

An Interview with David Lodge at Cambridge

INTERVIEWEE: David Lodge (1935-) is a distinguished contemporary British novelist as well as a critic. He is particularly well known for his campus trilogy - *Changing Places*, *Small World* and *Nice Work* and his works of literary criticism such as *The Language of Fiction*, *Working with Structuralism* and *After Bakhtin*. His literary creation represents the literary tendency of the post-war British neo-realism and his literary criticism reflects the successive impact of New Criticism, Structuralism and Bakhtin's theory of fiction on British critical circle. Though 75 years old, Lodge is still active in English literary arena and had his last work *Deaf Sentence* published in 2008 and will have a new novel about H. J. Wells published next April. Among Chinese readers, Lodge is very popular, for his *Small World* is often ranked with Qian Zhongshu's *The Fortress Besieged* which is the favorite of most of Chinese educated readers.

INTERVIEWER: Rong Ou, Hangzhou Normal University, Hangzhou 310036, China; E-mail: rongou2007@163.com

OU: It seems that most of your novels draw to a large extent upon your own experience. How much do you think a writer can make use of his own experience without being read auto-biographically?

DL: I think readers tend to connect a writer's work with anything they know about the writer's life. You know something you cannot change is this kind of curiosity. But I think it's something that as a writer you should not worry about. I think most novelists will say the same thing that they draw their own experience and their own introspection, but they are combining these with invented things and things they acquire from other sources, from books, from research and so on. It's a mixture of personal experience and fiction. It's something that only a novelist knows and even I forget sometimes what I made up and what actually happened to me. Fiction gives you freedom to take something that has actually happened and change it for artistic effect. So it would be a mistake to read a fiction auto-biographically as a simple transcription of writer's experience, but of course there is almost inevitably auto-biographical element, in some cases, more than others; I mean in my own work. I've admitted that in *Deaf Sentence* there's a lot of auto-biographical material in it. So that's briefly the answer. I think it's a special problem with readers who know you personally, your family, your friends. For this reason I just don't talk about my work to my family, my children, in detail. They will inevitably recognize things; they

know where this or that element in a novel came from. But they are not the readers you are writing for, the readers for whom you are just a voice coming from words on a page.

OU: Does it relate to intentional fallacy? You know, the notion of "intentional fallacy" has long been put forward, but still many readers look for the intention of the author.

DL: There is a connection, but they are slightly different questions. The intentional fallacy is the belief that you can ascertain a writer's intentions in a given work by asking him a question or by your knowledge of him in real life; and in that way identify what the intentions of the work are. That is a fallacy, I think, because the intentions of the work should be discoverable from the work. What the writer says his intentions were is not necessarily what that work actually means. You may formulate your intentions before you write it, but you always discover what you have to say in the process of saying it. There is always that area of ambiguity. The man who wrote the original article about the Intentional Fallacy says you don't ask T. S. Eliot, for instance, if you have the opportunity, "what did you mean by this line?" because Eliot is not truly conscious of all the meaning that he's evoking. He may offer an interpretation that is obviously interesting, perhaps more interesting than most, but it's not conclusive.

OU: And sometimes language is autonomous. When you write it down, sometimes it has its own implication.

DL: Yes, yes. It develops. Most writers have this experience. For me readers see things in my books that I was not conscious of putting there, but I accept them. In other cases they see things that I didn't put there and don't accept them as valid. There is such a thing as misreading.

OU: Dennis Jackson holds that "for your characters and for your settings, you seldom venture from academia or the Catholic church." Do you agree with him? Do you think *Author, Author* is your adventure out of these two spheres?

DL: It's true about the novels of modern life that most of them have either some connection of academia or Catholicism, as I do myself. Most of my novels, apart, perhaps, from one about army, *Ginger, You're Barmy*, in most of others that I write about, the main characters are students or university lecturers – and the main characters in *Ginger, You're Barmy* have just left university. The main character of *Therapy* is not an academic. His wife is an academic, but a minor character. And *Therapy* is narrated from the point of view of non-believer. But broadly speaking, the comment is true.

OU: And is *Author, Author* your adventure out of these two spheres?

