer claims that television was partly responsible for Nixon's success because it suited the "bland drone of oscillating ideological dots" that his public persona had become (SGG 177). The implication is that television did not convey information of substance or depth, but merely the broadest and easiest to perceive surface-level view. Therefore Nixon could

appeal to a large percentage of the television audience by being as general as possible. Furthermore Mailer claims that television was a means of communication easily manipulated by Nixon and the Republicans, and that they did so at their convention, including making television reporters apply for interviews and screening their questions (*SGG* 178). While the characterisation of Nixon as the perfect figure for television seems at odds with the detrimental effect television had on Nixon's campaign in 1960 after his disastrously televised debate with John F. Kennedy, McGinniss's account of Nixon's strategy in 1968 suggests that Nixon turned his own fears and hatred of television towards a manipulation of the medium: "Television was the only answer, despite its sins against him in the past. But not just any kind of television. An uncommitted camera could do irreparable harm. His television would have to be controlled" (32-34). Thus as Crouse and Mailer both argue, Nixon's success was learned from past mistakes and created from careful manipulation.

Mailer's arguments about the failings of television underscore both the significance and responsibility of print journalism to produce writings of substance and depth in order to keep the public truly informed. At a time in which television had recently become a consequential force in public opinion, the distinction between print journalism and television media was especially relevant. As John F. Kennedy wrote in 1959, "TV has altered drastically the nature of our political campaigns, conventions, constituents, candidates and costs" (Kennedy). Television's role as a force in politics was still new then, and yet already Kennedy argued "political success on television is not, unfortunately, limited only to those who deserve it. It is a medium which lends itself to manipulation, exploitation and gimmicks. It can be abused by demagogues, [sic] by appeals to emotion and prejudice and ignorance" (Kennedy). By 1972 the force of television in campaigns was well established, and for Mailer, television was the worst of the false representations. New Journalism, then, was even more important as an opposing force to popular representations of the campaign, because it advocated for analysing the meaning behind the words and actions of politicians instead of just repeating them.

Mailer argues that reproducing the statements of politicians has little value as a means of informing readers truthfully about them, because the statements are designed by politicians to control how they are viewed. According to him, "Hours of reportorial prospecting would pan very few grains of gold" because the information given to the press came from prepared statements which he claims "would hardly matter. It was taken for granted that the platform was being written in the White House" (*SGG* 125). And

since Nixon was in control of the White House, these statements were therefore another facet of his machinations. This links to one of the arguments that New Journalists had against the straight press, that it reprinted politicians' press releases at face value with no analysis.³⁷ As a New Journalist Mailer was not interested in the White House-composed press releases available to the general press, and portrays himself in the text as seeking the stories that others ignored, stories that he argues were of far greater importance to allowing voters to make an informed decision about the election, rather than the manipulated White House press releases. For example, in an account of a press conference given after the convention by the military analyst responsible for the release of the Pentagon Papers, Dan Ellsberg, Mailer describes the behaviour of the press as uninterested because "There is not the shock nor bite of a big news story" (*SGG* 195).

Because the public was influenced by what they were told in the press, and solidified its opinions based on that information (a conclusion not just argued by Mailer, but evidenced by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw's 1972 case study of the role of the press in the 1968 presidential campaign [179-184]), the way that the words and actions of politicians were portrayed in the press had potentially critical ramifications for the outcome of the election. Mailer argued that since the public was not given a representation of McGovern in the press that allowed them to understand or positively view his actions in the campaign, their opinion of him was negatively affected (*SGG* 51-52). Furthermore, the public opinion that Mailer had to work against in 1972 was, according to him, "that same public opinion which was the direct intellectual victim of fifty years of polluted reporting and vested editorial writing" (*SGG* 52). Mailer's claim here that the straight press was to blame for the misconceptions of the public is key as it was one of the fundamental ideas that New Journalism was born out of, that the straight press did not cover politics in a way that gave the public a comprehensively accurate understanding. It also implies that what Mailer is doing (or at least what he believes he is doing) is by comparison political writing which is not "polluted" and gives his readers a more accurate understanding of the politics involved in the campaign. Had he only reported the facts and offered no interpretation or contextual information, Mailer would have left his readers with the same lack of understanding of McGovern's actions as the straight press did. The difference is critical because of the more positive context that it

³⁷ See for instance Newfield's assertion that "The organs of the old journalism automatically print the press releases and White Papers of the government without any note of scepticism. The presumption of the truth is always with the President" ("Journalism" 59).

gives to McGovern as a candidate. Understanding his actions and attempting to justify them, as Mailer does, argues for his viability as a candidate to vote for in the election.

Ultimately these criticisms of the straight press combined with Mailer's view of Nixon's puppeteering control argue that the conventional portrayals of the campaign and McGovern were false. This false representation of the campaign by the bulk of the press, according to Mailer, had a negative effect on the voters' perception of the candidates. One of the most consequential examples of the power of the press's role in the campaign, and of Mailer's need to give an alternative viewpoint from what he sees as the predominant perception perpetrated by the manipulated media, is illustrated by his analysis of the Eagleton scandal. Mailer places a great deal of the weight of the negative perceptions of Eagleton's medical history and the creation of a scandal on the press: "not all political assassinations call for death; there is also bloodless slaughter in the Media" (SGG 93). Mailer argues that campaign reporting had once just reported the results of the election, but now had:

become a mirror which reflected every curse back upon its sender, a Holy Ghost to intervene with every political conception. At its most palpable, the Media had *droit de seigneur* in its pocket, and had become a force between the party and the public with a license to rape the candidate of his party. Media would even create giants so that it could listen to the sound of their fall. (SGG 93; emphasis in the original)

This is an aggressively critical portrayal of the mainstream press, which claims to lay bare the motivations behind their actions, and paints them as dishonourable, seeking to serve their own need for the drama of the fallen giant instead of reporting the truth. This is a serious accusation for Mailer to make, because it is asking the public to disbelieve their traditional sources of news and information. Conversely it suggests that if Mailer was meant to be trusted because he worked from an opposing viewpoint of the election to the one standard in the press, then it was those journalists like him who worked against conventional coverage of the campaign who could be trusted to be faithfully representing the truth. It was those who operated outside the boundaries of conventional journalism at the time who were not tied by the strings being manipulated by Nixon. At the time, Mailer would have meant New Journalists, and it is almost a reversal of the critics' idea that New Journalism could not be trusted to be accurate while straight journalism could. Mailer is arguing for a huge upheaval of the customary trust of the press in *St. George and the Godfather*, which is all the more unbalancing an argument because it came during the

middle of a campaign when the public looked toward the press to inform their decision of who to elect as the next president.

The Eagleton scandal took place after Mailer's original article on the Democratic Convention and represents a crucial turning point in the election in which the bulk of the press turned against McGovern. As Theodore H. White observed, in the wake of the Eagleton scandal:

The reporting of the first two weeks of August was to raze to the ground George McGovern's reputation for candor and trust; more than that, it was to make him look like a fool. The first weeks of August are always the low passage of the summer news doldrums, when television's making the front page attractive. And in this news vacuum stood McGovern—he was prey, and the press was on the hunt. (207)

In light of this, for Mailer to stand against the wave of conventional press, and attempt to rationalise McGovern's actions rather than attack him, frames *St. George and the Godfather* as a dramatically different version of the campaign. It effectively offers readers an alternative version of events, in order to attempt to sway them towards an alternative view of the election. The unstated angle of the text is that Mailer's account of the Eagleton scandal is more honest because he openly discusses the biases and manipulations of the press.

Following his analysis of the press frenzy regarding Eagleton and the idea that any small scrap of scandal would be jumped on, Mailer shifts to his own account of the story (SGG 95). Mailer's account has the benefit of being couched in the context of a personal interview with Eagleton. In comparison to the competing narrative of the straight press, it attempts to position Mailer as the one reporter readers should believe and base their voting decision on. At the end of his account of his interview with Eagleton, Mailer offers his analysis of the senator's level of truth in their conversation and concludes that while "It was preferable to believe he told the truth, [...] who could know what was in Eagleton's mind? Probably he did not know himself. When our motive is imperfect, the flaw is whipped like a pea from mental shell to shell" (SGG 99). This seems to suggest that not only are there levels of truth, but that there are levels of fiction as well, and that the intention behind a falsehood has a bearing on how it should be received. It matters not only if what a person is saying is more truth or more fiction, but what they are trying to achieve by saying it. Of course, as Mailer states, the motivations behind another person's words cannot truly be known and thus interpretation of the truth is always

uncertain. Mailer's value to the reader as a New Journalist is that he does the work of interpreting the politicians for them. Furthermore, as he has done here, he often does this interpretation on the page so that readers also can see the process by which he reached his conclusions. Therefore in contrast to the obscured motivations of the press that Mailer condemned, his view is shown to be more open, with the implication that it is therefore more honest. Since he was working against established popular opinion, it was particularly important that he offered his readers this insight in order to convince them of the logic of his version of the truth, and to bring them to the same conclusions as he had reached.

If the predominant mode of the press after the Eagleton scandal was to attack McGovern or at the very least assume he would not be elected, Mailer's portrayal of him in *St. George and the Godfather* dramatically opposes that concept of his candidacy. The difference between Mailer's interpretation of McGovern and the straight press's portrayal of him is a critical aspect of *St. George and the Godfather* as a text that sought to influence voters in favour of McGovern. *St. George and the Godfather* was not written with the immediacy of the current news in a daily or weekly publication. Mailer was clearly aware of the book's original position in time, as one which was reporting on events that had already happened and yet sought to influence the outcome of an election that was still to come. In comparison, the bulk of the press at the time was publishing in a daily or weekly context and did not have Mailer's benefit of hindsight, and yet according to him acted as if they did: "Obviously, [McGovern] was a candidate whom the Media had concluded was not going to become President" (*SGG* 104-105). The implication here is that the media's decision that McGovern would not win the election because his campaign was suffering affected how he was covered in the news, and in turn had a negative effect on his campaign. In an echo of Crouse's notion of "pack journalism," Mailer presents "the Media" as a single-minded entity that covered the election with the same viewpoint rather than individualised thoughts and opinions. He endeavours to position his own writing by contrast as a more complete representation of the truth because it does not conform to the popular viewpoint.

That Mailer himself saw the kind of reporting he did to be markedly different from the bulk of the straight press in a number of critical ways is apparent in his writing. A few years later in 1976 he tried to argue in his preface to *Some Honorable Men*, a collection of his convention reporting, that despite claims by others to the contrary "I never worked as a journalist and dislike the profession. It is a promiscuous way to live.

Just as a lawyer has no love of truth comparable to his attachment to the interests of his client, so a reporter has no respect for nuance” (vii). Though this seems to be a case of the old novelist ego reasserting itself, it is nonetheless indicative of the way that Mailer saw himself and the reporting that he did as separate from the journalism of the bulk of the press.

And yet even though Mailer writes as if he was separate from the press that was manipulated, *St. George and the Godfather* is clearly not free from manipulation by Mailer himself, and he was still a part of the press. His secondary agenda in reporting on the campaign sought to convince the reader that they should share his view of the election, which was its own attempt to manipulate. Furthermore, he still engages with the rest of the press rather than wholly dismissing them. For instance in the final chapter of the book he uses extracts from the mainstream press as a means of reporting on the protests at the Republican Convention. He uses a selection of quotes from articles by other authors in *The New York Times*, the *Miami Herald*, *The Washington Post*, and *Unconventional News* (Mailer, *SGG* 211-215). He also includes quotes from the Youth International Party, the *People's Almanac*, and the Miami Women's Coalition (*SGG* 211-217). The quotes are about the anti-Vietnam War protests in Miami during the convention. Though the articles are not quoted chronologically – Mailer first quotes from a *Times* article from 22 August 1972 then proceeds to jump around between the 19th and the 25th of that month – they still tell a story of the protests. He first quotes descriptions of the various protestors, then begins quoting articles that describe the results of the protest, namely that many of the protestors ended up arrested or otherwise harassed by the authorities (*SGG* 212). Some of the articles portray the protestors as valiant and worthy of sympathy, however the views presented in the clippings are as variable as the motley collection of groups of protestors, and others are much less sympathetic (*SGG* 212-214). The effect of this is to give a fairly rounded view of the protests, through an aggregation of the mainstream reportage. The clippings do not give a clear sense of either condemning or of praising the protests, and Mailer offers these quotes to the reader with no comment or context of his own. It is interesting that he quotes from *The New York Times* in particular, given its status at the time as the epitome of straight journalism. Indeed this section is in one sense the most in keeping with the so-called rules of straight journalism as there is no interpretation. At the same time it seems clear that Mailer is attempting to say something through the quotes, that they have been selected in order to present his perspective on the depressing state of society. That Mailer could take extracts from straight journalism, and

use them to present a potentially different viewpoint than they were originally written to express suggests that in a sense there is an aspect of all journalism that is subjective. As the arguments regarding the subjectivity of frameworks in objective journalism in the introduction to this thesis evidenced, New Journalism and straight journalism could report exactly the same facts, but those facts could convey entirely different meaning and opinions because of the different methods of framing them. In the context of a campaign, when information is needed not just to inform in a general sense, but with the specific aim of informing voters on who to vote for and therefore of affecting the outcome of the election, the difference in how information is framed is a hugely consequential matter.

This is all the more critical in Mailer's journalism, because of the power that he attributed not only to his journalism but to the press in general. In *St. George and the Godfather* he establishes the role of the press as not just affecting the outcome of the election by influencing voters, but as influencing the actions of politicians in the campaign:

If the selection of the Vice-President might have offered drama, Nixon announced his choice of Agnew much in advance and the V.P. in reply to a reporter who asked if the Republican Convention wasn't going therefore to be dull, replied, "Very well, then, we'll be dull," a way to point out that the values of the Media and the values of the Republicans might by now be as separate from one another as opposed political systems. (SGG 125)

This portrays the Republican Party in direct opposition to the media, whereas in his discussion of the Democrats Mailer described politicians who attempted to strategize in relation to the media. It establishes different expectations for the way that the Republicans are represented by the media, and also paints them as more antagonistic than the Democrats. At the same time it elevates the status of the media by suggesting that its role is equal to that of an opposing political party. Whether or not Mailer was correct that the press had the ability to affect politicians on that level, it is indicative of the power that he thought he had as a journalist, and moreover as a New Journalist who he believed was not manipulated in the way that the straight press was, to actually play a significant role in influencing the outcome of the election.

Conclusion: The Bigger Picture

Ultimately the significance of *St. George and the Godfather* lies not in Mailer's ability or inability to sway the election, but in the way that he argued about the politics of the election through those parts that he covered, as well as in his blatant accusations that Nixon was controlling the media and the press, and that therefore neither television nor the bulk of the press could be trusted. As Phyllis Frus argues, "Mailer wants to change the way reporters write about events, not simply add fictional techniques to reporting in order to challenge novelists" (151). But Mailer also goes further than that. His book does not just comment on the campaign, or report what happened at the conventions, but actively seeks to be a part of the political process by attempting to influence voters, a very different position from that of the other texts examined in this thesis. When viewed alongside the development of New Journalism and the campaign reportage of the other New Journalists, Mailer offers an important instance of the application of the mode at a peak in its development. His involvement in the text, and his blatantly subjective framework and analysis are elements that New Journalism was criticized for, and yet which fulfil the objectives of the mode to provide more personally analytical journalism. His role as a novelist turning to New Journalism, as well as his own ego, set him apart from the other journalists, epitomising in many ways Crouse's ideal of the reporter removed from the constraints of the bus and the pack. And yet *St. George and the Godfather* lacks a deeper underlying agenda beyond the outcome of the election, which as the reportage of Crouse, Thompson, and Steinem demonstrate and this thesis argues, is key to a work of campaign journalism having a lasting impact beyond its initial moment.

Chapter Three: The Weird Turns Pro – Hunter S. Thompson as a Member of the Pack

Introduction: Expect the Unexpected

If Mailer's agenda to affect the outcome of the election as a lone figure separate from what he saw as the corrupt media was an extreme illustration of the principles Crouse argued for in his critique of the system and the pack journalism it fostered, Hunter S. Thompson's agenda was in a sense the opposite. Rather than work apart from the system, Thompson's agenda was to be the New Journalist countercultural voice *within* the system. He framed his reportage as offering a different voice from the traditional media that Mailer railed against, despite being a part of the pack Crouse was critical of. This agenda caused Thompson to be the New Journalist whose presence on the 1972 campaign trail was the most immediately disruptive from within the system of campaign journalism, both because of the atypical journalism he wrote, and because of his position within the system. Thompson was one of the reporters who spent the most time on the campaign trail, leaving his home in Woody Creek, Colorado and journeying to Washington D.C. to begin covering the campaign in December 1971. His first article on the campaign, "Is This Trip Necessary?," appeared in the January 6 1972 issue of *Rolling Stone*, and with the exception of less than a handful of short trips home he remained on the campaign trail through to the November election, publishing at least one article on the campaign a month in *Rolling Stone*. The collected articles were later published in book form as *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*.

Unlike Crouse, who actively attempted to position himself as the outsider in *The Boys on the Bus*, an observer who critiqued the typical straight journalists on the campaign with the aim of improving the system, or Mailer who not only made it very clear that he was not one of the press but also that he deplored the mainstream media as a whole, Thompson operated from a role that was in many ways very similar to that of the majority of the straight journalists on the campaign trail. In *The Boys on the Bus* Crouse largely portrayed *Rolling Stone* as a publication that did not fit in any way with the other newspapers and magazines covering the campaign, and Thompson as the epitome of the outsider among the other campaign reporters (BB 312). Thompson's own portrayal of both *Rolling Stone* and his role as a reporter is dramatically different. In fact he makes a point of highlighting in his introduction to the book how his own

preconceptions regarding his position as a reporter prior to joining the campaign trail were largely disproved by his experiences (*FLCT* 14-16).³⁸ He professes that he initially believed his position on the campaign trail was different from the other journalists, and that he could, for instance, avoid the personal entanglements that encumbered other campaign reporters: “I could afford to burn all my bridges behind me – because I was only there for a year, and the last thing I cared about was establishing long-term connections on Capitol Hill” (*FLCT* 14). His goals for his reportage were “(1) to learn as much as possible about the mechanics and realities of a presidential campaign, and (2) to write about it the same way I’d write about anything else – as close to the bone as I could get, and to hell with the consequences” (*FLCT* 14). As an initial credo this is interesting in comparison to Crouse, who also claimed in *The Boys on the Bus* that he could offer a more analytically insightful view of the role of the press on the campaign because he was an outsider. The framework Thompson establishes, through his goals and his initial intention to maintain what he saw as his independent status, is one of trying to offer a viewpoint on the campaign that was unique because it was his brand of journalism and was unaffected by the system. And yet the journalism that Thompson ended up writing on the campaign disproved his initial belief in his ability to remain an outsider, and instead manifested the disruptive role that New Journalism had when written as a part of the system.

Though *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is one of his best-known texts, the body of scholarly work on Thompson is overshadowed by analyses of his earlier book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972). For instance, *Literary Journalism Studies*, the official journal of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies, dedicated a 2012 special issue to articles on Thompson using *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as its focal point. Only the briefest references are made to *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*. The journal’s editor William McKeen identifies the problem of perception as the difference between the image of Thompson as the caricature based on Raoul Duke, the alter-ego that Thompson sometimes used to represent himself in his journalism particularly when he wanted to fictionalise or stretch the truth, and Thompson the serious writer: “The second one is known mostly to those who see beyond the

³⁸ The introduction was also originally published as part of Thompson’s article “Time Warp: Campaign ’72: Fear & Loathing in the Past...Present...Future...The Meaning, as it were, of McGovern...& Where Do We Go from Here?” in the July 5 1973 issue of *Rolling Stone* along with what would become the “November” and “December” chapters of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*.

caricature and admire the writer, political philosopher, and serious artist trapped in the clownish exterior” (“The Two Sides” 7). McKeen goes so far as to characterise Duke as Thompson’s “albatross” because of the way the characterisation overshadowed Thompson’s abilities as a serious writer (“The Two Sides” 7). And yet McKeen nonetheless focuses his praise for Thompson’s journalism on *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, calling it Thompson’s *Great Gatsby*, the work that was “his undeniable masterpiece, perfect in a way that few books are” (“The Two Sides” 8). Even for scholars who recognize the role Duke and the wilder aspects of Gonzo (the name of Thompson’s particular brand of New Journalism) have played as a flashy distraction from Thompson’s other journalistic efforts, there is still something about *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* that dominates Thompson criticism. Bill Reynolds recognizes this issue in his article “On the Road to Gonzo: Hunter S. Thompson’s Early Literary Journalism (1961-1970)” and remarks “This excessive ‘Gonzo’ persona, which served him spectacularly well in the early 1970s, eventually overwhelmed his content and exiled him from the journalistic main stage to a kind of sideshow of recidivist buffoonery” (51). Reynolds in turn seeks to “re-examine his work by minimizing the discussion of the usual tropes” (51). However, his examination of Thompson’s journalism and characterisation removed from the Gonzo style focuses on Thompson’s work before he developed Gonzo and therefore does not apply this analysis of his reportage to the post-Gonzo *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72*.

Even scholarly work with more focus on *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* is typically influenced by the reading of Thompson and his Gonzo journalism born from the characterisation of both in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as wild, drug-influenced, bombastic, and leaning heavily on fiction. For example, in the brief passages in his book examining Thompson’s America through the Gonzo context, William Stephenson categorizes *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* as stylistically comparative to *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, arguing that the context of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* and the characterisation of Thompson within it are “cast very much in the mould” of that previous book (26-28).³⁹ Stephenson even describes Thompson as the narrator of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72*

³⁹ An association also made in James E Caron’s 1985 article on Thompson’s Gonzo journalism, in which he equates the fictionality of Thompson’s reporting to Mark Twain’s “Tall Tale” while not differentiating between the fictionality of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* (1, 4-6).

as a continuation of the same “stoned, maniacal persona sketched out at the start of *Vegas*” portrayed by Raoul Duke, and describes the book as taking “on the tone of a Renaissance tragedy of hyper-inflated egos and ruthless ambition warped into a comedy when seen from the cynical viewpoint of one of the peripheral participants: as if *Macbeth* had been narrated by a jaded bystander nobleman” (27, 13). While this assessment to some extent applies to the more fictionalised passages of Thompson’s campaign journalism, it does not deal with the nuances of the more straightforward, less literary, and less colourful political reporting that Thompson engages in during the majority of his campaign coverage. This is indicative of the way that the wilder aspects of Thompson’s reportage have heavily coloured modern criticism of his post-Gonzo journalism, and obscured his serious political reporting. Situating Thompson in the wider context of the New Journalists’ coverage of the 1972 campaign reveals the complexity of the more unusual aspects of his journalistic style when applied to the particularities of the campaign journalism system. Thompson once wrote “When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro” and *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* is not merely an exercise in weirdness, but of the incorporation of weirdness into the system (*The Great Shark Hunt* 49).

It Came From Within!: Thompson as Disruptive Participant

It was not only the journalism they produced, but the role of the New Journalists themselves on the campaign which had an impact on the system; this is particularly true in the case of Thompson, as the New Journalist most actively involved in the system. Despite being known as one of the more overtly unconventional New Journalists (as discussed in the introduction to this thesis) Thompson’s campaign journalism in 1972 worked its disruptive influence from within the campaign journalism system rather than outside or against it. In his 1977 autobiography McGovern referred to Thompson as “*Rolling Stone*’s brilliant mutation of the political journalist,” a description which aptly pointed to the role that Thompson had as both a peer of the other campaign reporters and yet also one who was different from the norm (227). Thompson’s respect for his fellow journalists and understanding of the campaign journalism system informs the approach of his own reportage. For instance, after a blazing denouncement of Hubert Humphrey he remarks:

There is no way to grasp what a shallow, contemptible, and hopelessly dishonest old hack Hubert Humphrey really is until you've followed him around for a while on the campaign trail. The double standard realities of campaign journalism, however, make it difficult for even the best of the 'straight/objective' reporters to write what they actually think and feel about a candidate. (*FLCT* 199)

The argument regarding the difficulty for a "straight/objective" reporter to give an honest opinion of a candidate juxtaposed against Thompson's own shamelessly honest opinion of Humphrey is reminiscent of more general New Journalism arguments. The distinction made here is that it was not just that other journalists were "straight/objective" which made giving opinions about the candidates difficult, but rather that it was something about the "double standard realities" of the system of campaign journalism in particular. This line of argument suggests that Thompson's writing as a New Journalist was even more disruptive from within the system of campaign journalism than it would have been on another subject or in another context. Furthermore, it suggests that the system was to blame for the constrained writing of the other journalists, not their abilities as reporters. Thompson points out that even among the traditionally straight journalists "some of these reporters are stepping out of the closet and beginning to describe Humphrey in print as the bag of PR gimmicks that he is" (*FLCT* 199). This, like Crouse's observations in *The Boys on the Bus* that journalists on the campaign were beginning to try out New Journalist techniques, suggests that the constraints of the system of campaign journalism were breaking down in 1972 in the face of new methods and styles of reporting and an increasingly hostile political climate. The disruptive nature of Thompson's journalism can be seen as not just unorthodox on its own, but a part of the driving force of change in campaign journalism as a whole.

