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Strombo Speak: Conversation Analysis, Democracy, and News Media

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The following Masters project examines to what extent broadcast talk acts as a catalyst in raising the awareness of social justice issues. CBC Newsworld's *The Hour* operates primarily through broadcast talk, defined as any or all conversations that appear in a broadcast setting. The host of *The Hour* George Stroumboulopoulos presents current events, news, and interviews to Canadian audiences. Best known for his informal approach to interviewing, Stroumboulopoulos defies formal interviewing practices by demonstrating both conversational (casual and unstructured types of talk) and journalistic (formal and structured types of talk) approaches to interviewing activists and politicians on *The Hour*. Despite successfully highlighting and personalizing social justice issues using formal and informal interviewing techniques, *The Hour* fails to make connections between social justice issues and the social structure that perpetuates inequality and oppression. *The Hour* does not operate through a social justice paradigm but rather, an entertainment and news paradigm. For *The Hour* to fall within the parameters of a social justice paradigm, building upon a *public communication for sustainable democracy* (Hackett and Zhao, 1998), it must make explicit connections between social issues and the social structure that perpetuates inequality and oppression. Stroumboulopoulos must both present social justice issues and an alternative perspective to major, oppressive, dominant ideologies such as capitalism and patriarchy through broadcast talk. Critical aspects of the show are examined through analysis of ten interviews with activists and politicians on *The Hour* using conversation analysis.

Based on an analysis of broadcast talk, two arguments can be made for Stroumboulopoulos and *The Hour*'s contribution to social justice discourses. First, Stroumboulopoulos' interviewing practices challenge the question/answer format typical of journalistic interviewing and allow more space to articulate alternative approaches to news. Instead of following a standard, formal question/answer technique of journalistic interviews, his informal and conversational approach to interviewing renders his interviews accessible and appealing to a wider audience instead of alienating audiences who are

uninformed by current social and political debates. He creates appealing content across generations by engaging in conversations with guests, instead of interviews.

Secondly, at times Stroumboulopoulos' approach to interviewing reveals qualitative discourse in broadcast talk. Qualitative discourse is defined as personal narrative or emotional, personal accounts of lived experiences. Stroumboulopoulos asks questions that prompt the interviewee to share accounts of their lived experiences working with or within a social movement or issue, from their perspective. Interviews on *The Hour* do not just report facts of social issues, but also share emotional accounts of experiences working within a social movement or issue. His interviews connect personal experience with social issues. This approach to interviewing challenges traditional approaches to journalism and engages audiences through the personalization of social issues.

Despite these offerings to social justice discourses, Stroumboulopoulos is unsuccessful at making connections between social issues featured on the show with a patriarchal, capitalist culture. Although there is a clear highlighting of social issues on *The Hour*, the social system that informs the legal and moral laws is never questioned. Stroumboulopoulos does not introduce underlying social problems to connect the emotive responses of activists with an oppressive social structure. In order for *The Hour* to be politically effective and serve greater purposes in the name of social justice, *The Hour* must arm its audience with the tools and motivation to challenge and change the social structure that allows for gender, class, racial inequality and environmental degradation to exist.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The significance of my research lies in exploring the relationship between journalism and democracy. The role journalism plays in a democratic society is that of informant. It provides the information required for “political accountability ... [and] public understanding of the economic, political, and social world” (Steel, 2009). However, two main issues trouble the relationship between democracy and journalism (Hackett and Zhao, 1998). For one, the notion of objectivity in the news media has long been in question. In *Sustaining Democracy: Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*, Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998) critique the *regime of objectivity* that informs journalism, and explain how news sources offer versions of objectivity reflective of the political ideology to which they subscribe. Secondly, an overall decline in news media consumption means that fewer and fewer citizens are engaged in current events and news programming. David T.Z. Mindich (2008) addresses the correlation between news consumption and voter turnouts in his book *Tuned Out: Why People Under 40 Don't Watch the News*. I believe *The Hour* attempts to create a space to reengage young people through the use of informal talk to provide discourse on social justice issues.

The relationship of journalism to democracy is informed by evolving definitions and standards of objectivity, but objectivity itself has more than come into question over time. Hackett and Zhao (1998) describe journalism as being an “important form of public knowledge in contemporary society,” having long been established as “one, key, news-spreading part” required for democracy. However, the regime of objectivity that informs modern journalism struggles to remain central to journalism and thus undermining journalism itself. The centralization of news media sources, a business-centric news focus, the popularity of sensationalized entertainment stories, and an overall decrease in news consumption have had negative implications on journalism’s ability to remain objective. By tracking feminist and postmodern criticisms of objectivity as a regime, Hackett and Zhao (1998) find that

journalism no longer considers the news to be truly objective, and therefore journalism as a practice should no longer be ruled by it.

Instead, Hackett and Zhao (1998) recommend what they describe as *public communication for sustainable democracy*. Public communication is described as “the more active role of promoting communal dialogue about matters of shared concern” and “helping to create a civic conversation, or democratic publics, and for providing for equitable participation in reasoned dialogue about fundamental options and values” (p. 224). This is not an easy task given a market-driven media system that refuses to question consumerist lifestyles and ongoing pressure from American commercialized media systems, in favour of profit maximization within a capitalist framework. Sustainable democracy then “hinges on the development of democratic subjectivity, the fostering of civic competence and democratic values on the part of ordinary citizens in the microworlds of everyday life” (Dahlgreen in Hackett and Zhao, 1998: p. 232). Democratic subjectivity entails the fundamental belief in democracy and the ability for citizens to make social change over time. Sustainable democracy requires democratic subjectivity because the democratic subjects know and understand that social change occurs over a long period of time. Civic competence requires that democratic subjects understand not only the democratic process, but also be active participants in their own knowledge. My research explores the way *The Hour* builds upon Hackett and Zhao’s (1998) conceptualization of public communication and sustainable democracy. In order for *The Hour* to make valuable contributions to contemporary journalism and social justice discourses using broadcast talk, it must do so in the name of democracy.

Hackett and Zhao (1998) discuss other ways journalism might address the current crisis in democracy and declining news consumption. They explain that ‘popular’ or ‘tabloid’ journalism, having typically been dismissed by the regime of objectivity, makes valuable offerings to democracy. “There is an extremely important democratic role for popular journalism that can tell interesting and personalized stories without losing the link with the public good and citizenship” (Hackett and Zhao,

1998). At times, Stroubouloupoulos does just that, successfully “evoke[ing] and connect[ing] private meanings and emotions with public issues” (Hackett and Zhao, 1998) through a unique interviewing style with guests of *The Hour*.

The Hour also addresses the correlation between democracy and journalism. The 2008 Canadian Federal election produced some of the lowest voter turnouts of all time; an embarrassingly low 58.1% of voters voted (Statistics Canada). In 2011, the CBC reported that that number had increased only slightly to 61.4% in the 2011 Federal Election. Statistics Canada claims that young people are even less likely to vote than older Canadians (CBC, 2011). David T.Z. Mindich offers an explanation for this trend in his (2008) book *Tuned Out*. Mindich (2008) explains that voter turnouts and news consumption are correlated; the greater the news consumption, the greater concern and the greater the likelihood of voting. If the same argument can be made for Canadians, young people fail to turn out at the polls because they don't watch the news. Left unattended, Mindich is certain this crisis in democracy will have dire consequences for a generation of citizens disengaged with news media and the democratic process. I believe *The Hour* speaks to a younger generation enticed with the promise of entertainment while providing insight into some of the issues that plague modern society.

A number of tensions exist in my research. Literature addressing the question of how *The Hour* is best described (as journalism, entertainment, or a hybrid of both types of broadcast talk) is presented below. Positioning *The Hour* as journalism or entertainment aids in the establishment of the mandate of the show, and how effectively (or ineffectively) it performs in these categories. As a journalistic entity, the relationship to democracy is greater in scope than that of an entertainment show. In order to answer these questions, I examine more closely the role of Stroubouloupoulos in interviews on *The Hour*. To determine which role he best fits, I examine the type of talk used on the show, and the relationship between talk and the presentation of social justice issues on CBC's *The Hour*.

Positioning *The Hour*: Journalism or Entertainment?

This research hopes to establish to which discourse *The Hour* best subscribes to: that of journalism or that of entertainment. These two paradigms are best described by how they operate for audiences. A journalistic paradigm is defined as programming that *informs* audiences of news, current events and social issues. An entertainment paradigm is defined as television programming that *entertains*, and is thus relieved of the responsibility of informing audiences. I examine the role of Stroumboulopoulos to determine whether *The Hour* is best described as journalism or entertainment.

I use J.T. Dillon's (1990) theories of political positionality and theatricality, and Hackett and Zhao's (1998) theories of celebrity journalism to analyze the role Stroumboulopoulos plays on *The Hour*. The role of Stroumboulopoulos is particularly difficult to describe. It is unclear whether he is a host, pundit, a journalist, presenter or a hybrid of multiple roles. Although he performs interviews much like a journalist, he also challenges the role of journalist by engaging in conversations with guests by offering feedback and a stance on social and political issues. This research will address how Stroumboulopoulos might be best categorized, and in turn, how that role (or hybrid roles) informs the relationship between broadcast talk and social justice discourse on the show. Research from J.T. Dillon (1990) describes a number of approaches used by journalists when interviewing in a broadcast setting, and Hackett and Zhao (1998) provide a theory of "celebrity journalism" that is useful to describe the role of Stroumboulopoulos.

J.T. Dillon (1990) offers two pertinent insights into journalistic interviewing. First, Dillon's (1990) research on broadcast interviews explains interaction between public figures and journalistic figures. Making the assumption that all 'public officials' actively evade the questions of journalists, Dillon (1990) believes it is the job of the journalist to question the guest by taking an oppositional stance. This often means journalists must react with scepticism to contest the position of the guest.

Secondly, Dillon (1990) explains that broadcast interviews possess a “theatrical feature” that is, to enact a performance whereby “the speakers appear to be playing well-defined roles, and playing to the audience. To all appearances [,] journalist and respondent are not, themselves, asking and answering questions, and thus not communicating, at least with each other.” (Dillon,1990: p. 95). The journalist and respondent do not talk *to* each other. They talk *around* the issue at hand because neither is communicating directly with the other. Each is performing for the audience and not addressing the issue clearly or directly. If neither interviewer nor interviewee is communicating directly about the issue, and communication is rendered ineffective, then merely the presence of discussion of social justice issues on *The Hour* is not necessarily effective in informing audiences in great depth about social justice issues.

A hybrid role, between host and entertainer, is that of the ‘celebrity journalist.’ Hackett and Zhao (1998) borrow from Altschull (*From Milton to McLuhan*) to describe the celebrity journalist, typical of hosts of ‘tabloid’ talks shows. “The celebrity journalist is not an objective observer but rather a teacher or guide. He interprets, but he also expresses his own opinions; he stands aloof, perhaps even above those of whom he writes or speaks” (Hackett and Zhao, 1998: p. 51). The role of Stroubouloupoulos is best defined using Hackett and Zhao’s (1998) descriptions of ‘celebrity journalism.’

To demonstrate Dillon’s (1990) theory of positionality and align *The Hour* with journalistic practice, Stroubouloupoulos must question from the positional opposite of the position or stance of the guest. (Ex. If the guest is politically left leaning, Stroubouloupoulos must ask questions from the standpoint of the political right). For Dillon’s (1990) ‘theatrical’ paradigm to be tested, Stroubouloupoulos might ask questions that allow the guest to explain their relationship to a social issue, thereby educating the audience on a social issue. As a journalist, this type of information sharing is not for the benefit of the interviewer; as a journalist, Stroubouloupoulos is already informed of the

public figure's involvement in social issues. This type of questioning is aimed at providing information to the audience, the interviewer asking questions on their behalf. Similarly, in order for Hackett and Zhao's (1998) theory of celebrity journalism to be tested, Stroumboulopoulos must act as teacher/guide by providing information in the interviews, as well as expressing opinion.

Positioning *The Hour*: Chat or Talk?

My research also hopes to establish the significance of traditional and nontraditional interviewing techniques in the presentation of social justice issues in a broadcast setting. To do this, I must determine whether *The Hour* is considered one of two types of broadcast interviews, talk or chat. I use Anne O'Keefe's (2006), Carbaugh (1988) and Tolson (1991) to describe how talk reveals the television genre of *The Hour*.

O'Keefe (2006) states that interviews with known and unknown figures tend to indicate different types of television talk. In the case of *The Hour*, the guests are always known in a specific domain, and it is therefore the topic covered which indicates whether the show is better classified as either "chat show" or "talk show." O'Keefe (2006) explains that chat shows are typically 'personality focused' and talk shows are 'issue focused'. Carbaugh (1988) explains that the line between chat shows and talk shows is blurred when politicians engage in chat interviews. Although they are public and political figures, the interviews tend to focus on personality rather than political issues.

Another source provides an explanation as to how *The Hour* is best described. Tolson (1991) describes chat television as any or all talk that takes place in a studio setting. This would therefore, include "the interview". He explains that 'broadcast chat' has an enormous opportunity to transgress typical conventions of the broadcast interview and therefore tends to both entertain and provide information to its audience. There is more flexibility within the interview and a motivation both "to inform and entertain; to appear serious and sincere, but also sometimes playful and flippant" (Tolson,

1991: p. 178). Analysis of talk on *The Hour* reveals how *The Hour* is able to facilitate dialogue on public, political issues without weighing the conversation down with the gravity of social issues. By this definition, *The Hour* possesses elements of journalism and entertainment programming and relies on ambiguity to attract viewers.

Strouboulopoulos' Approach: Qualitative or Human Interest

My research explores the interviewing style of Strouboulopoulos. At times, he employs a qualitative interviewing style, whereby he asks questions to prompt guests to share their emotional and personal experiences within their respective social movements. This qualitative interviewing style focuses less on empirical facts and more on the lived experiences of guests. At times, the effect of this style is feminist, as it integrates personal narrative into political broadcast discussions, but it could also be Strouboulopoulos' prerogative to create what are called *human-interest stories* in the field of journalism. A human-interest story is a news story that personalizes and humanizes news material (Polumbaum, 2009). It is unclear whether Strouboulopoulos takes a qualitative or human-interest approach in interviews. My research will more fully address what discourse informs his interviewing style. It also aims to establish the relationship of *The Hour* to social justice discourses.

Strouboulopoulos employs a method of interviewing I consider qualitative in nature based on definitions by Denzin (2006), Oakley (1981), Hughes (1940) and Polumbaum (2009). Although little has been written on qualitative interviewing practices from within the field of journalism, a substantial amount of literature has been produced on qualitative interviewing practices in the field of academic research methods. Research method discourses state that qualitative research is “the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in an individual's life” (Denzin, 2006). If “empirical material” is

produced in interviews on *The Hour*, then we should find references to personal experience, life stories, and observational facts in broadcast interviews. These personal tales connect the emotions of the sharer, in this case the interviewee, with an obstacle and meaning in their life and in turn, producing the first half of the social justice paradigm, a connection between accounts of lived experiences and social issues.

