

Teju Cole speaks with Kelly Rich

Transcript

Aarthi Vadde

Hello and welcome to Novel Dialogue, a new podcast sponsored by the Society for Novel Studies. I'm one of your hosts Aarthi Vadde. John Plotz is my co-host and co-creator of the show. You'll be hearing from him in upcoming episodes. Here in novel dialogue, we believe that critics and novelists belong in conversation and we invite them to talk about novels from every angle, how we read them, write them, publish them, and remember them.

We strive to bring you our listeners friendly and sophisticated dialogues that dissect the art of novel writing and consider the influence of characters, thoughts and stories on how we think about our world. If you like what you hear, please subscribe to novel dialogue on iTunes, Stitcher, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Today I'm in the virtual studio with two incredibly talented writers and thinkers. Kelly Rich is our critic and Teju Cole is our novelist. Kelly is an associate professor of English at Harvard where she teaches courses on modernism, the contemporary novel as well as law and literature. Her forthcoming book is called *States of Repair: Institutions of Private Life in the Postwar Anglophone Novel*.

Hi Kelly, thanks for being here today.

Kelly Rich:

Hello there.

Aarthi Vadde:

Teju Cole is our esteemed novelist and I should add photographer, essayist and all around polymath. He is the author of the prize-winning novel *Open City*, the photobook *Blind Spot*, the essay collection *Known and Strange Things*, and most recently an essay for the *New York Times Magazine* on re-acquainting himself with the Italian painter Caravaggio. In the *New York Times* piece, Teju says, and I'm quoting him: I seek him out Caravaggio for a certain kind of otherwise unbearable knowledge." I have followed Teju's work for almost 10 years now and I would say the same is true about my relationship to his writings and images. His work offers surprising, but not exactly jarring juxtapositions of beauty and violence. In fact, his prose handles contradiction so delicately that unlikely bedfellows – 16th century painting and the global migrant crisis, for example, - become seamlessly connected and mutually illuminating.

Welcome Teju. We're so glad you could do the show today.

Teju Cole

Thank you for having me, Aarthi, thank you.

Aarthi Vadde

Now here is where I recede into the background, only to appear in spots and Kelly, I pass the virtual mic to you.

Kelly Rich

So for this podcast on the novel and narrative, I'm sure that listeners are eager to hear when you might return, if at all, to long form fiction. I know you have a piece of recent piece out, "City of Pain," a beautiful short story that meditates both directly and indirectly, on the sort of state of affairs that we're living in now under coronavirus. But your work has really since departed from long form fiction since *Open City*

and *Everyday is for the Thief*, which was published in 2007 with you revisiting it and revising it in 2014.

You've since turned to meditate on the visual, particularly on photography, which you've been doing serious work in for many years. And you've also really come into your own as a cultural critic and a social commentator.

So in a way, I think you're actually well placed, perhaps more so than other novelists to comment both on the affordances, but also what you see as the limitations of the novel.

So I was hoping we could start there.

If you could comment a bit on why the departure knowing of course that so much of your work still is in conversation with the process of writing novels. As you know, in *Blind Spot* for instance. But if you could comment on why this departure and what might draw you back to the novel, which I think so many of us are eager for you to return to the novel.

Teju Cole

Yeah. Yes. Form, you know for the past few months I have been working quite intently on a novel, and it's the most sustained period of focused work on a longform fiction that I've had since *Open City*, I've done a lot more writing. I have also had many attempts that did not feel like they were what I needed to do or that did not feel like they were working properly. So right now it's a good place to be too...returning to the novel as a maker of a novel, but also as someone who's just taught novels and somebody who thinks about novels in a critical way.

It's a funny but interesting position to be in fact. Part of what I have to do when I sit at my desk and I'm creating these pages that are set in a fictional or fictionalized world. Part of what I have to do is ask myself questions about what the novel can do now. So I'm interested in the flexibility of the form in breaking the form in pushing the form forwards.

Aarthi Vadde:

And one of the things I really think about when I recall all of your really, I think, significant work in what many people take to be an insignificant medium, which is social media. When I think about you know, the fait-divers experiments on Twitter or the crowdsourced distributed short story "Hafiz," I sometimes think about you as someone who took a break from writing novels but had the spirit that people had when the novel was knew. You were testing a new medial environment. You know, a Samuel Richardson writing *Clarissa* thought he was addressing women of a certain type to educate them, but Daniel Defoe wanted to trick his readers, and he wanted them to think *Robinson Crusoe* was.