Unlike Crouse, Thompson does not make a clear-cut attempt to paint himself as an outsider among the other journalists. He knew them, he had worked around some of them before, and he was not new to high-profile professional journalism as Crouse was. Thompson's positioning of himself is complex, and his journalism portrays the flaws in a presumptive self-declared outsider status. For instance, he claims that he initially sought to ignore personal ties and not let them influence how he wrote about the campaign: "As far as I was concerned, there was no such thing as 'off the record.'" The most consistent and ultimately damaging failure of political journalism in America has its roots in the clubby/cocktail personal relationships that inevitably develop between politicians and journalists" (*FLCT* 14). However, despite these claims Thompson acknowledges that this

belief that he could remain an outsider did not fully hold up (*FLCT* 14-15). As he admits, his personal relationships with the other reporters and the bias that he developed in favour of McGovern compromised his ability to maintain his intended non-partisan, outsider approach (*FLCT* 15).

This is an intriguing analogue to the impossibility of purely objective journalism, because the comparison places Thompson in the role of the straight journalist, unable to maintain a position uninfluenced by his relationships with the other reporters (and ultimately McGovern). That a New Journalist was concerned that operating like straight journalists would skew his perspective is ironic because of the criticisms New Journalism faced, and Thompson's eventual succumbing to the system's influence points to the flaws in assuming a standard of "pure" objectivity is possible. Thompson does not entirely or consistently vouchsafe the extent to which bias played a role in his journalism. Contrary to his lofty claim in the introduction that he set out on the campaign with the guiding principle that nothing would be off the record, and that this approach had mostly worked well for him, there are instances in the text that blatantly contradict this notion. One such instance is the conversation he had with Rick Stearns (who worked on McGovern's campaign) and Bill Dougherty (the lieutenant governor of South Dakota and a supporter of McGovern) in July, which is, he claims: "a 98 percent verbatim transcript of my tape recording of that conversation. The other 2 percent was deleted in the editing process for reasons having to do with a journalist's obligation to 'protect' his sources – even if it sometimes means protecting them from themselves and their own potentially disastrous indiscretions" (*FLCT* 271). While a journalist having an "obligation to 'protect' his sources" sounds like a reasonable justification, it is nonetheless at odds with his "no such thing as 'off the record'" principle (*FLCT* 14). Furthermore, in his November retrospective on the campaign he remarks of the same conversation: "He [Dougherty] just came over and sat down, without realizing I had my tape recorder going, so I figured it wasn't fair to use some of the brutally frank things he said that day...I edited them out of the tape transcription" (*FLCT* 413). Again, a seemingly perfectly reasonable action for a journalist, but contradictory to Thompson's claims in his introduction, particularly because in the instance of the edits of Dougherty, the "brutally frank things" were in part repeated remarks made by McGovern's wife Eleanor (*FLCT* 413). Thompson, while professing to have made the edits to protect Dougherty, seems at least in part to have done so to protect Eleanor McGovern and by extension Senator McGovern, thus violating his intention to remain unattached to the politicians he reported on.

Thompson's coverage of the campaign offers a view of the intermingling of New Journalism and straight journalism in 1972. Rather than the dichotomy suggested by Mailer's antagonistic dismissal of the straight press, or by Crouse's self-styled outsider status, Thompson's reportage illustrates the bleed-through effect that New Journalists like himself were beginning to have on more traditional journalists. He maintained a collegial relationship with many of the straight journalists on the campaign, and the way that he depicts this in his writing suggests the possibility of a blending of New Journalism and straight journalism, or at least the beginnings of acceptance of the New Journalism mode. For instance, he writes in April that Stewart Alsop of *Newsweek* quoted his *Rolling Stone* article "to the effect that 'Hubert Humphrey is a treacherous, gutless old ward-heeler who should be put in a goddamn bottle and sent out with the Japanese current'" (FLCT 149). While Alsop "made it clear that he was not pleased with that kind of language," Thompson also notes that Alsop nonetheless "wound up his column by dismissing the Humphrey candidacy in terms more polite than mine, but not less final" (FLCT 149). That Alsop quoted Thompson in his article and dismissed not his point but merely his means of conveying it suggests a legitimising of Thompson and *Rolling Stone* in the eyes of straight journalists and publications like *Newsweek*.

Thompson's journalism challenged the established workings of the campaign journalism system by actively participating in the system. He did not ignore the reportage of his fellow journalists, and not only responded to it in his own, but at times even used it to supplement his own reporting.⁴⁰ Thompson's use of other journalists' reportage is at its most extreme in the chapter "Dark Interlude". For the most part *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is a faithful reproduction of Thompson's original articles on the campaign as published in *Rolling Stone*, with a handful of footnotes adding Thompson's observations where events had transpired since the election that proved or disproved his original claims. However, there is one chapter which was added to the book but was not originally a *Rolling Stone* article. "Dark Interlude" takes place between July and August, during the time between the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention. According to Thompson's introduction to the chapter, he had expected there to be nothing worth reporting on during this time, while the McGovern campaign consolidated their strategy post-convention by gathering at Sylvan

⁴⁰ See for example his quoting of the *Miami Herald* regarding an incident in Florida for which he was not present when his press credentials were used by another man (Thompson, FLCT 98-99).

Lake Lodge in Custer, South Dakota (*FLCT* 306). In hindsight Thompson was wrong, as the Sylvan Lake campaign sessions were where the campaign press uncovered the Eagleton scandal.

The name of the chapter has a dual meaning. On the one hand, it refers to the blunder made by the McGovern campaign and the negative impact that the Eagleton scandal had for the senator in the press – thus a “dark” period in the thematic sense. However, in the context of Thompson’s inability to report on the situation the name “Dark Interlude” recalls the concept of “going dark,” an FBI and law enforcement terminology referring to disruption of communication services or technologies that renders them incapable of gathering the information they need (United States, Federal Bureau of Investigations). Thompson realised his mistake upon reading the news about the Eagleton scandal in the July 25 newspapers, but was unable to get to Sylvan Lake Lodge in time to obtain first-hand the necessary information to report on the story (Thompson, *FLCT* 306-307).

While he did not report on the scandal for *Rolling Stone* at the time, Thompson includes it in his narrative of the campaign in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* by reproducing articles on the scandal written by other reporters: three by William Greider from *The Washington Post* and one by James M. Naughton from *The New York Times* (306-317). The use of Greider is perhaps less surprising than Naughton: *The Washington Post*, as discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, was one of the more liberal straight publications, willing to let their reporters utilise techniques favoured by New Journalists, and Greider actually went on to later write for *Rolling Stone*, reporting on the 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996 campaigns for the magazine.⁴¹ But the use of an article from the landmark of straight journalism, *The New York Times*, is more unexpected, particularly since Thompson does not use Greider and Naughton to comment on what the rest of the press were doing (as Crouse did in *The Boys on the Bus*) or to critique or mock them (as Mailer typically did in *St. George and the Godfather*), but as a complete supplement to fill the gap left by his own lack of reporting. In fact he does not even comment on the articles by the other two journalists at all, and the only writing in the

⁴¹ See for instance Greider’s *Rolling Stone* articles “For the Democrats, There is Really Only One Issue in 1984: Who Can Beat Reagan?” in the May 10 1984 issue; “Fighting for Their Right to the Party” from November 19 1987; “Who’s Pulling Bill Clinton’s Strings?” from April 30 1992; and “Race, Money and the Meaningless Search for the Center” from December 26 1996.

chapter done by Thompson is three brief introductory paragraphs that outline why he did not report on the scandal at the time himself (*FLCT* 306-307).

Even though he was a New Journalist, Thompson was a part of the system of journalism in a way that “outsiders” like Crouse and Mailer were not. Thompson had a different mode of writing, and a different method of journalism to that of straight journalists, but ultimately his reportage in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* indicates that he was a part of the same system of reporting, had a collegial rapport with the other journalists, and largely respected the work they did. This is important for several reasons. In the context of Thompson’s work, it means that his campaign journalism occasionally blends the straight journalism of other reporters into his own New Journalism reportage as it does in “Dark Interlude”. More importantly for the development of campaign journalism as a whole, the blending of straight journalism and New Journalism and the treatment of the other journalists as his equals works to disrupt the system of campaign journalism, not by overthrowing it and supplanting it with New Journalism but by promoting the incorporation of New Journalism in the established system and potentially influencing the other campaign journalists.

Pure GONZO?: The Development of Thompson’s New Journalism Alongside the Development of Campaign Journalism in 1972

Thompson’s campaign journalism ended up not only being a disruptive force within the system, but also having a particularly visible and well-known role in the media. Because of this, an examination of his contributions to New Journalism in 1972 is key as it would have significantly shaped popular understandings of the mode. As the introduction to this thesis revealed, ideas about New Journalism were coalescing at that time. It was not Thompson’s role on the campaign trail alone that caused him to be a disruptive influence on the campaign journalism system, but the New Journalism mode that he engaged in with gusto. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Thompson is famous for his particular brand of New Journalism known as “Gonzo journalism”. The concept of “Gonzo journalism” began after his 1970 article “The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved” when he adopted the term after fellow journalist Bill Cardoso described the article as ““pure GONZO!”” (qtd. in Steadman 69). It is a style of New Journalism with an unfixed definition. In both popular and critical contexts Gonzo is most often thought of as a wild and uninhibited style, typified by chaotic and aggressive

language, and unrestrained and unpredictable actions (often supplemented by drug and alcohol use) by Thompson as an involved participant. However, Thompson's own definition of the style, though it varied over the years, had notably different key concepts. In 1972, Thompson's sense of what was important to his Gonzo journalism had less to do with wildness or artistic style and was more materially about how journalism was undertaken. In the original jacket copy for *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, written for the 1972 first edition (though unpublished until its inclusion in the 1979 collection *The Great Shark Hunt*), Thompson described what he intended Gonzo journalism to be:

My idea was to buy a fat notebook and record the whole thing, *as it happened*, then send in the notebook for publication—without editing. That way, I felt, the eye & mind of the journalist would be functioning as a camera. The writing would be selective & necessarily interpretive—but once the image was written, the words would be final [...] True Gonzo reporting needs the talents of a master journalist, the eye of an artist/photographer and the heavy balls of an actor. Because the writer *must* be a participant in the scene, while he's writing it—or at least taping it, or even sketching it. Or all three. (*The Great Shark Hunt* 106; emphasis in the original)

Thompson laid out this ideal form of Gonzo journalism at approximately the same time as he began his coverage of the campaign,⁴² and the core concepts established here that his journalism sought to portray a wholly accurate and unedited but distinctly personal account of his experiences had an appreciable impact on his approach to campaign reportage. In the introduction to *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* Thompson echoes his *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* jacket copy:

since I haven't changed anything else in this mass of first-draft screeds that I wrote during the campaign, I can't find any excuse for changing my final prediction. Any re-writing now would cheat the basic concept of the book, which [...] was to lash the whole thing together and essentially *record the reality of an incredibly volatile presidential campaign while it was happening*: from an eye in the eye of the hurricane, as it were, and there is no way to do that without rejecting the luxury of hindsight. (*FLCT* 16; emphasis in the original)

⁴² Thompson had some experience on the campaign when the *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* jacket copy was written. As he remarks, "The week the first section of *Fear & Loathing* appeared in *Rolling Stone* I found myself applying for White House press credentials" (*The Great Shark Hunt* 108). However, the copy must have been written early in 1972 as he also states "...I have all of 1972 to fuck around with Nixon" (*The Great Shark Hunt* 108).

The repetition of the ideas regarding the recording of his experiences positions his approach to journalism on the campaign trail as his next attempt at capturing his ideal form of Gonzo journalism. His emphasis at both the start and end of the author's note on the lack of editing done to either the book or his journalism is all the more significant as evidence that perhaps, at least in Thompson's eyes, *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* was a more fully realised work of Gonzo journalism (FLCT 12, 16-17). This is not to say that the entirety of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* was what Thompson considered Gonzo, or should be read as such, but that the Gonzo method informed how Thompson approached his coverage of the campaign.

Though Thompson's manifesto for Gonzo in the early 1970s focused on the practical aspects of the role of the reporter and the accuracy of personal perspective in unedited and immediate reportage, analysis of the journalism that he wrote after he adopted the approach demonstrates that elements of literary style and a willingness to fictionalise events for literary effect were also key to the application of Gonzo in his work. By 1972, Thompson had been writing in his Gonzo style for nearly two years, and had been concerned with the divide between fact and fiction in his writing (and in writing more broadly) for longer than that. Having just written *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which blurred the line between fact and fiction more than in any of his previous work, he had already begun developing the concept of what he would later in 1976 describe as a "false distinction between journalism & fiction" (*Fear and Loathing in America* 723). This was very clearly at the forefront of his mind when he began covering the 1972 campaign, writing in his second article on the campaign (the second chapter of the book, "January"): "So much for Objective Journalism. Don't bother to look for it here – not under any byline of mine; or anyone else I can think of. With the possible exception of things like box scores, race results, and stock market tabulations, there is no such thing as Objective Journalism. The phrase itself is a pompous contradiction in terms" (FLCT 44). Thompson's belief in the pointless dichotomy between fact and fiction, and the impossibility of purely objective journalism, speaks to the way that he set out to write his campaign journalism from his own perspective, without regard to mainstream concepts of objectivity. However, he was writing as a participant in a system that did not share his flexible view of fact and fiction, and there are elements in his journalism that mark out a level of discord between what he wrote and how it was interpreted by readers and other members of the press. For instance, Thompson makes occasional reference to his Raoul Duke alias, which he had just recently used as the name that he went by for most of *Fear*

and Loathing in Las Vegas. And yet Thompson does not do anything in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* to clarify that Duke is his alter ego. Contributing to the nebulous sense of Duke as a separate and real person is *Rolling Stone*'s inclusion of both Thompson and Duke on the masthead in 1972, with Thompson as a National Affairs Associate Editor, and Duke as a Contributing Editor in Sports ("Masthead" 4). For readers in 1972, it was not necessarily clear that Thompson and Duke were not in fact two separate people, or that Thompson used him as a narrative device.

Responses to his "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" articles in *Rolling Stone* suggest that readers in 1971 were confused by the fictionalisation of fact in his Gonzo-style New Journalism. Readers of *Rolling Stone* questioned in letters to the editor in the December 23 1971 issue "'Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas' – fact or fiction?" and "All I ask is this: who is Raoul Duke?" ("Correspondence," 23 Dec. 3). The confusion over what was real and what was fiction regarding Thompson himself seems to have applied not only to the public, but to other journalists as well. For example, he includes a quote from a *Miami Herald* article where he is referred to as "Dr. Hunter S. Thompson" (Thompson, *FLCT* 98). Thompson, however, was not really a doctor having neither an MD nor a PhD, but occasionally self-styled himself as "Doctor" based on the premise that he was "a Doctor of Divinity, a certified Minister of the Church of the New Truth" as he had recently written in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* 203). While at first the misapplication of the title of Dr. might seem like a minor error, it is indicative of the potential for other journalists on the campaign to accept Thompson's particular New Journalism mode of including exaggerated or fictionalised details as fact.

The established system was not equipped to handle the application of his style to campaign journalism, and this discord set the stage for more disruptive possibilities. While in the case of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* this confusion had no real repercussions other than responses to Thompson's text, the consequences in the campaign context were more appreciable. Campaign journalism's main function was not to entertain, but to inform. Thompson's campaign journalism incorporated the entertaining and humorous elements of his New Journalism intermixed with the facts of his observations on the campaign in a way that did not obviously distinguish fact from fiction. And while Thompson may have been prepared to accept the lack of a clear distinction between fact and fiction and play with that in his journalism, his readers and the mainstream media were not.

In 1972, Thompson's use of playful hyperbolic writing and occasional fictional interjections into his otherwise factual journalism were at odds with the expectations that campaign reportage would produce straightforwardly objective accounts of the campaign. The discordance between his intentions for his journalism and the way that both the public and other reporters read it is one of the strongest examples of the upheaval to the campaign reporting system caused by the introduction of New Journalism techniques. One of the most consequential examples of this in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is Thompson's infamous "Ibogaine" article from the May 11 issue of *Rolling Stone* ("April" in the book). Part of the article is about the waning primary campaign of one-time frontrunner Ed Muskie. In the article, Thompson writes that he had discovered that Muskie was taking the hallucinogenic drug Ibogaine (*FLCT* 144-145). He prefaces this claim with a study from "PharmChem Laboratories, Palo Alto, California" on the historical background and psychoactive effects of the drug (*FLCT* 143-145). The scientific preface and the expectation that campaign reportage be wholly factual establishes a context that what follows the PharmChem study is equally factual. Therefore when Thompson claimed "There was no doubt about it: The Man from Maine had turned to massive doses of Ibogaine as a last resort," some readers of the article at the time failed to grasp that it was one of his fictionalised tall tales and read it as an actual exposé of drug use by Muskie (*FLCT* 144). The language in the passage likely contributed to the confusion, as other than the absurdity of his claims, Thompson's writing is relatively straightforward and lacks the aggressive slang or wild ranting of some of his more stylised writing. The article follows the claim with a factual discussion of the poll results in Wisconsin without shifting tone or otherwise indicating that there is any distinction in factuality between it and the previous passage (*FLCT* 146).

Thompson's fictionalised tall tale of Muskie's drug use blends with his factual reporting on the campaign without clear delineation. This caused confusion for readers in 1972 unused to reading fiction in campaign reporting. Despite Crouse's claim that in the wake of the effect of his Ibogaine article Thompson began toning down his hyperbolic writing or at least "telegraphed his punches" when he fictionalised something, Thompson does not address the fallout in his own work and indeed still writes things in later reportage like "Muskie 'received polite applause,' the caption said, and the camera had apparently caught him somewhere near the beginning of a delayed Ibogaine rush: his eyes are clouding over, his jaw has gone slack, his hair appears to be combed back in a DA" (Crouse, *BB* 316; Thompson, *FLCT* 240). This description was written in June and

published in July, several months after the May publication of the Ibogaine article, and there is no indication from this description of Muskie that Thompson felt the need to pull any punches.

Though Thompson does not address any fallout from the article in his own subsequent reportage on the campaign, the description of the aftermath in other works suggests that it had a salient impact on 1972 campaign journalism. Stephenson categorises the Ibogaine article as part of “Thompson’s allegations of fetishism and drug ritual at the heart of the political process of a great democracy” which he argues “formed an extended metaphor” that shed light on the irrationality of the political process in 1972 in a way that more objective journalism did not (82). This assessment is mirrored in the claim of Thompson’s fellow campaign reporter Greider of *The Washington Post* that “You could read his account of Muskie, that he was on some strange Brazilian drug, and it spoke to the truth about his odd behavior [...] maybe he [Thompson] was over the top, but the stories were true in a deeper sense” (qtd. in McKeen, *Outlaw Journalist* 191). With regards to Thompson’s position among the journalists on the campaign trail, McKeen proposes that it was after the notoriety gained from the Ibogaine article that “straighter members of the campaign press corps finally began to talk to the thug at the back of the bus. Thompson wrote all that great stuff in *Rolling Stone* that they wished they could write” (*Outlaw Journalist* 191). This suggests that the Ibogaine article was so different from the normal practices of campaign journalism that the shock drew attention to it and therefore to Thompson’s mode of journalism. Though the Ibogaine article in and of itself did not cause other journalists to begin including fictional elements in their journalism, the attention to Thompson’s journalism and the dramatically different possibilities for journalism that his work demonstrated were a part of the atmosphere of change prompted by the combination of the burgeoning success of New Journalism and the particular socio-politically chaotic nature of the 1972 campaign.

Despite a handful of changes made when compiling the articles into book form,⁴³ Thompson proposes that the compiled form of his campaign journalism would continue to be relevant after the campaign, because of the mode of his journalism (*FLCT* 16-17). On compiling his campaign reportage into book form, Thompson writes:

⁴³ Such as few instances of combining multiple articles into one chapter, or of splitting an article into multiple chapters as in the case of the “Author’s Note,” “November,” and “December” chapters, and the additions of the previously discussed “Dark Interlude” and a handful of footnotes.

What I would like to preserve here is a kind of high-speed cinematic reel-record of what the campaign was like *at the time*, not what the whole thing boiled down to or how it fits into history. There will be no shortage of books covering that end. The last count I got was just before Christmas in '72, when ex-McGovern speech writer Sandy Berger said at least nineteen people who'd been involved in the campaign were writing books about it – so we'll eventually get the whole story, for good or ill. (*FLCT* 17; emphasis in the original)

The argument here that Thompson's book would be significantly different despite there being "no shortage" of books about the campaign is rooted in the different method of journalism he engaged in while on the campaign trail. The emphasis on the personal perspective of Thompson's brand of New Journalism, and on seeking to maintain that even when reproduced as a book, is proposed here to be a key aspect of the difference it brings to coverage of the campaign. The idea that the book is not concerned with "the whole thing boiled down to or how it fits into history" suggests that campaign journalism that focuses on first-hand accounts rather than more general facts has something to offer readers after campaign speeches and poll numbers cease to be relevant. The idea that a particular campaign might have important unique elements that should be preserved, and that contemporary insights and opinions could be valuable, points to the particular elements of change in the 1972 campaign that made it ripe for the kind of first-hand personal New Journalism that Thompson utilised.

Additionally, the reportage in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* contends that there is something about political journalism in particular that affects a journalist like Thompson. This underscores the significance of the 1972 election coverage happening at such a key time in the development of New Journalism. Thompson's writing supports this idea from a technical perspective, not just a personal one:

Some of the scenes in this book will not make much sense to anybody except the people who were involved in them. Politics has its own language, which is often so complex that it borders on being a code, and the main trick in political journalism is learning how to translate – to make sense of the partisan bullshit that even your friends will lay on you – without crippling your access to the kind of information that allows you to keep functioning. (*FLCT* 13)

The argument here that political journalism involves breaking and translating the code of politics suggests its relevance as a medium that can speak intelligibly to readers about important things they would not otherwise comprehend. Even more significantly with

regards to the development of New Journalism, Thompson's claim argues the absence of value in unmediated facts-only political journalism. His admission that some of his own reports "will not make much sense to anybody except the people who were involved in them" suggests that even his own method of reporting cannot fully translate for readers, underscoring the importance of at least making an effort to interpret. Thompson is not championing New Journalism here, but speaking about political journalism in general, yet his argument echoes both the earliest New Journalism calls for change in the system of journalism at large, and Crouse's arguments for the necessity of reform to the campaign system specifically, focused through Thompson's personal rejection of objectivity and the division between fact and fiction.

When the Going Gets Weird: Thompson's Portrayal of Campaign Journalism

Thompson's initial agenda, to apply what he intended to be an outsider's perspective within the traditional system, frames interpretation from a personal perspective as the most salient means of translating political journalism for readers. The idea that politics requires interpretation in order to have meaning for readers has implications for the role of bias in campaign reporting: a potential use of frameworks is to interpret the campaign to suit secondary agendas beyond reporting facts and statistics. Thompson characterises the state of campaign journalism at the beginning of 1972 as stagnant, and claims that much of the journalism produced by it was "just filling space" (*FLCT* 89-90). This argument is reminiscent of the way that the state of journalism was written about in the earliest calls for the development of what became New Journalism. It suggests that one of the reasons that 1972 was a crucial year in the development of campaign journalism was that the nature of being a system with its own distinct rules and operating on a four-year cycle meant that it had been slower to open up to new modes of reporting than other avenues for journalism. With the combination of the socio-political disquiet over the state of both domestic politics and Vietnam, and the peak of interest in New Journalism, the system was ripe for something that jarred the "press wizards" and motivated the "very depressed" to do more than "just filling space" (Thompson, *FLCT* 89-90). It was from this context that Thompson developed his complex portrayal of the campaign journalism system in 1972 and the role of New Journalists like himself within that system.