Howard Becker (1971) states that qualitative interviewing is best performed as a conversation. Contrary to traditional research methods and traditional journalism, which states that emotional distance from the subject matter is best, Anne Oakley (1981) states that “conversational interviewing” especially important when interviewing women. Oakley (1981) also states that the richest the information from interviews is “best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship” (p. 41) and that only when the interviewee feels equal in the conversation do they share intimate details. Information-rich content is thus created through the *mutual* sharing of emotional personal narrative by interviewer and interviewee in conversation. For this research, I examine how Strouboulopoulos positions himself within debates, and the ways in which his conversational style of interviewing creates the space in order to do so.

However, it is possible that Strouboulopoulos, acting as journalist, wishes to simply draw out *human interest stories* or what Helen MacGill Hughes (1940), describes as “true stories of personal vicissitudes told with the exhaustive detail peculiar to gossip.” Judy Polumbaum (2009) describes as human interest “Stories attempting to humanize subject matter that ordinarily seems dry or impersonal.” Polumbaum (2009) explains that the goal of human-interest stories is to “attract the largest audience of consumers.” I surmise that Strouboulopoulos, who seeks to provide interesting news content in an accessible and digestible format, does just this.

The aforementioned scholars help situate my research on *The Hour*. Very little has been written from a Canadian perspective and none has been written about other Canadian talk shows, mainly, because there are no other television shows like *The Hour*. No academic articles currently exist about *The Hour*. The secondary sources pertaining to this project include journalistic articles from Canadian media sources and Canadian universities. I hope to address this gap in literature with this research and to use theories of conversation analysis to establish the relationship of talk interviews on *The Hour* to journalism, news and television entertainment. To answer the questions about affect of traditional and non-traditional interviewing techniques on *The Hour*, the typology of *The Hour*, the role and style of George Strouboulopoulos, I use conversation analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY + RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer questions about the role and function of both *The Hour* and George Strouboulopoulos, I use conversation analysis. Conversation analysis is a form of critical discourse analysis that observes, “how reality is produced in ordinary conversations” (Pinsler, 2008) and that dynamics of power can be revealed in conversation. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) establish conversation analysis as a tool to answer questions about talk, social interaction, and their relationship to the institutions in which they occur. They describe conversation analysis as “the systematic analysis of the talk produced in everyday situations of human interaction: talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008: p. 11). They state that talk-in-interaction occurs naturally between participants engaged in conversation, without prompting or force. Conversation analysis reveals how talk sequences develop as participants understand and react to each other. My research pays close attention to talk-in-interaction, that is, turn-taking in dialogue that occurs in broadcast interviews on *The Hour*.

My research pays close attention to talk-in-interaction in a broadcast setting. Hutchby's (2006) book *Media Talk* establishes the significance of talk-in-interaction in a broadcast setting.

Hutchby's (2006) explains that broadcast talk is the:

key to the nature of the relationship between the media, public opinion and public knowledge. The media not only play a central role in defining particular issues as newsworthy and therefore 'opinionable', but also provide the broadest and most accessible public spaces in which ordinary members of the populace can express their opinions on such issues (p. 4).

Talk on *The Hour* facilitates the relationship between broadcast news and public knowledge.

The Hour defines the news and provides the context needed for the Canadians to develop their own ideas on social issues. It provides the knowledge of current events and news in order required for public opinion to develop. This research explores how *The Hour's* use of conversation creates political space.

Over the years, conversation analysis has been performed on talk inside and outside of institutions. According to ten Have (2007), analysing conversation can be used to discover and gain knowledge about the institution itself. Sacks and Schegloff looked at meetings, courtroom proceedings and interviews to analyse how social institutions are developed and maintained through conversation (ten Have, 2007). John Heritage (1984) explains how social institutions are "talked into being" (p. 290). Analysis of talk on *The Hour* reveals to which discourse, that of entertainment or news television, or that of social justice, *The Hour* is "talked into". I hope my findings will show how talk on *The Hour* shapes news and entertainment discourses, and the ways in which *The Hour* makes contributions to social justice issues. I hope these findings lead to future research about the ways in which talk on *The Hour* shapes CBC as a journalistic institution, and the institution of journalism as a whole.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To explore the ways in which *The Hour* acts as a catalyst for social justice issues, I examine ten interviews with activists and Canadian politicians using a modified version of conversation analysis. I informed my analysis through the scholarship of Heritage, Pineselar, Hutchby & Wooffitt to explain the significance of talk in an institutionalized setting. This methodology is also informed by the distinctions made between conversations and interviews (Pinselar, 2004; Dillon). Finally, I also met with George Stroumboulopoulos to gain further insight as to the approaches that underpin the way in which he practices journalism.

Interviews were chosen from the 2008 – 2009 season of CBC's *The Hour* and transcribed from the online archives at www.cbc.ca/thehour. The chosen interviews had to meet specific criteria for analysis. First, interviews with activists and interviews with political leaders were identified primarily by the guests' title or position. Chosen interviews with activists are as follows: Erin Brockovich aired January 22, 2009; Barbara Becnel, aired January 21, 2009; Stephen Lewis, aired November 26, 2008; Ingrid Newkirk aired December 1, 2008 and David Suzuki, (no air date on CBC.ca). These five interviews touch on a variety of political and social issues including environmental issues, gang violence, the death penalty debate, HIV/AIDS in Africa, sexual assault, rape, female genital mutilation, animal rights, food politics, youth apathy and democracy.

Interviews with political leaders were easier to identify because of the limited choice of political party affiliation in Canada. The leaders had to come from Canadian politics at some point during the past year and be featured in an interview on *The Hour*. Interviews with political leaders are identified as follows: Michael Ignatieff aired December 18, 2008; Jack Layton aired on October 6, 2008, Elizabeth May (no date on CBC.ca), and Stéphane Dion aired October 14, 2008. The final interview came late into the process and was selected to represent a hybrid of both political figure and activist. Michaëlle Jean, aired June 9, 2009, has a history of activism in Canada and at the time of the interview

was the Governor General of Canada. I would have liked to include an interview with the Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper to represent a conservative perspective, but to date Harper has declined all offers to interview with *The Hour*.

It has been important for my research that interviews are chosen to represent Canadian diversity. I made a point to ensure that a variety of social issues were represented, but also that those people representing them were also diverse in cultural background and ethnicity. Unfortunately, this yielded interviews with only three non-white public figures. *The Hour's* interviews with activists Barbara Becnel and David Suzuki were chosen for their political activism as non-white activists. As for political party leaders, all are white with the exception of the Governor General of Canada, Michaëlle Jean.

Analysis of Transcripts

My analysis of transcripts pays close attention to talk in two ways. For this research, both the order in which dialogue occurs (i.e. turn-taking) and the topics covered are relevant. First, noticing the dialogue sequence and the patterns of turn-taking in dialogue on *The Hour* provides insight into the ways in which 'talk' on *The Hour* defies formalized interviewing techniques. Second, the actual topics covered in talk reveal ideologies embedded in *The Hour's* discourse. Ideological underpinnings are identified as assumptions made about the social structure/realities. Assumptions made in dialogue are indications of the speaker taking an aspect of their social reality for granted, that is, assuming that it is the norm and therefore, leaving unquestioned the social structure that perpetuates existing oppression and inequality. Furthermore, these ideological underpinnings reveal how *The Hour* subscribes to different discourses, namely news and entertainment discourses. Ideologies found in talk also reveal *The Hour's* relationship to social justice discourses, and the ways in which it contributes to social

justice discourses. Talk-in-interaction as described by Hutchby & Wooffitt (2008) or ‘turn taking,’ and ideologies imbedded in discourse in talk are examined in transcripts.

Transcription

After identifying ten interviews of interest to my project, I transcribed the audio from the chosen videos using live-streaming videos from the CBC website. In Conversation Analysis, the transcription of interviews is equivalent to the data collection process. I chose to transcribe the audio component of the electronic videos in the CBC online database (www.cbc.ca/thehour) because I was able to focus on “simple renderings of the words spoken,” described as essential to Conversation Analysis (ten Have, 2007). This means, simply, the spoken words are the focus. Transcription for this project took place over a six-week period. I recorded the interviews, starting with the “Bio” segment that introduces each guest. Stroumboulopoulos provides a voice over that I transcribed verbatim.

I included all audible verbal sounds in the transcription. I recorded spoken words, sounds, laughter, interruptions and breaks in speech such as ‘um,’ ‘er,’ ‘ah,’ and other vocal fillers. Although I was aware that conversation occurs through inflection, pauses and human respiration, I did not include this part of talk in the transcripts. Therefore, I did not make indications of inflection in the transcription process and focused primarily on verbal communication, that is, spoken words in conversation.

The omission of pauses and inflection was made for a number of reasons. As a researcher performing discourse analysis, I am primarily concerned with audible verbal dialogue. My interest is in uncovering underlying ideology revealed in conversation on *The Hour*. The specific types of ideologies, that is, assumptions made in conversation, are present in verbal cues, not in body language or non-verbal cues. The indications of ideology in non-verbal cues are not helpful to my thesis and it is for this reason that I chose to omit visual components of the interviews, such as posture and body

language. I also chose to omit indications of respiration and other audible sounds because they are not considered to be a part of talk discourse.

I have indicated where both parties spoke simultaneously, in one of two ways. First, if the dialogue remains uninterrupted, I have marked this in the transcripts using two incidents of [...]. For example if party A is speaking, and party B gives an indication of active listening, but party A continues speaking uninterrupted, transcribed, their dialogue would look like this. For example:

Party A: So, um, I was telling him that I worked hard for the grade...

Party B: Mmhm.

Party A: ... And that I thought I deserved a higher grade. So finally he told me that he would re-evaluate my paper.

Here, party B makes an audible sound, but party A does not stop speaking. Party B's audible sound was spoken in between 'grade' and 'and' and therefore, recorded on a separate line, as they are a new speaker, and then on the third line, Party A's dialogue continues. Party B's sound is located in between two incidents of [...].

Interruptions are also frequently identified in verbal exchanges in transcripts. If party B interrupts or cuts off party A, it is identified in the transcript with a [-] at the end of the last audible word spoken before they stopped speaking. For this type of exchange to be considered an interruption at all, the speaker A must stop speaking and allow party B to speak. For example:

Party A: It was amazing when Prime Minister Trudeau passed Bill C-120 and he –

Party B: No way! That bill really offended Quebec. He made it so that Quebec could never say they didn't feel welcome in Canada because now French was an official language and Quebec hasn't always felt a part of Canada.

Party A: Oh! I never thought of it like that.

Where party B begins speaking, sometimes mid word and mid sentence, the break in dialogue is indicated with a [--]. In this example, party B completely interrupts party A, to the point that party A stops talking and allows party B to take over.

Other times, there is a 'jumble' of dialogue. To transcribe this was probably the most challenging because it involved listening to each party speak over and over again in the videos and

placing each consecutive word in order. For example, if party A and party B are having a heated argument or exchange, the transcript for this conversation might look like this:

Party A: I thought you said that—
Party B: It doesn't matter what I said, you ...
Party A: Yes, it matters.
Party B: ... Were the one that told everyone about me and David.
Party A: I did not—
Party B: Yes you di—
Party A: ...I only told one person
Party B: Who?

In this exchange, there are indications of turn taking, interruptions, and failed interruptions. First, party B interrupts party A. As party B is speaking, party A states, but does not cut off party B or cause party B to break their line of dialogue. On lines 5 – 8 of this example, a complicated exchange occurs. Party A is interrupted by party B, but then picks up again after their line is cut off. B cuts off A in response but then A continues to speak. Party A finishes speaking and party B completes the exchange without interruption or overlap. I chose to represent the actual verbal dialogue spoken while indicating interruption with the (-) symbol.

Interviewing Stroumboulopoulos

While conducting research on Stroumboulopoulos, I found myself in a compromising situation. As a researcher, I found that I was forced into understanding the role of Stroumboulopoulos through articles written about him. Journalists and student journalists (Examples Ballantyne, 2006; Rayment, 2007) who have written about *The Hour* and Stroumboulopoulos generally present an inconclusive interpretation about how Stroumboulopoulos fares as a journalist, an entertainer and host of a CBC news show. I found that although a variety of opinions of the show were presented, I felt like I had many contradictory impressions of Stroumboulopoulos in my research, and thus, opted to contact CBC to set up an interview with Stroumboulopoulos.

I contacted The CBC again through the “Interview Request” feature on the www.cbc.ca/thehour website. I corresponded with *The Hour’s* publicist in order to coordinate an interview. I explained my project to the publicist via email and we arranged for me to attend a taping of *The Hour* so that Stroumboulopoulos and I could meet. I attended tapings of *The Hour* on May 12, 2009, May 20, 2009 and May 21, 2009. After the first taping, I met with Stroumboulopoulos and *The Hour’s* publicist in *The Hour’s* studio. We talked briefly and made tentative arrangements for an interview the following week. On May 20th, 2009, I attended another taping of the show having not received confirmation from the publicist and spoke at greater length with Stroumboulopoulos about my project. Stroumboulopoulos offered to conduct the interview on the spot, but having not received the confirmation in advance I was ill-prepared. I made plans to return to a third taping the following day, after which we would sit down and have a conversation about youth engagement, politics, and *The Hour*.

Tools of Analysis

To describe some of the trends I noticed in talk on *The Hour*, I turn to O’Keefe. She describes four trends found in dialogic language or exchange structures. Exchange structures, present in both conversations and broadcast interviews (O’Keefe, 2006), can be explained as a sequence of ‘turns’ by both interviewer and interviewee. O’Keefe (2006) explains that there are two types of exchanges: 1) initiation – response or 2) initiation – response – feedback. Although both two-part and three-part models are present in conversations, O’Keefe (2006) explains that the first model is more characteristic of broadcast interviews. Evidence of both types of exchanges O’Keefe’s (2006) models are common in interviews on *The Hour*. My analysis observes how interviews on *The Hour* are not only presented in conversations but also possess conversational attributes (like O’Keefe’s second model) and helps to position the show as a hybrid genre of television that actively employs various methods of information

gathering and deployment to its audience. The two-step model is best documented in consecutive occurrences of initiation - response, because the two-step model sequence is also present in conversation.

Pragmatic markers, such as hedging, discourse markers and interjections, are present in all spoken interactions (O'Keefe, 2006). O'Keefe (2006) borrows Carter and McCarthy's (2006) explanation of pragmatic markers, describing them as the intentional framing and reframing of dialogue which "encode [the] speaker's intentions and interpersonal meanings" (p. 7). For example, hedging involves the deliberate use of specific language with the intention of reducing the threat or potential threat of the question or message. In this context, hedging is the effective use of vague language in order to downplay the seriousness or threat of a challenging question. Like choosing words specifically to "lessen the directness" (p. 7) of a message as in hedging, vague language, according to O'Keefe (2006), is found in everyday language and is described as a "vague categorization" (p. 7). Examples of vague language include statements like "that sort of thing" where the speaker allows the idea to trail off and be determined by the listener. Noting instances of pragmatic markers helps to ascertain how language is used to simplify complex or complicated social and political issues.