Teju Cole

Was a memoir.

Aarthi Vadde

Was a memoir precisely, and so is there something about letting your creativity move into new places that preserves the spirit of a novel if not the genre or the form that we have now taken to recognize as novel.

Teju Cole

Yeah, I think I mean I think well back in my active Twitter days, one of the things I said was that you know if you're you don't go into a marathon and say I have not trained at all.

I've not done any running. I've saved everything for the day of the marathon. You'll collapse, you know what you do is that you run. You do 10 miles.

You do 5 miles.

You do 10 miles, then you do a half marathon and then you do a full marathon in practice and then on the week before that you taper it down, but you're running all the time.

You don't say I'm saving it all for that day and I was interested, particularly in Twitter in saying I'm not saving anything for later. That even if I'm writing a tweet, my concentration wants to be there.

You know, but your question also relates to actually the thought I was following earlier, which is that when I sit down to write, I'm not only writing against or with or conscious of the possibilities for the novel now or whatever I'm also writing in response to everything I have said about novels, you know I wouldn't call it pressure. I will call it, um, a sudden responsibility for proof of concept. You know I can't.

I cannot sit down and write a conventional novel. A lot of people can, and that's fine. I mean. I have said so many things over the years about novels and thinking and creativity and about the relationship between inventing things and taking them from life. And all of that when now, I'm inside this novel, I keep remembering so much of that. I keep imagining myself not only finishing the book, but in a strange kind of way potentially discussing it with Kelly, right?

You know what does it mean to write for that future intelligent reader who also knows what's up inside the history of the novel?

Kelly Rich

Can I just jump in here. We're both thrilled to hear that this is some of the work that you're doing right now, and I know you've described *Open City* as a reader's writing. You know, inflected by *Mrs. Dalloway*.

I'm curious to know, maybe as a way to gently probe at your at this new writing of yours is to ask you know, what are? What are the texts or the intertexts that have?

TC

Kelly, I'm not the I'm not the champion reader of contemporary fiction that you are. But I'm aware of a lot of the conversations that are happening. Inside it, you know. So for example, I've only read a few pages, maybe 20 pages of *Outline* by Rachel Cusk. But I've read a bunch of the reviews and I have a sense of what she's up to. And I, I mean I should. I should actually read that book because I like what she's up to. So I like the vibe of it. But I'm thinking about somebody like that, for example, who has a certain relationship between autobiography and fiction. And who's working with reticence quite a bit.

KR

And I think in your case that that conflation between the real you and the you of the writing as you have suggested, happened maybe more, not with your nonfiction work, but with your with your fiction. Especially *Everyday is for the Thief* and also as you mentioned here, with *Open City*, so I'm curious to know how that invocation of the person writing, or the way that you inhabit that figure in your other works. Did that ever kind of become troubled, or did readers ever kind of misread that kind of writerly figure or authorial figure that you that you positioned yourself in in these texts in ways that you were surprised about.

TC

Yes, I think I was fortunate enough with *Open City* finding a slow but steadily increasing readership that inevitably it fell in the hands of some strange readers. As well, and was misread in certain ways. I think this is something that I suspect, at least in the US is a bit racialized the idea of who can invent. And who is always a memoir, a writing subject. Let's

say over the 10 years of the life of the book I've seen it's common enough for people to say, oh, I really thought it was you. And then you know something strange happened at the end and I realized it wasn't like, well, yeah, if you've been paying attention all through it, you'll also know that it's not me, but OK. Now you have, you know I've had people ask me whether, you know, what part of Germany my mother is from is.

My mother is not German. Julius' mother is German and so on. But a couple of times. Once was in 2011 when the book came out and then the second time was actually late last year I have encountered people who thought I was using the book to confess to having committed rape. So they really thought it was a straight memoir. That's worrisome.

AV

To Say the least.

TC

To say the least, uhm, yet that I think that's what. It's an exaggerated version of what writers of fiction are. Tempted by writing fiction. Because on some level, you're always putting it out there, the idea of saying I dare you to imagine me having these thoughts. If I, say write a character has certain thoughts, I am telling you that, at least in the guise of writing that character, I have had that thought. Right, it is. It's even more fraught and more in certain ways, more dangerous than when an actor does it.

Usually because when we're watching something that line is very, very clear.