The complicated dynamics that Thompson details in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* offer a different understanding of the campaign reporting system from that of either Crouse or Mailer. One of the most striking differences is that he does not depict his own methods of campaign journalism as the best approach. Crouse's descriptions of Thompson are laudatory, and claim Thompson told the truth about the campaign more than any other journalist (*BB* 311). This is at odds with Thompson's portrayal of his role as an average working journalist. The juxtaposition between the way that Crouse portrays Thompson as able to do more than the straight journalists and to bring a fresh and energetic perspective to the systemic staidness of the campaign, and the way that Thompson portrays himself, offers a strikingly contradictory perspective. In the introduction to the book Thompson immediately draws a distinction between himself and the other more established and more typically straight journalists on the campaign by stating that they never seemed to have the same mad rush to dash off articles for deadlines (*FLCT* 12). Thompson makes the comparison as if to disparage his own methods of writing, praising "Reporters like Bill Greider from the *Washington Post* and Jim Naughton of the *New York Times*" for their ability to write "long, detailed, and relatively complex stories *every day*" with seeming ease, while Thompson laboured under "terrible pressure" struggling to meet a deadline that only fell "every two weeks" (*FLCT* 12; emphasis in the original). This portrays Thompson as unable to cope with the demands inherent in the continual cycle of publication deadlines in the campaign journalism system, demands which he sees other, straight journalists as having coped with better. Moreover, the way that he describes Greider's and Naughton's articles as "long, detailed, and relatively complex" does not even try to suggest that the reason they were more able to cope was because their straight journalism was somehow less involved than his New Journalism, and it is particularly notable here that Naughton worked for the straight journalism flagship *The New York Times*. There is however, seemingly unintentionally, a suggestion in the depiction of their calmness that these more established journalists potentially had less dynamic energy in their writing, and that perhaps there is something about being uncomfortable, or unfamiliar, that keeps complacency from filtering energy out of campaign reportage.

The idea of Thompson as the impassioned journalist too caught up in his own work not to write his personal truth is in keeping with the ideals of New Journalism as portrayed a little later in 1972 by Wolfe in the articles that became his anthology *The New Journalism*. And yet Thompson's description of established journalists like Greider and

Naughton as calm and laid-back in their approach to reporting does not fit with Crouse's observations about some of the more established and experienced journalists known as the "Heavies" and the idea that they "were a lot like other reporters except that they somehow had more energy, they were more monomaniacal about their work" (*BB* 69). This description instead seems more in line with Thompson's sense of his own intense, driven, energetic reporting method, which suggests that energetic writing or a monomaniacal approach to journalism are not what New Journalism brings to campaign reporting that is necessarily different from the approach of straight or mainstream journalists. Thompson's reportage indicates that contrary to Crouse's praise of his freshness, it was the experience of the other journalists that allowed them to maintain their monomaniacal approach without the same crushing weight of the "terrible pressure I always seemed to be laboring under" that Thompson describes (*FLCT* 12). The juxtaposition of their viewpoints suggests that there were elements of both straight journalism and New Journalism required to successfully report on a campaign in a meaningful way. The structure and schedule of the campaign system required some of the regulations of straight journalism, while New Journalism provided the personal interpretation that the increasingly complex socio-political climate necessitated.

In fact, Thompson is quite upfront about the fact that while there were some things that he had the freedom to do that other journalists on the campaign did not, both his abilities as a journalist and the nature of *Rolling Stone* as a publication were not necessarily capable of dealing with some of the particular quirks of campaign reportage. In "June" for instance, he asserts that he would have been incapable of breaking a truly newsworthy story in a timely manner, because of *Rolling Stone*'s fortnightly publication schedule (*FLCT* 220). The proposal that *Rolling Stone* was ill-equipped to be a source of breaking news because it only published every two weeks is particularly interesting because it was not a point usually made by proponents of New Journalism. More typically the extended deadlines of magazines like *Rolling Stone* were praised by these writers for the length of time they allowed journalists to devote to their articles. And yet the campaign journalism system needed to be able to deal with and report on breaking news when it arose, lest all journalists find themselves in the need of "eight quarts of Wild Turkey and all the Ibogaine I could get my hands on" to cope with sitting on a story (Thompson, *FLCT* 220). Additionally, Thompson's claim that he "wouldn't have known how to handle" a truly revelatory newsbreak is indicative of his awareness of the limitations of his experience with that kind of reportage (*FLCT* 220). This kind of analysis

supports Crouse's argument that the system should change to address the limitations and failings at the time but ultimately still allow for different kinds of journalists and publications, rather than Mailer's arguments for getting rid of mass media as a whole. Thompson's discussion of his limitations, and the limitations of *Rolling Stone*, suggests that there is a necessity in campaign journalism for both the lengthy and opinionated insights in his articles, and the ability of a daily newspaper to report relevant news with immediacy.

Thompson, unlike Mailer, is not unreservedly critical of the mainstream press, and he even seems to have more of an appreciation of aspects of the work done by straight journalists than Crouse, who primarily valued mainstream journalists only when they tried new ways of writing or used New Journalism techniques. Thompson, for example, praises James Reston, a well-known straight journalist from *The New York Times*, for getting right down to the core of what the campaign was about in an article on the New Hampshire primary: "Reston is narrow, but he has a good eye when it's focused, and in this case he seems to be right" (*FLCT* 83). Even the idea here that it could be good in some instances to be narrow in journalism if it means being so focused that one picks out details others may miss seems to run counter to many of the New Journalism ideals which argued in favour of writing that dealt with big ideas, context, and emotion instead of getting bogged down in the "narrow" facts. Despite his own Gonzo New Journalism style, and his self-proclaimed awkwardness as the odd-man among the campaign journalists, Thompson in some respects operated as a more traditional journalist than either Mailer or Crouse. Mailer was a novelist who deigned to write journalism because he had been successful with it in the past and he felt he had something to say about the election. Crouse was relatively new to professional journalism, and so much an observer of the process of the campaign that he was as much anthropologist as journalist. Thompson, however, apart from the novel *The Rum Diary* that he had been working on since 1959, actually was a journalist who respected both the form and many of the other journalists whose profession it was. This perspective informed the way that he, as a working journalist engaged in the system, framed his reportage.

One aspect that Thompson's reportage shares with Crouse's and Mailer's, however, is the portrayal of the relationship of the press to the politicians they reported on. The notion of the press and politicians as natural enemies is present in the way that Thompson describes people from both camps on the campaign. He declares that for political journalism in general: "One of the main marks of success in a career politician is a rooty

distrust of The Press – and this cynicism is usually reciprocated, in spades, by most reporters who have covered enough campaigns [...]” (*FLCT* 94). He believes this to be particularly true for campaign journalism where “the prevailing attitude among journalists with enough status to work Presidential Campaigns is that all politicians are congenital thieves and liars” while politicians thought “that The Press is a gang of swine” (*FLCT* 94-95). In the context of the 1972 campaign this highlights the oddity of McGovern’s open and gregarious attitude to the press that both Thompson and Crouse remark on as one of the reasons for his downfall. In a way this claim also normalises the antagonistic attitude of Nixon towards the press. If all career politicians had a “rooty distrust of The Press” and believed they were “swine,” Nixon’s treatment of the press as enemies, declared as abnormal and deplorable by both Crouse and Mailer, seems to be at the very least an exaggerated extension of the typical attitude.

More specifically to Thompson’s role as a journalist, his framing of this relationship implies that he believed himself to be outside the conventions of the campaign journalism system enough to not be subject to the rigid bias of the press against politicians. That he adds that he had “been on both sides of that ugly fence” of politicians and journalists intimates that he might be more sympathetic to the attitudes of the politicians toward the press on the campaign because of his own recent campaign for Sheriff of Aspen in 1970 (*FLCT* 94-95). While Mailer too had somewhat recently ran and lost a campaign (for Mayor of New York in 1969), the way that he positioned himself as a writer who was above both politicians and journalists seems to have kept him from developing the same feelings. This sympathy was not necessarily of benefit to Thompson’s campaign journalism, however, and as will be examined later in this chapter it may have contributed to the bias that Thompson developed in favour of McGovern; a bias which clouded his judgement of the senator and influenced his reportage, and compromised his initial agenda to analyse the campaign as an unattached individual. Nevertheless, the notion that antagonism between press and politicians had become natural, and that McGovern was an anomaly, supports the idea that one reason for change to the system in 1972 was that campaign journalism required more in-depth and opinionated reportage because politicians could no longer be trusted to be taken at face value.

An Unusual Intimacy with Nixon, and an Idealised McGovern

Thompson's portrayal of the two main candidates in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* demonstrates how the personal perspective of the New Journalism mode was increasingly suited to the nature of campaign journalism as it evolved in 1972. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Thompson believed that a state of enmity existed between most reporters and politicians involved in the presidential campaign system. The ability of a New Journalist to focus their reportage on analysis and interpretations of politicians, utilising a personal viewpoint, would seem to have been of crucial value in an increasingly divided and antagonistic system (and certainly this is what Crouse argues in his calls for reform to the system of campaign journalism in *The Boys on the Bus*). This was particularly so in the case of Thompson, who demonstrates in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* a propensity for aggressive attacks on the shortcomings of candidates he does not like, such as Humphrey and Muskie. The irreverence with which Thompson writes about politicians is one of the key ways that his journalism disrupted the normal practice of campaign reporting. The language that he uses is not only aggressively derogatory at times, but also peppered with slang, contrary to the contemporary professional standards of straight journalism. For instance, Muskie is called a "wiggy bastard," and "swine" is frequently used for any politician that Thompson does not like (*FLCT* 128). And yet despite all of this, his reportage on both Nixon and McGovern in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is remarkably less antagonistic than might be expected from someone who initially frames his agenda as "going to Washington [...] 'To check out the people and find out if they're *all* swine'" (*FLCT* 28; emphasis in the original).

The lack of outright hostility is particularly remarkable in Thompson's portrayal of Nixon. The president is explicitly depicted as a manipulative puppet-master in *The Boys on the Bus* and a violently controlling Godfather in *St. George and the Godfather*; by comparison, Thompson's version of Nixon is relatively restrained. Thompson already had a history with Nixon as a journalist, and had been writing about him for years.⁴⁴ There is a certain intimacy in the way that Thompson writes about Nixon in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*. This seems in part to have developed from an oddly personal encounter Thompson had with Nixon during the 1968 election, when Nixon chose

⁴⁴ See for instance Thompson's article "Presenting: The Richard Nixon Doll (Overhauled 1968 Model)," originally published in *Pageant* magazine in July 1968 (*The Great Shark Hunt* 185-192).

Thompson to ride to the airport in his car alone with him (besides the driver and two of Nixon's speechwriters) (Thompson, *FLCT* 54-55). According to Thompson, he had been chosen from among the other reporters because Nixon wanted to talk about football (and “*nothing except football*”) and Thompson was the only journalist there capable of carrying on such a conversation (*FLCT* 56-57; emphasis in the original). Beyond the strangeness of this set-up, the exceptionally peculiar thing about the way that Thompson describes the encounter is the grudging respect that he affords Nixon. Even regarding Nixon's decision to ride with him Thompson admits: “I still had to credit the bastard for having the balls to choose *me* – out of the fifteen or twenty straight/heavy press types [...]” (*FLCT* 56; emphasis in the original). The ride itself shocked Thompson because of the personal view of Nixon it gave him, and he recalls: “We had a fine time. I enjoyed it,” a fact which he states “put me a bit off balance” (*FLCT* 57). Something about being able to connect to Nixon on such a common level as a shared love of football engendered in Thompson a more personal awareness of Nixon as an individual instead of just as a deplorable head of state.

The level of intimacy with which Thompson writes of Nixon is unlike any other portrayal of him in the New Journalism analysed in this thesis. Despite Thompson's sardonic aside in the passage that “there is still serious doubt in my mind that he [Nixon] could pass for Human,” there is a decidedly humanising element to the personal experience that he recounts, and the genuine enjoyment of the “fine time” that put him so off balance (*FLCT* 57). Regarding how he addressed Nixon, Thompson claims “I don't think I did. I'm very uncomfortable with titles” (*FLCT* 411). Nixon, however, addressed him as “‘Hunter’... We were talking about football. He was feeling very relaxed” (*FLCT* 411). The picture painted by the “relaxed” Nixon on a first-name basis with Thompson, amiably chatting about football, depicts a jarringly collegial image of two men who were otherwise natural enemies with diametrically opposed political views. It is a far cry from Crouse's Nixon, who does not really appear as a presence so much as an ominous figurehead represented by his actions and his staff, or the villainous Godfather of Mailer, whose hand Mailer would not shake, professing “Even in politics, some hands are not yours to shake” (Mailer, *SGG* 229). Thompson's typical vitriolic stance on Nixon notwithstanding, his Nixon in the football conversation is a more realised person. In the end Thompson claims: “It was a very weird trip; probably one of the weirdest things I've ever done, and especially weird because both Nixon and I enjoyed it. We had a good talk [...]” (*FLCT* 55). The attempt to come to terms with Nixon as an individual is consistent

with the way that Thompson's reportage at first typically deals with Nixon's actions and motivations as a person rather than a metaphorical devil. At the heart of Thompson's ability and willingness to connect to the subjects of his reportage are the same elements of potential bias because of his personal connection to the campaign. This, he admits at the outset of the book in his author's note, had affected how he wrote about McGovern. His willingness to dive in-depth into his reporting, though a strength of New Journalism, significantly compromised his original framework as an unattached observer and ruthless reporter.

That Thompson's portrayal of Nixon is surprisingly tame is not to suggest that it is essentially positive, or that he is not clear in his opposition to Nixon's candidacy and his politics. But it is not the focus of his campaign journalism and represents a relatively small portion of the reportage he produced, seemingly almost an afterthought. Nixon is occasionally mentioned as an aside, a way of denigrating Democratic primary candidates Thompson did not like, such as Muskie whom he refers to as "even duller and more depressing than travelling with Evil Dick himself" (*FLCT* 110). Nixon appears manifestly as a villain in the narrative of Thompson's reportage only when the threat of McGovern's defeat drives Thompson to attempt to do what he can to affect the viewpoint of his readers, such as the brief anti-Nixon tirade in the chapter "September".

Thompson's shift towards more astringent criticism of Nixon coincides with his increasing despair with the McGovern campaign. However disappointed Thompson became with McGovern and his campaign tactics after he won the Democratic nomination, he still believed McGovern was categorically better than Nixon. Of the difference between the two candidates, Thompson argues:

There may not be much difference between Democrats and Republicans; I have made that argument myself – with considerable venom, as I recall – over the past ten months ... But only a blind geek or a waterhead could miss the difference between McGovern and Richard Nixon. Granted, they are both white men; and both are politicians – but the similarity ends right there, and from that point on the difference is so vast that anybody who can't see it deserves whatever happens to them if Nixon gets re-elected due to apathy, stupidity, and laziness on the part of potential McGovern voters. (*FLCT* 373)

This vehement stance on the need to vote for McGovern to defeat Nixon is not typical of Thompson, who was upfront that in the past he had either neglected to vote or voted for nonsense candidates (such as "'No' in '64") (*FLCT* 373). His fervour here demonstrates

the intensity with which he believed Nixon needed to be kept from another term as president. Thompson seems to have viewed the re-election of Nixon as potentially damning to the future of America, echoing Bobby Kennedy's claim in 1968 that Nixon "*represents the dark side of the American spirit*" (FLCT 373-374; emphasis in the original).

The potentially damning impact of Nixon's re-election was one of the reasons that the 1972 election was so important, and why it drew in New Journalists like Thompson, Crouse, Mailer, and Steinem. What had tempered Nixon's presidency at all in the past, according to Thompson, was his need to get re-elected (FLCT 372-373). With the two-term limit on holding presidential office, and the presidency being the peak of American politics, Thompson was starkly aware that it was "Nixon's *last four years in politics*" (FLCT 372; emphasis in the original). Thompson viewed this as something to be feared, because it meant that Nixon would be "completely unshackled, for the first time in his life, from any need to worry about who might or might not vote for him the next time around" (FLCT 372-373). Consequently Thompson's Nixon becomes more colourfully villainous the more depressed Thompson grew with his certainty that Nixon would win. In "October" he describes Nixon as "America's answer to the monstrous Mr. Hyde. He speaks for the Werewolf in us; the bully, the predatory shyster who turns into something unspeakable, full of claws and bleeding string-warts, on nights when the moon comes too close..." (FLCT 391). Thompson's Nixon here is no longer the nuanced individual, but the bogeyman, the lurking threat poised to terrorise the United States for another four years. There is also a note of blame here for the American public that would fail to vote him out. However, the idea that he "speaks for the Werewolf in us" suggests that there is something of Nixon's "Mr. Hyde" in the heart of the country as a whole, and that if the nation chooses a monster, then the nation deserves a monster. And yet the marked increase in the intensity of Thompson's criticism of Nixon came very late in the campaign and was short-lived, and the percentage of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* that focuses on Nixon or attacks him is relatively minimal.

That the focus of Thompson's campaign journalism is on the Democrats is logical, given that he followed the Democratic primary and then the campaign of McGovern. Moreover, his characterisation of Nixon's relationship with the press is in keeping with that of Crouse and Mailer and the idea that it was not possible to cover Nixon's campaign because there barely was one. The main focus of Thompson's campaign reportage, and the candidate who had the most impact on the framework of his campaign journalism,

was McGovern. The bias with which Thompson supported McGovern profoundly influenced his coverage of the 1972 campaign, and his original agenda. The effect of Thompson's favouritism speaks to the inherent role of bias in campaign journalism in general, but is especially relevant to the New Journalism reportage on the 1972 campaign. When the prominence of subjectivity in Thompson's journalism is examined alongside Crouse's and Mailer's arguments for a need for more personal and subjective campaign journalism, it proposes that the argument for New Journalism in the context of campaign journalism in 1972 was both an argument *for* personal perspectives and an argument *against* trying to pretend that pure objectivity was possible.

Thompson's portrayal of McGovern represents a complete reversal of the self-professed ruthless attitude towards campaign journalism with which he had set out. Even before he won the Democratic nomination, Thompson was focused on McGovern as his preferred candidate. He began covering the campaign much earlier than either Mailer or Crouse: Mailer did not cover the election until the Democratic Convention in July, and though Crouse published two smaller articles on the primary campaign in March and April, his journalistic narrative in *The Boys on the Bus* begins after the McGovern campaign had become "the Winner's Bus" in the primaries and his main "The Boys on the Bus" article was not published until October. By contrast, Thompson began covering the campaign in December 1971 (with the first article appearing in the January 6 1972 issue of *Rolling Stone*). This early reportage gives a very different insight into the campaign than that of its later stages when the nomination of McGovern was more likely, and the looming spectre of Nixon was more of a real threat. Furthermore, it lays the groundwork for Thompson's characterisation of McGovern as the underdog: "George McGovern, the only candidate in either party worth voting for, is hung in a frustrated limbo created mainly by the gross cynicism of the Washington Press Corps. 'He'd be a fine President,' they say, 'but of course he can't possibly win.' Why not?" (*FLCT* 30). Thompson's self-professed "natural out-front bias in favor of the McGovern candidacy" is already present here (*FLCT* 15). His frustration with the traditional portrayal of campaigns in journalism and the effect of such a portrayal on McGovern's campaign is equally strong, and he builds on this in his analysis of the answer to "Why not?" McGovern:

Well ... the wizards haven't bothered to explain that, but their reasoning appears to be rooted in the hazy idea that the people who could make McGovern President – that huge & confused coalition of students, freaks, blacks, anti-war activists &

dazed dropouts – won't even bother to register, much less drag themselves to the poll on election day.

Maybe so ... but it is hard to recall many candidates, in recent history, who failed to move what is now called 'The McGovern Vote' to the polls if they *actually represented it*. (FLCT 30; emphasis in the original)

This speaks to the same kind of rationale that Thompson gives earlier in the chapter for why he came to D.C. to cover the campaign in the first place – to speak to the kind of people “who could make McGovern President,” the kind of people who read *Rolling Stone*, the kind of people that were Thompson's kind of people.

The portrayal of McGovern as the candidate who needed to win the election for the good of the country is consistent across the New Journalists discussed in this thesis. This suggests, in part, that there was something about his politics as well as his personal and open attitude toward the press that appealed to the drive for personal honesty in many of the New Journalists. In *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, the depiction of McGovern as the best candidate for the fringe and youth vote advocates for his election as president and builds on Thompson's justification for his agenda in his coverage of the campaign. It intimates that Thompson, as not just fresh eyes to Washington but with the perspective of these “other” voters, has a different point of view to offer in his coverage of the campaign to the standard “gross cynicism of the Washington Press Corps” (FLCT 30). In a discussion in “January” of the extreme unlikeliness that any candidate from the two major parties would come away with less than 40 percent of the vote and would completely alienate no more than 20 percent of the electorate, Thompson writes “even that far-left radical bastard, George McGovern – babbling a maddening litany of his most Far Out ideas – would be hard pressed to crank up any more than a 30 percent animosity quotient” (FLCT 45-46).⁴⁵ This characterisation of McGovern is made in contrast to the rest of the pack of candidates who were “a pretty bland lot” according to Thompson (FLCT 46). It suggests that in the early stages of the primaries, one of the reasons that Thompson initially liked McGovern was that he viewed him as radical, an unorthodox thinker who did not fit in, perhaps engendering partiality and support from Thompson because these were characteristics that he identified with himself. In many ways these

⁴⁵ Thompson's claim that any nominated candidate would receive at least 40 percent of the vote proved to be slightly too optimistic, though not by a huge margin – McGovern received 37.5 percent of the popular vote (Woolley and Peters).

were characteristics similar to the traits of journalism valued by New Journalists. McGovern, according to Thompson:

is the only major candidate – including Lindsay and Muskie – who invariably gives a straight answer [...] He lines out the painful truth, and his reward has been just about the same as that of any other politician who insists on telling the truth: He is mocked, vilified, ignored, and abandoned as a hopeless loser by even his good old buddies [...] (*FLCT* 77)

The focus on McGovern being truthful, and of honestly portraying his personal perspective on the issues is one which also applies to New Journalism. Even the sense of McGovern as being mocked and vilified because of this has echoes of the resistance that proponents of New Journalism faced in the early years of the mode's development.

Rather than mocking McGovern for his unwavering honesty the way that Thompson claims everyone else in the campaign journalism system did, Thompson positions him as the underdog, the last honest man in politics. Not to be mocked, but as a hope for the future, with claims by others that he is proof “that there is no room in American politics for an honest man” only true if one buys that American politics must always be “synonymous with the traditional Two Party system: the Democrats and the Republicans, the Ins and the Outs, the Party in Power and The Loyal Opposition” (Thompson, *FLCT* 77). Thompson seems here to be pinning his hopes for change in politics on McGovern, with the idea that his honesty could mean a different kind of politician could come to power and the system could change, if only the last honest man in American politics could actually win. This concept of McGovern is important to the way that Thompson writes about him in his campaign coverage, because it was key to Thompson's positive disposition towards McGovern and desire to support him from early on in the campaign. Thompson writes in “February” that even though he was unexcited by McGovern as a candidate and “politically numb, despite the fact that I agreed with everything he said,” he spent a great deal of time trying to figure out the cause of the numbness “because I *like* McGovern – which still surprises me, because politicians, like journalists, are pretty hard people to like” (*FLCT* 79; emphasis in the original).

The effect of this is an empathy that Thompson does not have for the other presidential candidates in 1972. He is gentler in the way that he reports on McGovern and notably emotionally entangled in his portrayal of the senator. The same sense of being too open, too friendly and guileless with the press that Crouse attributes in part to McGovern's later campaign struggles is visible early on in some of Thompson's more

personal moments with the senator. Alone in a men's restroom in February he asks McGovern for a comment on a recent campaign development in order to get the story before McGovern's staff can spin it: "He was washing his hands, staring down at the sink. 'Well...' he said finally. 'I guess I shouldn't say this, Hunter, but I honestly don't know. I'm surprised; we're *all* surprised'" (*FLCT* 67; emphasis in the original). Unlike Crouse, Thompson does not comment on McGovern's openness here, on the idea that saying things that he knows he should not is not the wisest political move. Instead he observes: "He looked very tired, and I didn't see much point in prodding him to say anything else about what was clearly a painful subject" (*FLCT* 67). This kind of uncritical observation and quiet deferment to McGovern's feelings is not in keeping with the perception of Gonzo journalism as indiscriminately wild and unchecked in the pursuit of the story. It also runs counter to Thompson's truth at any cost, no feelings spared approach that he claimed he had gone into the campaign with (*FLCT* 15). Thompson states that initially on the campaign he was the only person to call McGovern "George" rather than "The Senator" or "Senator," and that he only stopped calling him George because he "began to feel weird, because I was the only person that called him that" (*FLCT* 410). The inclination to refer to McGovern by his first name is indicative of the ease with which Thompson viewed McGovern as a man to whom he could relate, rather than one of the many Washington D.C. "swine". Furthermore, Thompson does not seem to have any problem with the friendly relationship he developed with McGovern, and does not display any reticence about the effect that relationship could have on notions of objectivity in his journalism (*FLCT* 192-193).