38 Discourse markers mark the speaker's intent to organize and structure their ideas in verbal communication (Carter and McCarthy, 2006 in O'Keefe, 2006). This means that discourse is marked in conversation through the indication of discourse markers. In interviews, discourse markers are used to redirect and maintain conversation or interviewing topics. Examples of discourse markers include "okay," "right," "so," "well," "now," "oh," "anyway" or phrases such as "as I was saying, getting back to" (p. 8). Instances of discourse markers in the transcripts of interviews on *The Hour* suggest the interviewer has more power than the interviewee, as discourse markers are used to direct the interview.

39 O'Keefe (2006) also describes response tokens as typical responses or reactions to an utterance. Response tokens are a response to a speaker's utterance. Usually identified as "mm," "umhmm,"

“yeah,” “really?,” or “wow, that’s right, absolutely” (p. 9), response tokens can also be seen as the feedback to response in the three-part exchange structure (initiation – response – feedback). I have included all response tokens in the transcripts of all interviews in order to best identify O’Keefe’s (2006) models. However, I have not indicated discourse markers or pragmatic markers in my analysis, I have simply used them to identify portions of dialogue containing discourse on social justice issues.

Interjections, according to O’Keefe (2006) are verbal and audible interruptions that stop the speaker from completing an idea orally. Interjections, for the purposes of this research are indications of conversational dialogue between host and guest, because they defy formal approaches to interviewing. In a formal setting, the person with a contributing idea, would wait until the speaker was finished. It will also be important to notice how host or presenters recover from an interruption or interjection.

Tools for Analysis: Questioning

The role of questioning in both conversation and interviewing connects the questioner to the institution in which they operate (in this case, *The Hour* and the CBC). O’Keefe (2006) explains that questions posed during an interview reveal details about the institution in which they occur. According to O’Keefe (2006) in interviews, the interviewer holds more power because they are responsible “for managing the discourse within the interaction” (p. 62). In order to maintain power, the interviewer, representing the institution, typically asks the questions and the interviewee answers (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, 2008), in a simple question/answer format. For my analysis, I pay attention to the role questioning plays in maintaining or giving up power in interviews, the host acting as either a representative of the institution or an independent figure.

O’Keefe’s (2006) three-part model (initiation – response – feedback) is of particular importance where questioning occurs. In a formal setting, there are fewer instances of the three-part model and

more instances of the two-part model. In a formal interview, the interviewer comments and gives feedback infrequently, and immediately asks more questions. In a casual setting, the interviewer is free to comment and give feedback, allowing for more space to articulate positionality on the part of the host.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Through the processes of viewing the videos of interviews, transcribing interviews and conducting analysis, a number of themes emerge to support my thesis. These themes demonstrate that despite *The Hour*'s ability to successfully highlight and personalize social justice issues using informal interviewing techniques, the show fails to make connections between social justice issues and the social structure that perpetuates inequality and oppression. The themes found in this research can be attributed to either a conversational style of interviewing or a traditional journalistic style, and it is through these styles that *The Hour* can be better understood as a catalyst for social debate. It is also through these styles that we understand the obligation of *The Hour* to be informative, while remaining ultimately an entertainment talk show. Below is a description of trends found in transcripts, followed by evidence of each trend.

First, O'Keefe's (2006) two and three step models are found in the transcribed interviews. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model (initiation – response) and three-step model (initiation – response-feedback) are found in conversation, but the two-step model is more indicative of broadcast interviews. This section explores occurrences of each of these models and how they indicate each talk model.

Dialogue between Strouboulopoulos and politicians possess qualities of journalistic interviewing. Examples include evidence of O'Keefe's two-step response model, the discussion of social issues, questioning methods and the use of hypothetical questions. "Platforming" appears while Strouboulopoulos performs the role of interviewer. For the sake of this paper, "platforming" refers to an intentional opening or invitation, as provided by Strouboulopoulos, to allow interviewees to talk

about social issues, recent book or film publication, their activist work, or a specific political approach attached to their political or activist careers. The opportunity for ‘platforming’ appears in a number of ways. Most often, Strouboulopoulos’ biographical voice over of the featured guest gives some indication of recent accomplishments, including recent book publications, projects, or film tours. Often, the announcement of a book or project is the last line before the interview commences, giving Strouboulopoulos an easy lead-in to the interview. Strouboulopoulos also allows guests to discuss their political platforms, new books, or films during the interview. He does this by asking specific questions or inviting a precise dialogue pertaining to their political and activist work, usually at the outset of the interview.

Strouboulopoulos takes a journalistic approach to questioning when interviewing public figures. Parallel to J.T. Dillon’s (1990) theory of journalistic positionality, whereby the journalist takes a position of opposition in order to challenge the position of the guest, Strouboulopoulos’ version of this style is established when speaking with politicians. However, this questioning method is also read as scepticism and occurrences are therefore indicated.

Strouboulopoulos also questions politicians about hypothetical situations. A hypothetical question is defined as a question about a scenario that is either impending or imaginary, but not a reality at that specific time. In the case of *The Hour*, hypothetical questions are always directed at political leaders. Hypothetical questioning, in these cases, is indicative of journalistic questioning, because it builds on J.T. Dillon’s (1990) theory of journalistic positionality and tries to reveal inconsistencies, forcing the politician to improvise on the spot. Strouboulopoulos’ hypothetical questioning is met with a number of responses, with some politicians even addressing the hypothetical questioning directly. However, because hypothetical questioning allows insight into consistency and stability of character, and is telling of personality instead of actual current events or social issues, its categorization as a ‘journalistic trait’ is complicated. Discussing actual current events renders *The*

Hour as an informative news-show but instead, the focus on hypothetical situations, specifically when speaking with politicians, serve as a distraction from potentially productive political discussions and because these responses reveal character, interviews on *The Hour* are found to be chat and entertainment focused.

Features of conversation are also present in interviews on *The Hour*. Included here are evidence of both of O’Keefe’s response models, positioning, and qualitative discourse. These trends and occurrences are indicative of conversational dialogue because they depart from traditional journalistic methods and introduce different types of information into standard interviewing discourse. Conversations are marked by O’Keefe’s three-step response model, the presence of feedback and positionality from Stroumboulopoulos.

Positioning refers to a genuine assertion of positionality by Stroumboulopoulos or guests of *The Hour*. Positioning is demonstrated by Stroumboulopoulos personally, through the declaration of personal opinion in the third step of O’Keefe’s three-step model known as “feedback.” He also asserts positionality politically, through the association or disassociation with a political discourse in the “feedback” portion of O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step model. As well as positioning his guests, Stroumboulopoulos positions himself within the debate. Positionality is not a quality of traditional journalism because it undoes objectivity or neutrality as basis of good journalism. Assertions of positionality by Stroumboulopoulos indicate non-journalistic practices.

As well as presenting evidence of both traditional and non-traditional talk discourses; qualitative approaches to interviewing were also evident in the discourse. Qualitative discourse is marked by questions leading to personal experiences and feelings surrounding a situation or challenge pertaining to a social issue instead of about historical facts. A qualitative approach is operationalized as the focus on the personal experiences of guests instead of historical facts and helps to tie the public figure to a social issue. This component of my research demonstrates that although *The Hour* does

make valuable contributions to social justice discourses through a qualitative approach to interviewing, it is not enough to fulfill the aforementioned social justice paradigm. Further analysis in the ‘Discussion’ section of this paper extrapolates the relationship of this style and approach to interviewing with *The Hour*’s relationship to social justice discourses.

EVIDENCE

This section isolates instances of evidence that support my various claims about Stroumboulopoulos and *The Hour*. Evidence is used to help answer my research questions about the classification of *The Hour*, the role of Stroumboulopoulos, and to what extent *The Hour* is an example of critical media. I have isolated instances of the trends in my interview with George Stroumboulopoulos, but mainly in his interviews with politicians and activists. These include instances of questioning, platforming with activists and politicians, a qualitative approaches to interviewing, and missed opportunities to connect social issues with a dominant, oppressive social structure that perpetuate such issues.

“It’s a Conversation”

The presence of conversational elements exists in both interviews analysed on *The Hour* and in my personal interview with George Stroumboulopoulos. Below, I present evidence from my interview with George Stroumboulopoulos. In fact, when I sat down with Stroumboulopoulos in May of 2009, it was evident he had given thought to his approach to interviewing guests on *The Hour*.

Example 1.0

EM: Okay. So um, why interviews? What is it about an interview that is so appealing to you?

GS: Uh, it's not really an interview to me, it's a conversation. I think uh, the best way to, uh, uh, a be entertained and to um, to be uh, kept company, to learn about yourself, to learn about other things, to kind of accomplish a number of goals is to listen in on an interesting conversation. I think that conversations are the most natural way to, to uh, gain perspective, context, whatever. Um, and so that's why I think that I, I like, I get to go to bed knowing more

than you did when you woke up and it's not just information but it's also, you know you get enriched emotionally, you get enriched intellectually and get enriched um, ah, spiritually, um, for whatever that's a lot.

(Interview with George Stroumboulopoulos, 2009)

To Stroumboulopoulos, dialogue is crucial. It is intentional. To Stroumboulopoulos, it is the way viewers learn about public figures. In fact, while interviewing guests of *The Hour*, he favours a conversational paradigm over a journalistic one.

Stroumboulopoulos provided more insight into a conversational approach to interviewing. This quotation explains Stroumboulopoulos interviewing style when approaching guests of *The Hour*.

Here, Stroumboulopoulos talks about the relationship to young viewers and voting in Canada:

Example 1.1

G.S: I'm not, I'm not down on the 18 year olds who don't vote thing. You know, if you think about it you have, you have, um, you're leaving high school, the big bad world of college is coming for you (or university), you're about to acquire just accumulate an enormous student debt, your first love dumped you, you don't know what you're going to do for a living, and you feel pressure, but you got, I mean all of this is crashing down on you at once, and you're supposed to understand the implications of free trade? That's a lot to ask of somebody who's just trying to get, who's entering their adulthood. If 18 year olds are engaged in vote, I'd be very happy if they all did. I would love it. But, um, I'm not down on the 18 year olds who don't. They're just figuring their life out. Um, it's the 40 year olds who don't vote that have a problem with in this world, right? They're the ones who know better. So I don't worry about the youth's engagement. I mean, the bus is leaving, and there will be those on the bus who want to go to that journey, that destination. I'm fine with that. The kids: Fine with that. I would, I delight in engaged youth. But, I don't think that, I think people put too much pressure on their, on them already. They got enough shit to figure out in life. Um, 30 year olds, 40 year olds: They're the ones who should vote. Um, so, I don't like it to be a much higher voter turnout. *But that's just me, cause uh, cause politics, and um, um, um, and the world moving, the dialogue moving forward, that's important to me. But it's not important to everybody. And one of the glorious things about a democracy is, you don't have to.*

(Italics added, Interview with George Stroumboulopoulos, 2009)

Two major points about the positionality of Stroumboulopoulos are present in this excerpt. First, Stroumboulopoulos is of the opinion that “the dialogue moving forward” (George Stroumboulopoulos, 2009) is important to the democratic process. To Stroumboulopoulos “the dialogue moving forward” means that there is public debate and discussion surrounding public issues. It also implies an informed

and engaged citizenry. The emphasis on dialogue over political and social position is a key point in understanding his approach to interviews. However, despite his belief in public debate and discussion, he is less concerned with non-voting citizens because of their freedom to engage or disengage. This simply reveals the limitations of an emphasis on talk and debate on political issues: it does not necessarily guarantee votes.

‘Tough’ Questions

As we might expect while performing research on a television talk show, a major trend found in Strouboulopoulos’ approach to interviewing on *The Hour* is questioning. Questioning, in the following examples, demonstrate a traditional interviewing stance in the field of journalism. Questioning during these instances is at times playful, but aggressive in other instances. Strouboulopoulos poses difficult or ‘tough’ questions in opposition to the political stance of the politician as described by J.T. Dillon (1990). Although both of O’Keefe’s (2006) two and three-step models are both present, Strouboulopoulos poses ‘tough questions,’ more frequently using a conversational method.

In my interview with Strouboulopoulos, he makes a distinction between his approach to interviewing politicians and activists to justify his fluid approach to interviewing public figures. He articulates his awareness of his use of varied approaches to interviewing, connecting the type of questions with the type of guest. He discusses why he must approach each differently and how his role as journalist matters more while interviewing an elected official.

Example 2.0

E.M: So what then is the difference between interviewing a politician and an activist?

G.S: And an activist? Well, you know, I mean. The – the only fundamental difference is their personal respons – their accountability. An activist is responsible to themselves and their value system. Um, a politician is responsible to themselves and their value system, but also to their voters, their constituents. So, um, an actor and an activist don’t owe you anything. No, you

didn't vote for them. You don't pay their salary. They don't owe you anything. A politician does. Right? A politician owes you everything.

(Interview with George Stroumboulopoulos, 2009).

Stroumboulopoulos approach to interviewing politicians is based on his belief that politicians ought to be held accountable for their actions. His awareness of his professional responsibility as journalist demonstrates an accompanying awareness in his role in maintaining a democratic state by informing audiences on a variety of social issues and political standpoints, as he positions himself in opposition. Stroumboulopoulos does not believe that activists ought to be held accountable in the same way that politicians do, namely, because activists are not elected to their public roles.

This is documented each time Stroumboulopoulos meets with Canadian politicians to speak about their campaign for Prime Minister. With the exception of Michael Ignatieff who became the Liberal Party leader after Stéphane Dion's unsuccessful run in the Federal Election in October 2008, Stroumboulopoulos is tasked with speaking to the party leaders about their political platform and campaigns, while holding politicians accountable. However, while holding politicians accountable for their actions is important in this interview setting, Stroumboulopoulos' 'tough' approach may be read as scepticism by viewers.

The evidence indicates a 'tough' or 'aggressive' approach to interviewing, and occurs primarily while Stroumboulopoulos speaks to politicians. Specifically, interviews with Jack Layton, Elizabeth May and Stéphane Dion all feature 'tough' questions that can be attributed to journalistic interviewing techniques as described by J.T. Dillon's (1990) theory of opposition. The following questions and prompts made by Stroumboulopoulos are considered to be journalistic. First, Stroumboulopoulos talks to Jack Layton about the upcoming election and asks a series of questions about the 2008 campaign for Prime Minister as well as election polls. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step response model is demonstrated as Stroumboulopoulos probes Layton, until at the end of this example where Stroumboulopoulos offers feedback, entering into or O'Keefe's (2006) three-step response model.

Example 2.1

GS: Can we have a, a George and Jack conversation. I am going to ask you a few questions straight up, okay?

JL: Mmhmm.