DL: Yes, I suppose it is really. In many ways, it's totally unlike all the other novels. It's a fact-based novel. And it's kind of non-fiction novel in a way. It's historical, a novel set back in the

past before my own lifetime. It's an exception in my work, and it was a kind of liberation actually, it delighted me to do something completely different, with different rules, drawing on different kinds of material from my other fiction. But again there is some autobiographical emotion in it. I had myself like Henry James this experience of turning from writing fiction to writing plays in middle life. I found it was both exciting and also frustrating, not quite to the extent that James did, but I could identify with his hopes for success and depression when it didn't work out and frustration when he has to collaborate with people who don't always see things the way he wants them to. So I could identify with James in this respect.

OU: Yes, I have read your criticism on the comparison between novel writing and play writing. There are both advantages and disadvantages. With play writing, you can get immediately the audience's response. But sometimes, you have less freedom. Sometimes, the success of the play depends on many factors not only the author himself.

DL: Yes. That's true and when I began writing for television and film I experienced many frustrations as James did. It is called in today's film world "development hell." You keep writing new scripts, getting new suggestions for revision, but nothing happens in the end. That happened to James many times.

OU: How do you regard being categorized as campus novelist or Catholic novelist? It seems to me that you are the last campus novelist, as you say scholarly novelist, after Kingsley Amis and Bradbury up to now. Do you agree?

DL: I'm certainly not the last novelist to write campus novels. There have been several who are younger. There is for instance a novelist called Howard Jacobson. He wrote his first novel *Coming from Behind*, a campus novel, in the 1980s. There are many others but perhaps in England they haven't made a big impact. Many writers now rely on teaching creative writing as their second occupation instead of being an ordinary academic professor as I did. I know quite a few writers who started as freelance writers, but in middle age they take permanent jobs in creative writing. They have done opposite to me, in the other direction.

OU: This may be a tricky question. What is your religious identity? In your opinion, what's the ultimate meaning or value for religion or Christianity?

DL: Well, that's a very difficult question to answer, particularly in a short space of time. Basically if you read my novels in chronological order, it's obvious I was once quite an orthodox, believing, practicing Catholic, that's the education I had, and the fact that I married a Catholic also reinforced that. Intellectually, theologically I have completely changed since I was a young man. I no longer believe literally the doctrines. I am like many educated Catholics in this respect. Some, like myself, go on sort of belonging to the Catholic community. I go to Mass though I don't go every week as I used to with a sense of obligation. Basically I don't

think Christianity or any of the other great world religions has any firm epistemological foundations. They are attempts to explain or address some fundamental problems: why are we here, what it is about? And I don't want to cut myself off from the great tradition of, in my case, Catholic Christianity. So to my mind, religion is a record of human thinking, sometimes quite poetic thinking in the Scriptures for instance, about fundamental questions about life and the mysterious question of what happens after death. That's basically my rather vague position. In some way, it's paradoxical, I suppose.

I don't think people who reject religion all together, and reject the idea of God, really face up to the implications of that position. They don't face up the fact that millions of people in this world don't have a comfortable life, and maybe have a miserable life. There is no hope for them if you deny the validity of religious ideas. So to me, hope has replaced faith. You hope that there is something beyond death, which will rectify the obvious evils and injustices of this world. But it's only hope. There is no real foundation at all. So that's my present position. When I was young I was taught that the Catholic Christian religion was the only really true one. Now Catholics are taught to respect the validity of other faiths. If there are various valid approaches to the same problems, Christian or Islamic or whatever, it's obvious these are all produced by culture. These are all cultural responses to the same fundamental questions.

I'm fascinated by religion but I observe the gradual waning of supernatural belief in the western world. I cannot approve the fanatical and fundamentalist religions that take literally their holy books' sayings which are in fact open to infinite interpretation. The whole cosmology of traditional religion now seems to me childish and mythological so that I can't believe it, can't seriously believe it. But it's easy for me to accept that -- not easy for other people, simple people; simple people want simple reassurance.

OU: So in your book *How Far Can you Go?*, you seem to hold double consciousness, like paradoxical. On one hand, you don't believe it literally, miracle, supernatural thing like that; on the other hand, you do believe there is some hope for one's life.

DL: Graham Greene said something quite interesting when he was old because his faith changed much like mine from being rather orthodox to being agnostic. He called himself a Catholic agnostic. I'm not sure what exactly he meant. But he said something like "I think there is a mystery about our existence, our universe, which is not even the Church can explain". I think that's true. You know, take the idea of God. It seems there is a genuine scientific mystery about how the universe has the qualities it has, because that it happened by chance is so improbable. That sort of question may encourage the idea of God. But the assumption that whatever is behind the visible universe is anything like us, is obviously mythological. Neither science nor religion can solve the mystery.