As the campaign progressed, a tension developed in Thompson's reportage between the idea of McGovern as the underdog liberal, and the real McGovern as the suddenly viable presidential candidate. While Thompson's self-identification with McGovern and support of his candidacy initially has the effect of colouring his reportage with a biased favouritism and empathy towards the senator, his later disappointment begets a much darker outlook and tone. Towards the end of "September," Thompson's disappointment with McGovern combines with his near certainty that Nixon would win the election and creates an even more bitter attitude towards the senator (*FLCT* 386-388). McGovern by this point in Thompson's reportage has become the man who let him down, who had betrayed his convictions and consequently "His behavior since Miami has made a piecemeal mockery of everything he seemed to stand for during the primaries" (*FLCT* 387). Thompson's bitterness has an effect on his overall tone and style, which becomes

increasingly more acerbic and colourful as his lack of interest in talking about the progress of the campaign grows. However, despite the rancour and despondency that colour the outlook of his reportage (generated in significant part by his aggrieved disappointment in McGovern's campaign), Thompson never quite completely gives up on the man himself:

The tragedy of all this is that George McGovern, for all his mistakes and all his imprecise talk about 'new politics' and 'honesty in government,' is one of the few men who've run for President of the United States in this century who really understands what a fantastic monument to all the best instincts of the human race this country might have been, if we could have kept it out of the hands of greedy little hustlers like Richard Nixon. (*FLCT* 389)

This comes at the end of "September," following several pages of bitterness and condemnations against the shift in McGovern's campaign that Thompson believed would cost him the election. It is an almost wistful melancholic wish for what could have been, if the McGovern that Thompson supported so strongly in the primaries had remained after he won the party nomination. That Thompson still believed that McGovern "really understands" the best possibilities of the United States indicates that it was not McGovern as an individual politician whom he blamed, but the system of the campaign and the decisions made by McGovern's campaign team that had steered him towards the more political and less sincere position.

Even after the election, when Thompson felt let down by McGovern's campaign tactics after the primaries as well as the crushing weight of his defeat to Nixon, his journalism still remains affected by the sense of an emotional tie to the senator. For instance, in the post-mortem article "Time Warp: Campaign '72: Fear & Loathing in the Past...Present...Future...The Meaning, as it were, of McGovern...& Where Do We Go from Here?" published several months after the election in the July 5 1973 issue of *Rolling Stone* (included in the book as the chapter "November"), he describes McGovern's actions during the fallout from the Eagleton scandal:

His whole image of being a ... first a maverick, anti-politician and then suddenly becoming an expedient, pragmatic hack ... who talked like any politician in anybody's ... kind of a ... Well, he began talking like a used car salesman, sort of out of both sides of his mouth, in the eyes of the public, and he was no longer ... either a maverick or an anti-politician ... he was ... he was no better than Hubert

Humphrey and that's not a personal judgement, that's how he was *perceived*...
(*FLCT* 401-402; emphasis in the original)

There is some indication here that Thompson is able to be less biased in his assessment of McGovern when there is no longer the need to support him as a candidate. This is suggested by the mournful description of McGovern's abandonment of principles to the extent that he was "no better than Hubert Humphrey". Though Thompson claims this was "not a personal judgement" but merely "how he was *perceived*," for him to equate McGovern to Humphrey, whom he despised, is nonetheless a dramatic shift. However, Thompson's hesitant voice as he struggles to articulate his feelings about McGovern, pausing and trailing off sentences prior to settling on the "used car salesman" and "Hubert Humphrey" comparisons before finally shifting the judgement off as belonging to the public rather than himself, indicates that he was still uncomfortable with the change between his feelings towards McGovern's character at the beginning of the primary and his view of McGovern's actions after the Democratic nomination, and that he was hesitant to voice this negativity. The lasting effect of Thompson's personal bias in favour of McGovern highlights one of the potential dangers faced when introducing the personal mode of New Journalism that Thompson used to a system that already fostered what Crouse called "the Winner's Bus" attachment to candidates.

Thompson's perspective after the election when he was adding footnotes to the book version is markedly more bitter. In one note affixed to a description of the McGovern victory party after the Democratic National Convention in July, Thompson describes going out to swim in the ocean by himself, only to get caught by the current with no one else there to help him. Upon finally making it to the beach after his near-death experience, he recounts: "It was somewhere around 9:00 A.M., and upstairs in McGovern's penthouse his brain-trust was meeting to select a vice-president. Business as usual ... and my death by drowning on that ugly Thursday morning would not have changed their decision any more than the rude things I'd already said [...]" (*FLCT* 299). The juxtaposition here of McGovern and his people upstairs in the penthouse oblivious to Thompson's plight down below is, from Thompson's retrospective when adding the footnote, analogous to the change he saw in McGovern's campaign after the convention. The notion that they did not care about his opinion, and that even his death would have no sway over them, underscores his sense of betrayal as the campaign moved more towards big interest groups and away from the grassroots nature that appealed to him about McGovern's campaign in the primary. This sense is not present in the main text; at

that stage Thompson had not yet become disillusioned with McGovern. The contrast between the footnote and the original reportage highlights the lasting sense of betrayal that Thompson felt after the campaign. The indelible mark that both Thompson's bias towards McGovern and the aftermath of his disappointment in the senator left on his approach to campaign journalism becomes clear from these additions. The strength of Thompson's emotional involvement in his campaign journalism, and the lasting effect it had, is indicative of the particularly powerful ties engendered by applying a personal New Journalism mode of reporting to a campaign with such dramatically different candidates in a time of social chaos and change.

Conclusion: Pandora's Box Opened

Thompson's work as a campaign journalist during the 1972 presidential campaign had a profound impact on his role as a journalist, and the ramifications that the bias he developed had for his own agenda speaks to the broader significance of frameworks in political journalism. The disruption to his sense of what it meant to be a journalist and to cover campaigns is evidenced in the journalism included in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* which was published after the campaign. The "November" and "December" chapters appeared alongside the introduction to the book in the July 5 1973 article in *Rolling Stone*. This served as a post-mortem on the McGovern campaign, a retrospective on Thompson's involvement as a reporter on the campaign trail, and an advertisement for the book. It is the first two aspects which give the most insight into the effect the campaign had on Thompson's concept of his role as a journalist. As previously discussed, he had become aware in the aftermath of the election that he had allowed his personal attachment to McGovern to cloud his sense of the senator as a presidential candidate and to influence the journalism he produced about McGovern's campaign. It is in this post-campaign assessment that Thompson admits to the elements of the campaign that caused him to stray from his planned approach of uncaring truthfulness: "The other, more complex, problem had to do with my natural out-front bias in favor of the McGovern candidacy" (*FLCT* 15). Even this line is an addition to the text of the original article that the introduction of the book was based on, and its later inclusion indicates Thompson's continued preoccupation with the way he covered the campaign and McGovern.

It is this personal awareness which is key to Thompson's reporting on the campaign as a New Journalist and to his role within the system. For instance, in the post-mortem chapters, Thompson is more detached from the campaign, and his perspective is much less involved participant than clinical observer. The touches of his personal style of journalism are still present – a fictional hallucinated bar fight, a conversation with his “editor” which may or may not have been a made-up device to articulate his thoughts clearly,⁴⁶ a drifting narrative – but the detached perspective nonetheless has a distinctly different tone from the rest of the book (*FLCT* 395-397; 411). The sense of removal after Thompson had been off the campaign trail for several months points to a difference in campaign journalism produced by reporters actually on the campaign, and those who wrote about the campaign but were not a part of it; such as the difference between most of Thompson's and Crouse's books on the one hand, and Mailer's *St. George and the Godfather* on the other, which could only offer his experience at the conventions and was otherwise removed from the campaign.

Used as book-ends to the more personal reportage of his time on the campaign however, the post-campaign journalism Thompson includes in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* provides him with the opportunity to frame his narrative in a way that he did not or could not at the time of its original publication in *Rolling Stone*. The more detached perspective of his November post-mortem allows him the emotional space from the campaign to comment on his relationship with McGovern:

... A weird relationship develops when you follow a candidate for a long time. You become sort of a ... friendly antagonist ... to the extent sometime [sic] where it can get dangerous ... It certainly did in this campaign during the last month or so ... In my case I became more of a flack for McGovern than ... than a journalist. (*FLCT* 421)

This declaration is given as part of his (potentially fictional) conversation with his editor, and the reluctance of the language and the use of ellipses as pauses portrays a man apparently hesitant to admit, out loud or perhaps even to himself, the extent to which he had become biased on the campaign and had given up the ideals with which he set out to Washington D.C. in December 1971. The final, halting admission that he had become “more of a flack for McGovern than ... than a journalist” is indicative of what is perhaps the most important aspect of Thompson's post-mortem: not the recapitulation of the

⁴⁶ McKeen asserts that the conversation was in fact a fictional device (*Outlaw Journalist* 200).

campaign, but the space to analyse his own role in his journalism. As reportage published originally in an article long after the campaign and after the bulk of the other articles in the book, and partially done so as an advertisement for the book, this suggests that one significant outcome of collecting campaign journalism into book form is the ability for the journalist to deal with their role in the narrative of the campaign. This is particularly so in the case of a New Journalist like Thompson where there was a personal narrative to his campaign coverage: it was not just isolated articles, or tied solely to the events that it was about, but the ongoing chronicle of his odyssey on the campaign trail. This retrospective, created for the book, cements the agenda of it being both coverage of the campaign and the personal journey of Thompson on the campaign. This is different from the approaches of the other books covered thus far in this thesis, and points to one of the reasons why *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* remains one of (if not the) most widely read texts on the 1972 campaign.

Chapter Four: A New Feminism in New Journalism – Gloria Steinem’s Feminist Perspective

Introduction: More Than One Agenda, More Than One Role

Gloria Steinem is perhaps best known for her role in the development and surge of the feminist movement in the early 1970s. Among other things, in 1971 she helped form the National Woman’s Political Caucus (NWPC) which was established to work for greater representation of women in both the Democratic and Republican parties (Steinem, *My Life* 149-151; Stansell 282-283). Steinem was later elected spokeswoman for the NWPC at the 1972 Democratic Convention (Steinem, *My Life* 149-151). As Amanda Izzo says, “Many people might identify Steinem and feminism as one and the same” (151). And though of course reality is much more complex, and Steinem was neither the first nor the only advocate of the feminist movement, “The media and the general public assume a false familiarity with her and have crafted a mythic representation of her as the definitive feminist” (Izzo 152). Steinem herself has said “I don’t think there is such a thing as a feminist icon. I guess it just means that you’re recognizable, which for me was just an accident. If I was a physicist or astronaut or mechanic, I would be just as much a feminist” (“Gloria Steinem: No Such Thing”). This suggests that for Steinem, being a feminist is a part of who she is, rather than her career. Yet it is the overpowering image of Steinem as the figurehead of feminism, and the notion that she is synonymous with feminism, which has led many to not look past her role as an advocate of feminism to the critical importance of her role as a journalist and advocate and practitioner of New Journalism.

The lack of scholarly work on Steinem’s role as a New Journalist is reflected in the corresponding lack of critical discourse on her campaign journalism. If Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail ’72* is the most well-known New Journalism text covering the 1972 election, Steinem’s reportage is the least discussed. Though *St. George and the Godfather* has long been out of print, Mailer’s place as a New Journalist political writer is well established in the New Journalism canon. And though Crouse is largely only analysed as a New Journalist for *The Boys on the Bus*, that reportage continues to be seen as a key text of the 1972 coverage. Conversely, both Steinem’s role as a New Journalist and her coverage of the 1972 campaign are underrepresented and largely forgotten in modern critical analysis of New Journalism. In some ways the neglect in

critical analysis of Steinem's role as a New Journalist may be due to an overshadowing by her more famous role as a feminist. However, to confine analysis to her role as a feminist, and to not acknowledge her significance as a journalist in both the development of New Journalism and the advancement of feminism in journalism, has overtones of the patriarchal discrimination in mainstream journalism that Steinem faced in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁷ This kind of discrimination resulted in, for instance, her rejection as a journalist by "an editor at a major national magazine, who dismissed me by saying, 'We don't want a pretty girl—we want a writer'" (Steinem, *My Life* 51).

In actuality, Steinem was not only one of the key New Journalists in 1972, she also played a large role in the foundation of the mode. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, she was a vocal advocate for New Journalism, believing it to be capable of being more truthful and representative than straight journalism, which was locked into the pursuit of objectivity (Steinem, "Gloria Steinem: An Interview" 78, 80). Steinem was the first woman speaker at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., in 1972, not long after women journalists were first allowed to join (Steinem, *OAER* 4; Steinem, "Gloria Steinem: No Such Thing").⁴⁸ Describing the experience Steinem remarked "they gave me a necktie" and stated that she believed that to the male journalists in the club in 1972 she was "an oddity" ("Gloria Steinem: No Such Thing"). That Steinem was the first woman speaker in 1972 demonstrates the era of change that was taking place in journalism in the early 1970s that we see at an apex in 1972, marked by the prominence of New Journalism and the broadening scope of what was acceptable in mainstream journalism. That the first woman speaker at the National Press Club was Steinem illustrates the consequential role that her journalism had in that period of change. That she was "an oddity" and given a traditionally male accessory to wear is indicative of a level of uncertainty and tension that the increasing role of women in journalism produced in some areas of the field, just as New Journalism had been doing since its rise.

Alongside the timeline of New Journalism's development, 1972 marked a surge in the struggles of women to be taken seriously in journalism. In 1972 the women reporters

⁴⁷ Consider for example Perlstein's account of Nixon's rise to power in *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (2008), in which Thompson is described multiple times by Perlstein as "countercultural journalist Hunter S. Thompson" while Steinem is designated "the glamorous Manhattan journalist Gloria Steinem" (220, 275, 309). That the description of Thompson's role evokes the type of writing that he did while the description of Steinem is predicated on a meaningless allusion to physical beauty points to the casual way that patriarchal inequality has continued to affect writing about journalism of the 1960s and 1970s.

⁴⁸ Women were first allowed to become full members of The National Press Club in 1971 (Rosen ch. "Chronology").

at *The New York Times* organized a caucus and tried to obtain equal pay and work opportunities, to no avail (Stansell 299-300). This followed earlier legal action against journalism publications to try to obtain equal opportunities, including the complaint filed in 1970 with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by the women employees of *Newsweek* “charging that [they] had been ‘systematically discriminated against in both hiring and promotion and forced to assume a subsidiary role’ simply because [they] were women” (Povich 1).⁴⁹ Lynn Povich credits Steinem with being an important influence in changing the perception of Katharine Graham, president of the Washington Post Company that owned *Newsweek*, and *Newsweek* editor Osborn Elliott regarding feminism and the role of women in the newsroom (141-142). Steinem’s own development as a feminist was intrinsically tied to her work as a journalist, as will be explored further in this chapter.

And yet despite the significance of her role as a journalist, analysis of Steinem as a New Journalist is rare, as are even passing references to her in typically male-dominated lists of New Journalists in critical texts on the mode. When New Journalism was at its peak in the early 1970s, Steinem’s role in the development of the mode was recognized with the inclusion of an interview she gave about her journalism and the role of New Journalism in Ronald Weber’s 1974 anthology *The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy* (“Gloria Steinem: An Interview”). And yet Steinem is the only female New Journalist with a chapter in the anthology, which still in some ways marks her out as an oddity. In more modern scholarship, when Steinem is included in lists of New Journalists, these references are typically brief, without articles and books devoted to her work as they are with the standard male writers like Thompson. Norman Sims for instance in his 2007 *True Stories* includes Steinem alongside Capote, Wolfe, Talese, Thompson, Herr, and Didion as some of the New Journalists whose work “mirrored the strange times of the sixties and early seventies” (23) but includes no more substantial mention of Steinem than this: “Another dozen or so writers, including a number of women, were closely associated with this style. Didion, Sara Davidson, Gail Sheehy, and Gloria Steinem produced first-rate literary journalism. Some were drawn off to other pursuits, such as Steinem, who became a leading figure in the women’s movement”

⁴⁹ Other antidiscrimination lawsuits in 1970 were brought against *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, and *Sports Illustrated* (Rosen ch. “Chronology”). A sit-in of more than 100 women at the *Ladies’ Home Journal* in 1970 got the condescending response “‘How do I know you’re serious?’” from editor and publisher John Mack Carter before the sit-in’s spokeswomen were finally able to convince him to negotiate (Bikman).

(220). Joan Didion as a female New Journalist is analysed more frequently than Steinem, though still less so than the males on Sims' list. His assessment of Steinem takes the focus off her work as a New Journalist, with the statement that she was "drawn off to other pursuits" suggesting that she was not simultaneously a feminist leader and a New Journalist but rather gave up New Journalism for feminism. This is not a suggestion that is unique to Sims, but is representative of the marginalisation of Steinem's journalism in a largely male-dominated approach to the mode.⁵⁰

In fact, Steinem's role as a New Journalist and her role as a feminist represent the natural intersection of social change and the New Journalist method that came together so strongly in 1972. New Journalism was actually what gave Steinem the opportunity to write about politics from a feminist perspective. According to Steinem, in the 1960s women journalists were not assigned to cover campaigns: "If I tried for an assignment covering a major political leader, I would be asked to write about his wife instead [...] the world of politics allowed few women into it, even as journalists" (*My Life* 132).⁵¹ It was not until 1968 that Steinem was allowed these opportunities:

in 1968, I joined a group of writers—led by Clay Felker, my editor at *Esquire*—who were starting *New York* magazine. I was the only "girl reporter," but finally I would be able to write about politics. This was the home of the New Journalism as practiced by Tom Wolfe, and also of Jimmy Breslin, an in-the-streets chronicler of New York life. (*My Life* 132)

The significance attributed here to magazines like *Esquire* and *New York* indicates that the magazines that were a home for New Journalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s presented in their open attitude to freedoms in styles and methods of journalism an avenue for women to have opportunities as journalists that were previously denied to them.

⁵⁰ For example see also the lack of women New Journalists included in Kevin Kerrane and Ben Yagoda's 1998 *The Art of Fact: An Anthology of Literary Journalism* in which Steinem is not included at all, and of the 58 selections of literary journalism only six are by women writers. Marc Weingarten's 2005 *Who's Afraid of Tom Wolfe: How New Journalism Rewrote the World* as a history of New Journalism does include several references to Steinem's role in the founding of *New York* magazine, and briefly summarizes her reportage for the magazine, but does not critically analyse her journalism (194-195, 203).

⁵¹ In 1963 in *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan attributed the lack of opportunities for women in serious journalism in part to a post-World War II takeover of publications by men which led to women being discriminated against in the competition for journalism jobs, as well as the shaping by the newly male-dominated publications in the late 1940s of the idea that women were not interested in serious subjects outside of the framework of light-hearted entertainment for housewives (48-49, 216-217). Though Friedan later was hostile towards Steinem and a source of conflict for her, *The Feminine Mystique* was an important contemporary text, and her argument offers an indication of the socio-political climate in which Steinem's struggle to be taken seriously as a journalist took place.

Furthermore, the New Journalism of Wolfe and Breslin at these magazines inspired Steinem's method as a journalist: "they helped establish the right of nonfiction writers to be both personal and political—as long as we got our facts straight" (Steinem, *My Life* 132). That a writer could be "both personal and political" was key to Steinem's approach in her coverage of the 1972 campaign.⁵² Steinem not only worked alongside Wolfe and Breslin, but helped found *New York* magazine in 1968 and was a regular contributing editor and political columnist (Steinem, *OAER* 12-13, 20).⁵³ From her work at *New York*, Steinem co-founded *Ms.* in 1972, and both Steinem and the magazine were key contributors to the 1970s feminist movement (Steinem, "Gloria Steinem: Writer").⁵⁴ Steinem describes women writers and editors at the time as "growing impatient with the old 'feminine' and 'masculine' stereotypes in the media" (*OAER* 5). Just as the early 1970s was a time ripe for the peak in New Journalism, it was a time for changes in the roles women were allowed to have in journalism: "The good news was that there were more than enough readers for a new kind of women's magazine for, by, and about women. Though feminism was (and sometimes still is) a misunderstood word, many women readers wanted a magazine that supported its real definition: the equality and full humanity of women and men" (*OAER* 5). The idea that magazines could be the home for more liberal changes in approaches to the publication of journalism hearkens to their role in the rise of New Journalism. Likewise, the misunderstanding attributed to the word "feminism" echoes the way that New Journalism was both misunderstood and misused by those who opposed the mode, particularly during the tumultuous early 1970s. Much like New Journalism was in part born from a belief that there was a void of personal and literary journalism, *Ms.* was founded to fill a gap in feminist discourse in journalism. As

⁵² In an interesting mirror of this idea, Shulamith Firestone claimed in her 1970 feminist text *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* that "the feminist movement is the first to combine effectively the 'personal' with the 'political'" (ch. 2 section III). "The personal is political" became an important slogan in the feminist movement, representing the idea that problems which had been dismissed as personal issues for women were in fact politically relevant or rooted in larger political issues (Thom 4; Hanisch 76). In her claim in *The Dialectic of Sex*, Firestone was speaking about actual politics rather than political reportage, but the argument is strikingly similar to that of the New Journalists for the importance of a personal perspective in political journalism. That Steinem was both a feminist and a New Journalist, as well as both an active participant in political movements and a political reporter, further underscores the importance of being "both personal and political" in her reportage as will be explored further in this chapter (Steinem, *My Life* 132).

⁵³ Steinem biographer Carolyn G. Heilbrun notes that Steinem's role in the magazine's operations was considerable, and that unlike other publications at the time "*New York* had women working on the magazine in all capacities, even as salespeople, which was then almost unknown" (ch. "1968").

⁵⁴ Historian Christine Stansell cites *Ms.* as becoming "the woman's magazine of choice for the enlightened female masses" after its formation in 1972 (303). Historian Ruth Rosen highlights *Ms.*'s significance as both creating an important space for women and feminism in journalism, and for the role it played in the growing feminist movement of the early 1970s (ch. 6).

Steinem recalls, in 1972 when feminists in the growing movement “said they had no place to publish what they cared about most, *Ms.* magazine was born” (*My Life* xix).

Steinem’s development as a New Journalist mirrored that of her male colleagues, despite the roadblocks she faced as a woman trying to be taken seriously in a male-dominated profession. Like many of the other journalists covering the 1972 campaign, Steinem’s experiences at the 1968 Democratic Convention riots had a significant impact on her as a journalist; she describes the anger over her experience as enough to make her try public speaking again despite an almost debilitating fear of it (*OAER* 12). Steinem states in her book *My Life on the Road* (2015) that she began wanting to start writing journalism from an early feminist perspective in the mid-1960s, “But it was still the 1960s, and even my most open-minded editor explained that if he published an article saying women were equal, he would have to publish one next to it saying women were not—in order to be objective” (45-46). Of the collection of articles in her book *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Steinem points out that only two of the chapters “I Was a Playboy Bunny” and “Campaigning” contained her “more first-person” journalism (*OAER* 16). The “Campaigning” chapter is a composite of more than one of her political articles, but the portions of it that she refers to as “more first-person” are mostly taken from her article on the McGovern Campaign, “Coming of Age with McGovern: Notes from a Political Diary”. According to Steinem, the reason that there was not more of this kind of personal, first-person journalism in the collection was because she had initially tried to conform more to the standards of mainstream straight journalism:

If I had realized at the time that trying to write like other reporters and essayists is precisely what makes the results more interchangeable and more perishable, I would have been less hesitant about writing in the first person. But I had been told to say nothing more personal than “this reporter,” and I was trying to be a professional writer-on-assignment. That’s a worthy calling, but not one that makes for much original thinking. (*OAER* 16)

That it was later on in her journalism career, after she became a proponent of the New Journalism mode, that Steinem viewed her writing as including more “original thinking” and being less “interchangeable” and “perishable” is indicative of her view of the importance of New Journalism’s greater scope for personal perspective. That her campaign journalism from 1972 is one of the few places that she highlights for its use of

this method underscores her 1972 campaign journalism as the epitome of this kind of writing for Steinem.

However, though advocacy for New Journalism had led to magazines that supported its literary style, personal perspective, and subjective approach, these publications were not inherently open to all modes of change. Steinem describes her experience trying to get magazines to publish articles from a feminist perspective as largely fruitless: “most magazines said, ‘Sorry, we published our feminist article last year’” (*OAER* 23). It was the founding of *Ms.* as a magazine for women, by women, that allowed Steinem to write as both a New Journalist and a feminist. Nor are Steinem’s dual roles as a New Journalist and a feminist to suggest that New Journalism was a haven of feminism. For instance, Steinem recalls covering a Bobby Kennedy campaign event with Gay Talese and Saul Bellow during which “Talese leaned across me—as if I were neither talking nor present—and said to Bellow, *You know how every year there’s a pretty girl who comes to New York and pretends to be a writer? Well, Gloria is this year’s pretty girl*” (*My Life* 139; emphasis in the original). But there does seem to have been a correlation between the changes happening in journalism and society which opened up possibilities for New Journalism, and those which allowed for an increasing feminist perspective. New Journalism as a mode born in part from a desire for the use of subjectivity in journalism to contribute to social change was an innate avenue for the advocacy of women’s issues and the feminist movement.⁵⁵

Feminism and the Symbolic Campaign

The natural melding of advocacy for social change and use of the New Journalism mode are demonstrated in their intersection in Steinem’s coverage of the 1972 election. Steinem’s primary work of campaign journalism in 1972 was the article “Coming of Age with McGovern,” which was first published in the October 1972 issue of *Ms.* and covers the period from Steinem’s first meeting with McGovern in 1965 to the 1972 election. As previously noted, “Coming of Age with McGovern” was later included in her 1983 anthology of journalism, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* as part of the chapter

⁵⁵ The connection to the opportunities for progressive agendas such as the advancement of feminist issues in the personal perspectives of literary journalism is one being increasingly drawn in modern scholarship. See for example the Spring 2015 issue of *Literary Journalism Studies* which was a special issue devoted to “Women and Literary Journalism” (Flis). However, none of the articles in the anthology cover New Journalism specifically, and none focus on Steinem.