GS: Do you think you are going to be, do you think, like, I get what you're saying but if you look at all the polling and look at the the NDP have never had that office. You don't think you are going to win in this particular election to be the Prime Minister because you know the way the numbers are rolling out. So I wondered, why put yourself in that position?

JL: I'm like the guy, you know, you've gotta uh, one of those Olympic athletes whose is the coach says "eh, everybody says you're going to come in ninth or twelfth" and you say, "you know somethin? We are going to do better than that. We are going to go out there and actually try and win" because we really believe that the way we're going is the right way for the country and uh, we got a great team and I think we are going to win. I think Canadians are going to say, and they are saying increasingly at the gatherings and the rallings, rallies that we are having, "we don't want to go back to same old. We don't, we don't want Stephen Harper. He's the wrong direction for the country, uh, we've got some concerns about the other party that's been there propping them up and so on and so forth. Uh let's try something new". We're not going to, lets, let us tell all, [inaudible] people tell us time and time again you can't do that. ..

GS: Mmhmm.

JL: ... It's not possible. I finish every speech by saying "don't let them tell you it can't be done." It's a can-do kind of approach. If you don't believe in it, then don't come forward and offer it.

GS: On a very practical level, where are you realistically uh, expecting the Democrats to pick up seats in this election?

JL: All over the country. We've got, we've got some fabulous candidates running in uh...

GS: But you've got—

JL: ... From from Newfoundland and Labrador ...

GS: Mmhmm.

JL: ... Jack Harris, former NDP leader there uh up to Nunavut, we've got a very popular CBC broadcaster running for us there, an Inuit. I could go across the country. We've got, buh, b, Tom King...

GS: But whadda—

JL: ... from Dead Dog Cafe in Guelph—

GS: But where do you expect to win them though, because you don't expect to win a Democratic seat in Alberta. You'd, you're not going to win one there. And if you do win one there—

(Interview with Jack Layton, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos asserts his power in the interview by indicating to both Layton (and the audience at home) that he is in control of the interview and he requires realness and honesty from Layton.

Stroubouloupoulos proceeds to ask why he is campaigning for Prime Minister. Jack Layton asserts his belief in the democratic system. Stroubouloupoulos asks similar questions in a variety of different

ways, looking for examples from Layton. As he continues to ask the same question, Layton answers him with more examples of where NDP can expect to win across Canada. However, Strouboulopoulos responds by indicating a general disbelief for the possibility of Layton becoming Prime Minister, repeating “but” many times as a lead to oppose Layton’s stance. The conversation intensifies to where they both firmly disagree and they place a bet on national television. Then, they resume talking about the possibility of political gains for the New Democrats. O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step model is indicated below as they engage in conversation, rather than a formal interview.

Example 2.2

JL: I am not a betting man.

GS: Right.

JL: But...

GS: I’ll twenty bucks, now listen, I’m don’t, I don’t, I’m all about democracy! Twenty bucks says you’re not winning a seat in Alberta...

JL: Twenty bucks. A cold beer.

GS: Twenty bucks.

JL: A cold beer.

GS: [One drink at O’Toole’s].

JL: Alright a cold beer.

GS: But...

JL: We have our former NDP leader running for us in Edmonton East and a fabulous environmental lawyer just about won last time in Edmonton Strathcona...

GS: You keep talking like this people are going to think you smoke pot because this is not going to happen.

JL: [laughs]

GS: Alright. Okay. So do you expect, but is there is there a riding you know Stephen Harper expects to make his majority but then makes a lot of ground in Quebec he thinks he can make ground there. Stéphane Dion needs to hold on to Toronto. Elizabeth May probably out West. For you where like is there a place you expect “this is where we have a shot.” Edmonton East? You think, is that your shot?

(Interview with Jack Layton, 2008)

After they playfully place their bet, Strouboulopoulos continues to interrogate Layton about where he expects to pick up votes in the upcoming election. Jack Layton keeps answering his questions, giving tangible examples, but Strouboulopoulos only responds by asking questions that demonstrate Strouboulopoulos’ disbelief in Layton’s platform. This disbelief, although playful, is read as

scepticism. Stroumboulopoulos also offers feedback by giving the audience ideas about Layton's challenges. In the third example, Stroumboulopoulos does not ask a question, [but rather] and instead, provides a stance for Layton to refute. Again, a conversational approach is demonstrated here.

Example 2.3

GS: ... People feel that corporations are the ones that keep jobs and keep the economy going and in in this particular time, that's not the way to go. A lot of economists say that's not the way to go by by higher corporate tax.

JL: Bank economists. Uh who uh—

GS: economists! No no no economists.

JL: But let me just be clear in what we're saying. We want to freeze the corporate tax rate for corporations to what it was in their last tax return so this is not anything dramatic and we've seen taxes go down for corporations under Paul Martin and the others for the last several years. We're now below the Americans so we're in a very good competitive competition but they've been throwing people out of work. Four hundred thousand good jobs lost the approach. The approach isn't working. I say lets help the businesses who are gonna create jobs here especially the ones in the new economy the new energy economy we took people to a solar voltaic manufacturing plant where we could put solar energy on the roofs tens of thousands of houses. Lets help that company get up and going and deliver on the environment and and the job side at the same time

GS: yeah, but is that enough to bring those jobs back a lot people would think a politician can't really create jobs all they can do is create conditions where a company can create jobs ...

JL: Yes.

GS: ...And you think that by by you know putting a corporation in a position they're losing money on their own end that's going to create those conditions?

(Interview with Jack Layton, 2008)

Again Stroumboulopoulos demonstrates a journalistic and aggressive approach to interviewing, and takes the stance of the opposition to the New Democratic Party to challenge Layton. Layton tries to shape the question, and is interrupted by Stroumboulopoulos who disagrees with Layton's attempt to reshape the question. Layton takes the opportunity to platform and is met with questions about the possibility of politicians facilitating environments of political and social change.

54 The next example of journalistic interviewing occurs in Stroumboulopoulos' interview with Elizabeth May. However, this is an example of non-traditional interviewing techniques, as Stroumboulopoulos provides information and a stance instead of asking questions. He also does not ask questions and instead makes statements. I include it here because although questions are not used, they

still evoke a response from the interviewee. These statements are considered to be the initiation phase of O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step model (initiation – response – feedback). I include the following exchange as an example of questioning because although direct questions are not asked, the conversation remains combative when Stroumbouloupoulos directly challenges her stance.

Example 2.4

GS: Um, you uh, that’s not going to be an easy win for you. I know Peter MaKay hasn’t won by an enormous amount of seats in, in the previous elections, ah, the most recent ones, but it's still a very, a very tough road ahead to beat a, ah, a, minister like that.

EM: Yeah, the difficult, th- the difficulty for him is the traditional political equation that if you have a powerful minister in the House of Commons or in cabinet on behalf of your area, you get some benefits from it. Our region has been bleeding jobs, the economic situation has been an in a constant downturn and it's more of the fact that Stephen Harper has a certain antipathy towards Atlantic Canada and that none of his ministers have any role in determining policy.

They wait to be told – Gerry Ritz was unprepared, this is a recent story, he didn’t have any idea about what to say on a conference call about lysteriosis crisis, Mr. Harper makes all the decisions and then sends his ministers out, pretty much unprepared...

GS: But that’s not that unique to Stephen Harper...

EM: Oh, it is...

GS: Jean Chretien faced very similar criticism for running his...

EM: No, no. I tell you no. Jean Chretien may have run his party like that, but he let his ministers of the crown do work in their area. There’s never been a minister, there’s never been a PMO that reviewed and vetted all the speeches that ministers gave, that reviewed and vetted all the civil servant speeches. I used to work in Mulroney government with none of that centralising and control in PMO.

(Interview with Elizabeth May, 2008)

This section of dialogue leads with Stroumbouloupoulos’ statement about the challenge of May’s political position and the likelihood of a win in the upcoming election. She addresses the challenge of her situation and continues to criticize the Harper government. Stroumbouloupoulos then defends the actions of Harper’s Conservatives, and is met with May’s stance and firm disagreement with Stroumbouloupoulos. Following J.T. Dillon’s (1990) theory of journalistic positionality, Stroumbouloupoulos poses questions in opposition to May’s stance. Stroumbouloupoulos’ responses are not only combative, but continuously question Elizabeth May’s position and political perspective.

The next example of journalistic interviewing comes in the interview with Stéphane Dion.

Stroumboulopoulos asks accountability questions to Dion about the budget. This is an example of O’Keefe’s (2006) two-step response model (question – answer), although Stroumboulopoulos does provide information to lead into questions.

Example 2.5

GS: Where’s the, where’s that, where’s that money going to come from?—

SD: ... Will change the way we give our support to children.

GS: How’re you going to pay for that? Where’s that money going to come from?

SD: It will be balance budget because it’s in our DNA now what Mr. Chretien and Mr. Martin gave to this country. The possibility to have retargeted investments good for the people and at the same time same time to not bo, borrow at the that the expense of our children.

GS: Well, you, you hear a lot, you know, certainly a lot of people of the Liberal campaign right now talk about the surplus that the, the Liberal uhh, government had when they were in government, but the criticism was always why wasn’t that money ever re-invested? An there were lots of cuts and that money never went back into the system, uhmm, so isn’t, isn’t the surplus money there there to be spent anyway on programs. And so what would be different about this Liberal government that the previous Liberal government who just sat on that money?

SD: I think when we started to have surpluses the uh, federal debt, according the economy, if you compare the debt with the economy it was two third of the economy. One of the highest debt in the G8 countries now is a third of the economy is one of the lowest in all of the OCD countries so much we work well. So it’s time to say that if we have surpluses, and because we’ll have a strong fiscal discipline, it’s very likely that we’ll be able to have surpluses. Part of the surpluses, instead to put that to decrease the debt, we suggest to put that in the infrastructure of the country because we have a huge deficit about infrastructure. The are in pretty bad shape and if we don’t address this problem now, well our children will have a lot of difficulty to pay for it. Because you see, today we have five workers for one senior in Canada. In two thousand and twenty it will be three to one. In two thousand and thirty, it will be two to one. If at that time they have bridges that will fall down on their heads, they will say “well, our grandparents did not do their work to prepare our future.”

GS: Wait. The surplus is down now, uhh, from what it was, you know, over the last couple of years, and like you said, you have this big plan to to re-invest all this, are you prepared to go into deficit to, to live up to all the promises?

SD: We will never cause a deficit. The fact is that Mr. Harper may have brought on, uh us a deficit because he chose as a Minister of Finance somebody, uhh, Mr. Flaugherly who destroy the finance of Ontario. When Mr. Guinty came in power, he discovered that he had a deficit of five point six billion dollars that they were trying to hide. So one of the first thing I will do as a Prime Minister if Ca—Canadians give me this mandate cause I hope will be to call for an independent audit to see if Mr. Flaugherly and Mr. Harper did the same that what they did for Ontario.

GS: Do you, uhm, Harp—they’ve been saying, the Conservatives have been claiming that you will, uh, raise the GST if you get elected, will you do that?

(Interview with Stéphane Dion, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos asks questions by using his insight and provides the audience with his standpoint. Stroubouloupoulos takes an aggressive approach by asking difficult questions and citing history as his basis for his questioning. The dialogue is indicative of O’Keefe’s (2006) two-response model, and a typical journalistic approach to interviewing, whereby the interviewer asks difficult questions to politicians to hold them accountable for their actions.

The following example of journalistic interviewing from the same interview contains conversational elements. This dialogue occurs at the end of the interview with Stéphane Dion. Stroubouloupoulos challenges Dion’s opinion of Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party. Here, the dialogue is broken apart and combative. An example of O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step response model, Stroubouloupoulos and Dion engage in conversational, combative on-air dialogue.

Example 2.6

SD: Yeah, and he gave to Canada a Minister of Foreign Affairs that has been an embarrassment, a Minister of Finance that said that ...

GS: Yeah, but you know, sir, that that’s not a ‘Conservative Party thing.’ Liberals parties have lots of embarrassing people as well, over the course of elections, right?

SD: I never saw that...

GS: Yeah?

SD: A Minister of Finance who said to the world, “don’t invest” is the biggest province of the country. When he said “don’t invest in Ontario” he should have been fired right away.

GS: Come back again when you are ready and we’ll talk to you more—

SD: And I’d like to speak also about the Minister of Heritage who’s accepting this government to come with censorship against arts and culture. This is awful. Not my Canada—

GS: You talking about Bill C-10?

SD: Yeah.

GS: Yeah, but that was drafted by a Liberal though. Liberal government drafted that, that, that line in the document.

SD: It never reached the first base. We stopped it. At that moment we saw what that meant.

GS: Please come back, we’ll carry this on.

SD: Okay.

GS: Good to see you.

SD: Thank you very much.

(Interview with Stéphane Dion, 2008).

Dion tries to make a case against Prime Minister Harper, and Stroumboulopoulos interrupts (perhaps because they were out of time, but the viewer is left with the impression that Stroumboulopoulos is annoyed) and points out that Dion's argument doesn't hold strong because of the Liberal Party history. Dion denies the Liberal Party having "embarrassing" members, and Stroumboulopoulos immediately grows more confrontational, but allows Dion to continue to give examples of the problems with the actions of the Minister of Finance. Stroumboulopoulos seems to then seize the opportunity to halt the dialogue and close the interview. However, Dion continues to give examples of the Conservative Party "embarrassments" and instead of insisting the interview come to a close, he re-engages with a question about Bill C-10. Stroumboulopoulos points out that that Bill C-10 was written by a Liberal, and Dion responds by disassociating the Liberal party from the document. Stroumboulopoulos then takes a second opportunity to close the interview, with an invitation to return to continue the discussion, and this time, Dion agrees.

Stroumboulopoulos is found to position himself in opposition to politicians and their political stances while interviewing on *The Hour*. However, both of O'Keefe's (2006) models were found in dialogue, showing flexibility in style. However, in these instances of 'tough' and sometimes aggressive questioning, a conversational model, whereby questions are posed as statements, is frequently observed. Stroumboulopoulos demonstrates J.T. Dillon's (1990) theory of journalistic positionality by consistently positioning himself in opposition to politicians on *The Hour*, and he does so by using both traditional journalistic models (question – answer) and conversational models (question – answer – feedback).

Platforming with Activists

Platforming is demonstrated in all interviews with activists examined for this research. I describe platforming as instances of deliberate verbal cues that invite guests to speak about social

issues, and books and films on the subject of current social issues. O’Keefe’s (2006) two and three-step models are present here, indicating the use of both traditional and journalistic methods. Assertions of a two-step model continue to indicate Stroumboulopoulos’ commitment to journalism. Where O’Keefe’s three-step model is present, a conversational element indicates a departure from traditional journalistic practices, and a relationship between conversational methods of interviewing and broadcast discussion of social issues.

58 First, Stroumboulopoulos spoke to me about the importance of featuring the work of activists on *The Hour*.

Example 3.0

EM: So guests of *The Hour* come on the show to talk about their activist work. Why is it important for Canada to hear their stories?