AV

So I was thinking about the direction that perhaps creative writing pedagogy has gone in in the last decade or two, and just in general the direction progressive politics has gone in. And whether this has something to do with the restraint people now feel they must show in the face of writing who they perceive to be other than themselves, and so now there is something about the reception of a character that is shaped by the notion that one can only write what one knows. And so I'm curious whether. You lose, I mean *Open City* thinks so deeply about the relationship between distance and intimacy and what is the way to address another person's history. What is the way to connect across difference and so with autofiction like you said you're provoking or even courting the conflation of character and reader. But you've already been subjected to it in a way, and now you're taking control of it.

TC

That's right.

AV

Yeah, and so I'm just wondering if you know, as both of you have been in the classroom together.

Is there is a sea change in what writers feel they can authoritatively write about, especially young writers?

TC

You know one of the things that occurs to me as we seek to make rounded characters, and this actually relates to also to the classroom question as we seek to invent rounded characters is that genuine autobiographical attention potentially could give us the deepest roundness of all. Potentially could. Just because of how much hesitation, reversal, reconsideration you can put into the narrative into that into that person, you know, uhm? So OK, we have many big

political discussions in our everyday life and if you go on social media you will think oh battle lines are cleanly drawn.

If you go into your text messages to the people you actually like and respect. You see that everything is complicated. And to write about any of those things over by graphically means to say this, but also this. But on the other hand, consider this and a few days later I actually thought of this other thing even while you're keeping in front of yourself. Core of moral commitments. How that plays out can be infinitely nuanced, and I think that's interesting to find a way to try to find a way of writing that down that does not have the novel dying a death of 1000 cuts but, but to actually have it be propelled by that kind of sane consideration and reconsideration. You know that I think is what excites me the most about it, you know.

I mean, I can allude to one thing I've sort of written, for example, whether. Characters thinking about Bach right? And about some stuff that he likes in Bach that I like in Bach. And if you ask me to talk about, but there are many things I could say if I was just thinking, oh, this character just likes whatever this recording of the Goldberg variations. That's easy and simple enough. But for myself. It goes into so many other things including the fact that Bach is a kind of shorthand for a particular kind of sophistication, right? So Dutch people love blah, you know, Dutch intellectual, German Germans of course, but touch intellectual people are like, ah, you know.

So as racialized American subject, what's my relationship to their love of all you like? But you must be one of us. Well, I'm not one of you, and not at all thinking about Bach himself. Being in, you know Germany and the you know 18th century very much a religious figure working inside that context

was it where there's a great deal of anti-Semitism which shows up in his own work as well.

Nobody writes about this ever, and then looping that back into the way anti-Semitism might function in the contemporary for a young black person like myself who is interested in speaking about Palestinian rights. Public discourse definitely will never discuss the fact that you know the Saint John passion or the you know, the Saint Matthew passion are basically antisemitic texts, but if you say you know Free Palestine, it's like: Are we going to fire you or not? You know?

AV

The way you talked about Bach reminded me of the way you talked about Caravaggio in the New York Times piece, and I'm going to quote you again because I have it here.

I apologize if that's at all discomfiting OK.

TC

No, it's a recent enough piece that I'm proud of. It OK, yeah.

AV

Well, I highlighted.

TC

The old stuff I'm like oh good for them, but right now this is the best I could do under pandemic conditions.

AV

Oh it's wonderful. I mean, this is a part that I highlighted because I think it precisely goes against the mentality of either you love Bach or you want a free Palestine. "So the very act of looking at an old painting can be so strange. It is an activity that is often bound up with class identity or social aspiration. It can sometimes feel like a diverting or irritating stroll amongst white people's ancestors. It can also often be wonderful, giving the viewer a chance to be blessed by a stranger's ingenuity, but

rarely something even better happens. A painting made by someone in a distant country hundreds of years ago, and artists careful attention and turbulent experience sedimented onto a stretched canvas, leaps out of the past to call you to call you through attention in the present. To drive you to confusion by drawing from you both the sense of alarm and a feeling of consolation to bring you to something that is well beyond the grasp of language, something that you wouldn't wish to live without.”

In there in one sentence, maybe two is just why we look at objects of art, right? why we read and why we think about music and it starts with what sounds like it's going to be a sociological critique of aesthetics. Which it also is. I mean, it's both at once. It's true aesthetic experience felt in with a sense of immediacy and with full critical knowledge of patterns of taste and their associations.