“Campaigning”.⁵⁶ And despite the lack of modern critical attention paid to Steinem’s campaign coverage and her roles in both the coverage of the 1972 campaign and the foundation of the New Journalism mode, her importance as a feminist writer and the breadth of the articles included in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* has ensured that the book has remained in print instead of fading from contemporary awareness entirely as did Mailer’s campaign coverage, which has been similarly overlooked but was published on its own. In fact, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* is in its second edition, an outcome which Steinem describes as “more than I could even have imagined,” “Considering the average shelf life of a book in this country is somewhere between that of milk and eggs—and the essays in this one ranged over a twenty-year period when they were first assembled” (*OAER* xi).

That Steinem’s articles have remained in print long past their initial aim of covering the election and representing the feminist voice in campaign journalism speaks to the significance of her secondary agenda alongside her campaign coverage. Her 1995 preface to the second edition of *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* articulates one of her aims as a journalist, that her writing could transcend its 1972 contemporary publication:

Reissued in a slightly changed world, I hope these essays have added uses. For younger readers and others whose idea of the recent feminist past is secondhand, they may contribute to an account of events and ideas as they were experienced at the time. I think of the need for such a contemporaneous record whenever I read books and articles that are based more on media or academic accounts than on the diverse experiences of people who were there; [...] (xi)

This suggests that one of the consequential outcomes of the perspective that the New Journalists brought to coverage of the 1972 campaign was a lasting personal take on the campaign that could have later influence beyond the historical data provided by a coverage of speeches and poll results. This is seen in both Crouse’s and Thompson’s work, which has influenced the way that campaign journalism has developed, as will be discussed further in the conclusion to this thesis. Steinem’s campaign coverage for *Ms.* not only provided an important voice for the feminist movement at the time, but can now

⁵⁶As the campaign journalism chapter in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* is comprised of not only Steinem’s “Coming of Age with McGovern” article, but also her other campaign journalism from 1968 and 1972, there are some changes to the original article. Some details are reordered to appear chronologically, such as Steinem’s analysis of McGovern’s prophetic speeches on Vietnam and racism, which appear in the book following her first encounter with the senator in July, 1965, and in the article during her time on his campaign in August, 1968 (*OAER* 78-79; *CAM* 43).

be seen as a key touchstone to the foundation of the role of the modern feminist movement in political journalism. Her argument that the “diverse experiences of people who were there” are more important than abstract articles and academic accounts of the feminist movement speaks to her New Journalist method, and to the arguments she made in favour of New Journalism during its tumultuous foundation period leading up to 1972. “Only personal stories,” Steinem argues, “plus parallels with systems already recognized as political—say, those based on class or ethnicity, which also were once thought to be inborn—can help us begin to see the world *as if everyone mattered*” (*OAER* xii; emphasis in the original). That Steinem’s magazine was founded in the same year as her coverage of the 1972 campaign speaks to the importance of the kind of deeply personal writing she utilised in her journalism to the feminist politics that she strived to bring to the forefront of societal awareness and discussion.

Steinem’s campaign reportage displays an awareness of its potential as a method of advancing the feminist cause. One area in which this is particularly clear is her depictions of her “symbolic” support of the candidacy of Shirley Chisholm, a black woman running in the Democratic presidential primary.⁵⁷ In March 1972, when faced with the decision of whether to support McGovern or Chisholm as a primary delegate in New York, Steinem writes “Personally, I’d still feel much more at home going to the convention as a member of the press” (*OAER* 114). This is indicative of the dual nature of Steinem in 1972 as a political activist and a journalist, and that her role as a journalist was of equal importance to her. Her reporting took the form of a campaign journal, which highlights this duality in the way that she is often a part of the campaigning that she is reporting on. There is a further duality in her practical support of McGovern and her symbolic support of Chisholm; there is a tension that can be seen in Steinem’s writing between the desire for change and the practicality of the socio-political world of the early 1970s. She states in a passage from 1971 that “no one knows what leadership has gone undiscovered in women of all races, and in black and other men of color” and yet describes her support of the candidacy of Chisholm as “symbolic” rather than intending to affect the actual results in 1972 (*OAER* 112). And though Chisholm’s candidacy was more clearly linked to the ideals of feminism and equality that Steinem strongly believed

⁵⁷ Previously in 1968 Chisholm had been the first black woman elected to the House of Representatives, as a congresswoman from New York (Rosen ch. “Chronology”). She was also, like Steinem, a founding member of the NWPC executive board (Stansell 283).

in, her symbolic support of Chisholm does not supplant her support of McGovern's candidacy because McGovern could win and Chisholm could not.

Yet when faced with the decision of whether to become a McGovern caucus delegate or a Chisholm caucus delegate in the New York primary, Steinem ultimately decided in April 1972 to become a Chisholm delegate (*OAER* 114). Of this decision Steinem claims: "I think it was the surprise in McGovern's voice that did it: surprise at the strength of women's issues in New Hampshire, or that our one benefit speech in Florida could bring ten thousand dollars in ticket sales into campaign coffers. He still doesn't understand the strong appeal women's movement [sic]" (*OAER* 114). This indicates that Steinem's continued active support of Chisholm over McGovern was partly a direct result of McGovern's lack of understanding of or follow-through on women's issues. At the same time the symbolic nature of Steinem's support of Chisholm is demonstrated: "If I run as a Chisholm delegate, there is little chance of winning, but perhaps any woman who is in the least recognizable should offer to run on her slate" (*OAER* 113). Later in her analysis of her decision she asserts: "There are so many pressure groups pushing McGovern to the right. The Chisholm candidacy is one of the few forces on the left, and almost the only one focusing on the issues of women and other powerless groups. It might help to educate McGovern—and the country" (*OAER* 114). Her support of Chisholm would not get a woman candidate the nomination, but would produce a visible presence in the media in support of women's issues.

Steinem's other significant article on the 1972 campaign, the earlier "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted," does not make use of the New Journalism mode.⁵⁸ Steinem forgoes the mode in order to make a stark rebuttal of the claims that have been made in male-dominated studies regarding the participation of women in politics, and the article is not a personal narrative the way that "Coming of Age with McGovern" is. The contrast between the two articles highlights the significance of the use of the New Journalism mode in "Coming of Age with McGovern". "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted" offers an analysis of the political climate in 1972 that influenced Steinem's perspective towards the end of "Coming of Age with McGovern" and her symbolic support of Chisholm. In "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted," Steinem addresses from a feminist perspective the

⁵⁸ "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted" predated the later publication of "Coming of Age with McGovern" by three months (though for the most part the content of "Coming of Age with McGovern" takes place earlier), and was printed in the July 1972 issue of *Ms*. The article is not included in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*.

challenges around the role of women in politics, and breaks down the statistics on women voters in 1972. She begins by arguing that men have made a number of assumptions about the way that women vote: that it is in alignment with the votes of their husbands or fathers, that they choose male candidates based on attractiveness, that they have little interest in the political process and consider it the dominion of males, that black women are even less interested in the politics of women's issues than white women, that women are more conservative than men, and that giving women the right to vote had not mattered because women would never make a difference in politics ("Women Voters" 47). Her article presents a rebuttal of these assumptions, and a call to arms to women who have "tended to go along with" them ("Women Voters" 48). According to Steinem, part of the imbalance in the way that politics was addressed as if men were the only people whose vote mattered was caused by an imbalance in the way that voting and candidacy data was gathered and recorded ("Women Voters" 48). Women voters were less likely to be polled or their voting habits studied: "Most books on American voting habits have a few pages or paragraphs on women (often based more on Popular Wisdom than on statistics), and that's pretty much it" ("Women Voters" 48). Steinem furthermore points out that though there was an apparent increase in women running for political office in 1972, even this was difficult to gauge because "neither major party" had kept statistics on "the number of women who have declared their candidacies at some meaningful stage in the political process, whether state primary or nominating convention" in the past ("Women Voters" 48). This adds a further layer to Steinem's "symbolic" support of Chisholm's candidacy and her contemplation that "perhaps any woman who is in the least recognizable should offer to run on her slate" (*OAER* 112-113).

Both Steinem's actions as a visible feminist, and her own journalism proclaiming her feminist perspective were laying a foundation for a more representative record of the role of women in politics. She does not lay the blame for the discrepancy in records and accounts of the political actions and motivations of women solely on male shoulders:

Even the few politically active women have rarely encouraged this kind of examination. (The League of Women Voters, for instance, has less research to offer on how women vote than do the male-controlled political parties.) Some prominent women have taken positive pride in ignoring the women's vote, or insisting there was no such thing. After all, if men were the acknowledged political grown-ups, then any difference from them was the measure of our immaturity. ("Women Voters" 48)

This places equal, if differently motivated, culpability on the shoulders of both genders for the lack of representative coverage of women in politics. The idea that women may ignore their own political inequality so as not to draw attention to any difference as a “measure of our immaturity” is directly opposed in Steinem’s campaign journalism. Her “Coming of Age with McGovern” article, for instance, begins with her in a very weak position politically in 1965, submissive to the more experienced and informed male voices surrounding her (*OAER* 76-79). It is not until the passages from 1971 and 1972 that she really begins to show independent strength and an insistence on her perspective being not only heard but actioned. This, according to Steinem, is reflective of the reality of women in politics in 1972: “We are just beginning to look unashamedly at how we think, whether it is like, or different from, men. We are just beginning to flex our muscles, and figure out what kind of political force we might be” (“Women Voters” 48).

Steinem’s honesty about the growth of her own perspective as a feminist, and the changes in how she viewed politics because of it, are underscored by the personal approach of her journalism. Her development as a feminist mirrors her development as a New Journalist, as demonstrated by her later comfort with the mode’s more personal aspects (as she has said of her earlier work “If I had realized at the time that trying to write like other reporters and essayists is precisely what makes the results more interchangeable and more perishable, I would have been less hesitant about writing in the first person” [*Outrageous Acts* 16]). This is demonstrated in her article following the 1972 election, “The Ticket That Might Have Been...President Chisholm”. This article was published in the January 1973 issue of *Ms.* alongside a companion article, “The Ticket That Might Have Been...Vice President Farenthold” by Elizabeth Frappollo. “The Ticket That Might Have Been...President Chisholm” is a deeply personal snapshot of the feminist response to the outcome of the 1972 election. Steinem begins with an analysis of the impact of Chisholm’s campaign in the Democratic primary, then ends with personal responses to the campaign from both men and women.

Steinem’s approach here is indicative of her intentionally direct confrontation with the norms of campaign reportage. Considering what was important to her about the symbolic campaign, “What effect did the Chisholm campaign have on the country? On the excluded groups it was meant to help and encourage? What ideas did it launch or lives did it change? And finally, the heart of all the questions: was it all worth it?” she concludes that mainstream election coverage was insufficient to answer these questions (“The Ticket” 73). Steinem observes: “From reading the post-Convention and

postelection reporting, it's impossible to tell [the effect of Chisholm]. The Chisholm candidacy was rarely analyzed while it was going on, and even less so in traditional postmortems" ("The Ticket" 73). That Chisholm was rarely analysed by other reporters portrays a sense of the bias against women in politics that Steinem breaks down in her "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted" article, the very thing that Steinem hoped to fight against in her support of Chisholm and in her campaign reportage. Steinem's article is then rebelliously feminist, focusing on the impact of Chisholm rather than the traditionally patriarchal post-mortem of the "familiar white and male face, in the White House for four more years" ("The Ticket" 73).

As a New Journalist, Steinem also conveys a sense here that even if the mainstream press had deigned to pay more attention to Chisholm's candidacy, their mode of journalism would have been insufficient to deal with the kind of larger impact that Steinem wanted Chisholm to have on the people of the country: "traditional analyses deal only with winning or losing in the traditional sense [...] Perhaps the best indicator of her campaign's impact is the effect it had on individual lives" ("The Ticket" 73). In this sense her mode of journalism itself is rebellious, as her post-mortem on Chisholm relies not on facts and figures, and not even on her own analysis, but on the thoughts and feelings of a variety of people, including among others, a woman "*self-described as 'a white, middle-class, middle-aged American housewife,'*" "*a founder of the National Organization for Women and the Feminist Party,*" the Mayor of New York City, the editor of *Newsweek*, and ending with the response of "*Gina Belafonte, age ten, daughter of Harry and Julie Robinson Belafonte, and a Chisholm campaign worker:* 'Next time, I'm going to run for the Presidency. I have seven delegates already'" ("The Ticket" 120-124; emphasis in the original). Steinem's article both continues to try to advance the agenda of feminism and awareness of women in politics, and through its use of the personal response method is able to answer her questions about the impact of the Chisholm campaign in a way that more mainstream campaign post-mortems could not. This method of framing the election results through personal narratives is indicative of Steinem's development through her "Coming of Age" as a New Journalist, and of the melding of her use of the mode and her evolving feminist discourse. This was not always seen in her earlier work but is significantly more prevalent by the end of the 1972 campaign.

Coming of Age Together

The personal perspective is key to Steinem's main article on the 1972 campaign, "Coming of Age with McGovern," and to the way it illustrates her synchronous development as both a campaign journalist and a feminist. Instead of focusing on the narrative timeline of the 1972 campaign, Steinem chronicles both her personal and her professional relationships with McGovern as a parallel to his political career, from their first meeting in July, 1965, to just after the Eagleton scandal had been revealed in August 1972 (CAM 39, 106).⁵⁹ Not included in the text of Steinem's campaign coverage in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* is her note preceding the original article:

This is an occupational hazard. I keep scribbled notes, bits of dialogue, brochures, clippings: great sliding stacks of research and notes to myself for some future, hoped-for time of writing.

I've sifted through the stacks for details; the conventional kind of research that journalism requires. But character is more important than statistics or a catalog of past issues, especially when writing about the individual leaders on whom we may depend. (CAM 39)

The claim that the "statistics" and "catalog of past issues" are not what is important in portraying politicians and their campaigns immediately establishes the subjective context of the article. Steinem's claims here echo those she made in favour of New Journalism during its rise, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis. There is a sense of the compilation of personal artefacts she describes here in the subtitle of the article: "Notes from a Political Diary" (CAM 39). Steinem's introductory note continues: "If I had the courage to stop playing the just-the-facts journalistic game, I would use the observations, plots, and bits of dialogue instead. I would use stories that are clues to character" (CAM 39). That this was written in 1972 when New Journalism, though at an apex of cultural significance, was still relatively new suggests that bucking the conventions of straight journalism was still, to some, a rebellious act. And this act was perhaps particularly rebellious in the case of a woman like Steinem, struggling to be respected and taken seriously in a field dominated by men. Steinem's note preceding the chapter "Campaigning" in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, in which the "Coming of

⁵⁹ The article gives the date of their first meeting as July, 1964, but it was corrected to July, 1965 in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (Steinem, CAM 39; Steinem, *OAER* 76). Additionally, the version of the article in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* ends slightly sooner than the original, just after McGovern had accepted the nomination at the Democratic National Convention (*OAER* 120).

Age with McGovern” article is included, adds a different context: “*I never would have guessed while writing these articles that such seemingly transitory politics would have such permanent impact*” (76; emphasis in the original). Steinem expected the politics to be “*transitory*” and was surprised by the “*permanent impact*” of her campaign articles, but the 1972 campaign was a unique confluence of events and socio-political atmosphere that many were unprepared for and that contributed to the impact of the kind of unusually personal reporting done by New Journalists like Crouse, Mailer, Thompson, and Steinem.

Steinem’s “political diary” approach is key both to her emotional honesty about her development as a feminist and journalist, and to the humanising approach she takes to McGovern as a candidate. Her method of campaign reporting in “Coming of Age with McGovern” seems to have been first developed during her time covering the Eugene McCarthy campaign during the 1968 primary. In *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, she interposes her 1968 article “Trying to Love Eugene McCarthy” into the timeline of her “Coming of Age with McGovern” article. This allows for a direct juxtaposition of some of the differences between McCarthy and McGovern that Steinem references in her 1972 reportage. It was the McCarthy assignment which prompted the personal “political diary” perspective with which she wrote on the 1972 campaign: “Having suffered Johnson, a president with a heart and no moral structure, we might be in for a moral structure and no heart. To find out, I accepted an assignment to cover the McCarthy campaign as a journalist in the old-fashioned sense: the keeper of a journal” (OAER 89). That McCarthy was so completely uninspiring to Steinem as a candidate, and so heartless as she describes here, offers a stark contrast to her portrayal of McGovern. Part-way through her reportage from July 1968, Steinem writes:

This week, I happened to be on one of those late-night radio shows—so late that you’re convinced no one is listening, and you begin to speak frankly. I was supposed to be talking about the article I had just written on the McCarthy campaign. “Probably,” I heard myself saying, “George McGovern is the real Eugene McCarthy.” (OAER 93)

By calling McGovern “the real Eugene McCarthy,” Steinem is articulating her perspective of McCarthy as having “no heart,” a man who at first sounded fine on paper but who was uninspiring and not the hoped-for liberal candidate. McGovern, by contrast, is portrayed as meant to truly embody the ideal liberal qualities and genuine character lacked by McCarthy.

Steinem's focus in her 1972 campaign journalism was on McGovern, and not on Nixon, because of the personal framework of her reportage. She was not covering the campaign as a whole, and instead covered it from the perspective of a person with a relationship with McGovern, who had campaigned for him, and who had changed as a feminist and seen changes in feminist politics during her time campaigning for him. The title "Coming of Age with McGovern" points both to Steinem's coming of age as a campaign journalist and feminist, and McGovern's coming of age as a political candidate with his own education in women's political issues.

Steinem's first experience with McGovern portrays him in a similar context to the personal descriptions of the senator expressed by Crouse, Mailer, and Thompson. Steinem's McGovern is a simple man, a man of the common people, whose "wrinkled, too-big suit looks as if it were from a mail-order catalog and clearly betrays him as a man who doesn't give a damn about clothes" and who introduces himself with "'My name is George McGovern.' No 'Senator,' no nothing" (*OAER* 77). However, as with the other New Journalists' portrayals, what this McGovern lacks in glamour or excitement, he makes up for in the substance and quality of his politics: "Once in the car, I gradually forget about style and start to listen. The drive is long, but the time races by: three hours of unpretentious political talk, which assumes I am an equal and therefore allows me to both join in and learn something" (*OAER* 77). The unpretentious, substantive talk had appealed to Crouse, Mailer, and Thompson. But though they also acknowledged and admired McGovern's respectful attitude towards seemingly less important people, Steinem's note that his political talk "assumes I am an equal" is more noteworthy because she is a woman. This encounter with McGovern takes place in 1965, before she was even allowed to join the National Press Club, before she wrote for *New York* magazine or founded *Ms.*, when she was still fighting to be allowed to write articles of meaning rather than puff pieces of the "schizophrenic" work that she was allowed to publish "prefeminism" (Steinem, *OAER* 19). And yet McGovern, the unassuming, unpretentious senator assumed she was an equal in that same prefeminism time. Steinem's encounter with McGovern in 1965 also portrays the candour that would later cause him problems with the press covering the 1972 campaign: "he is very trusting about my job as a journalist. Whether it's which senators are afflicted with alcoholism ('the political disease,' as McGovern calls it) or his own opinion of various national leaders, he doesn't show the suspicion and lack of candor I have grown to expect from politicians" (*OAER* 77). It is interesting to observe that this quality that was remarkable enough for Steinem

to point out as surprising in 1965 was one that McGovern maintained throughout the seven years leading to his run for the presidency. And yet his openness is here portrayed by Steinem as an admirable quality, not the weakness that it was presented as in many of the other versions of McGovern in 1972 reportage.

The McGovern of Steinem's 1965 encounter is an undeveloped and unpolished version of the 1972 candidate he would become, comparable to Steinem's own uncertainty in her role as a journalist and her "prefeminist" perspective. She describes herself at that time as "a new and little-known journalist" (OAER 76). Her portrayal of McGovern by contrast is of a person who is more of an activist than she, and more certain in his beliefs and statements. In addition to being remarkable in his treatment of Steinem, a young woman, as a conversational equal, the McGovern in Steinem's article is depicted as remarkable for his unflinching liberal beliefs about other key socio-political issues in the mid-1960s. He had spoken out against the Vietnam War in 1963, and Steinem notes that "In 1964, while other politicians were still lamenting 'the Negro problem,' McGovern, then a freshman senator, was condemning 'white racism'" (OAER 78-79). Steinem describes his attitude on these issues as more radical and "less cautious" than her own (OAER 78). It was both his openness and his liberalness that made McGovern a remarkable politician to Steinem, and yet there is a hint of the problems that these very qualities would cause his campaign in 1972 in her final observation: "I am aware now that in his head there is anger and a sense of history. I wonder how this unpretentious, honest man became a politician" (OAER 80). It is in this quality that the roots of Steinem's support for McGovern in 1972 can be discerned.

Steinem's coverage of the 1972 campaign begins not with the primaries or with McGovern's nomination as the Democratic candidate as did those of Thompson, Crouse, and Mailer. Instead, she starts with her first experience with the senator, underscoring the personal perspective that characterises the article. Steinem's personal viewpoint is perhaps even more key to her reportage than Thompson's is to his; Thompson's narrative voice is an important part of his method of reporting in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, but he focuses mainly on the campaign itself. Steinem's reportage uses her perspective as a feminist to depict an even more specific analysis in its account of what the election meant to a woman in the growing feminist movement. By using her past encounters with and thoughts on McGovern, Steinem also provides the most comprehensive analysis of the senator and what led to his 1972 campaign. Most of the other reportage focused on his primary success and later campaign mishaps, or on

Nixon's past but not McGovern's. By contrast, Steinem offers a richer analysis of the senator as more than just the opponent to Nixon.

Steinem's experiences covering both McGovern's 1968 and 1972 campaigns not only illuminate the development of the senator as a political candidate, but directly influenced Steinem's own political awareness as both a journalist and a feminist. In 1968 Steinem did not just cover McGovern's campaign as a journalist, she actually worked on it; as she wrote: "Because there are so few people in this campaign, we all end up doing everything. So far, I have been a pamphlet writer, advance person, fund raiser, lobbyist of delegates, errand runner, and press secretary—consecutively or simultaneously. I'm telling myself it's educational" (*OAER* 95). Her journalism therefore offers the most personal perspective of the campaign possible – it is not just about the campaign, it is also a part of the campaign. Steinem's role as a journalist and her role as a campaign worker here are fused. Her comment that she was "telling myself it's educational" points to the simultaneous development of both her experience with politics and her career as a journalist.

The dual role of campaign worker and campaign journalist demonstrates a function of the New Journalism mode's more flexible stance on subjectivity in reportage. Steinem's close relationship with McGovern represents the most clearly personal reporting of the New Journalists analysed in this thesis. And yet Steinem herself never really suggests that her relationship with McGovern and obvious bias for his campaign are problematic for her journalistic perspective until the end of the original article. In a passage that does not appear in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Steinem considers the professional practicalities of the dual nature of their relationship: "I walk down the hall, trying to square the two experiences: he is a Presidential candidate, all distance and staff-insulation and power; but he is also a familiar and honest friend" (*CAM* 105). It is in this analysis of her friendship with McGovern, and what that means for both her work as a feminist and her work as a journalist, that Steinem's own awareness of the effect of her bias is most clearly drawn. She both feels "guilty" about not using her access to McGovern to more clearly impress upon him the importance of women's issues and aware that she can never report on him with the same distance as other journalists: "In the Eagleton case, for instance, I couldn't think of McGovern's week-long irresolution as either a political manipulation (let-him-take-his-case-to-the-country) or some cowardly sign. Only that he had once had to deal with psychiatrists and hospitals on behalf of a relative, and that fact must make it much tougher for him to decide" (*CAM* 105-106).

Even in this reflective analysis Steinem's problem with her subjectivity does not lie with its impact on her journalism. The statement about the Eagleton case is a matter-of-fact observation that her perspective is obviously going to be different from that of a reporter who does not personally know McGovern. The guilt she feels is as a feminist, "about not using what access I had to bridge that insulation" to help make McGovern more understanding of women's issues and their importance to his campaign (CAM 105). Though her reporting from within the campaign is in some ways illustrative of the New Journalism immersive reporting method, the dual campaign worker and journalist role is not an intentional approach but a natural product of Steinem's binary as both a politically active feminist and a journalist.