G.S: Well, I think, uh, it’s nice to know what’s going on. But I also think that it’s important so that you can look at how it affects your life. Someth- you know, people are inspirational. Heroes should – and hero’s a weird word. You know, like people who do stuff, who support their own value system through their actions, um, are inspirational to other people. Um, but we live in a culture where we often celebrate those who aren’t necessarily inspirational, they’re just famous. So I think that you can put – I think Stephen Lewis is as big a celebrity as anybody, right? And should be. June Callwood is as big a celebrity– and should be. Right? So we – I just kind of feel like we need to sort of shine the light on those doing good work.

In this excerpt, Stroumboulopoulos describes a journalistic responsibility surrounding the work of activists. His first response indicates that it is about bringing the news to people. Stroumboulopoulos makes the assumption that the work of activists affects viewers personally, especially activists doing ‘inspirational’ work. He makes a distinction between interviews with celebrities and those doing ‘inspirational’ work. In fact, he goes so far to call the work of Stephen Lewis “good,” and explains that to him, Stephen Lewis is a celebrity because of the work he does.

Secondly, in every interview I examined, Stroumboulopoulos discusses recent activist or political work with each guest. With activists, this happens in two ways. Stroumboulopoulos promotes book and film releases, as they become “news” in social justice discourses, but also asks questions that

allow the guest to speak about their cause and defend criticisms of their position. This is first apparent while speaking to Ingrid Newkirk of The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

First, he promotes her most recent book in the introductory “biography”:

Example 3.1

GS: She has written books on everything from how kids can help animals to vegetarian cookbooks to how to stop animal cruelty in general. Her latest one is called *One Can Make a Difference: How Simple Actions Can Change The World*.

Then, he asks a series of questions that allow Newkirk to explain animal cruelty from her perspective. Stroubouloupoulos asks Newkirk a question about PETA’s initiatives. O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step response model is present, as instead of meeting her response to his question with another question, he instead breaks the social issue apart into two perspectives. Then, instead of proceeding with questions, he challenges Newkirk to explain the dichotomy of belief systems surrounding her issue further.

Example 3.2

GS: Are you comfortable with all the things you guys do?

IN: No, not at all. Um, some of them I think, “you know, here we are looking daft again” but the what’s the option? It’s silence. It’s that nobody will hear about us unless we do something that will get people to turn around. So sometimes we are like a car wreck, you don’t want to look, but you’ve got to.

GS: I think the fundamental challenge for for an organization like PETA or certainly PETA is there are two ways to look at the world. You either think humans and animals are equal or you don’t think humans and animals are one hundred percent equal. And those are the two opinions.

IN: Well, yes, there is the sort of the Attila the Hun view, which they are put here, we can do any damn thing we want to them—

GS: Well it’s not just the Attila the Hun, there are lots of non-Attila the Hun people who feel that way.

IN: There are but I think they have either there mira neuron, that part of their brain that controls empathy isn’t full developed. I am serious about that, there is a neurological reason for having empathy, or they’ve just brought up in a way that they never questioned. Um, and then there are people who are the so-called “bleeding hearts” which I call “the people who give a damn” because for some reason, they are empathetic. They can’t control it, but they’ve come to look at an animal and think “well, I can see a reflection of myself, I wouldn’t want to suffer, I don’t want these animals to suffer and I can actually control making them have a better life.”

(Interview with Ingrid Newkirk, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos' comment opens the social issue for audiences unfamiliar with debates on animal rights. He reiterates what Newkirk has said, that gaining press coverage for animal rights is a challenge, and attributes further challenges to two competing ideologies that people hold. As Newkirk attempts to elaborate on Stroubouloupoulos' comment, he refutes her belief that meat eaters are comparable to Attila the Hun. His comments allow for the dialogue develop depth about the scope of opinions surrounding the debate.

Barbara Becnel, the journalist who helped publish educational anti-gang literature and attempted to appeal ex-gang leader Stan 'Tookie' Williams's death sentence, is given to opportunity to platform. While platforming occurs, Stroubouloupoulos offers feedback.

Example 3.3

GS: But if you're a grown up, like he's a grown man now, but if you're a grown up at any point, you know how you feel about the death penalty for a reason. That's to change his mind at this stage, I am sure he has thought a lot about it. How will you do that?

BB: Well, for one the movie, the documentary, that I just worked on called *Tribute: Stanley Tookie Williams*. Um part of one of the reasons why I made that documentary was to get people to see what the death penalty really means and ...

GS: You can.

BB: ...I was in the death chamber and I have to tell you, that was the most horrific, horrific experience of my life.

GS: You see it re-enacted on this (gesturing to the film)

BB: You do see it re-enacted, and believe you me, it is as powerful as that is, that wasn't as bad as what it, as it what I actually saw. And my belief is, if anyone if they had a modicum of humanity they could not see this film and at least not have their heart soften. An we have had people during the Q and A after the screening say "I came in here believing in the death penalty and I just came here you know to tell you a thing or two." And they say "You know what? I need to at least think, rethink my position." I've we've been able to do that so that's that's my charge, at least, that's one of my charges.

(Interview with Barbara Becnel, 2009)

O'Keefe's (2006) three-step model is indicated as Stroubouloupoulos shares information about the film. He does not ask another question, and instead offers a lead for Becnel to explain the impact the film has on the death penalty debate. Next, the dialogue continues in a standard, journalistic, question

– answer format until Stroubouloupoulos offers feedback once again before returning to two-step question answer format:

Example 3.4

GS: How d'you meet Stanley? Tell me about how you first met.

BB: Well, I was a journalist and I was asked by a national women's magazine to write an article about black youth gangs. This was in 1992 it was during the Rodney King uprising in LA. It turns out that at that moment, the Crips and the Bloods in LA and in Watts were forging their first truce, so they let me hang out with them and in the course of doing that, I realized there was a bigger story that someone really needed to tell the story of the history of the Crips and the Bloods and they said "Well, you should go meet Stanley Tookie Williams because he is the cofounder, the other cofounder was murdered in 79', he hates journalists but—

GS: For obvious reasons.

BB: Right, if you can convince him then you can get that story. So I wrote him for six months before he allowed me to come visit him and I came in fully intending to just do an interview and and be done but he talked to me about "I'm not the same person that came in here I really want to write books to help kids so that they don't follow it my footsteps"

GS: The you know the gangs and self-esteem. Was he able to tell you from his perspective what what ground zero was for him and for, because we all have as we know, contributing factors...

BB: Yes.

GS: ...To why lifestyles are chosen but there tends to be sparks. Was he able to identify to you what the spark is?

BB: Yeah, um, what he said was and the reason why he was doing his work is he said he didn't uh he saw his father maybe three times in his entire life even though his father lived maybe twenty minutes from San Quinton and he was in San Quinton for um, twenty almost twenty five years, his father never visited him and during his young life, he saw maybe three times and so he said that there were a number of things. One was, there was no strong responsible male who could sort of grab him by the scruff of the neck and talk to him and help him to know how to be a real man. But the other piece of it was that he lived in South Central, and South Central Los Angeles in the 19 um, 60's and 70's was an extremely racist city to live in and what he said was San Quinton, I mean uh, South Central was like a shiny red apple that had a worm inside that was rotten on the inside but looked okay on the outside. And he said that what that lead to was, the conditions lead to a lot of self hatred and what folks, what these young, um young black boys were doing in some ways, was sort of lashing out at themselves that they believed the negative stereotypes about themselves.

(Interview with Barbara Becnel, 2009)

Stroubouloupoulos' question invites Becnel to explain Stan Williams' road to gang crime. She explains that growing up in a rough neighbourhood without a strong male figure lead Stan Williams to commit violent crimes while involved in the Crips gang, and ultimately his death sentence. She is able

to successfully argue the side opposed to the death penalty by demonstrating that socio-economic and social factors enabled his lifestyle choice, not his personality.

In speaking to Erin Brockovich in 2009, Stroumbouloupoulos opens the interview by asking her about her most recent work. In this model, Stroumbouloupoulos invites Brockovich to speak about a current environmental disaster. He reacts to her response before she has finished speaking. This is demonstrative of O'Keefe's (2006) three-step model.

Example 3.5

GS: Tell me what is going on in Tennessee right now.

EB: Oh my gosh, well you know they had that huge disaster up there. Uh, the largest coal powered plant in the United States and they kept all of their fly ash, their bottom ash, their waste into these earth and unline dams and they gave way and five point four million cubic yards I believe, or one point one billion gallons of waste was just unearthed and came out into this beautiful lake. Um destroyed properties, destroyed severely damaged homes, boats, docks. I think the thing that is so concerning, for certainly me and for all those residents is what the long term health effects are going to be, because they are already experiencing respiratory problems, and the stuff is just creeping through the rivers and the tributaries. We did a fly over and as far as we can see for at least 7 miles ...

GS: Wow.

EB: ...this contamination ran. Huge, huge event.

(Interview with Erin Brockovich, 2008)

Next, Stroumbouloupoulos invites Brockovich to speak further about the bigger, more systemic reasons for massive environmental degradation. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step response model is demonstrated, with Brockovich providing cues of active listening. This example demonstrates how journalistic style of interviewing is used to allow activists such as Brockovich to speak about both current events and social issues.

Example 3.6

GS: We well, we know in a major urban centre, if there is a problem with crime, most mayors flash the bat signal in the air, Batman comes and saves them....

EB: Yeah.

GS: ... But when there are these kinds of disasters affecting communities, they are calling you, aren't they? A lot of people are calling you.

EB: Oh my gosh, you know, when, I even thought after the Hinkley incident and the movie came out and many people just thought that that was the end of all of the problems but it was

just the beginning. And I am amazed at how many people contact me not only from the United States, but throughout the world who have environmental issues. Ah, it's very very concerning to me and the event that, well, first of all if I go back to the now famous case that the movie was about, even in Hinkley and everything else I am working on, even what I am seeing in Tennessee is, this is a fog of deregulation and we can't have industry self monitor anymore and we are going to continue to have more and more disasters. And there is always some form of deceit behind it, and I think that is what bothers me so much is because they actually knew and something could have been done to prevent it. So I am really hopeful, and part of my work is becoming an advocate in the US and throughout the world to get a message out that we have got to become more preventative than just coming in and rescuing because public health and safety, along with the environment, is in jeopardy.

(Interview with Erin Brockovich, 2009)

For the remainder of the interview, Stroumboulopoulos does not ask Brockovich to speak about social issues or the environment further. Instead, Stroumboulopoulos asks her about her experience of having a film made of her environmental work in Hinkley. She speaks about an “act of Green” as invited by Stroumboulopoulos’ for the CBC initiative, ‘One Million Acts of Green.’

In the next example of platforming, Stroumboulopoulos speaks with Stephen Lewis about HIV/AIDS in Africa and the political climate in Africa. Both traditional and conversational interviewing are present. Stroumboulopoulos approach for this portion of the dialogue shifts between the two styles. He begins by offering some background information and then asks Lewis to elaborate further. Then, instead of asking questions, he contributes to the dialogue by offering relevant information about the situation.

Example 3.7

GS: Something significant's happened. Though I mean obviously the conversation about AIDS, HIV AIDS exists in the public sphere in the context of Africa but South Africa went through a major change. With Thabo Mbeki out, is thata , thats a big move, isn't it?

SL: Oh its massive. It's massive because he was a denialist. He is, he is, I don't know how else to say this, he's a murderer! I mean he presided over the—

GS: You say he should be brought in front of the International Criminal Court—

SL: And I believe that to this day. And I think its going to happen, I think time has caught up with him because there are now studies that show that on his watch, 385,000 people died unnecessarily because he refused to roll out treatment with his berserk Minister of Health...

GS: Mmhmm.

SL: ... Now everything shifted and people are asking for him to be brought to account. They want justice.

GS: And is it and there seems to be in that country now an appetite for real change.

SL: Yes, just today the Minister of Health in South Africa appointed one of the leading activists, a young woman lawyer named Fatima Hassan ...

GS: Mmhmm.

SL: ... As her senior advisor and this is a tremendous breakthrough because they've always been in the opposition.

GS: What does this mean for 'cause I know the Arab North Africa is very different but having South Africa take this position now, this this new position, what does it mean for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa?

SL: Oh, it means a great deal because South Africa is considered the model, the powerhouse, and when South Africa does something the other countries tend to follow. Indeed the other countries have been slower in some respects in rolling out treatment because South Africa was slow and they thought "well, should we mirror that?" Everything is now changed. This is a real breakthrough in the battle against the pandemic.

(Interview with Stephen Lewis, 2008)

Strouboulopoulos' role in the direction and development of the dialogue is to ask questions and prompt Lewis for details about the Africa situation. Consequently, this excerpt of the interview is particularly informative because Lewis speaks in great detail about the political climate in South Africa. Instead of asking questions to encourage Lewis to proceed further, Strouboulopoulos shares what he knows with the audience, contributing to the conversation. He reverts back to formal questioning at the end of this excerpt, demonstrating O'Keefe's (2006) two-step response model.

This next example further demonstrates Strouboulopoulos' conversational approach to interviewing and its relationship to platforming. After speaking about rape as a war strategy, Strouboulopoulos and Lewis have a broadcast exchange about apathy surrounding the violence and Canada's inability to hold African leaders accountable for their war crimes. In the following example, Strouboulopoulos leads Lewis to speak about Canada's role in international political action with a comment about apathy.

Example 3.8

GS: What's happening in DRC has been in the news for so long now—

SL: You wonder—

GS: But th, I think this is why and from time to time on this show we talk about the United Nations and we talk about other countries, but then it's hard not to look at your own Prime Ministers and Presidents and go "this is all bullshit" 'cause, they, if everybody knows what is going on and they don't do anything about it.

SL: Oh well it's the first time I will be able to use bullshit on the air ...

GS: [laughs].

SL: ...I can't believe it! And and and I I I want to tell you in a sense it's a liberating moment because Canada was the author of a new principle internationally called 'the responsibility to protect' where if a country is not protecting the human rights or violating the human rights of its people then the world has the right to intervene. That has been agreed upon, unanimously, every country in the world. We authored it ...

GS: Mmhm.

SL: ... It was our ambassador Alan Rock and when Lloyd Axworthy was Foreign Minister , and yet we have done nothing as a country to see it enforced, whether in Zimbabwe, which is a nightmare, or whether in the Congo, which is hallucinatory.

(Interview with Stephen Lewis, 2008)

This is a strong example of O'Keefe's three-step model and a departure from traditional interviewing as Lewis connects the social issue to Canada's international role. By establishing the contradiction that takes place, another social issue is introduced and connected to international law. It is Strouboulopoulos' comment that allows Lewis to speak freely about the lack of action towards such severe war crimes, despite Canada's role in the development of accountability laws.