OU: What do you think when people call you an agnostic Catholic or Catholic agnostic?

DL: Well I call myself an agnostic Catholic. Of course it's not a category recognized by the Church. The whole religious scene is confusing. There are so many debates within individual Churches and between them. The disagreements are often about sexuality, about homosexuality, whether women can be priests, whether priests can marry. These issues are theologically trivial but they are tearing the Christian Churches apart which again suggests that religion is a cultural production.

OU: As to your attitude towards American culture, I find in your earlier novels, you are very positive and quite admire American culture, but gradually, you become more critical of American culture. Is that so?

DL: I think that's probably true with many people in my generation. What evidence do you find that I'm critical of American culture?

OU: For example, I remember in *Nice Work* and in one of your essays, you criticize American academic system, so much competition, and rat's race...

DL: I know most people including a lot of my American friends deplore the way American imperialism developed in the last decade or two, the American interventions in foreign policy since the Second World War have been on the whole disastrous, like Vietnam, the Gulf and Iraq, because it's become a more violent country and religious sentiment has become more fundamentalist. In many ways it's become a rather ugly society, but it has still got some wonderful features. In the academic world, I think political correctness is a stifling influence on intellectual freedom and development which on the whole has a rather bad effect on American writing because most American writers do creative writing courses and most courses are influenced by the climate of political correctness. You aren't supposed to write about anything except your own culture, your own experience. I think American writing has become rather less adventurous on the whole than it used to be. I still find myself more sympathetic to America than my son's generation which was influenced by the Vietnam War. So they never liked it, never really knew what reason there was to like it. My feeling towards America is as somebody who grew up in austerity England just after the war, and saw America as a place of plenty, and also felt a debt of gratitude to America for helping us to win the Second World War. So America has always been a big brother to me in my mind. But I have been rather saddened by the way American civilization and culture have gone in the last two or three decades. So I don't feel so enthusiastic about it as I used to. And I find I'm more and more irritated by the fact that Americans talk very loudly in public all the time.

OU: Many of your novels deal with the decline of religion but since I came to Cambridge, according to my observation, it seems that religion is, "popular" perhaps is not the suitable word, very influential in Cambridge life. Perhaps Cambridge is an exception. Do you think there is a revival of religion?

DL: I don't know how you made this observation, but it's a surprise. My understanding is that Church of England only attracts 1% of the nation's population to attend Church every week. It's very very small. It's possible that within Cambridge, it has a kind of presence that is not typical. Once all the teachers here were ordained priests. And perhaps there is more interest in attending services as all colleges have chapels. But for Catholic churches in England Mass attendance has declined by 40% in the last thirty years. It's still fairly high compared to other Christian churches, mind you. On the whole my view is that official church membership and church attendance is declining quite steeply in England. But people are still interested in some religious ideas, spirituality, meditation, or they are interested in the eastern religions, but I don't think the mass of British people, the ordinary working people, have much religion allegiance. In striking contrast, in the third world they still do.

OU: So you don't agree that religion is reviving now?

DL: No, I don't believe that. Christian leaders don't feel that. They feel very defensive. They feel the West has become totally pagan and materialistic. If you go to Italy, for instance, where the Catholic Church has its headquarters, there are very few people at the church on Sundays compared with the population.

OU: Do you think there is death consciousness in your work?

DL: Consciousness of death? Yes, death has become a primary subject more and more in my work, simply because the fact that one is getting older. When you are young, you really don't think you are going to die. As you grow old, you realize that you are.

OU: But I think your death consciousness can be traced back to your novel *Out of Shelter*. At the beginning of the novel, the hero's good friend, a little girl, they slept together. Then a bomb exploded, the girl was killed.

DL: That part of the novel is completely fictional. That trauma, that episode, was invented to make the hero have a cautious and tentative attitude to life which he has to grow out of.

OU: Then in *Ginger, You are Barmy*, there is death of a soldier...