Both this dual role and the particular quality of McGovern as a candidate afforded Steinem unique opportunities as a woman reporter in 1968. For example, she describes attending a luncheon with McGovern at the *Time* magazine boardroom at which "the appearance of women at these events is not a part of the ritual. And I doubled the error by bringing along another woman: a public-relations expert who is also a McGovern volunteer" (OAER 95-96). Steinem's experience at this encounter highlights the disparity between the treatment of men and women in journalism in 1968:

The result was some embarrassment, especially at *Time*, and endless "lady" jokes. (Much hesitancy over whether to serve us ale and cigars, and editors who excused themselves if they said "damn.") The other woman didn't mind, being toughened to such situations by her experience in business. But I was surprised by the editors' condescension, and by the low intellectual quality of their questions. Are these the journalistic heights to which we've all been climbing? (OAER 96)

The treatment of Steinem as an oddity at this lunch to which she was not meant to be allowed points to the inequality still present in journalism, despite the progress that afforded her the opportunity to be there. The question "Are these the journalistic heights to which we've all been climbing?" suggests an early sense of the need for change in the approach of journalism as a field, not just as a form; much like Crouse's arguments against some of the clique behaviour and dangers of pack journalism in *The Boys on the Bus* do. The attitude of the male journalists also contrasts sharply to the respect with

which McGovern spoke to Steinem, as highlighted in the beginning of her article and recorded in his autobiography.⁶⁰

It is her experiences with the inequalities of the treatment of women on McGovern's campaign, despite his own progressiveness, that unfold in Steinem's reportage as a feminist awakening. One significant cut made to the original article when reproduced in *Outrageous Acts and Every Day Rebellions* is to the period of time after the Chicago convention, from the end of Steinem's reportage in September, 1968, until July, 1969. In the book Steinem replaces this section with "In Your Heart You Know He's Nixon," an article that she wrote for *New York* in 1968, covering her experience reporting on Nixon's campaign. The material left out in the book from her original 1972 reportage in "Coming of Age with McGovern" deals with the aftermath for the McGovern team in the wake of the Chicago convention and the nomination of Humphrey as the Democratic candidate. During this time Steinem continued to report on and work for McGovern as he campaigned for re-election as senator. This section is significant, as it describes her experiences working on the McGovern campaign as stirring the roots of feminist rebellion in her. Steinem writes that she was "warned that I should wear long skirts, pull back my hair and generally look dowdy if I didn't want to be a political liability" but that after initially acquiescing she "had second thoughts" and wondered "Was the motive something else?" (CAM 98). Her contemplation on her personal role on the campaign leads her to consider how women have been treated on campaigns more broadly:

In my head, there are echoes of campaigns past; all those headquarters in which I, like the other women, was supposed to stay on the outer edges doing the menial jobs, or be hidden in the back room because (a) it might be a little ... *counterproductive* to admit that a female was working on important speeches or policy decisions, and (b) if she was under 60 and didn't have terminal acne, someone might think she was having an affair with the candidate.

But neither dowdiness nor hiding out really helps the work problems. At best, the campaign staff here regards me as some girl from New York who has to be

⁶⁰ McGovern's account of the *Time* meeting in his autobiography, *Grassroots: The Autobiography of George McGovern* (1977), underscores the respect that he had for Steinem (122). McGovern not only credits Steinem with arranging the meeting with *Time*, but with having "guided me around the national-media world concentrated in New York" (122). In light of the patronising treatment of Steinem and the other woman at the meeting by the men of *Time*, McGovern's easy accreditation of Steinem's important role in this avenue of his 1968 campaign speaks to both his esteem for her and her appreciation of his professional respect towards women.

tolerated because she can get to New York contributors. (CAM 98; emphasis in the original)

There is the same sense here in being given “menial jobs” or shoved out of the way and “hidden in the back room” working on campaigns, of the frivolous journalism assignments she was used to being given at the time and the treatment of her as an uncomfortable oddity in places such as the *Time* magazine boardroom (Steinem, *OAER* 19, 96). In this account from 1968 there is a tension to Steinem’s writing, as she identifies the injustice of the inequality in the system and yet does not protest against it: “It fills me with anger and makes effective work more difficult, but I don’t have the heart to complain to McGovern. He has enough trouble” (CAM 98). Though this account was from 1968, it was not until her 1972 article that she published it, which is indicative of both the rising strength of the feminist movement in 1972 and of Steinem’s strengthened voice in her journalism.

A juxtaposition to Steinem’s role on McGovern’s campaign in 1968 is her account of the role of Eleanor McGovern, the senator’s wife (CAM 98). Steinem’s depiction of Eleanor McGovern seems uniquely possible because of her intimate experience as part of the campaign team:

You have to be observant and hang around for a while to notice, but Eleanor McGovern plays a big part in this campaign. She gives speeches and answers questions on the issues, as most political wives do not. Like her husband, she seems to know thousands of people by their first names; not just their identities but what they care about and what their worries are. (CAM 98)

Steinem’s perspective here is born not only out of how closely she worked with the McGoverns, but from her perspective as a feminist. Her awareness of how she herself was “supposed to stay on the outer edges doing the menial jobs, or be hidden in the back room” is echoed in the statement that Eleanor’s role was only visible to those who were “observant and [hung] around for a while to notice” (CAM 98). Eleanor, like Steinem, contributed significantly to a campaign in a system that in 1968 all but denied her existence or role.

The effect that the rising feminist movement had on Steinem and her campaign journalism is evidenced by changes throughout her 1972 reportage on McGovern’s campaign, as her perspective shifts from 1965 to 1972. While she recognized admirable and unusual qualities in McGovern’s treatment of her as an equal in 1965, and the injustice of how she was treated on his campaign by other (male) staffers in 1968, it is

not until the lead-up to the 1972 campaign that she begins to write as if she has the drive to try to effect change. Upon being asked in 1969 to join McGovern's campaign team to discuss him running in 1972, Steinem reflects: "The truth is that I haven't thought about politics, at least not in the conventional sense that I would have five or six months ago, since I woke up to the fact that my own position, and the position of women in general, was political in the deepest sense. I'm told that it's called the Feminist Realization" (*OAER* 108). This "Feminist Realization" gives her pause about the role she was allowed to have on a traditional campaign, as well as the way that women were treated professionally. That she had only recently "woke up" to the fact that her "own position, and the position of women in general" mattered politically "in the deepest sense" is seen in both the more passive tone of her earlier campaign journalism, as well as in the airing of past grievances that she includes in this passage from 1969. For instance, she states that on the 1968 campaign "I had raised as much money and done as much political work as anyone in McGovern's last brief presidential effort and *still* had been treated like a frivolous pariah by much of McGovern's senate staff," and repeats earlier accounts of having to "dress dowdily" and "lurk around corners" so that she did not offend anyone such as the aide who "didn't like women in politics, and said he feared someone would think I was having an affair with the candidate" (*OAER* 108-109; emphasis in the original).

These outrages were not particular to McGovern's campaign, or to 1968, but indicative of the standard treatment of women according to Steinem: "Those events were echoes of every political campaign I had ever worked in as a volunteer, from Students for Stevenson in 1952 to McGovern" (*OAER* 109). However, Steinem also indicates that she had accepted this kind of treatment in the past: "Six months ago, I would have been honored by McGovern's invitation to a 'serious' (i.e., male and therefore grown-up) political meeting, but full of doubt about whether I could contribute in a 'serious' (male) way" (*OAER* 108). That she herself had doubts about her value as an equal contributor to the men had led to the role she accepted for herself on all previous campaigns:

Not only had I suppressed all those years of anger, just assuming that I was lucky to be allowed to volunteer for a campaign at all, but I also had defined politics very narrowly as faraway events in Washington or Saigon or city hall. I couldn't admit that any power relationship in life is political, that politics also may be who's doing the dishes, or who's getting paid half the wages that a man would get for the same

job, or who's expected to take the roles of service and support everywhere, including in political campaigns. (OAER 109)

The language here indicates a sense of past complicity in being treated as lesser than the men on the campaign. By juxtaposition, there is the sense that the "Feminist Realization" she had begun to have in 1969 could lead to change in her approach to campaigns: "It's a realization I owe to those brave women whose meetings I started covering last winter [...] They changed my life. It will never be the same" (OAER 109). And yet, though this passage from what Steinem had described previously as a campaign journal came from her thoughts in 1969, it was not until her 1972 article and the tides of social change at that time that she actually voiced these disparities and grievances.

Because Steinem's article encompasses a lengthy period of time in snapshots from her experiences with McGovern, it is able to clearly and immediately draw connections in the evolution of her support of his candidacy and her advocacy as a feminist. Having reported on and personally known McGovern for longer than any of the other reporters covered in this thesis, Steinem identifies and remarks much earlier upon the changes he undergoes as a "serious candidate for the Democratic nomination" (OAER 111). In a passage describing a meeting in August 1971, Steinem observes that in an effort to "buck the party and get grass-roots support," he had begun making an effort to appeal to the countercultural youth with "longer hair and sideburns" (OAER 111-112). Her depiction of McGovern at the 1971 meeting connects her continued support of him as a candidate with the sense that he is more open to the increasing strength of the feminist movement than many other politicians: "he is measurably better than the other candidates on issues of interest to women" and "He won't lead the humanist revolution—but then no individual could. Those marked by race or sex for society's subordinate roles will have to do that. But he may be one of the few leaders who will let fundamental change happen" (CAM 100).⁶¹ According to this analysis it is not that McGovern was necessarily the ideal of diverse leadership, but that, of the options available in the political climate of 1972, he was one of the few who would "let fundamental change happen" so that a more diverse future might be possible. Thus though McGovern might not be perfect, Steinem's claim that he is the best feasible candidate in 1972: "I ended by praising McGovern as 'the best white male candidate'" (OAER 112).

⁶¹ These comments were not included in the version of the article in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, with the exception of the modified last line "He may be one of the few leaders who will tolerate fundamental change" (Steinem, OAER 112).

There is a tension here between the idea of McGovern as the best feasibly electable candidate and Chisholm as Steinem's preferred yet purely symbolic candidate. Nonetheless, Steinem continued to support both McGovern and Chisholm in the 1972 primaries, writing in February 1972 that "I've been working for Chisholm in the states where she is running in the primaries, and McGovern wherever she's not" (*OAER* 112). This is indicative of the dichotomy in her campaign reportage between the idealistic support of Chisholm and the realistic support of McGovern. Furthermore, though McGovern might have been an acceptably progressive candidate, that did not ensure that his campaign necessarily was, as Steinem observes in New Hampshire where women were "more likely to be the workers than the decision makers": "'McGovern is fine,' the delegate explained to me, 'but he should discipline his staff. If the campaign managers here had the attitudes about black men that they do about all women, they would be fired'" (*OAER* 113). The disparity between McGovern's attitude towards women and those of his male campaign staffers is indicative of the difference in his candidacy between his high-minded beliefs and principles and the realities of a presidential campaign. Steinem begins to point to this earlier than Thompson, observing when she told McGovern of the attitudes of the male campaign workers that "McGovern sounds a little resigned. After all, the New Hampshire campaign is over. There are other worries now" (*OAER* 113). And though Steinem does not attach any negative judgement to this metamorphosis, it is interesting to observe much earlier the chameleon quality of the professional campaigning politician that so shocked and dismayed Thompson after the changes in McGovern's strategy following the 1972 nomination. Crouse's idea of the indoctrinated feelings of support born of following a single campaign, and the skewed perspective of doing so for a single election cycle, are borne out in Thompson's discomposure and juxtaposed against Steinem's calm observations. Steinem then is both an illustration of the bias that might be wrought from knowing a candidate personally, as well as an example of the benefits of having a broader picture of a candidate than the intensely focused perspective of closely following a single campaign.

Steinem portrays a version of McGovern who is not perfect but is dealing with the political realities of 1972. Her bias seems to fall somewhere between Thompson's and Mailer's. She has a more grounded perspective of McGovern than Thompson and so is not as crushingly disappointed when he does not live up to an expectation. Like Mailer, a certain amount of her support comes from a logical analysis of the political climate and the belief that McGovern is the best of the options available. And yet she portrays a sense

of genuinely liking McGovern that Mailer's less than enthusiastic perspective in *St. George and the Godfather* does not. Steinem's McGovern may not be perfect, but he is still a good candidate rather than just better than Nixon.

The ways that McGovern failed to live up to Steinem's ideals are representative of the broader political climate of the United States in 1972 that McGovern tried to conform to in order to attempt to win the election. For instance, Steinem criticizes McGovern's policy on abortion at a meeting with members of the National Women's Political Caucus, because he "had first inspired hope, and then waffled [...]. As a result, his position was neither consistent nor pleasing to either side" (*OAER* 114). As a compromise Steinem suggested a wording for the position of backing "reproductive freedom" rather than "abortion" which covered a number of reproductive health issues while removing the stigma of the word abortion from the language of the position and "also took a stance against government interference with which both the right and the left could agree" (*OAER* 114-115). This analysis and compromise on McGovern's official position on abortion portrays a sense of politics that accepts that the reality will not live up to the ideal. At the same time, Steinem's writing from 1972 represents the strongest feminist stance in her campaign reportage. For example, when another woman wants to cut the reproductive freedom position entirely so that Nixon cannot use it against McGovern, Steinem reflects: "Had I been that infected with campaign-itis in my prefeminist days? Perhaps. It had taken me a long time to learn that no one would speak for these issues if their natural constituency did not" (*OAER* 116). This is indicative of the joint evolution of Steinem's feminist beliefs and her role as a journalist in "Coming of Age with McGovern," and the "Coming of Age" of the title being borne out in multiple aspects of both Steinem and McGovern.

Not One of the Boys

Steinem's use of the personal aspects of the New Journalism mode in her campaign journalism portrays not just a perspective of the campaign, but also of the increasingly strong feminist movement. Her campaign reportage offers a unique viewpoint of the intersection of the role of feminism and journalism during the 1972 campaign, and what the potential political outcomes of the election meant for feminism. The particular sense of the 1972 campaign as a focal point for societal change is demonstrated in the growing feminist perspective in Steinem's reportage. As she states in June, 1972: "It's the strength

of the women's movement: some of us won't be told what to do anymore, not even by each other" (OAER 116). Steinem's depiction of the role of feminism in the 1972 campaign connects her personal evolution to this larger sense of change; like her, "women all over the country have had a Feminist Realization and have been willing to work" (OAER 116).

One of the ways she illustrates this is with an analysis of the victories won by women at the Democratic Convention: "The convention is bound to be a far cry from 1968, when most of the women were going to luncheons and fashion shows arranged for 'the wives'" (OAER 117). And despite describing the reality of the convention itself as a madhouse ("If you let Barnum & Bailey interpret a plot by Stendhal, it might turn out to be something like the 1972 Democratic convention"), Steinem notes a number of victories by the women's group including that "The women's plank passed beautifully, as expected. In 1968 there was not one word about women in the Democratic platform" and that "The issue of reproductive freedom had been raised in a national political platform for the first time" (OAER 117-119). Furthermore, though Steinem described the candidacy of Chisholm as symbolic, the attempts at the convention to put a woman on the Democratic ticket as McGovern's vice president are depicted as feasible (OAER 119). When Chisholm declined to run for vice president, "there remained only one afternoon to put together the vice-presidential candidacy of Frances 'Sissy' Farenthold" and yet Steinem reports the movement was almost successful and "Farenthold came in second" (OAER 119).⁶² The shift from a symbolic campaign to a genuine push for a reality in which a woman was on the ticket as the nominee for vice president is demonstrative of both the rise in the strength of the feminist movement as well as of Steinem's conviction in the possibility of a feminist reality in the present instead of a more distant future.

⁶² Stansell cites the "disarray" in the Democratic Party in 1972 as providing an opportunity for women to move for a greater presence at the convention where the number of women nominators "tripled from 13 percent to 40 percent" (283). Toni Carabillo, Judith Meuli, and June Bundy Csida's *Feminist Chronicles: 1953-1993* notes the increased percentage of women nominators "constituted a large voting bloc" (62). This undoubtedly contributed to the sense of success that Steinem reported. McGovern acknowledged in 1977 that conventions prior to 1972 had tended "to be dominated by comfortable white upper-middle-class middle-aged males" and neglected to represent "Women, youth, minorities and independent-minded voters" (130). McGovern cited the actions of the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus, including the efforts of both Steinem and Chisholm specifically, as an important part of the changes that took place between the 1968 and 1972 Democratic Conventions (131).

In contrast to Steinem's view of the strength of the vote for Farenthold as a victory, White's *The Making of the President 1972* portrayed it as a nuisance of "Open politics," referring to Farenthold as one of the last-minute "hopeless nominees for Vice-President" whose insistence "on pressing their symbolic or publicity causes from the podium" merely delayed the nomination of Eagleton (185). The stark contrast to the power of progress that Farenthold's nomination drive represented in Steinem's reportage speaks to the significantly different viewpoint her journalism offered.

That Steinem's voice as a female New Journalist covering the 1972 campaign is rare if not unique lends particular import to her reportage. Unlike male reporters, the presence of women on campaigns was not an established given. For example, 1972 was the first year that women reporters were allowed to cover the conventions from the floor (Carabillo et al. 62). Though there were other female journalists covering the campaign, the descriptions of them in Crouse's journalism suggests that their contributions were valuable but uncommon, and did not utilise the New Journalism mode. The environment in which Steinem had to fight so hard to be taken seriously as a journalist on a level equal to men is indicated in the depictions of campaign journalism in *The Boys on the Bus*, which focuses almost exclusively on male journalists, with few references to female journalists. As discussed in a previous chapter of this thesis, in Crouse's brief coverage of the women reporters, he at least acknowledges the discrepancy between the roles given to men and women reporters on the campaign – for example, his observation that “Sarah McClendon was vulnerable because she was a woman in a male chauvinist profession and she did not work for a large paper” (BB 210). But though he includes examples of women journalists on the campaign who contributed valuable reportage, these are oddities rather than the norm. Crouse's book has it right there in the title – it is not *The Journalists on the Bus* or *The Reporters on the Bus* but *The Boys on the Bus*. This was the environment in which Steinem's journalism was written, in which she struggled to be taken seriously as a political journalist who was also a woman.

Furthermore, it is not only the portrayal of female journalists that differentiates Steinem's reportage from that of her male counterparts, but the portrayal of women candidates and the feminist political agenda. Thompson, for instance, remarks, with a sense of surprise on the strength of Chisholm's success in the Massachusetts Caucus: “There was no mention in the press or anywhere else that some unknown black woman from Brooklyn might seriously challenge these famous liberal heavies on their own turf...but when the final vote came in, Shirley Chisholm had actually beaten Gene McCarthy, who finished a close third” (FLCT 64). This gives a sense of the lack of reporting on Chisholm's campaign by the mainstream campaign press, and that this undercurrent of bias against the idea of her as a serious candidate was because she was both black and a woman in a system that expected the participation of neither demographic at the level of presidential candidate. It is a low-grade bias that Thompson seems to share, in the way that he too largely neglects to focus on her candidacy, shifting his focus back to McGovern after dismissively reflecting on her minor victory: “The

Chisholm challenge was a last-minute idea and only half-organized, on the morning of the Caucus, by a handful of speedy young black politicians and Women's Lib types" (*FLCT* 64). This assessment paints Chisholm's candidacy almost as a stunt, and her small amount of success as at best symbolic to these demographics while lacking serious meaning to the larger primary.⁶³ This is in stark contrast to Steinem's portrayal of Chisholm, in which the symbolic nature of her candidacy is important in advancing the role of women in politics. For Thompson, the oddity of Chisholm's victory at the Caucus is due to the frivolous desire of a faction of liberal voters to vote for a less conventional candidate than McGovern or the other old white men on the ticket (*FLCT* 64). His viewpoint that seeking a candidate other than a white man is a pointless or frivolous pursuit is dramatically different from Steinem's assessment that though McGovern may be the "best white male candidate" that does not mean that there is nothing to be gained in terms of social change by supporting a candidate who is neither white nor male (Steinem, *OAER* 112). Likewise, her portrayal of the success of the NWPC at the Democratic Convention as striking an important first blow for women's rights issues opposes Mailer's depiction of the same events as a petulant immature group of women "acting like women—in a fight with the husband" (Mailer, *SGG* 61). These moments of bias against the women's movement form a small percentage of Thompson's and Mailer's campaign reportage, but demonstrate the undercurrent of patriarchal bias that Steinem's journalism attempted to work against in both its method and content.

Steinem was able to include in her campaign journalism for *Ms.* the kind of reporting from a feminist perspective that does not seem to have been present in most other media. In a 1992 interview she gave to Margaret Larson from NBC, Larson observed of the first issue of *Ms.* in 1972, "something that wasn't part of the public dialogue at the time appears in that issue, and that was the evaluation of candidates based on their stance on women's issues" (Steinem, "Gloria Steinem Looks"). Steinem's campaign reportage from 1972 actively tried to make the stance of candidates on women's issues "part of the public dialogue". In March, 1973, she co-wrote an article for *Ms.* with Carolyn Setlow titled "Why Women Voted for Richard Nixon (Richard Nixon?)". This article, like Steinem's "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted," is more

⁶³ This view remains consistent with Thompson's later assessment of Chisholm's candidacy as trying to capture what Congressman Ron Dellums called "the Nigger vote," referring to "the Young, the Black, the Brown, the women, the Poor – all the people who feel left out of the political process," a claim which Thompson portrays with both derision and grudging acknowledgment that it was a potentially politically smart move for a candidate like Chisholm who did not fit the typical candidate profile (*FLCT* 69).

typically mainstream, providing a post-mortem of the results of the 1972 election using statistics and poll data to analyse the election results. As it was co-written, the article does not offer a particularly useful point of analysis of Steinem's writing style and mode of journalism. However, the concluding point of the article is indicative of her arguments in her other campaign reportage:

Until women of all races take their problems *as women* seriously enough to ferret out issues of self-interest—whether or not those issues are emphasized by the press, and whether or not they are espoused in ideal form by the candidate—women will not be able to use the political machine to better their own lives. Other powerless groups identify crucial issues on their own initiative, and hold candidates accountable. Women must learn to do the same. (Setlow and Steinem 110; emphasis in the original)

The assertions here that the role of women in Nixon's victory needed to be addressed by women taking "their problems *as women* seriously enough" and to "use the political machine to better their own lives" speaks to the evolution of Steinem as both a campaign reporter and campaign worker that she portrayed in "Coming of Age with McGovern". According to Setlow and Steinem, "The nature of the Nixon campaign, the press coverage, and the McGovern campaign itself must share the blame. But so must women" (110). In some ways this is similar to the post-mortems of Crouse and Thompson, and the sense that the mainstream campaign coverage, Nixon's manipulation and control of the press, and McGovern's campaign fumbles all contributed to the outcome of the election. But by placing the blame on women as well, Setlow and Steinem are addressing very specifically their target audience and including their acceptance of the campaign coverage as culpable alongside the coverage itself.

Steinem's perspective as a vocal proponent of the feminist movement combines with her New Journalist mode of writing to portray and analyse the campaign in a distinct way that attempts to both cover the campaign and advance the role of women in politics. Her personal perspective in "Coming of Age with McGovern" of her own evolution as a feminist connects potentially abstract notions of socio-political change to a revealing personal narrative. Later, in her 2015 book *My Life on the Road*, Steinem claims she had loved campaigns since moving to Washington D.C. in high school:

I've stayed hooked on campaigns to this day. Despite all their faults, campaigns are based on the fact that every vote counts, and therefore every person counts. As freestanding societies, they are more open than academia, more idealistic than

corporations, more unifying than religions, and more accessible than government itself. Campaign season is the only time of public debate about what we want for the future. It can change consciousness even more than who gets elected. In short, campaigns may be the closest thing we have to democracy itself. (131-132)

In this we see a justification behind the symbolic campaigning of Chisholm, that the campaign itself and the “public debate about what we want for the future” was more important than “who gets elected”. It is a dramatically more optimistic view of the power of campaigns than Crouse’s, and speaks to the different intention of a reporter who did not come to believe in McGovern’s campaign because she covered it so closely for an extended period of time, but covered it so closely and for so long because she believed in it.