The interview with David Suzuki demonstrates Strouboulopoulos' traditional approach to interviewing and its relationship to platforming. David Suzuki, a long-time environmental activist, Canadian icon, and frequent visitor to *The Hour*, is given a number of opportunities to platform about current environmental projects. In 2008, Suzuki appeared to promote his new book and to help promote "One Million Acts of Green." Strouboulopoulos opens the interview by introducing Suzuki's latest book. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model is demonstrated, as Strouboulopoulos asks a question, and although audible indications of active listening from Strouboulopoulos are present, Suzuki is able to respond completely.

Example 3.9a

GS: David Suzuki! Nice to see you again, Dr. Suzuki. Thanks for being here! Um, you know as we launch as we launch our 'One Million Acts of Green' I am very thankful that you have a green guide out the same time...

DS: [laughs]. Yeah.

GS: ...Because there are a lot of options in here. But before we get into the details, what do you think about the idea that one person and one act can make an impact?

DS: Well, one person is a drop in the bucket. Let's face it, there are six point seven billion of us but if there are enough of us trying, we can fill any bucket there is...

GS: Mmhm.

DS: ... But we've got to become involved. If all Canadians got involved, and I think your initiative is a wonderful one, congratulations for doing it, it will have a perceptible impact but it's not gonna get us off the trail here, it'll slow us down. Right now we need time....

GS: Right.

DS: ...Time to begin to think where, where are the opportunities and you know, what are the dangers and uh, but we need government, we need government in there to set regulations and to use taxation creatively and we haven't had that for twenty years.

(Interview with David Suzuki, 2008).

This example of platforming shows how Strouboulopoulos invites Suzuki to engage viewers of *The Hour* with current problems in the environmental movement. Strouboulopoulos talks briefly about the book and then invites Suzuki to talk about the CBC initiative. He asks "what do you think" and Suzuki proceeds with enthusiasm for Strouboulopoulos' initiative. Strouboulopoulos gives indications of active listening by nodding and giving positive verbal cues (i.e. "mmhm") while Suzuki explains how apathy towards the environment is at the root of the issue and begs Canadians to act now.

In this next example, Strouboulopoulos allows Suzuki to platform further as they discuss the social issue in greater depth. To begin, Strouboulopoulos does not ask a question and instead makes a statement about the concrete affects of the book. Strouboulopoulos promotes Suzuki's book, provides a critical perspective of the social issue, and provides background information on the government's role in environmental social change. O'Keefe's (2006) three-step model is demonstrated as Strouboulopoulos offers more information about his motivation to create the 'One Million Acts of Green' initiative. He then connects the individual need to act on the environment with the failings of Canadian legislation on the environment by making statements and providing background information on the issue.

Example 3.9b

GS: Well, so this book in a lot of ways is a personal, uh, like almost for one person at home could, like, I could do this, businesses could incorporate this but this alone is not enough.

DS: No. No, I mean, it's a start. It's a start and everybody's gotta get started. And you know, million acts of green is a huge start but that's not gonna get us there either.

GS: No, it shouldn't [inaudible] I don't want to do a billion acts of green. I'll leave that to Oprah. Om, part of the reason we're doing this is because we, uh, you know, as time as gone on I don't really believe, I don't want to be cynical about it, but I haven't seen any real action on the part of the legislators...

DS: Mmm.

GS: ... And not just the Conservative Party, the Liberals sat on Kyoto for an enormous amount of time and did nothing, so I don't have any reason to believe that governments will be the ones to do it. Are, do you think that Canadians can, even if they got all onto parliament hill that this government would listen?

DS: I don't know. I mean, I tried desperately before for the last two years to meet with each of the leaders of the parties. An they all did except for Mr. Harper who turned me down three times and gave me his Minister of the Environment. Ah, so I don't know. I mean I think the current government has never put the environment as, at the top of the agenda. And certainly even when our Prime Minister finally agreed that climate was an issue that had to be dealt with, he said we can't do anything to jeopardize the economy.

(Interview with David Suzuki, 2008)

First, Strouboulopoulos gives information about Suzuki's book and leads Suzuki into an explanation as to why reading the book does not equal social change. Suzuki cautions that the 'One Million Acts of Green' initiative is not the total solution. Strouboulopoulos explains his motivation for his initiative is a critique of current government action on the environment and then proceeds to ask Suzuki if the government could be persuaded by civic participation. Suzuki responds with his opinion and experience working with the government on this issue. Once again, Strouboulopoulos' comments allows for the dialogue on environmental issues to deepen.

Strouboulopoulos encourages activists to platform by giving verbal cues to invite discussion of social issues, the promotion books and films on the subject of current social issues, and their viewpoints. O'Keefe's (2006) two and three-step models are present here. Assertions of a two-step model continue to indicate Strouboulopoulos' journalistic interviewing techniques. However, where O'Keefe's three-step model is present, conversational contributions (the third step in O'Keefe's three –

step model or ‘feedback’) allows the conversation on the social issue to deepen. These are indications of a relationship between conversational methods of interviewing and rich conversations about social issues in a broadcast setting.

Platforming with Politicians

Platforming is demonstrated in all interviews with politicians examined for this research. In this case, platforming with politicians refers to deliberate verbal cues that invite guests to speak about social issues, democracy and their political platforms. O’Keefe’s (2006) two and three-step models are present here, indicating the use of both traditional and journalistic methods to foster broadcast discussions of social justice issues in democracy. Assertions of a two-step model indicate traditional methods of interviewing when inviting guests to speak about their political platforms. Where O’Keefe’s three-step model is present, a conversational element is used to invite guests to speak about their political platforms.

Social issues are discussed in interviews politicians, specifically with Jack Layton and Elizabeth May, but the central focus of interviews with Canadian politicians is their political platform before the 2008 Federal election. With the exception of Michael Ignatieff, who became the Liberal Party leader after the 2008 Federal Election and the fall of Stéphane Dion, and Michaëlle Jean, the Governor General of Canada, politicians tend to discuss their political platforms in relation to the upcoming election. Here, I include an excerpt of dialogue provided by my interview with Stroumboulopoulos, where he indicates distaste for specific guest behaviour related to political interviews. Then, I give examples to demonstrate how Stroumboulopoulos’ interviewing style allows for the pre-election political leaders to discuss their platforms and describe their approaches to leading their respective political parties. Next, I provide examples of how Ignatieff is also allowed to speak about his platform

as a new party leader. Finally, when Michaëlle Jean, a viceroy to the Monarch with a background in community activism, is interviewed she too is allowed to explain her position on a variety of issues.

In the following excerpt, Stroumboulopoulos describes his goals for interviews. Although he does not speak directly about interviewing politicians, the following example provides insight into why his approach makes for more interesting interviews.

Example 4.0

E.M: So when are you satisfied with an interview?

G.S: If. If it hits range: if the interview – if I can learn something from the interview; if I can, uh, that I can apply to life; if I can laugh; if I can be – you know, go to a darker place; if I can hit a variety of emotional – you know, uh, markers. Then I’m really satisfied with the interview.

E.M: And when are you disappointed then?

G.S: When I don’t.

E.M: When you don’t?

G.S: Yeah, yeah. When it’s a simple – when it’s a one track, or when people aren’t willing to give anything up. People turn into press release interviewees. That’s when it’s boring as hell.

This excerpt describes an overall goal in approach to interviews: to touch upon as many “emotional markers” as possible. He expresses distaste for guests who appear on the show to promote their product or treat the interview as a press release. In the case of politicians, their objective is to essentially sell themselves to the audiences at home and to assert their ability to communicate and lead. Therefore, a tension lies in interviews conducted on *The Hour* with politicians, because to Stroumboulopoulos, their objective makes for ‘boring’ (or non-entertaining) television. It also indicates an exchange process – Stroumboulopoulos is pleased to let people talk about their work or political platforms, but only in exchange for personal anecdotes outside of a press release format.

While speaking to Jack Layton of the New Democrat Party, Stroumboulopoulos provides Layton a number of opportunities to explain his approach to the upcoming election. O’Keefe’s (2006) two-step model is demonstrated in basic question-answer format. Stroumboulopoulos questions Layton about his approach to the election, and but seems dissatisfied with Layton’s response.

Example 4.1

GS: You campaigned hard, uh, you're campaigning hard right now to be the Prime Minister. Noh -that's it, now you know, er, a you are going out for this job. Why the decision this way, this tactic?

JL: Well, because I think we need a whole new direction in the country. You know, I've watched governments come and go over the years and what I see is the the concerns that people are grappling with at their kitchen table and I was sitting at a kitchen table with a family that put this word, this concept, this image in my mind—

GS: Were you invited or did you just walk in?

JL: Yeah, well. Being ah, uh, uh councillor, ya knock on doors and you get invited in. Canadians are like that, you know. Come and have a cup of tea, uh, or whatever. And so, uh, and they are grappling with all these issues, “how we gonna, how are we gonna look after our grandmother? She needs homecare.” Uh, “how we gonna cover the costs of the medications that we need?” “How we gonna, how, er, somebody's done well in high school but we can't afford to send them to college.” Uh, “What about my job?” These are the things that we oughtta be talking about everyday in the House of Commons...

GS: Yeah but, you could do that

JL: ...Our party is going to put them front and centre and deliver with some step by step solutions.

GS: Can we have a, a George and Jack conversation. I am going to ask you a few questions straight up, okay?

(Interview with Jack Layton, 2008)

Strouboulopoulos' question asks about Layton's approach to the campaign, but Layton begins by explaining what he is hearing from Canadians, the concerns that underpin his approach to running the country. Ultimately, these concerns are built into Layton's viewpoint and political platform. Layton takes the opportunity to platform. Strouboulopoulos interject with a joke, likely trying to “hit a variety of emotional markers” (Interview with George Strouboulopoulos, 2009) but Layton continues to explain issues that Canadians are faced with. Strouboulopoulos interjects that there are other ways to do what Layton is addressing, but fails as Layton continues to talk. Then, Strouboulopoulos asks for a “George and Jack conversation” and keeps control of the interview by telling Layton what he is about to do. By saying this, he expresses distaste for Layton's continued platforming, as expressed at the beginning of this section. Analysis of this passage reveals the tension of being a politician on *The Hour*, whom the host questions “in opposition” and to hold accountable, *without* turning the interview into a press release.

In the following excerpt, Stroumboulopoulos demonstrates a non-traditional interviewing approach while asking about where the NDP expects to win ridings. Parts of this passage are first used in the ‘Questioning’ section of this paper. It is repeated here for further analysis on ‘Platforming with Politicians. Layton takes the opportunity to criticize the tax cuts for banks and oil companies. O’Keefe’s three-step model is demonstrated as both interrupt and disagree with each other.

Example 4.2

GS: Alright. Okay. So do you expect, but is there is there a riding you know Stephen Harper expects to make his majority but then makes a lot of ground in Quebec he thinks he can make ground there. Stéphane Dion needs to hold on to Toronto. Elizabeth May probably out West. For you where like is there a place you expect “this is where we have a shot.” Edmonton East? You think, is that your shot?

JL: Ah yeah. And all across the country. Kamloops, uhh, we’ve got uh in in Toronto. Marilyn Churley is running in Beaches and she’s such a great environmentalist, people love her. Uh right across the country we’ve got great candidates. People told us we could never win in Quebec ...

GS: Mmhmm.

JL: ... That was one year ago, practically to the day. And now we have a member of parliament. And why is that? Because people want change and they want something positive, forward looking. They don’t want to go back to the things that they’ve seen and had for years, especially, if I may say so, a fifty billion dollar corporate tax cut for banks and oil companies. That’s not the right thing to do right now.

GS: But the corporate tax cut isn’t just for banks and oil companies. I mean, you’re proposing to raise the corporate tax again and by doing that there are a lot of smaller corporations that are gonna get hurt ...

JL: No.

GS: ... People feel that corporations are the ones that keep jobs and keep the economy going and in in this particular time, that’s not the way to go. A lot of economists say that’s not the way to go by by higher corporate tax.

JL: Bank economists. Uh who uh—

GS: economists! No no no economists.

JL: But let me just be clear in what we’re saying. We want to freeze the corporate tax rate for corporations to what it was in their last tax return so this is not anything dramatic and we’ve seen taxes go down for corporations under Paul Martin and the others for the last several years. We’re now below the Americans so we’re in a very good competitive competition but they’ve been throwing people out of work. Four hundred thousand good jobs lost the approach. The approach isn’t working. I say lets help the businesses who are gonna create jobs here especially the ones in the new economy the new energy economy we took people to a solar voltaic manufacturing plant where we could put solar energy on the roofs tens of thousands of houses. Lets help that company get up and going and deliver on the environment and and the job side at the same time.

(Interview with Jack Layton, 2008)

By the end of this portion of dialogue, Layton is able to platform further, explaining how the NDP intends to improve the economy, but not before Stroumboulopoulos poses a question citing opposing arguments. By citing the opinions that contradict Layton's justifications for higher taxes to banks and oil companies, Stroumboulopoulos positions himself in opposition to Layton and again, J.T. Dillon's theory of journalistic positionality is demonstrated. Stroumboulopoulos allows Layton to platform further, but not without a struggle.

While speaking to Elizabeth May, Stroumboulopoulos asks questions that lead his guest to speak about the Green Party campaign in the 2008 Federal Election. As May responds, O'Keefe's (2006) two-step response model is demonstrated. Then, Stroumboulopoulos breaks the two-step model as he completes his question after May has begun answering his second question.

Example 4.3

GS: So, what do you want for the Green Party out of this election?

EM: We, we, we need Green members of parliament in the House of Commons and I, when I say that I don't just mean the Green Party needs them, I mean Canada needs them. We need to change the culture in the House of Commons. We need to change the culture of politics and a sufficient number of greens can have a healthy contagion of positive, cooperative, you know, leh - less self serving, more service to the public and our politics.

GS: How, I mean, there are a lot of candidates running and we have the Green Party who are running who have very little experience politically, right?

EM: Mmm, hmm. And some who are very experienced.

GS: Right. How does getting them into the House of Commons um, change that culture? I mean, you still have to have some modicum of experience to do this.

EM: I..

GS: Hopefully.

EM: I think the experience of being by nature prising values of co-operation over competitiveness, the ability to see that the larger issues matter more than the self-interest of your party. These are not skills which are uh, particularly honed through political life. They may be better described by lack of experience in politics.

(Interview with Elizabeth May, 2008)

In her second response, Elizabeth May is able to respond to Stroumboulopoulos' question and platform for the Green Party but in doing so, also describes a critical approach to the current operation of the House of Commons and a general awareness of concrete changes needed to evolve political culture.

This demonstrates journalistic television rather than of entertainment television because of the nature of the discussion and the way in which the dialogue unfolds. Again, the questions are being asked for the knowledge of the audience, to educate them on current events and the upcoming election as described by J.T. Dillon's (1990) theory of broadcast theatricality.

However, there are many more examples where Stroumboulopoulos uses a conversational method to allow May to platform, where instead of asking questions to extract information on the Green Party's political platform, he contributes commentary and allows May to react to his statements. Parts of this passage are used in the 'Questioning' section of this paper. I use them again for further analysis on 'Platforming with Politicians' for further analysis. In the next examples, Stroumboulopoulos does not ask questions, but rather, engages in a conversation.