TC

Always fighting for that irreducibility. You know is where I think this actually connects to what Kelly and I tried to do in the classroom. You know we taught a classical literature today and we had a bunch of mostly first years and second years. Presenting them an array of fascinating 21st century texts, but mostly trying to teach them Open minded habits of reading. I don't think it worked in every single case because some students just really knew what they wanted out of a book. But I think for many students there was a surprise. Oh, I can read not just for information. But for ways of apprehending information. You know, for ways of expanding my mind, and I think this is a like something that we hope to like deposit you know into into their minds and I would like Kelly to actually address that a little bit how questions of tolerance and open mindedness intersected with what we were doing in the classroom.

KR

Yeah, I mean, I think that we each had different mantras or assorted axioms. Literary axioms that we brought to the class and what I found so invigorating and yeah, were refreshing pedagogically was that it looked different for both of us, for it looks different for a literary critic than it did for a writer.

Too often said, you know, I want you to think about things from a writerly perspective, and that didn't always. It certainly overlapped, and one of the reasons I was excited to teach this class with you to do this, because I think you're, you know. You have a a bright, alive, literary critical mind, as well as a creative mind. And so I thought that these those two things with that kinship would work really well in the classroom, and it did, but some of the moments I most appreciated where were moments were that you spoke as a sort of creative writer and I think for me as a reader.

What I tried to impress upon the students was what I called saying yes to the text, and I inherited this from David Kazanjian at Penn, who inherited this from Gayatri Spivak back at Columbia I believe.

TC

I really loved that it really. Yeah, saying yes to the text stayed with me, yeah?

KR

Yeah, and it did with the students too. I think saying yes to the text multiple times in order to really inhabit a text and really understand what it's saying. You have to say yes at least two times. The first time you just have to say yes by saying by reading it all the way through which you know for some students that is hard given the amount of reading that they have to do and and the chaos of their lives right now anyway, but the second yes is to say to really understand almost on the

writer's own terms, what that writer is trying to say, and then only then, can you move to a place of critique.

TC

A thought I've had recently is that in 1940, let's say in the late 40s around the time when my parents are born. The world look a certain way. It was ruled by the British and the French and a small handful of others. The world had been carved up. In Post World War Two, it was certainly, I mean the world my grandparents were born into not only looked a certain way, but made a certain kind of sense. Because that was what the world was. 10 years later, the world looks completely different, but it doesn't only look different. It has been. The ways of thinking about it. There's no going back. So. In the late 40s, if you're British, you're thinking and our colonies and these people in those foreign countries who look a certain way. It is only fit and proper for them to pour the labor of their lifetimes into producing prosperity for us. That was what the world was set up as. And whatever. In a sense, anybody might marry it for themselves in that time period. As a white person in Britain. It was impinged upon by this crime that they did not even recognize.

In 1960, the British leave Nigeria, by which time they've left almost everywhere else, right by that time by this by the 60s. By the mid 60s that empire is over. It happened very fast. And so that, formally speaking, 15 years later when I'm born, but it's only 15 years. But 15 years later, you know that's a gap between now and 2006. It's not very long ago, 15 years before I'm born, Nigerians are formally second class citizens in their own country to white British overlords. It blows the mind. Formally speaking, you were secondary to them in terms of your rights in your own country, you know if we had railway lines, they took things from the interior out to the ports so they could go out to Manchester and Liverpool and Bristol.

And I think. Decolonization is an analogy, but of course it's also real and continuing and I feel as though just the way things happen so fast in this period. Around 60 years ago. I think in the past few years we're in a similar conceptual seachange. And it's happening so fast that it's bewildering. You know, come and it impinges a lot on the art that's made on what students learn on how they think about it and what assumptions are made.

For example, Kelly and I are both members of an English Department. A thing, an entity that was designed to do a certain kind of work. And under a certain set of assumptions. I could whisper this part; those assumptions; they no longer hold.

AV

Absolutely.

TC

The world Is something else. And it is related to that that postcolonial moment, because once again, the question oF equality of persons comes up. You know things that could not be questioned are now being questioned, cause why could they not be questioned? So if somebody says, for example, that well, obviously, Shakespeare is the essential writer. It is true that that was essential for a long time. And now in our moment, with all our subtlety and all our love art and our love of humanity, it is actually legitimate to say OK, obviously why?

KR

In this new moment, which I think is really spot on. As a writer, do you want your readers to feel or or what kind of work do you want your writing to do to your reader? That feels different than the self of 5-10-15 years ago? That's the short span that you mentioned here.

I just want to quote, I think in an interview you said about your photography that your early work of your early work. You wanted people to say wow and your later work you wanted them to say "hmmmm."