Conclusion: New Journalism, New Feminism

Steinem’s reportage speaks to the idea that the enduring works of campaign journalism from 1972 are those which were not just about the campaign but which did something more that participated in and contributed to the tumult of social change at that time. Mailer’s *St. George and the Godfather* was quickly forgotten because it was almost solely about the 1972 Democratic and Republican conventions, with an agenda focused on Mailer’s time-sensitive arguments against voting for Nixon. On the other hand, Crouse’s *The Boys on the Bus* was not only about the 1972 campaign specifically, but about broader arguments regarding the way that campaign journalism functioned in modern society. Likewise Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* was both a coverage of the 1972 campaign and an entertaining personal narrative of his experiences that made societal connections. In her preface to *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* Steinem writes: “the activist in me doesn’t feel at all happy to find that this or any of its sister books is still relevant. I would feel far more rewarded if this collection were so out of date with most readers that it ranked with *Why Roosevelt Can’t Win A Second Term* [...]” (xiii). Steinem’s campaign journalism is not just about the 1972 campaign: it is also an important text of the feminist movement at the time. Judith Hole and Ellen Levine observed of the movement in 1971 that while there was “no single recognized theoretician or theory of the movement,” it was the breadth of the texts being published at the time which was building the movement, and from which “the main outlines of feminist thought” could be constructed (169). In this context, Steinem’s

contribution to the burgeoning canon of feminist texts mirrors her contribution to New Journalism as it developed. It is that context that, like Crouse's pack journalism assessment and Thompson's personal narrative, gives her journalism a continued relevance past 1972. We may not care that Roosevelt could not win a second term, but arguments about the role of women in politics and the need for more progressive and diverse candidates continue to be a powerful part of the living history of the feminist movement as it builds on the recent past rather than forgetting it.

In Steinem's campaign journalism there is a sense of a contemporary effect to the combined efforts of feminists that her reportage was a part of. In 1972, "*Considering that it is necessary to strengthen universal recognition of the principle of the equality of men and women,*" the United Nations declared that 1975 would be International Women's Year (United Nations; emphasis in the original). In her article "Women Voters Can't Be Trusted" Steinem argues that in 1972 the power of women in politics was growing rapidly: "All the available polls show one thing very clearly: women are changing more rapidly than any other group. We are just beginning to act forcefully, and to express the ways in which we are culturally different from men" ("Women Voters" 131). Her final statement – "Now, women want something in return. 1972 is just the beginning" – is the kind of call to arms and sense of shifting socio-political climate that she comes to in her personal experience at the end of "Coming of Age with McGovern": "Of course, we won't let up our vigilance for a moment. Women are never again going to be mechanics—whether it's mindless coffee-making, or mindless policy-making" ("Women Voters" 131; CAM 106). It is this call to arms, this effort to contribute to societal change, alongside the personal and the political that is the "something more" element of Steinem's campaign journalism in 1972.

Conclusion: What Kind of Year Has It Been?

This thesis has offered an examination of four texts of New Journalism reportage on the 1972 U.S. presidential election. These four texts, Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus*, Mailer's *St. George and the Godfather*, Thompson's *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, and Steinem's "Coming of Age with McGovern" are all works of New Journalism, yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, they each approach the campaign very differently. The analysis in this thesis indicates the breadth of the New Journalism mode, which was not a single style of writing but an approach to journalism which allowed for the kind of variety in style, content, and, crucially, perspective that is evident in these texts. This thesis has focused an examination of these texts around the idea of campaign journalism frameworks, and examined each with an eye towards the particular writer's agenda in covering the campaign, and how that agenda shaped the framework of their reportage.

In Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus*, the New Journalism mode as a stylistic element is perhaps the least obvious. Though there are flashes of the kind of literary elements that we would expect from New Journalism, Crouse's reportage often relies on the perspective of, and even direct quotes from, other reporters on the campaign, including those who were themselves not New Journalists. Yet the New Journalism perspective is key to Crouse's secondary agenda which is to critique the entire campaign journalism system. It is key to the framework of his reportage, the suggestions he makes for reform and those elements of reporting that he highlights as the most valuable to campaign journalism. These elements are all in keeping with the calls for reform to journalism more broadly that were made by the advocates of New Journalism as a developing mode, a point demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis. *The Boys on the Bus*, as a work that advocates for New Journalism, is both a continuation of those New Journalism works which advocated for changes to journalism, and a hinge between the straight journalism it sought to influence and the New Journalists with whom Crouse aligned himself.

Elements of Mailer's *St. George and the Godfather* offer the kind of New Journalist approach to campaigns advocated by Crouse. Mailer certainly employed many of the stylistic and literary elements valued by New Journalism, and in many ways his working method as a journalist was in keeping with suggestions made in Crouse's critique: Mailer was not impacted by any other reporters as he set himself apart from them, and he was thus never subject to the influence of pack journalism. Additionally, his limited time on

the campaign (only reporting on the conventions) kept him free from the winner's bus syndrome that Crouse warned against. And yet, unlike the other New Journalists examined in this thesis, Mailer's secondary agenda was narrowly focused, more exclusively directed towards trying to influence voters to prevent Nixon winning the election. As will be examined further in this conclusion, this had a negative impact on *St. George and the Godfather's* lasting relevance as a text, not shared by the more broad secondary agendas of the other texts.

Thompson's *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* in some respects demonstrates the potential negative impact of the traits of Crouse's critique of campaign journalism that Mailer was able to avoid. Thompson's close working relationship with the other journalists on the bus and his personal favouring of and relationship with McGovern as a candidate, heavily influenced his initial agenda of offering a ruthless, outsider's perspective on the campaign and the politicians involved. Yet, though his ruthlessness was compromised, Thompson's personal perspective remained key to the framework with which he addressed the campaign and the socio-political context of 1972. It is this personal and at times consciously subjective perspective of Thompson's that gives *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* a secondary context beyond its reportage of the 1972 campaign.

The personal perspective is similarly integral to the framework of Steinem's "Coming of Age with McGovern". The secondary agenda of Steinem's reportage links the development of McGovern as a political candidate to her own development as a feminist. Thus "Coming of Age with McGovern" is both an article on the 1972 campaign, and an article on the role of feminism in that campaign. The kind of personal perspective offered by Steinem's campaign diary approach is in keeping with the role of New Journalism as offering personal perspectives on significant socio-political issues as advocated for in the development of the mode. Despite the fact that Steinem's role as a feminist has overshadowed her role as a journalist in modern criticism, her reportage on the campaign is nonetheless an important example of the way New Journalism addressed current socio-political issues while straight journalism did not.

The socio-political context of these works was key to the New Journalism mode of writing that all four authors engaged in. The socio-political chaos facing the United States in 1972 and the uncertainty over the changing role of the press collided in the campaign journalism produced that year. In the reportage of the New Journalists there is the sense that the 1972 campaign was a time of change for the system of campaign journalism.

They represented a disruption of the mode of campaign journalism, and furthermore portrayed in their writing the idea that it was the first campaign where the nation and national political journalism really faced the aftermath of the chaos that had begun in the 1960s. The political upheaval, the internal divisions over race relations and gender inequality, the sense of a loss of innocence from the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy,⁶⁴ and the violence of Vietnam were a part of the driving force that shaped the agendas of the New Journalists and their responses to McGovern and Nixon.

What the role of New Journalism in the 1972 campaign coverage reveals about the development of the mode in 1972 is that as it became legitimised it also became incorporated more into mainstream journalism. For New Journalism to exist and function within the traditional roles of media in society, it could not completely reject existing systems of reportage. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, for instance, had such a significant impact, both on its own as a text that offered insight into the campaign and as a disruption to the journalism of others, because it did not completely reject the system but was written and published within it. Even Crouse, who made a concerted effort to frame himself as an outsider, was writing about the system while observing it from within. His work to understand and unpack the system often relied on the perspectives of mainstream journalists. His calls for reform did not entail a complete abolition of the campaign journalism system and its replacement by a new one, but rather a modification of the existing system.

As this thesis has revealed, the New Journalism mode brought a consequentially different approach to campaign journalism with the conscious embracing of subjective frameworks and personal narrative. Steinem's reportage, for instance, offers the strongest example of a secondary agenda that has given her journalism a strong and lasting purpose. Conversely, that Mailer's campaign text is the least enduringly successful in the years since 1972 (and the only one analysed in this thesis that is out of print), despite his literary reputation, is indicative of the extent to which he removed himself entirely from the system and framed his reportage very narrowly as an argument for voting against Nixon. His characterisation of himself as Aquarius, the noble novelist turned to journalism, placed him apart from the other journalists, and the way he deplored the new forms of media did not position him as an agent of change, but as a lone voice commenting on that

⁶⁴ Though Martin Luther King Jr. was also assassinated during this era, his death was not referenced in the reportage of these New Journalists the way that the deaths of John and Bobby Kennedy were.

particular election in that particular moment in time, rather than having any agenda or narrative that transcended the moment as did Crouse, Thompson, and Steinem. New Journalists had the most success in effecting change when they worked with the system to try to change it rather than rejecting it entirely.

All the President's Manipulations: The Role of Watergate in the 1972 Campaign Reportage

The extent to which American society itself and the role of the media was changing in 1972 seems to have made it ripe for some of the changes to reporting offered by New Journalism. For example, Nixon's hostile attitude towards the press highlighted the need for the kind of personal insights that were disallowed by the mandate to be objective that dominated straight journalism. The fact that Watergate occurred well before the November election and yet had almost no impact on the campaign journalism and therefore no impact on the election is a stark reflection of this. The juxtaposition of the attention paid to any misstep from McGovern's campaign and the damning role of the Eagleton scandal's portrayal in the press alongside the lack of reporting on this crucial fault in the Nixon administration highlights a significant problem in the reporting done during the campaign. As McGovern later wrote in 1977, "leaks about such minor problems in the McGovern Campaign were front-page news, while leaks during the same period about White House involvement in Watergate were virtually ignored except in the *Washington Post*" (225).⁶⁵ At the same time that Eagleton's medical history was wreaking havoc on McGovern's campaign, Bernstein and Woodward had already begun reporting on the link between the White House, the Committee for the Re-election of the President, and the men who had attempted to bug the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate; and yet "More than ever, Richard Nixon's re-election seemed assured" (Bernstein and Woodward 45). In hindsight, the landslide victory that Nixon ultimately achieved in the 1972 election is one of the biggest justifications for the approach of the New Journalists on the campaign and their arguments for reform. That the Watergate scandal had been broken by Bernstein and Woodward in *The Washington Post* prior to the election and yet had not been widely covered in mainstream journalism

⁶⁵ McGovern goes so far as to claim that "the rest of the press" was not just ignoring Watergate but "was downplaying the story" (241).

and clearly had no appreciable impact on the results demonstrates that there was a severe gap in the kind of information provided by campaign journalism.

Moreover, in retrospect it seems that a conservative president like Nixon, who continued the war in Vietnam, should at least have faced a larger opposition in the polls from the so-called youth vote or “that huge & confused coalition of students, freaks, blacks, anti-war activists & dazed dropouts” that Thompson had identified at the start of his campaign coverage as just waiting for a candidate like McGovern (*FLCT* 30). That in spite of all of this Nixon still achieved a landslide victory suggests in part that there was something about the standard approach to campaign journalism that failed in the face of the changing relationships between politicians and the press, and that the reproduction of campaign speeches and polling data could not breach the gap. The approach of the New Journalists on the campaign and their portrayal of their particular versions of the candidates was crucial because, even though it ultimately did not affect the outcome of that election, it was a move towards campaign journalism that could provide more nuanced views of candidates even in the face of tactics like Nixon’s non-campaign. According to Thompson’s post-mortem after the campaign, “[...] Nixon was *not* out in the open and committing no blunders...or at least none that the press could pin on him. The Watergate thing came about as close as anything and the *Washington Post* worked that one about as heavily as any newspaper could,” and there is a hint here of the bitterness Thompson felt about the role of the press in Nixon’s victory (*FLCT* 426; emphasis in the original).⁶⁶

This is not to imply that the New Journalists on the campaign trail in 1972 had a better understanding of Watergate at the time. For instance, when Mailer wrote *St George and the Godfather*, he did not know the extent of the Watergate scandal and its ties to Nixon, and he does not engage with it as a reason to keep Nixon from being re-elected. Mailer occasionally refers to Watergate, as the break-in was a topical event, but there is no sense that it would have larger political ramifications. Those he writes of treated the issue as almost insignificant; for example, prominent Democrat Larry O’Brien jokes with Henry Kissinger about Watergate before Mailer’s interview with Kissinger: ““That was

⁶⁶ Thompson also wrote a lengthy article in the September 27 1973 issue of *Rolling Stone* on Watergate, “Fear and Loathing at the Watergate: Mr. Nixon Has Cashd His Check,” which included the assessment “by election day in November, the Watergate story seemed like old news. It was rarely if ever mentioned among the press people following the campaign” (31), a statement which also seems to suggest Thompson blamed a lack of reporting on Nixon on the favourable view he maintained with the public that led to his victory.

good luck, Henry, to get away just before it hit the fan,’ said O’Brien. ‘Ah, what a pity,’ said Kissinger. ‘You could have had me for the villain of the sixth floor’” (SGG 115). Clark MacGregor, the head of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, when asked if Watergate would hurt Nixon in the election answered: “I am absolutely satisfied that the so-called Watergate caper will have absolutely no effect on the election of Richard Nixon” (SGG 146). Mailer’s report of the scandal even dips into the humorous when writing of former Committee head John Mitchell’s resignation ostensibly at the urging of his wife Martha: “Certainly, not since the writing of *El Cid* has such a conflict between love and duty been presented to so high an official with such perfect timing. Is it true that John has been told he could not do better than to choose Martha? Some go so far as to suggest Martha has been encouraged to be Martha. Whatever!” (SGG 148). There is no real sense that Watergate could, or should, be detrimental to Nixon in the election. Though it did not offer any valuable insight on the scandal for 1972 readers, as a historical text *St. George and the Godfather*’s representation of Watergate is a fascinating snapshot of the portrayal of the scandal in the press at the time, particularly since Mailer was so vehement about his reportage being more insightful than the mainstream press and yet failed in this instance to be so.⁶⁷ Yet his version of these events also provides a greater understanding of the social environment in which Nixon was still enough untouched by the scandal to be elected, because it provides not just facts of the break-in, but details of the attitudes and feelings held about Watergate during the campaign. That Mailer did not differ from the accepted view of Nixon’s non-involvement in the scandal, despite his otherwise scathing analysis of the Republicans and departure from standard views of the campaigns, suggests the extent to which the Watergate scandal was not an issue in the election.

In contrast, because *The Boys on the Bus* was published in 1973 after the Watergate scandal had fully broken, Crouse is able to use it as proof of his analysis of the failures of the campaign journalism system and his view that straight journalism did not offer enough meaningful insight. Crouse claims that it was the established system of journalism in which the major newspapers operated in 1972 that kept the Watergate story from having an impact on the outcome of the election (BB 297-299). The idea that the system

⁶⁷ Mailer himself later wrote in 1976 of his version of Watergate in *St. George and the Godfather*: “Who can now read what I wrote about the Democratic and Republican conventions of 1972 without searching for everything I did not see? How much we did not know at the time of all the secret history being made” (*Some Honorable Men* xi).

of reporting would not allow *Washington Post* reporters Bernstein and Woodward's story to have an effect on the election is used by Crouse to support his claims about the seriousness of the potential impact of the broken system. His argument contends that in retrospect it is clear that the Watergate scandal could have significantly altered the outcome of the election if the system had not kept it from gaining traction in other publications for so long. Crouse underscores this point by ending his chapter on the Watergate scandal with Bernstein's assessment of the *Post* reporters' inability to impact the election: "we knew how the press had been undercut, and we realized one crucial fact about the White House: *they know our business and we don't know their business*" (BB 300; emphasis in the original). This observation supports Crouse's argument that the campaign press in 1972 suffered from significant weaknesses because Nixon better understood how to manipulate the system than the reporters understood what he was doing. It also underlines the scope of the control that the established system of campaign journalism afforded Nixon. For Crouse, all of the negative outcomes and failures of the press that he observed were to be blamed on old forms of journalism: "There was nothing in the rules of objectivity to rectify such a situation" (BB 319). Furthermore, that Bernstein and Woodward felt their journalism was influenced by the campaign, even though they were not writing campaign journalism as such, suggests the magnitude of the influence of campaign reportage during an election year on the larger system of journalism as a whole. In conjunction with Crouse's argument that in 1972 campaign journalism suffered from a lack of insight, and of independent analysis of Nixon, this portrays the delayed scandal of Watergate as exemplifying the potential consequences of not developing new forms of campaign journalism.

Though even the New Journalists lacked insight into Watergate in their reportage before the election, the failure of the press at large to engage with the reportage of Bernstein and Woodward in *The Washington Post* supports the conclusions that Crouse drew about the failure of the standard system of campaign reporting to appreciate anything other than the surface-level information provided by the candidates. The standard system of objectivity and reporting facts at face value, combined with the effects of pack journalism, can be seen in hindsight to have greatly affected the role (or lack thereof) that Watergate played in the campaign reportage. In light of the outcome of Nixon's non-campaign, this supports the arguments of all the New Journalists analysed in this thesis that more interpretive and independently framed work was needed in campaign journalism.

Response and Impact

The contemporary responses to these texts in 1972-73 and the impact they have had in the decades since offer a view of what they accomplished beyond their original publication. Contemporary reactions to Crouse's book in 1973 suggest that *The Boys on the Bus* did have an impact on how campaign journalism was viewed, and that despite any disdain that Crouse may have faced from some of the more established journalists on the campaign as an outsider from a New Journalism publication like *Rolling Stone*, his work was taken seriously by his contemporary journalists after it was published as a book. A review by Garry Wills in *The New York Review of Books* praised Crouse's development from his initial view of the press in his *Rolling Stone* article to the greater breadth of his analysis in *The Boys on the Bus* ("Death of a Salesman"). This supports the idea that Crouse's analysis of the press benefitted from the greater space that he was able to give it in the book, and also suggests that his work was lent more legitimacy in the eyes of journalists and critics when it took the form of a book rather than that of an article in a less-established publication like *Rolling Stone*. A review by Eliot Fremont-Smith in *New York* magazine in 1973 called *The Boys on the Bus* an "on-the-mark account and critique—and probably the best book to come out of the election" ("Leaves Under the Tree" 87). Fremont-Smith later in 1974 compared the authoritative post-mortem of Watergate by Bernstein and Woodward, *All the President's Men*, to *The Boys on the Bus* calling the former "the most revealing 'inside' book on journalism since Timothy Crouse's study of the election campaign press, *The Boys on the Bus*," which demonstrates how quickly Crouse's work became recognized as an influential work of journalism ("Ring Around the White House" 103).

This is not to imply that reactions to his work were entirely positive at the time. In particular, as Wills' comparison of Crouse's article to his book suggests, it seems that while reactions to the book were more favourable, initial responses to the *Rolling Stone* article were less so. In fact, because Crouse published his *Rolling Stone* article before the campaign ended, and then wrote the latter half and published the whole as a book after the election, he had an opportunity in the book to address reactions among the press pack to the article. He notes in a later chapter trying to avoid at least one reporter on the campaign, Doug Kneeland, after engaging in a shouting match over Kneeland's problems with the initial article (*BB* 369). This reaction to the article, rather than to the book, could point to a change in perceptions between the middle of the campaign when the article was

published and the point when the book was published after the campaign had ended and Watergate had been more exposed. That Kneeland wrote for *The New York Times* also suggests the possibility that hostility towards Crouse's work was more likely to come from reporters with stronger ties to the rules of straight journalism (and who Crouse was openly criticising).⁶⁸ A less antagonistic disagreement with Crouse's assessment of the state of journalism came from John Lindsay of *Newsweek*, who compared Crouse's complaints about the state of campaign journalism to "railing against a right triangle for the awkward length of its hypotenuse" ("Correspondence," 23 Nov. 5). Lindsay's analogy, and his conclusion that "More interesting is how *Newsweek* [sic] surmounts the problem with consistent success," argued that some of the problems Crouse highlighted in his reportage were intrinsic to the process of campaign journalism, and that it was not for the system to change but for journalists to do a better job working within it ("Correspondence," 23 Nov. 5).

Crouse himself argues that working against his attempts as a New Journalist at changing the contemporary system of campaign journalism was the fact that "Journalism is probably the slowest-moving, most tradition-bound profession in America. It refuses to budge until it is shoved into the future by some irresistible external force" (BB 303). This assertion is supported by what was, at the time, the recent rise of New Journalism, and the more than a decade that had passed since the early calls for the mode before it fought its way to the peak of attention that it found in 1972. The New Journalists who argued for a new mode of writing were the "irresistible external force" that shoved change into American journalism, and this is what Crouse attempted to do for campaign journalism in *The Boys on the Bus*.

Crouse's long-term success is evident from the way that *The Boys on the Bus* has continued to be viewed as one of the touchstones for an understanding of campaign journalism. According to NPR in 2012, "The news business has changed a lot in recent years, and that's especially true of political news. But when you ask about a book that captures what it's like to report on a presidential campaign, one decades-old classic still rules: *The Boys on the Bus*" (NPR Staff). In 2004 Jonathan Yardley argued in *The Washington Post* that *The Boys on the Bus* was one of the two books that came from the

⁶⁸ See, for example, the resistance to his research Crouse faced when he tried to interview self-proclaimed straight reporter Robert Novak who rejected not only Crouse and *Rolling Stone*, but the kind of people who would read Crouse's article: "'No,' Novak frowned. 'Your readers have never heard of me.' 'Well, that's just the point,' I said. 'We want to inform our readers.' 'No,' he said, already walking away. '*Rolling Stone*—that's another world'" (Crouse, BB 112).

1972 election that changed how journalism was viewed. The other book, according to Yardley, was *All the President's Men*, and he claims that *The Boys on the Bus* “may have had a deeper and broader effect, for it turned the eyes of the press on the press itself”. As an echo of the comparison of *All the President's Men* to *The Boys on the Bus* in the 1974 review by Fremont-Smith, this speaks to both the deep and lasting impact that Crouse’s book has had on journalism as well as its cultural significance. Modern books about campaign journalism influenced by Crouse’s ideas and approach echo him in their titles – *The Girls in the Van* (2001) by Beth J. Harpaz, or *Bloggers on the Bus* (2009) by Eric Boehlert for instance. More critically the direct impact of *The Boys on the Bus* on modern campaign journalism is seen in such examples as the formation in 2008 of “OffTheBus”:

a citizen-powered and -produced presidential campaign news site sponsored by the Huffington Post and New York University's NewAssignment.Net. Inspired by Timothy Crouse's "Boys On The Bus," [sic] an account of the 1972 contest between Nixon and McGovern that chronicles a campaigns' [sic] ability to manipulate the press and orchestrate campaign coverage, OTB was founded to better presidential campaign reporting. (“OffTheBus Masthead”)

Altogether these legacies demonstrate the continued influence of the changes being made to campaign journalism in 1972, and the way that journalism such as Crouse’s had the potential to have an impact that lasted long after its initial publication.

By contrast, it is clear that *St. George and the Godfather* did not have the effect on the outcome of the election that Mailer had hoped. Partly, he overestimated the power to sway the tide of public opinion and affect elections that he believed he had after the success of “Superman Comes to the Supermarket” coincided with Kennedy’s 1960 victory. That said, public perception of Mailer at the time does seem to have been that he was one of the foremost contemporary writers of convention coverage; as Wills put it in his review of the book in *The New York Times Book Review*, many writers went to Miami attempting to replicate Mailer’s previous convention pieces, “But nobody writes like Mailer” (Review of *St. George* 1). Partly, the book’s delayed publication could have diluted its chances of having a greater effect on the election; since it was not published until September 1972 and did not appear in bookstores until October, it would have had at the most a month before the November 7 Election Day to influence voters’ minds. As Mailer’s worried tone in *St. George and the Godfather* indicates, and as he himself points out in his analysis of what he saw as the manipulated coverage of the bulk of the press, McGovern’s campaign was already not doing well. It could have been too far gone by

the time the book was available for Mailer to make a big enough difference to change the outcome of the election even if he did have some of the power to effect change that he believed he had.

Contemporary reactions suggest that Mailer's overt political motivations in the book had a large effect on how it was read. For example, the neoconservative magazine *Commentary* took offence to Mailer's detestation of the Republican Party and disdain for its supporters, and in particular his characterisation of them as "the wad" (Thorburn). Conversely the *Harvard Crimson*, a more liberal publication from Mailer's alma mater, praised *St. George and the Godfather's* "delegate's-eye-view of the American political process at work, and slyly ingenious speculations and insights into what--really--was going on" in comparison to the "aloof commentators who dissected this year's campaign at a distance" (Englund). In a more recent assessment of the book in the *Columbia Journalism Review* in 2012, Jordan Michael Smith suggests that modern neglect of *St. George and the Godfather* may be due to the fact that McGovern lost the election despite Mailer's efforts. Therefore it has been forgotten because it failed in its clear objective to keep Nixon from being re-elected.

Though Mailer was obviously ultimately unsuccessful in swaying the election, *St. George and the Godfather* nonetheless was significant at the time for its mode of reportage and for the agenda it tried to accomplish in the face of the prevailing view of the media. The 1973 *Rolling Stone* review of the book hailed Mailer's willingness to speak his mind even when what he had to say was unpopular at the time: "You've got to take the good with the bad in Mailer; it's his willingness to run the big risks, to dare to sound ridiculous, that got him where he is today. This is very good Mailer indeed, and that means better than anybody else around" (Gordon 74). John F. Keener asserts in his article "Writing the Vacuum: Richard Nixon as Literary Figure" (2000) that the version of Nixon in *St. George and the Godfather* is one of "the most provocative examples of the literary Nixon" (137). And though Mailer did not succeed in convincing readers about the true insidious nature of Nixon before the election, the book's undisguised accusations that the President of the United States had puppet master-like control over the press make an important argument about the role of the press in the campaign, particularly when a single viewpoint is presented by the bulk of the media. Mailer's New Journalism in contrast suggests that in order to make informed decisions about elections, the public needs journalism which not only comes from in-depth reporting but includes

interpretation of and opinions on politicians' words and actions in order to cut past the outer veneers of carefully crafted manipulations.