Example 4.4

GS: But you have the Conservatives and the Liberals, the only two that win it in this country are not interested in changing that.

EM: Well, I heard that uh, I heard from my daughter just earlier today that Stéphane Dion say on Cross Country Check-Up that he'd be interested in a different voting system. I think we need to ask Canadian's what they'd like but we really are in an archaic voting system and only the US and the UK and Canada are in this mode of modern, progressive democracies, the rest of them have proportional representation. So given that, just like the Bloc Quebequois and the Reform starting from Alberta, have an advantage of concentrating their votes in one region. We have the challenge of being a truly national party that cares about all of Canada. We don't want to promote regionalism of any kind. So it's taken us 25 years to build, to where when we do break through the House of Commons, we'll have members from coast to coast to coast. We have very strong candidates right across the country. Of course, I'll be in the House of Commons for Nova Scotia [laughs]

GS: Um, you uh, that's not going to be an easy win for you. I know Peter MaKay hasn't won by an enormous amount of seats in, in the previous elections, ah, the most recent ones, but it's still a very, a very tough road ahead to beat a, ah, a, minister like that.

EM: Yeah, the difficul, th- the difficulty for him is the traditional political equation that if you have a powerful minister in the House of Commons or in cabinet on behalf of your area, you get some benefits from it. Our region has been bleeding jobs, the economic situation has been an in a constant downturn and it's more of the fact that Stephen Harper has a certain antipathy towards Atlantic Canada and that none of his ministers have any role in determining policy. They wait to be told – Gerry Ritz was unprepared, this is a recent story, he didn't have any idea about what to say on a conference call about lysteriosis crisis, Mr. Harper makes all the decisions and then sends his ministers out, pretty much unprepared...

GS: But that's not that unique to Stephen Harper...

EM: Oh, it is...

GS: Jean Chretien faced very similar criticism for running his...

EM: No, no. I tell you no. Jean Chretien may have run his party like that, but he let his ministers of the crown do work in their area. There's never been a minister, there's never been a PMO that reviewed and vetted all the speeches that ministers gave, that reviewed and vetted all the civil servant speeches. I used to work in Mulroney government with none of that centralising and control in PMO.

GS: Right, well, I mean part of the reason I think, in, the Conservative Party, or this version of it is in a newer stage so they needed to have some control so they could actually build their party back because...

EM: Oh, I don't ...

GS: It was fractured for a while.

EM: Yeah. I, I think that you really can't have a minority government that is a minority of one. Mr. Harper does everything, and that's not healthy...

(Interview with Elizabeth May, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos engages in discussion with May with a level of combativeness. He does not ask questions at every turn; instead, he expresses an understanding of current political events that is oppositional and challenging. Questions are not used to extract information about the Green Party platform, but instead, statements are used to initiate a response.

In the following example, a conversational method is used to extract information valuable to the public on the Green party platform. Again, Stroubouloupoulos uses statements to allow May to clarify and describe specific initiatives of the Green Party and the effect is conversational despite the presence of O'Keefe's (2006) two-step response model.

Example 4.5

GS: In the carbon tax world, Stéphane Dion is talking 10 dollars...

EM: Yeah.

GS: Uh, uh in penalty fees. You are talking 50 bucks.

EM: It's not penalty fees. It's 50 dollars a tonne that delivers tax reductions elsewhere. So our approach...

GS: Especially to those who are entering above ...

EM: No, no. Oh no, because what it does is it shifting taxes. So that when we decide – why is it that right now, is it appropriate or fair or even economical to, that dumping pollution into the atmosphere is free. It shouldn't be free. We need to have a price signal that accompanies that, and the world's leading economists, including the leading economists in Canada all support that this will improve our economic performance because it allows us to bring down the taxes on things that stimulate the economy the most. When you bring down income taxes, bring down

payroll taxes, that creates a local economic stimulus. That's what we need right now in times of uncertainty.

(Interview with Elizabeth May, 2008)

Here, not only does May clarify the Green Party position, but the Liberal Party position as well.

Instead of leading with questions, Stroumboulopoulos makes statements, displaying knowledge of the different political party platforms. May corrects Stroumboulopoulos. It is unclear whether he calls them “penalty fees” so that May can correct him, or because of a genuine misunderstanding of the initiative. Stroumboulopoulos focuses on the Liberal Party platform again, and again, while May moves the discussion topic to the Green Party platform. She explains how the Green Party position on the issue of carbon tax is different from that of the Liberal Party and describes why the Green Party platform is the most beneficial to Canadians who care about the environment. Despite the presence of question – response format (O’Keefe’s two-step model), and the presence of “feedback” from O’Keefe’s three-step model, dialogue in this example has a conversational effect due to the lack of questions used to extract information about May’s political platform.

Stroumboulopoulos sat down with Stéphane Dion in the fall of 2008 to discuss the Liberal Party platform. In this next example, Stroumboulopoulos asks questions which allow for ex-party leader Stéphane Dion to platform for the Liberal Party. In doing so, he allows Dion to clarify a misconception about the Liberal Party platform. O’Keefe’s two-step model is demonstrated here:

Example 4.6

GS: Do you, uhm, Harp—they’ve been saying, the Conservatives have been claiming that you will, uh, raise the GST if you get elected, will you do that?

SD: Well, uh, Mr. Harper wants to control everything to the point that he would like to write the Liberal platform. Well, the Liberal platform has been written by us, and there’s nothing about the GST.

GS: So you won’t raise the GST if you win?

SD: No. No. It’s not part of our plan.

(Interview with Stéphane Dion, 2008)

This is an example of journalistic practice on the part of Stroumboulopoulos. He uses questions to extract information from Stéphane Dion for the at-home and in-studio audience. He even asks the question twice, as to be absolutely sure that this is the Liberal Party position. Dion responds twice with corresponding responses. This allows the audience to be absolutely certain about Dion's position. This is important for Dion at this point in the campaign, as he was often criticized for being a weak communicator.

Stroumboulopoulos makes a similar move, asking another question about clarification of the Liberal Party platform later in the interview with Stéphane Dion. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model is demonstrated.

Example 4.7

GS: One of the criticisms though is that people don't seem to understand the Green Shift Plan. Why do you think that is?

SD: Okay. Go to thegreenshift.ca. There is a calculator. For a family of fifty thousand dollars, uh, earning fifty thousand dollars with two kids, it's fifteen hundred dollars of tax cuts. A family in poverty, earning twenty thousand dollars with two kids will get twenty-four hundred dollars cash to help them. So we are, because we are Liberals, we are combining—

GS: But why isn't that connecting to people? Why are they having trouble understanding that?

SD: Now they will understand because we did this [inaudible]...

GS: Okay.

(Interview with Stéphane Dion, 2008)

Stroumboulopoulos again asks the same question twice. Dion does not answer Stroumboulopoulos' question. Dion instead responds the first time by giving the audience an explanation of the Liberal's Green Shift. He directs them to the Green Shift website, providing them with a resource. He then explains what the Green Shift means for Canadians. He is interrupted by Stroumboulopoulos, who repeats the question. Dion responds by saying that Canadians will no longer have a problem understanding the Green Shift initiative because of his previous response.

When sitting down with Michael Ignatieff, the newly elected leader of the Liberal Party in the Fall of 2008, Stroumbouloupoulos allows Ignatieff to speak about his new position and leadership for the Liberal Party. The sequence of turn taking that occurs is indicative of journalistic interviews.

Example 4.8

GS: How's your liberal party different from Stéphane Dion's liberal party.

MI: Ah, I think it's a party that builds on some of the things that Stéphane did. I think there's wide respect for a couple things he did. One of them, the attention he gave to women in our party. Secondly, the attention he gave on environmental issues. He put environmental sustainability at the centre of what a liberal party ought to stand for. Now, we then have to figure out how to do that in a time of recession and depression, but there's some things that he contributed that I don't want to throw overboard at all.

GS: Is the green shift 'in' in the Michael Ignatieff Liberal Party?

MI: I think what we need to do on environmental stuff is say a very simple message: How can we get Canadian's to waste less energy? You waste less energy, you shoot less stuff up the stack, right? The key thing is energy efficiency and energy use. We get that message out, it's great for productivity, it makes us more efficient and it helps to save the planet.

(Interview with Michael Ignatieff, 2008)

This segment of text takes place at the end of the first half of the interview. In relation to platforming, this is the first time Ignatieff is prompted through questioning to speak about his role in the change of leadership in the Liberal Party. Then, again after the break in the interview, Ignatieff is questioned again. The flow of turn-taking is consistent with a journalistic style of interviewing.

Example 4.9a

GS: Jack Layton says he doesn't trust Stephen Harper. Do you?

MI: Uh, he has lost the confidence of the House of Commons. That means, in simple layman's terms, we don't trust him, no. He's got a trust problem. He's has to re-establish trust in order to survive the end of January.

GS: But can he ... re-establish with you? Like reasonable—understand that he's gotta to meet the needs of the majority of the people who sent him to the house and his members, right?

Do—can there be a compromise between your, your coalition and Stephen Harper?

MI: I never give up on anybody, I won't give up on Stephen Harper. Uh, you know, he

GS: You sound like a pastor.

MI: [laughs] There's hope, there's hope, my friends

GS: [laughs] What do you need to see in the budget then? Is there, give me just a couple of specifics that you need to see in the budget that would make you say, 'I'm okay with this.'

MI: I think the thing you want to see is that if workers are unemployed or forced to be unemployed, we help them to retrain so they can get back in the game. That would be one. Secondly, tax relief for people at the lower end of the income so that they've got money to

spend. It puts food on the table. That gives a jolt to the economy. It's not a question of stimulus, but who gets the stimulus and I think it should be on that side. That's one thing. The other thing finally, is uh, helping entrepreneurs and small business men to invest in new technology. One of the key ways to make us more productive is putting them, allowing them to replace their computer systems and get new machines and stuff so that when we get out of this, they're ready to fire on all cylinders.

(Interview with Michael Ignatieff, 2008)

Although this segment of dialogue goes off topic for a moment, Stroubouloupoulos resumes asking questions and re-establishes his position as a journalist, refraining from giving feedback. This segment of dialogue maintains a question-answer format, and O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model.

In May of 2009 when George Stroubouloupoulos sat down with Michaëlle Jean, the then-Governor General of Canada, it was her first appearance on *The Hour*. After a year in parliament full of controversy, there was much for Stroubouloupoulos to ask Jean about her then four-year residency. The first example of platforming takes place early in the interview with Stroubouloupoulos asking questions to allow Jean to clarify and tell the story from her perspective. That way Stroubouloupoulos prompts Jean to answer questions about both political and personal issues. Platforming in this case is defined as instances of deliberate verbal cues that invite guests to speak about social issues, and books and films on the subject of current social issues. Stroubouloupoulos performs the role of journalist by asking questions which lead her to tell her story.

Example 4.9b

GS: [inaudible]. It's true. There's lots to talk about, lets get right with the seal thing 'cause that is what made all the newspapers. Did you know that, that, that when you bit into that piece of seal that this was what was going to happen?

MJ: D'you know, um, I think ah, what's important for me, is always to ah, to engage with people. And I was in Rankin Inlet for this community feast. And ah, it was quite uh, quite special because uh, the people in the north are very generous, they welcome you with open arms-

GS: mmm, mmm.

JS: And they always want to share the best of themselves with you. So time came to share a meal, of course, you know, no surprise, they offer you the heart. And uhh, and uh, it was quite nice because I was really, um, having a great conversation with the elders, uh, the women. One of them shared her Oloo with me and she—

GS: That's the uh, the knife that you cut with—

MJ: Yes, like this. That's that special knife that the women use to skin uhh, the animals. And uh, and the other one was teaching me how to skin the seal and she was telling me of, uh, of legends and how important it is, you know, for uhh, uh, for Inuit people to have this possibility of being always close to nature and, and this this special meal in such a, a harsh environment, beautiful though, uhhh, the importance of it and uh, and she was eating, uh, part of heart and telling me that it's, it's a delicacy, it's a special part

GS: mmhmm.

MJ: that they offer to people that they appreciate and 'specially to women. And uh, I, I, I hadn't made, you know, a decision that I was going to eat some but you know, as you engage uh, in it's, it's a way of paying respect, it's –

GS: But seals aren't usually served in that setting, so, like, that, that's, that's I mean I've been up in the north and been had in a similar environment once an, and seals aren't normally there...

MJ: Yes.

GS: Did you ask for a seal--

MJ: No, I never asked for it...

GS: You never asked for it.

MJ: I never asked for it...

GS: Did you know, so, you didn't plan, did you plan to eat this as a political statement?

MJ: No, not at all...

GS: Oh, I understand.

MJ: I just, uh, I was in a relationship, really. And and at one point she just said, 'would you like to try some?' And I was ready, and I said 'Yes, of course.' But you know, uh, it's like when you, in uh, in, in an interview like you are now with me...

GS: mmm.

MJ: You just, uh, you in a bubble ...

GS: Yeah.

MJ: And you just in that relationship with the other. And that's exactly what was happening. But at the same time, I believe in ah, in ah, diplomacy on a human scale and I think that it's very important, really to respect people, to recognize and uh, to receive what they have to offer to you, and uh, it's a way of, of connecting and I have this ability and I do that everywhere...

GS: mm hmm.

MJ: People talked about this occasion, but it's uh, something that I do constantly as I meet with communities in Canada but abroad also.

(Interview with Michaëlle Jean, 2009)

Stroubouloupoulos begins by questioning whether Jean could have anticipated the media response to the photo of her consuming seal meat. His approach in this question is *not* to hold her accountable for her actions, but rather, to hear her side of the story. He questions her as he would an activist instead of as an elected official. Jean responds by beginning to tell the story of how she came to eat the seal meat. As she tells the tale, Stroubouloupoulos responds with indications of active listening. He offers information to clarify the term "oolo" pertaining to Jean's version of the event. She continues

explaining herself. Stroubouloupoulos then interrupts Jean and asks a question more specific to the eating of seal during certain ceremonies, and claims that he has attended similar ceremonies without being offered seal. He then asks if she asked to be served seal during the ceremony, and she responds no. He asks the question again to clarify, and she repeats herself. He asks another question about whether her actions were political. Jean responds by denying the allegation and returns to explaining the depth of her situation, justifying her actions further. Stroubouloupoulos gives more indications of active listening before Jean finishes providing audiences with her explanation of the story.

Later in the interview with Michaëlle Jean, Stroubouloupoulos eases into the hard questions by making comments to make light of the situation. Breaking the question-answer format typical of journalistic interviewing, Stroubouloupoulos and Jean engage in scattered and non-dialogic turn taking, demonstrating O’Keefe’s three-step model.

Example 4.9c

GS: That’s not the only way they are going to talk about you in history class, they’re, they are also going to talk about you as the Governor General who prorogued parliament.

MJ: [laughs].