DL: Again, that was invented though it was not an uncommon event. There was a character who was bullied like that in my own life, in my own squad, but the actual death was invented. I think those deaths are narrative devices but later death becomes a real theme, and consciousness that how to cope with it becomes more important. Of course as one becomes old, some of your friends and relatives die. In family the mother and father die. The idea of death becomes more and more prominent theme really.

OU: With your campus trilogy: *Changing Place*, *Small World* and *Nice Work*, you have combined successfully creative writing and literary criticism, but with *Thinks*, you seem to have developed certain interest and expertise in linguistics, which is also demonstrated in *Deaf Sentence*. Does it mean that you can't find any literary theory which can be combined in your fiction any more?

DL: If that's correct it's partly because I stopped keeping up with literary theory when I took retirement from university in 1986. Then I really got interested in the debate about the nature of consciousness, I read a couple of books and that took me away from literary theory, I suppose. I felt probably I'd done as much as I could do with literary theory as a discourse in fiction. As to linguistics, I explained yesterday why I decided to make my character a linguistics professor who could plausibly explain or be conscious of what is physiologically involved that makes one deaf and I didn't want to make him a literary professor because that would invite a too autobiographical reading of the book. I knew a fair amount of linguistics and my own literary criticism is rather linguistic. So I had that knowledge though I needed to acquire more to write the novel. I think literary theory is not as innovative, lively and interesting as it was once. My sense is it's sort of fading away. Those are the reasons that I don't bring it back into the foreground of my novels.

OU: Have you heard of the saying that after Derrida, nowadays it's the end of theory?

DL: Yes. There is a feeling, I think, that movement has exhausted itself. There are still people in academic world that have an interest in keeping it going and it's still being taught. But I think the excitement, the novelty has gone out of it. A lot of major figures who were the proponents of theory, like Terry Eagleton for instance, have now renounced it or dropped it or written against it. So I think its Day is gone really.

OU: You once claimed that your "quest for a poetics of fiction" ends with your discovery of Bakhtin, because "A vast amount of it [i.e. contemporary literary theory] is not, like the work of Bakhtin, a contribution to human knowledge, but the demonstration of a professional mastery by translating known facts into more and more arcane metalanguages." (*After Bakhtin*, 8). Looking back today, do you still insist on what you said?

DL: Well I can't say honestly that I keep up with the academic literary theory, but that was my feeling at the time I wrote it. I use literary theory quite a lot in my own criticism but always with explanatory purpose. I explain to the readers why they might have felt what they feel when they read a book. A lot of criticism influenced by theory simply translated something from a simple language into something more complicated, and that didn't really explain anything. It's just an exercise in a way. It has become a way proving oneself professionally because it's quite difficult to master. I didn't really like that. I guess it's the fact that I'm a writer as well as a critic

that has made me suspicious that a critic has to demonstrate his professional superiority instead of explaining a text.

OU: I think that's the strength of your writing. Even for your criticism, it's lucid, easy to understand, and even humorous. That's the beginning of my fancy for your writing.

OU: What's your opinion of literary prize? How is it significant to the literature, to the writer and to the reader?

DL: I think it's the main change in the commercial and public aspect of novel writing in the last twenty or thirty years. It's wholly new element in the way that writers are evaluated and acquire the reputation that they have in their own lifetime. The prize will not guarantee the perpetuation of that reputation, does not guarantee that the work will become classic in fifty or a hundred years' time. But at this moment while they are alive relating to a living public, it now seems to be the most influential factor in the reputation of a writer, which I find slightly worrying. When I started writing fiction, there were very few prizes and they made very little difference at all. But since then they've proliferated to an extraordinary extent. Before the age of the prize, reputation was established by reviews and more substantial criticism and by a sort of 'word of mouth', by the consensus of literary intelligentsia, if you like. And these assessments were more provisional and flexible – not a matter of ranking writers as to who is the first, who is the second or third and so on in a competition. I think the competitive prize, this institutionalisation of the competitive element inherent in all artistic activity, is not good for writers' peace of mind. Now it's extremely difficult for young writer to make a career if he or she doesn't win a prize or get shortlisted for one. I think that is bad because prizes are actually awarded rather arbitrarily. It all depends on the chemistry between the judges and who the judges are. There is a literary politics underneath the whole prize system. The general public doesn't realize how arbitrary the decisions of prize jurors are. They think there is kind of absolute standard. The journalists perpetuate that idea. Every time they mention a novel, they say it's shortlisted to Booker or other prizes. It becomes a shorthand or a pecking order. I think it has got out of hand actually. It's all subsidized by commercial organizations who pay for the prize. It costs quite a lot, not just the money of the prize but the setting up of the whole process. They do it for publicity so it is commerce-driven. The media loves it because it's competitive. The Booker Prize only took off in England when they delayed the announcement of the prize until the very day it is given. (In the past the name of the winner was secretly decided at the same time that the shortlist was announced.) The new procedure meant that bookmakers could take bets. It took off with the general public because it was then like a horse race, a competition. It certainly arouses a lot of public interest in literary fiction. To that extent, it's good for the novel, bad for the novelists.