TC

Now I want to say I'm much more curious about the gaps in the record, but the gaps in the account that we've been given due to our education of what counts as greatness. I have no patience for people who think you know they're too black to enjoy Mahler or whatever. OK, fine, live your life. But you know don't you can't take mine away from me or who think you know, whatever their race politics is so intense that they're not going to get anything out of Emily Dickinson, OK? If you want to be deprived, that's your issue. But the flip side of that is that claims have been made for Emily Dickinson and for Beethoven. And for Fellini. And for all the inherit, you know. And for Homer for all the inheritance of Western higher education. Claims that not only need to be interrogated because I'm not trying to say oh, if Beethoven is not the greatest composer is not the greatest composer, then who is kind of thing.

Whatever and now we have to find somebody.

I'm. I'm I'm actually not also that interested in the project of saying George Bridgetower, whom Beethoven knew and who was Black, was actually as good as composers Beethoven, 'cause he wasn't.

I'm interested in the whole Western systems investment in greatness. That is where I think like the big postcolonial move, conceptual postcolonial move is happening now where people are like thundering about standards and I think the counter view of that is saying: How do we have excellence, which is probably a Maslow need of the human psyche? Like true excellence. And yet not thunder on

about standards in a way that ends up reverting to a pyramid that still has the best white guys at the top.

KR

Yeah, it's not an issue of recovering. It's an issue of finding new ways of as we talked about with teaching apprehending new ways of believing, you know, I mean, that that's again just to speak to your work as a whole.

TC

Yeah, exactly.

KR

I think that a through line is that you do. As a writer, you don't fall into Nihilism or sarcasm. You know there's a real belief in cultural value that sustains your work. And I imagine sustained you as a writer and thinker too. But you're asking what I'm hearing is you're asking along what other tenets might believe be possible?

TC

Precisely, precisely and not only about the past, but also about the present, right?

AV

You know, I found myself thinking of George Lamming through this line of reasoning and I don't know if everyone would call him a great novelist, but I was certainly intrigued by his work enough that I wanted to write about it and his first novel *In the Castle of My Skin*, I think, is a classic by any standard, but one of the things that he said was he wanted to create a novel where a village was the protagonist, not an individual, which goes against the crux of what we think the novel is built to do. And so that estranged the novel from its roots to such a point, where the standards couldn't recognize it for what it was trying

to explode about the standards, and for that reason I think it's a really interesting novel to teach people who are open to questioning the standard or teaching them what it means to measure something by a standard it was openly antagonistic towards, but in a creative way and an accomplished way.

TC

I have not read that and it sounds very interesting to me because I'm now thinking about Saul Bellow's dismissive comments that he made late in life. He said, you know, who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus; the Proust of the Papuans. I'd like to meet him, you know, OK, so, and this was very much recognized for the excuse me.

What you said about Lamming's novel fascinates me. And it actually ends up connecting back to Coetzee's exhausted novels cause on one level, I believe that great novels like *War and Peace*, you know, and *Madame Bovary* have contributed to destroying the novel, right? There's there's a way in which a great novel is like a great empire. It contains within itself the seeds of its own eventual deconstruction. Right, so that at some point in the 16th century we had the we started doing the novels and there's a Rabalais and a Cervantes, and then it moves on from their open-ended form. It's wild. All of this stuff is happening to it and in it. At some point in the 19th century, it becomes a very much verified form, and we have not just novels. We have greatness as the thing in the novel and in the 20th century. There is an American obsession with the Great American novel, and what such a thing could be, so that the idea of it as a world conquering, non-controversially great piece of culture.

And it seemed even as it got less ambitious it formally it got more ambitious in terms of its own notion of its place in the culture. There is

such a thing as a great novel. It's one of the things to which the word great most easily attaches. You know, great, it's a great novel.

What a novel like Lamming's you know suggests. Or maybe you know, maybe the Rachel Cusk's if I read deeper into it is why great? Are there other ways of approaching what the novel can do and be? And I'm not talking about a light, an entertaining novel, but maybe the greatness factor is a problem?

KR

I was thinking about your comment in class when we read the Carvaggio piece and you said that you know every work should have a vulnerability to it, but also he wanted it to have a certain twist of the knife. To do that to the reader of the *New York Times Magazine*, I'm wondering in this conversation about greatness versus excellence in thinking about how. How a novel can do this work?

TC

Thank you, that's such a productive question. Once again, we've all been raised to think of the work of scholarship as well as creative writing as being done in a certain way. Before a certain audience, and all of this is so formalized already that it is understood to pass without comments, but you don't need to say anything about it, you know, and therefore we have great novels that win prizes, you know, and we have good pieces of scholarship that get people, jobs and so on.