If Mailer's book is the least directly impactful and least remembered, Thompson's is perhaps the most. Reactions to his book on its publication in 1973 were mixed in a way reminiscent of the mixed reactions in literary criticism to the birth of New Journalism. The misperception of Thompson as a wild and undisciplined character rather than a serious journalist coloured some responses to his reportage. For instance, in his review of *St. George and the Godfather*, Wills characterised Thompson as having "ricocheted around Miami [...] trying to do for McGovern what Mailer thinks he did for Kennedy in 'Superman Comes to the Supermarket,'" and, according to Wills, failing to live up to Mailer (1). This characterisation of Thompson portrays him as an ungovernably wild and immature reporter, incapable of the serious journalism of a more established writer like Mailer. It offers a demonstration of how even within the category "New Journalist" there were different levels of respectability that might be applied, given a writer's body of work and the stance towards New Journalism of the particular critic. Thompson responds to one instance of the criticism of his campaign articles in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*, in perhaps one of the most substantial additions to the original articles at the end of "July". Here Thompson includes a postscript in which he prints a letter from NBC correspondent John Chancellor claiming that Thompson's description in his article of the NBC broadcast on the night of the Democratic Convention was incorrect, and a letter that Thompson wrote to Chancellor in reply calling him a "filthy skunk-sucking bastard" and maintaining that he was correct in the original article (*FLCT* 304-305).

Even readers of *Rolling Stone*, presumably Thompson's demographic more than any other, were not universally enamoured of his campaign coverage. In the August 16 1973 issue of *Rolling Stone*, the "Correspondence, Love Letters & Advice" section printed two negative responses to Thompson's July 5 1973 article, which had concluded his campaign coverage and advertised the book. These responses were heavily critical of Thompson's personal approach: Thompson, argued one correspondent, "attempts to write about a serious issue, but he evidently doesn't know how to go about it. He seems to glory in breaking with journalistic conventions such as documenting his charges (against Eagleton) in such a consistent way [...]" ("Correspondence," 16 Aug. 3). Thompson was as dismissive of this criticism as he was of Chancellor's, and concluded his response: "*In the future, please divert all mail of that nature to Raoul Duke at the Sports Desk. This is*

the last time I'll acknowledge receipt of that kind of drooling, half-bright bullshit" ("Correspondence," 16 Aug. 3; emphasis in the original).

Conversely, those who praised Thompson's articles did so for being among the most honest and accurate portrayals of the campaign, even though the most subjective. A review by Burdett A. Loomis in a 1974 issue of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* alongside a review of White's *The Making of the President 1972*, praised the subjectivity of Thompson, whose "journalism is decidedly untraditional, and objective only when he cares to make it so. But it is never dull, and Thompson, as opposed to most journalists (with White as a prime example) wears his subjectivity on his sleeve" (319). Loomis's juxtaposition here of Thompson against other campaign journalists like White underscores the idea that though Thompson's journalism was more overtly subjective, it could actually be considered in some ways more truthful. It implies that subjectivity was present in other campaign journalism, but that by attempting to deny that subjectivity a level of honesty was lost. By "deal[ing] with his own emotions, as well as those of his subjects" and "wear[ing] his subjectivity on his sleeve" Loomis argued that Thompson's reportage was true to his experience (319). As noted previously, this subjectivity combined with accuracy was why Crouse believed Thompson's reportage to be so significant and so influential, because "Thompson had the freedom to describe the campaign as he actually experienced it" (BB 314). Likewise, recalling the 1972 campaign in 2012, McGovern campaign director Frank Mankiewicz claimed that *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* was "'the most accurate, and the least factual,' account of the 1972 campaign" (Mankiewicz). This phrase highlights the falseness of the assumption of a dichotomy between truth and fiction that Thompson set out to break down in his Gonzo journalism. Coming from someone directly involved in the McGovern campaign, this is high praise. Additionally, and even more relevant to Thompson's impact on the campaign reportage of his fellow journalists, *Washington Post* reporter Carl Bernstein proclaimed that Thompson's book was "the moment we realized that traditional journalism is not sufficient [...] Hunter could not have existed in the mainstream press. The myth of objectivity is what holds us back the most" (qtd. in McKeen, *Outlaw Journalist* 201). This is indicative of Thompson's role within the system, and the impact that he had on his fellow reporters.

In the more than four decades since its publication, *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* has continued to be one of Thompson's most famous works, and one of the most famous works of New Journalism more broadly. Despite the misperceptions

of Gonzo identified earlier in this thesis which have coloured analysis of it, the book is considered one of the best collections of reportage on the 1972 campaign, and its influence on modern campaign journalism is considerable. Nick Nuttall refers to *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* as Thompson's "most significant political opus" (111), praise that is shared by Douglas Brinkley who claims it to be one of the two "most enduring works" of Thompson's (the other being the article "Fear and Loathing at the Watergate: Mr. Nixon Has Cashed his Check") (xvii). Stephenson calls it "utterly necessary" for its application of subjectivity to campaign journalism in a system that had only just begun to consider change (80). Furthermore, the continued relevance of Thompson's campaign reportage is present in McKeen's assertion in 2008 that "the book gave a brilliant inside look at a presidential campaign. The decades haven't dimmed the book's relevance. It remains a full-scale portrait of the political process" (*Outlaw Journalist* 201).

The legacy of Thompson's approach to campaign journalism is also decidedly evident at *Rolling Stone*. Matt Taibbi, one of the magazine's main political journalists since the mid-2000s, wrote an introduction to the 40th anniversary edition of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* which begins with the bold claim: "I doubt any book means more to a single professional sect than *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72* means to American political journalists. It's been read and reread by practically every living reporter in this country" ("*Fear and Loathing* 40 Years Later"). Taibbi emphasises the significance of the text, which he calls "a kind of bible of political reporting" by arguing that its continuing impact in the decades since 1972 has directly contributed to the style of campaign journalism produced since, to the extent that "many campaign reporters (including, unfortunately, me) [have found] themselves unconsciously making villainous Nixons, or Quislingian Muskies, or Christlike McGoverns out of each new quadrennial batch of presidential pretenders" ("*Fear and Loathing* 40 Years Later"). Clearly Taibbi has a vested interest here in praising Thompson, considering the venue for these claims about the importance of *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is an introduction to the book itself (not to mention that Taibbi as a *Rolling Stone* reporter would have an interest in the importance with which reportage printed by his publication was viewed).⁶⁹ Still, that Taibbi believes these

⁶⁹ Indeed, when Taibbi published an account of Donald Trump's campaign in the 2016 election he framed narrative campaign reporting as a tradition at *Rolling Stone* since Thompson, and therefore himself as

claims at least to some extent is evidence of the continued significance of Thompson to *Rolling Stone's* approach to campaign journalism, and that *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is still being read and considered meaningful by journalists over 40 years after its publication. And based on the continued popularity of Thompson's work and the use of his "Fear and Loathing" catchphrase as a cultural touchstone for campaign and general political journalism, Taibbi's claims certainly seem at least rooted in the truth.⁷⁰ This demonstrates how the ongoing popularity of Thompson's campaign reportage has the potential to continue having an impact on the system beyond the time that he participated in it.

In particular, notable works of campaign journalism in recent years have demonstrated an approach to campaign journalism that echoes Thompson's and shows how the avenues opened in 1972 for that mode of reporting remained influential. For instance, the campaign journalism of David Foster Wallace was markedly influenced by Thompson's. Wallace covered the 2000 campaign of Senator John McCain for *Rolling Stone* in the April 13 2000 article "The Weasel, Twelve Monkeys and the Shrub: Seven Days in the Life of the Late, Great John McCain," and his personal narrative, informally conversational language, use of humour, and consciously visible opinion echo Thompson's 1972 coverage for the magazine: "Yes, this is simplistic. All politicians sell, always have. FDR and JFK and MLK and Gandhi were great salesmen. But that's not all they were. People could smell it. That weird little extra something. It had to do with 'character' (which, yes, is also a cliché — suck it up)" (Wallace, "The Weasel" 68). This is not to suggest that Wallace and Thompson share exactly the same style or voice, but that their application of their distinctly personal and literary styles to a caustically honest portrayal of the candidates are notably similar methods of campaign journalism outside the sphere of straight journalism.

inheriting Thompson's responsibilities as the reporter who would do battle with the monster in the White House ("Matt Taibbi's New Book").

⁷⁰ See for instance "Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail" by Debra Black in 1991, "Fear & Loathing on the European Campaign Trail: Political Consulting is Becoming a Global Business" by Peter Gwin in 1998, "The Fear of Loathing on the Campaign Trail" by James Bennet in 2000, "Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail 2000" (which even begins "With all due respect to the great gonzo [sic] journalist Hunter S. Thompson") by Paul Bunner in 2000, "Australia: Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail" by Keith Suter in 2002, "Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail: Politicians are Pandering to Prejudices and Stoking Anxieties" in the London *Financial Times* in 2005, "Fear and Loathing in Kansas City: Political Harassment and the Making of Moderates in America's Abortion Wars" by Alexander Thomas T. Smith in 2010, and "Fear and Loathing on the GOP Campaign Trail" by Aaron Deslatte in 2010; and this list is not all-inclusive but a selection of recent articles representing the breadth of Thompson's notoriety among journalists.

The mirroring of Thompson's and Wallace's reportage is even more evidenced in the introduction that Wallace added to the expanded edition of the article in his collection *Consider the Lobster: And Other Essays*, where he (like Thompson in *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*) addresses not only the editorial constraints of magazine writing but more importantly his intended approach to the campaign (*Consider the Lobster* 156-159). Like Thompson's introduction, Wallace's shares insights into the choices he made in his article and its framework as offering an atypical campaign report of an outsider's perspective with an unusual agenda (*Consider the Lobster* 156-159). Particularly notable is Wallace's claim the article is not "pro-McCain" but "neither is it anti; it's just meant to be the truth as one person saw it" (*Consider the Lobster* 157). The article was, in other words, an intentionally subjective assessment; much like Thompson's agenda of "going to Washington [...] 'To check out the people and find out if they're *all* swine'" (*FLCT* 28; emphasis in the original). Furthermore, Wallace's positioning of himself as a *Rolling Stone* reporter is reminiscent of Thompson's self-described role as a journalist who was not quite normal – and liked it:

I was absurdly proud of my *Rolling Stone* press badge and of the fact that most of the pencils and campaign staff referred to me as "the guy from *Rolling Stone*." I will confess that I even borrowed a friend's battered old black leather jacket to wear on the Trail so I'd better project the kind of edgy, vaguely dangerous vibe I imagined an *RS* reporter ought to give off. (*Consider the Lobster* 158)

Even the notion that working for *Rolling Stone* (though in 2000 a long-established publication at thirty-three years old) was still a marker of disreputability to the political establishment is reminiscent of Thompson's 1972 set-up: "journalistically, my covering the campaign for this particular organ turned out to have a big effect on what I got to see and how various people conducted themselves when I was around. For example, it was the main reason why the McCain2000 High Command pretty much refused to have anything to do with me" (Wallace, *Consider the Lobster* 158-159). Likewise Wallace's claim that "the document itself is sort of rhetorically directed at voters of a particular age-range and attitude, and I'm figuring that the occasional *Rolling Stone* reference might help keep the reasons for some of this rhetoric clear" is reminiscent of Thompson's positioning of both himself and *Rolling Stone* as speaking to the kind of countercultural freaks, drug users, and liberals that were not represented in more so-called "legitimate" publications (*Consider the Lobster* 159; *FLCT* 27-28, 30). Wallace's personal mode of writing represents the legacy of the New Journalists and in particular of Thompson in

modern campaign reportage. In an analysis of Wallace's journalism in *Salon*, Daniel B. Roberts goes so far as to claim that Wallace "in myriad ways, was [Thompson's] heir". That the New Journalism approach that Thompson brought to campaign journalism in 1972 could continue to be an effective mode of campaign journalism in 2000 demonstrates the significance of the impact of New Journalism on the future of campaign journalism. The rejection of the need for pure objectivity, and the importance of the perspective of the involved reporter, are the legacies of which Thompson's framework continues to be an exemplar.

Responses to Steinem's campaign journalism are less plentiful, in part due to the fact that "Coming of Age with McGovern" was not turned into a book like Crouse's, Thompson's, and Mailer's campaign journalism, and it was not until 1983 that it was collected in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. Furthermore, as this thesis's analysis of Steinem makes clear, Steinem's journalism has been neglected due to the lack of critical attention to her work as a female New Journalist, and by the overshadowing of the portrayal of her as a "feminist icon" rather than a more nuanced depiction of her multifaceted career. The latter seems to have been particularly true in the case of "Coming of Age with McGovern," since, though it uses Steinem's feminist awakening as a key part of its framework, it is not singularly nor at first explicitly focused on offering a feminist argument, but weaves it into her campaign reportage. A review in *The New York Times* of *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* from 1983, for instance, uses the article as an example of one of Steinem's earlier works which it calls "anecdotal and not specifically feminist" (Johnson). Another review in 1983 from *Kirkus Reviews* goes so far as to dismiss Steinem's abilities as a journalist because she is a feminist, and suggests that the role of her journalism is only to spread her feminist agenda: "her particular talent has been for perceiving the feminist angle, in her own writing and for Ms., and spreading that recognition" (Review of *Outrageous Acts*). *People Magazine*, on the other hand, viewed the collection as an important part of the feminist movement because it was good journalism, pointing out "Steinem was a respected journalist long before she founded Ms. magazine; until 1971 she had written a political column for New York (another publication she helped found)" (People Staff). And as Steinem noted in her introduction to *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, that the articles in the collection have remained relevant to society long after their initial publication points to a significance beyond the immediacy of reporting on the campaign.

That both the reception in 1972 and the modern legacy of these texts is so varied speaks to the multifaceted nature of New Journalism as a mode of writing without a singular definition. In the more than 40 years since their original publication, the original agendas that these writers used in their journalistic frameworks have become instrumental to the way that we view them now. Crouse's work has become intricately tied to the way that we talk about the system of campaign journalism. Thompson, though *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72* is the least wild of his Gonzo texts, is nonetheless remembered for his specific voice and for the approach he took to the campaign. Mailer focused closely on his thoughts on the election and his text is the least remembered, for his angle was both time-specific and narrow. And Steinem, having the clearest social agenda in her reportage, is remembered more for the agenda than for her work as a journalist. Yet the impact of Crouse, Thompson, and Steinem speaks to the possibility for the use of distinct voice and secondary agendas to contribute to a lasting literary context beyond the immediacy of simple factual reporting, and though Mailer's reportage has been less successful, analysis of it nonetheless reveals valuable insights into the development of New Journalism. Furthermore, as this thesis has made clear, these writers and their campaign journalism are far more complex than the condensed way in which they have been remembered.

Where Do We Go from Here?

The research and analysis in this thesis has revealed that the field of study devoted to New Journalism needs to re-think some of the ways the mode has been written about. There are assumptions in the critical understanding that have been consistently accepted but which should be questioned further. It is crucial to an in-depth understanding of the mode that New Journalism scholarship reassess some of the ideas that we have become accustomed to and make sure they actually fit the aims and output of the New Journalists at the time. The canon has come to accept some very fixed ideas for such an unfixed period in the development and early peak of New Journalism. Turning back to the beginning of the mode, as the introduction to this thesis did, shows how such basic tenets as who is responsible for the creation and naming of New Journalism need to be rethought; credit belongs not solely to Wolfe nor any other single writer. This points to a need to re-examine our assumptions about popular figures in the field. Further examination of Steinem is needed to enrich our view of her as a journalist. And, beyond

Steinem, we should continue to investigate other female New Journalists whose work has been overlooked or not delved into with the depth it deserves. Further examination of Thompson is needed to push beyond the interesting yet overpowering shadow of his Gonzo style. Further examination of Mailer is needed to deepen our understanding of his complex dual role as novelist and journalist, and the effect of that role in our analysis of his journalism. And in 2017 it seems more urgent than ever that we re-examine Crouse's work and think not only of *The Boys on the Bus* as a text about the 1972 campaign, but consider what its analysis, and the role of the visible subjectivity of the reporter that it argued for and the other New Journalists practiced, can teach us about what ramifications can result from a flawed system of campaign journalism.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – and more than forty years after 1972 the United States is no less divided, the politics no less hostile, the war still goes on (albeit in other countries), the innocence once lost has never returned. And the personal journalism so revolutionary in the time of the advent of New Journalism is now something expected from features writers who are no longer fringe elements but “serious” journalists, with magazines like *Rolling Stone* held to the same standards of accuracy and truth as newspapers. The more things change, the more things stay the same, and instead of being just historical texts of a time long since passed, the campaign journalism from 1972 foreshadows and echoes the political and campaign journalism of the modern day. Nineteen seventy-two is not just key to understanding the development of New Journalism, or of campaign journalism, but to the beginning of the personal and significant role that kind of journalism has come to occupy in modern society.

In particular, in light of the role of the press in the 2016 presidential election and the hostile treatment of the press by Donald Trump immediately after his victory, it seems that all of the lessons that the campaign journalism and role of the press in 1972 have to offer with regards to subjectivity in campaign reportage have not been taken on board by modern journalism. There are echoes between the relationship of Nixon and the press and Trump and the press. See for example a report by Dan Rather that only one week after winning the electoral college vote in the 2016 election, Trump evaded both the press pool and his own press secretary in order to have a private dinner with his wealthy supporters, something Rather found to raise “alarm bells” as an action that is troublingly abnormal for a president-elect: “Every President in recent memory has traveled with the press pool. It is there for a reason [...] If news breaks around him or involving him, it is the public's right to know about it. That is the nature of democracy”. The alarm bells that ring for

Rather here take on a particularly troubling tone when we consider Nixon's behaviour, and the outcome of his private machinations and restrictions of the press, especially since even before Trump could be sworn in to office, transgressions to rival Watergate began to surface, including the possible collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russian government in the hacking of the 2016 election (Sanger).

In light of these disturbing similarities to the 1972 political landscape and the way it was covered in the media, it seems that society has not learned the lessons that a close examination of that campaign coverage provides, and which suggest that campaign journalism needs to do more than just cover the facts and reproduce speeches, and that greater critical analysis of candidates is needed even if that analysis may contain elements of open subjectivity. Though Trump actively campaigned more than Nixon, the exclusionary tactics that he utilised in his manipulation of the press bear a striking resemblance to Nixon's in 1972:

excluding the media was a regular feature of the Trump campaign, as journalists and news organizations were routinely blacklisted by Trump's staff from getting credentials for campaign events and restricted to an isolated area when they were allowed in. In addition, Trump himself regularly called out and disparaged members of his press pool during campaign appearances, and even threatened lawsuits and — should he become president — executive action, over stories he deemed as false and unfair. (Danner)

This was campaign behaviour that took Nixon's tactics and made them even more aggressive. There are echoes in this behaviour of the threats made by the Nixon administration towards Bernstein and Woodward when they started reporting on Watergate in 1972, such as John Mitchell's threat to Bernstein: "Did the committee tell you to go ahead and publish that story? [...] As soon as you're through paying [*Washington Post* lawyer] Ed Williams and the rest of those fellows, we're going to do a story on all of *you*" (Bernstein and Woodward 105; emphasis in the original). Trump's treatment of the press as the enemy both during and after the campaign is if anything more blatant and hostile than Nixon's was.

And yet, despite the blatant abuse and manipulation of the press, it was a tactic that worked for Trump in 2016, just as it had for Nixon in 1972. Prior to the 2016 election, Nathan Gelgud wrote and illustrated a guide to covering a convention like Mailer, based on *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, that Gelgud concluded by proclaiming:

for the weird, toxic current that runs beneath the surface of what we see on television, to know what was happening in the half-drunk conversations among the powerful in bars around Cleveland and Philadelphia, we'd need a voice like Mailer's. Hopefully, right now in an air-conditioned hotel room or airport bar in Philly, some untamed reporter is scribbling notes for what will become the 2016 version of Mailer's compact, important, and singular book.

And yet that was not the case, and hopes for such reporting were dashed. Now, after the 2016 campaign and election, the press faces a disturbing trend of behaviour from Trump, such as his post-election berating of the major news anchors in a meeting of the networks (Smith and Halper), before "escalating his attacks on journalists as 'the enemy of the people'" and banning from the White House briefing room reporters from *The New York Times*, *BuzzFeed News*, *CNN*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Politico*, the *BBC* and *The Huffington Post* (Davis and Grynbaum). The media has pushed back, beginning immediately after the election: Charles M. Blow of *The New York Times* declared "No, Mr. Trump, we will not all just get along. For as long as a threat to the state is the head of the state, all citizens of good faith and national fidelity – and certainly this columnist – have an absolute obligation to meet you and your agenda with resistance at every turn"; Margaret Sullivan of *The Washington Post* warned against the "post-truth world" of Trump's administration in which he disseminates lies and disinformation via Twitter; John Daniszewski, the Vice President for Standards of the *Associated Press*, cautioned the news media not to normalise the white supremacists and white nationalists (who both support and in many cases work for Trump in his administration) by referring to them by them as "alt-right" or "alternative right". But surely it would have been better to have approached the campaign differently, rather than wait until after the election was over to address issues which could have been raised before. This is not to suggest that the outcome of the 2016 is to be blamed on the press, but that the way that the campaign was covered was an important factor. After the election Susan McWilliams of *The Nation* wrote that Thompson had predicted the "retaliatory, right-wing politics that now goes by the name of Trumpism" in *Hell's Angels*. The time is ripe then, for a re-examination of the lessons afforded by the 1972 campaign reportage that American campaign journalism could have already learned, so that if the United States pulls itself out of the pit that has been dug, the mistakes of 1972 and 2016 are not repeated again.

Additionally, the substantial role that misogyny played in the way that Hillary Clinton was reported on and portrayed by both the press and the public shows that the

inequality of the role of women in campaigns that Steinem clearly marked out in her reportage is no less restrictive and damning to women now than it was 1972. Writing during the campaign, Paul Krugman of *The New York Times* argued there was a false equivalency in the way the press portrayed the two candidates. Trump was “graded on a curve” where “If he manages to read from a TelePrompter without going off script, he’s being presidential” and “many of his multiple scandals” got “remarkably little attention”. Conversely, “we have the presumption that anything Hillary Clinton does must be corrupt,” a framework of reporting, according to Krugman, that affected the majority of the press including the Associated Press and demonstrated a campaign with coverage more engaged in “innuendo” than fact. Writing about the 2008 election, when Clinton ran against Barack Obama in the Democratic primary, Steinem observes:

A woman reporter from *The Washington Post* wrote about a Hillary suit jacket that disclosed a bit of cleavage and called it “a provocation.” No such charge had been leveled at male presidential candidates, from John F. Kennedy to Obama, when they were photographed on the beach in bathing suits. About Hillary, Rush Limbaugh asked: “Will this country want to actually watch a woman get older on a daily basis?” (*My Life on the Road* 166)

These are strikingly similar remarks to those Steinem heard about herself, the other campaign workers, and Chisholm in 1972. Steinem is not shocked by the treatment of women in the media even after so many years: “No wonder such misogyny was almost never named by the media. It *was* the media” (*My Life on the Road* 166; emphasis in the original). In the wake of the 2016 election she stated in an interview: “I suspect many fewer people are going to tell me we live in a post-racist, post-feminist world now” (“Gloria Steinem: ‘Fewer people’”).

The critical eye with which the New Journalists approached campaign coverage in 1972 is needed just as much now as it was then. *The Washington Post* Editorial Board, speaking to the distorted way that Trump and Clinton were portrayed in the media, stated: “Imagine how history would judge today’s Americans if, looking back at this election, the record showed that voters empowered a dangerous man because of ... a minor email scandal. There is no equivalence between Ms. Clinton’s wrongs and Mr. Trump’s manifest unfitness for office” (*The Washington Post*). Placing this question against an analysis of the 1972 campaign shines a light on how little progress we have actually made. Compare this to the disbelief of Mailer or Thompson that so evil a man as Nixon could be elected to office, and the crushing depression of Thompson when he was. Or,

more forebodingly, compare this to the facts of Watergate that *The Washington Post* had begun reporting on before the election, but that had not been taken up by the mainstream press until it was too late and Nixon was in office. Now more than ever there needs to be a critical eye towards how campaigns are reported on, to the relationship between the press and presidential candidates, the practice of so-called objectivity, and the function of frameworks in journalism.

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