OU: Doris Lessing was the last Nobel Prize winner in the UK. In your opinion, who will be next Nobel Prize winner in the UK?

DL: I really don't know. Nobel Prize is more carefully awarded. A full-time committee spend their whole life reading the nominated people. It's a very very careful process. Booker Prize is decided by a few meetings of people that amount to perhaps twenty hours in all. But there is still political agenda behind Nobel Prize -- that it should be distributed around the world. Doris Lessing is a South African actually. I think she was a worthy winner. I don't think there is any obvious candidate that I can think of now. So I don't like to predict.

OU: You have written two articles on the dilemma of contemporary novelists – “A Novelist at the Crossroads” and “The Novelist Today: Still at the Crossroads?” And you used to classify fiction into modernist, antimodernist and postmodernist. The last mode was also called “the problematic novels” or “crossover fiction”. What do you think of the “state of novel” in the new century, the contemporary English fiction?

DL: I don't read huge amount of fiction now, as I write more of it myself. My impression is there is still a variety of genre. There is no obvious dominant fashion or mode of writing anymore.

OU: How do you understand post-colonial? Since I came to Cambridge, I've found this word is very trendy.

DL: Post-colonial is, to me, a category of content than form. My classification in the essays you mention was about the form, really. You can have post-colonial literature like Salman Rushdie, in the mode of magic realism; you can have post-colonial literature that is more realistic even documentary. So to me, it's a question of subject matter, the stance of the writer towards his own culture against an imperial background or empire, that sort of thing. I guess British fiction has become ethnically and culturally much more varied than it was. You've got a whole new generation of writers who grew up in Britain but actually have non-British or mixed ethnic origins, like Zadie Smith. My impression is that in the mass of literary fiction, one new trend is the biographical novel, more and more, it seems to me, that compared with twenty or thirty years ago. There are many many more novels which take a real life and tell its story using novelistic techniques. That would be one fairly new trend. And I say in my book *Year of Henry James* at the beginning that twenty thirty years ago, I wouldn't have thought of writing a novel like *Author Author*. But now it's very common. So that's one new development. I think in a way British novels are getting more conservative in form. They are very well written, they are technically accomplished; it's partly result of creative writing schools, I think. The young novelists obviously know what they're doing. There has been for some time a preference for first person novels and novels told in present tense, which used to be rare. Now it becomes the standard way of narration. These changes in the style of fiction do not fundamentally affect the

way that literature presents life. Fiction still represents public and private experience through the consciousness of characters, their love affairs, marriage, common life experiences. Another development is that crime novels and science fiction are getting more challenging to the status of the literary novel, claiming to be not just entertainment.

OU: The net literature is very popular in China and it's said that the net literature will be the third type of literature after oral and printing literature. Do you agree?

DL: I don't read it. I know what you are talking about, but I can't really comment. Publishers might respond to it. Would you include blogs in it?

OU: No, not blog.

DL: You mean real ...

OU: I guess it's different in the UK. In China we have several professional websites.

DL: I don't think we have that yet. It could be. For myself I'm too old fashioned. I like serious way of publication. You put your name after your writing. I think it's very arbitrary who finds your work on the net, who reads it. The web seems arbitrary. It's full of junk, rubbish. It's possible that a website could get a reputation as a publisher with good fiction. People would access to get the fiction that way. The question is how the writers are rewarded. There are a few professional writers who make their works available on website for free. Not many writers could afford to do that. That's the whole problem about web. It's free, apart from some advertising which you can ignore. If the web does take over, it will be quite a big crisis for writing as a profession. Journalism has already been feeling the hit, since journalism deals with general information and it's very vulnerable to the competition from web. Novel comes into existence with printing, with copyright, with the ability to sell your work and live by it. I don't think web can offer the writer that kind of support.