And now with this conceptually Copernican revolution that we have. You have to say who is editing it? With what sensibility? For what eventual audience? To what purpose? You know? It would sound weird to say what's the race of my editor. I don't care how weird anything sounds, but my editor right now for this novel is a white woman. It is not irrelevant that I can have serious conversations with her about political positioning and what we are and what the world is. I think it

helps that she is younger than I am and she is queer. Because it means that conversation is already open and it helps she's a woman. Now if it was a straight white guy who was older than me. If he'll be, he can be fine. He's a professional. But there's a lot of work for him to do, and it's not enough to simply be a professional anymore. It's not enough to put a book out into the world and say if it's good, it will be recognized regardless of who you are as your color, your gender, or any of that.

AV

No.

TC

A book for, you know, white middle class women buy books made by mainstream publishers. That is the audience. We are in the age of post rudeness. It would have been rude to say that. Now we can say what does it mean to cater for that audience? What does it mean to not cater for that audience?

As a black writer, what does it mean to cater for the white people in universities who assign books.

What does it mean to be pushing against that? This is not even about or whether my work is set in Nigeria or whether it's set in. There's a way in which if I write something that's set in Nigeria, that's actually more digestible than if I write something that is set here, but that is poking too much at their sacred cows when I write in the *New York Times*, and I write white people's ancestors.

You know there was a long conversation with my editor at the *Times* about do we need to say that it's like? Well, yeah we do because for me when I'm in those spaces, I experience them as being surrounded by white people's ancestors, you know. And that is what and I would not even call it violence.

I'll say more about you know standing ones ground. Even reverse about something is happening. There's a detournement happening. You know, things are being reoriented. It is it is a little, quite literally this collective revolutionary move we're doing.

AV

So the the line I.

TC

An and and and it helps us understand what we're reading.

AV

I just wanted to make sure I understood the line that I quoted back to you about standing in the room of white ancestors was the line the editor questioned keeping into in the essay.

TC

Yeah, I mean I write quite a bit for the *New York Times* and every time I write something about whiteness or white people or something like that, which I think is actually kind of a habitual thing for me. it's always queried and I always end up retaining it.

AV

Good.

TC

And my editor like understands me now and she defends me.

It's you know you must be aware that it's weird for white people to be reading a piece, and suddenly it says white people. You know it's strange for them. They feel accused, they're like why are you bringing up race, huh?

AV

Particularized.

TC

Right, right. Wow, I'm so glad you asked, you know so those forms of signaling that I'm not just some black person here who is putting up a pretty good show of being one of you. In fact, I'm not one of you. I'm speaking to my experience and you're welcome to listen in.

KR

So our work is coming to a close now. The podcast is coming to a close and the signature question that Novel Dialogue, this podcast, always asks at the end is about pleasure, actually, and what do you do or eat or play or listen to or read when the going gets really tough? What's your favorite treat while in the throes of writing?

TC

I'm a great lover of music. I sometimes take out the really good headphones and listen to something really closely and really with it, so I'm a music nerd in that way. But I also like having music that requires a different kind of focal attention. You know not elevator music, because that is too dumb for me and it drives me crazy. But music that is interesting enough in the medium zone where it's interesting enough to hold my interest but not overwhelm it and I love making playlists that I have with me when I'm writing, but especially when I'm editing.

So like for example in the past few days I've been working on like a 6 hour playlist that just has classical and jazz, and like you know a lot of non-vocal stuff, some soundtracks and things like that.

Nothing too much with people singing in English because that'll drag me out of my words, but it has just been so much fun to like. How can I

make a coherent 6 hour playlist, so that's a real pleasure for me. I listen to hours of music every day.

AV

I have to thank you both so much for doing the show and bringing such scintillating conversation to our first season as we approach the end of another Novel Dialogue, John and I would like to thank the Society for Novel Studies for its sponsorship of the podcast and acknowledge support from Brandeis University, the Mellon connected Ph.D program and Duke University.

Nai Kim is our production intern and designer and Claire Ogden is our sound engineer. Recent and upcoming dialogues include Elizabeth McMahon in conversation with Helen Garner and Martin Puchner speaking to Catherine Lacey about her latest novel, *Pew*. So from all of us here at Novel Dialogue. Thanks for listening. And if you liked what you heard, please subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher or wherever you get your podcasts.