OU: In China, we have some professional literature websites. They provide part of books for free. If readers are very interested in reading the whole book, they have to pay.

DL: Yes, that's coming. But it still depends on the existence of conventional publishing. That's the issue: will the book survive? It's quite likely that bookshops may disappear. People simply order their books from book-making source.

OU: Yes, for me, I usually order books on line.

OU: Do you have any work in progress? What is it about? Or what is your next goal of writing?

DL: Yes, I do. The problem is that I don't talk about it. I haven't told anybody what it is, only very few people. I say it's another biographical novel. I had it in mind when I was finishing *Author, Author*. But when I collided with Toibin, I decided I would not write another biographical novel straightway in case same thing happens again. I couldn't bear the same thing happen twice in succession. So I decided to write *Deaf Sentence* instead. I had my ideas in my notebook. I'm glad I did. Lots of my regular readers don't really like *Author, Author*. They like *Deaf Sentence*. That was a good move. I am writing that biographical novel I had in my mind. It's about H. J. Wells, the writer of *Time Machine*. I will publish that next.

OU: How much do you agree with me about your identity of religion-- agnostic Catholic, of literary writing -- dominantly realist or anti-modernist, with post-modernist writing techniques combined, of criticism-- humanist and formalist and of educational profession?¹

DL: Yes, I see basically literature as a communication. The writer is communicating some vision of world, some interpretation of the world. To that extent, I have never sympathized with deconstruction, the most extreme form of post-structuralism. Broadly, I would accept your description.

People in education don't always recognize that wealth has to be created to pay for good education. On the other hand trade itself, I mean industry, commerce, which makes money, is not something you want civilization to be based on or to live for. The recent collapse of financial institutions affects the whole world. It's a very salutary lesson. I suppose I was making rather commonplace statement in *Nice Work* that both the high culture people and the business people tend to look at the world just in their own perspective. They think anything else is rather unimportant. In fact you need both. You do need to create wealth in order to be able to enjoy art and things of spirit. This is always being the case and this used to be the case. I mean the art was patronised by kings and courts. And now it has to be the whole community through taxes that provides money for universities, opera houses and so on. I don't have a strong political commitment in particular. I'm sort of slightly left-center, I suppose. I believe in equitable distribution of wealth, but I also recognize the communist model failed. Now the capitalist model has failed. I made the point in *Nice Work* when Robyn says her brother's girl friend's work as a currency dealer is just "glorified gambling really." It's always been my view that it is totally unproductive, you get always very clever people selling something, knowing that they can buy cheaper next week. Nothing happens, nothing changes except that they get rich. It's completely pointless. But to raise money, to invest it in business, to make things that people want to buy, for everybody's benefit, that's a different matter.

¹ Here the question refers to my analysis on Lodge's multiple identities in my book *The Motif of Crisis in David Lodge's Fiction*, Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2008. I gave a book to Mr. Lodge the day before the interview.

OU: How much do you know about Chinese literature? What is your deepest or general impression of China or Chinese people?

DL: That will be a very short answer. I don't know anything about Chinese literature.

OU: Have you been to China?

DL: No. In 2004, I got invited but I am getting too old to enjoy long distance journeys and my deafness makes it difficult to relate to people. I feel I'm kind of unadventurous in this respect. I observe the rise of China with fascination and certain alarm. People are alarmed about the sudden power of China, in particular, what part it's going to play in global politics regarding environment, whether it can control its sudden industrial revolution, its extraordinary explosion of industrial power, which seems to me almost too quick to be safe because it's very vulnerable to depressions, economic depression. One whole city sometimes makes only one thing. If suddenly no-one wants to buy it the consequences are alarming. I find it extraordinary what transformation China is going through. It reminds me of South Korea in early 1980s. I attended a conference there then. It seemed to me that country had suddenly gone from an agricultural to an industrial society in about ten years. The population seemed to be wondering what had happened to them and the city of Seoul seemed in total chaos, just like our British cities in the 19th century. It's quite dangerous when you get such violent social and economic change.

Everybody seems to think the future belongs to China. American's power is on the wane and the only possible rival is China. I mean America has been largely financed by Chinese money and everything we buy now is made in China. I note that in *Deaf Sentence*.