GS: Did you, did you, I mean, I, I, I wondered, you know we talked about it here on the show ...

MJ: Mmhm.

GS: ... When it was mentioned that Stephen Harper was probably going to come to you and ask you this...

MJ: Mmm.

GS: ... I thought if you were just like not going to answer the phone.

MJ: [laughs].

GS: ‘Cause, because, because the truth is, even by this point the Governor General’s position was a political position, at this point, it seemed not to be that position—

MJ: But you know, you never run away.

GS: Of course.

MJ: You assume your responsibility—

GS: He could also find you, he knows where you live.

MJ: [laughs].

GS: It’s, I’ve done the walk, it’s not that far from where you live!

MJ: [laughs]. We’re neighbours! [laughs].

GS: Did you um, did you struggle with the decision? How did you come to the decision?

MJ: It wasn’t an easy decision. I think uh, the Prime Minister came with it, his advice uh, I consulted, also, I took the time—

GS: You talked to constitutional experts or something like that?

MJ: I did, I did. Uh, and, and I took the time, it was important. And my main focus was 'What's the best, what would be the best decision for, in the best interest of the country.' This is what needs to be the focus all the time. So you, you just, you analyse circumstances uhh, and then I knew that I would make my decision, I had to assume it totally. And I did.

GS: Uh, so, was it about, because I wondered if people afterwards, there was a lot of speculation an, and also just a lot of analysis. We wondered, in your position in Rideau Hall, at this stage, do you have to follow the will of the Prime Minister or, or were you in a position where you could've said, 'no' and 'we're not going to dissolve parliament'?

MJ: I was in a position that I could have said, 'yea--no'...

GS: Oh, yeah?

MJ: ... And uh, and the decision, I mean, the decision had really to, in my mind, uh, to be in the best interests really of the country. Looking at all the circumstances, I have no regrets...

GS: Mmhmm.

MJ: ... I have no regrets.

GS: Okay. Thank you for being here.

(Interview with Michaëlle Jean, 2009)

After joking around on the issue of the prorogation of parliament, Stroumboulopoulos slowly leads into the discussion. Stroumboulopoulos suddenly changes the tone of conversation and asks Jean a serious question about the sequence of events pertaining to the prorogation of government in December 2008. Then, she answers, explaining her situation, justifying her actions. Stroumboulopoulos reacts by asking a question that assumes Jean was pressured her decision to proroguing parliament. Again, she justifies her decision one last time before the close of the interview. Stroumboulopoulos allows his guests to platform by engaging in casual conversation. He does not criticize or take what Dillon (1990) would consider a position of opposition, Stroumboulopoulos is instead happy to prompt her to share her experience. The interview closes as Michaëlle Jean shares her experience in the prorogation of the Canadian Government.

These examples on *The Hour* reveal Stroumboulopoulos' role in consistent platforming in interviews. Stroumboulopoulos consistently allows politicians the opportunity to platform. He asks questions and makes statements that prompt the guest to speak about their political platform or political viewpoint. Both conversational and journalistic approaches are used to do so. The tension lies in the tension between Stroumboulopoulos' aversion to "press release" interviews, and the politician's desire

and need to treat the interview like a press release. Michaëlle Jean is treated as an activist and not a politician in this example.

Positionality

Evidence of the positionality, or the disclosure of political affiliation of Stroumboulopoulos' came in two forms. First, during my interview with Stroumboulopoulos, he indicated that personal political affiliation was best left out of the public arena. Second, analysis of the interviews presents evidence of an assertion of George Stroumboulopoulos' positionality. The significance of this contradiction will be explored in greater length in the Discussion section of this paper.

Indications of positionality are genuine assertions of opinion or stand point, usually direct verbalizations that indicate a political alignment or identity associated with Stroumboulopoulos. These examples indicate a non-journalistic style of interviewing and conversing with guests, and stand in contrast to traditional journalism that demands the interviewer remain neutral. The following are examples of assertions of George Stroumboulopoulos' positionality in interviews.

78 While speaking with Stroumboulopoulos in May of 2009, he offered this information as to why his political positionality is not made public. I opened by asking Stroumboulopoulos where the show stands.

Example 5.0

E.M: Do you think that *The Hour* falls to the right, or to the left politically as a show? Or do you think that it does a pretty good job at staying -

G.S: - I don't think it falls on either of them. I think , yeah, because the show's – there are a lot of different kinds of people with a lot of different value systems um, who are, um, who work here. Uh, and we also go out – it's important to us to not be partisan. Like it really is important to not be partisan to us, right? Because I think once you tell people how you vote, you're ruined. Um, it's really hard-

E.M: Yeah, and I mean I've noticed in your press that there's nothing about how you vote.

G.S: No, my friends don't know how I vote. My, my best friends don't know how I vote. I don't know how they vote. You know, it's important to keep, I think that's important to keep

quiet when you do as I do for a living. You know? Um, it's not that you, you can, you can be partisan, support a party, vote any way you want, you can vote in the same party in every level of government a hundred times over if you've lived through that many elections. But, what's im- the challenge is, that you can do all that and be an unbiased interviewer and presenter. It's, but it's not about you, it's about the audiences' perception of you. Right? And once they know how you vote. I know you can assume it. But once you say it – I just think there's a line that I'm not comfortable crossing, you know?

According to this excerpt, Stroubouloupoulos, despite his celebrity status, and reputation as a celebrity known to demonstrate support for Canadian democracy by volunteering at the local election booth during Federal elections, he feels it is the responsibility of *The Hour* to remain neutral to the viewers in order to uphold the foundations of democracy with an informed citizenry who are free to make up their own minds given proper information. This, however, contradicts what actually happens on the show. Although Stroubouloupoulos never explicitly asserts himself to the right or to the left, there are indications given in dialogue that aid both the researcher and viewer to understand how his positionality might affect his line of questioning. Often, this is displayed as scepticism surrounding the likelihood of democratic change.

There are a variety of examples from interviews with politicians where Stroubouloupoulos asserts what he is *not* politically. While speaking casually and offering an opinion (O'Keefe's (2006) three-step response model) to Michael Ignatieff about the formation of a coalition government, Stroubouloupoulos distances himself from political affiliation.

Example 5.1

GS: The [sigh] the idea of forming a government, has been met with, I actually kind of enjoy the outrage at it cause...

MI: [chuckles]

GS: people have been paying attention

MI: I am glad you enjoyed it, George.

GS: I really did. I also not in the Liberal Party, and so...

MI: [laughs]

(Interview with Michael Ignatieff, 2008).

Then, in the pre-interview biography for Elizabeth May, Stroubouloupoulos expresses his opinion.

Example 5.2

Then in 2006, she helped nominate Mulroney as 'greenest prime minister.' That same year, May was elected leader of the 'Green Party.' Her goal was to get Canada to meet its Kyoto target. *Uh, yeah. Good luck with that.*

(italics added, Interview with Elizabeth May, 2008)

While speaking to Ingrid Newkirk, Stroumboulopoulos positions himself opposite Newkirk's argument for vegetarianism and animal rights activism. O'Keefe's (2006) three-response model is demonstrated as Stroumboulopoulos offers feedback and expresses his personal stance on vegetarianism.

Example 5.3

GS: Is it about the industrialization of food and farming because I eat meat and I try to go to a a butcher shop that doesn't, isn't mass industrialized and it's a healthier way. They're still killing the cow, I get it but there is an absolutely different way to approach food.

IN: There are degrees of cruelty, yes. I am hopeful that you are a pre-vegetarian. [laughs].

GS: That ain't going to happen...

IN: Hey!

GS: ... I'd love In one part of my life I see why I'd want to be but right now that's not where my head's at.

(Interview with Ingrid Newkirk, 2009)

Stroumboulopoulos distances himself from Newkirk's standpoint as he expresses distaste towards Newkirk's suggestion of vegetarianism. His negative reaction to Newkirk's suggestion places his standpoint in opposition to her standpoint within animal rights activism. Shortly after, he defends his stance, and remains open to the idea of adopting vegetarianism as a lifestyle in the future, expressing understanding of why people make the decision to become vegetarian for a social justice cause.

In the next example, Stroumboulopoulos expresses scepticism while speaking to David Suzuki for the possibility of social reform and a functioning democratic system. This example defies both O'Keefe's (2006) two and three-step models of broadcast dialogue because an opinion or "feedback" is embedded in the question.

Example 5.4

GS: No, it shouldn't [inaudible] I don't want to do a billion acts of green. I'll leave that to Oprah. Om, part of the reason we're doing this is because we, uh, you know, as time has gone

on I don't really believe, I don't want to be cynical about it, but I haven't seen any real action on the part of the legislators...

DS: Mmm.

GS: ... And not just the Conservative Party, the Liberals sat on Kyoto for an enormous amount of time and did nothing, so I don't have any reason to believe that governments will be the ones to do it. Are, do you think that Canadians can, even if they got all onto parliament hill that this government would listen?

Again, Stroumboulopoulos attempts to provide evidence for his opinion on Canadian democracy. He has taken the initiative One Million Acts of Green because he claims not to have witnessed favourable action on the environment from legislators. He reinforces his statements by citing inaction by Canada's main political parties, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

The public disclosure of political affiliation and personal opinion of Stroumboulopoulos is found in interviews with Ingrid Newkirk, Elizabeth May and David Suzuki. The use of conversational elements in interviews on *The Hour* aids in the creation of space for Stroumboulopoulos to position himself within the dialogue. The 'feedback' component allows Stroumboulopoulos to share his opinion on democracy and other political matters. The way Stroumboulopoulos exercises that space, though the use of scepticism and sarcasm are problematic and are further analysed in the 'Discussion' section of this paper.

Hypothetical Questions

There are four instances of hypothetical questions in the ten interviews examined, all of which occur while Stroumboulopoulos is interviewing politicians. The purpose of a hypothetical question is to position the interviewee in an unforeseen situation. The usefulness of asking hypothetical questions is not necessarily to engage the interviewee in a right or wrong debate, but to ensure their answer concurs with their current political positionality. It can also be seen as a test of character for political figures to think on their feet (Dillon, 2004). The role hypothetical questioning plays in relation to my

thesis is dependent on the outcome of the question and to what extent the conversation remains productive and focused on current political debates.

Example 6.1 demonstrates O’Keefe’s (2006) two-step model, and a traditional approach to interviewing. Initially, Stroubouloupoulos asks a cluster of questions to clarify his question to May. She addresses his hypothetical question head on.

Example 6.1

GS: What are you going to do if you don’t win your seat? Like, what happens to the Green Party if Elizabeth May does not win her seat? Because, and I’ll say this because it means, is it a, is it a statement to your leadership or to your judgement to run in that riding?

EM: Well, we’ll discuss this after I win my seat.

GS: But – But that is why I put the words “what if” before...

EM: I don’t have time to think about the hypotheticals. I mean, I am neither wondering what happens if I am Prime Minister on October 15th, or what happens if I don’t win my seat. Both cases are hypotheticals at this point and I am focusing right now on getting home to Nova Scotia ‘cause I’ve had, I’ve done half the campaign I’ve had to be doing national tour things as a national leader and I need to get home and meet all the people that I haven’t yet talked to in Central Nova and answer their questions about what I’d do for them as an MP, and when you ask what difference it would make to have a few Green’s in the House of Commons, I think bringing a change to the culture, moving into the House of Commons with the goal of that we would adopt the standard of zero tolerance for bullying and abuse in the House and insist on a level of discourse that is respectful and I think we can make a difference because we would conduct ourselves in a way that the public liked and the other parties would pretty quickly realize they had to follow our lead.

(Interview with Elizabeth May, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos asks a hypothetical question about securing her parliamentary seats, and then continues to ask about a hypothetical situation would affect the Green Party. In this example of hypothetical questioning, the focus is removed from the current political discussions, and instead focuses on a non-existent situation. However, May quickly dismisses his question, and even identifies it as hypothetical in the interview.

However, when Michael Ignatieff is similarly questioned, the outcome is dissimilar. The dialogue sequence appears with elements of both a two and three-sequence response models, as Stroubouloupoulos informs Ignatieff and audiences that he only has one question, and Ignatieff gives

concrete signifiers to indicate active listening throughout the formation of Stroubouloupoulos' question. Both indicate active listening and then the dialogue weaves in and out of turn. The third time Stroubouloupoulos speaks, he reminds Ignatieff (and audiences) of his position in the Iraq war at that time. Then Stroubouloupoulos asks what Ignatieff calls a "*retrospective hypothetical*" question:

Example 6.2

GS: Alright, it's my last question. As you get to the point where you might be Prime Minister, like you said, one of three jobs you could have, 4 if you want to go back to teaching.

MI: [chuckles].

GS: But, your judgement and your record is going to come up time and time again

MI: Sure, sure.

GS: To see if you are the guy that can withstand the stress test. Now, knowing what we know about the war in Iraq, had you been the Prime Minister at the time, had Stephen Harper been the Prime Minister at the time, Canada would most likely be in the war in Iraq. Had you been the Prime Minister, we would be in the war in Iraq. Cause' in, since you, you've taken away, because at the time you were in favour of it. Can someone say then is that a question of your judgement and how you would handle a situation like that?

MI: My judgement's on the line the whole time, George. And I've not, I've made mistakes, um, my feeling about Iraq was driven by something that scalded me if I can use those words. Seeing what Saddam had done to the Kurds when I was a journalist. And that maybe took me further than I should have gone. You know, sometimes, in the, in the, depth of your feeling, your anger at something you have seen takes you further than you should have gone. Had I been Prime Minister, which is your direct question, 2003, I think I would have had the briefings Mr. Chretien would have had, I would have been responsible for a government. I would have had to listen to the Canadian people, the Canadian people I think felt on balance, they didn't think going into Iraq was a good thing. I think I can say with some degree of confidence, had I been in the chair Mr. Chretien's chair, I would have made the same call. I sure hope so. Uh, it's what's called a **retrospective hypothetical**, so I can't exactly tell you, I mean, I'm doing the best I can here.

GS: Sure.

MI: But I think Mr. Chretien made the right decision for the country, uh, and uh, I sure hope, let me put it that way, I sure hope I would have made that decision.

(Interview with Michael Ignatieff, 2008)

In the following example, a discourse marker ("Alright, it's my last question...") leads into the conversation. Stroubouloupoulos asks a hypothetical question to Jack Layton pre-Federal election 2008. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step response model is demonstrated by the following sequence. A variation on the two-step model takes place as Stroubouloupoulos interrupts Layton before he has the chance to complete his response.

Example 6.3

GS: Is that then and it's a conversation I have with all the leaders who come on here uh if you are not the Prime Minister or you are not the leader of the official opposition after this election will you be the leader of the NDP?

JL: Oh that's always up to our party to decide. We have a convention –

GS: Do you want it to stay that way?

JL: I'm enjoying the job and every two years we have a convention and they get to tell me whether they're enjoying me in the job as much as I'm enjoying the job.

GS: Good to see you man thanks for coming on.

JL: Okay thanks.

(Interview with Jack Layton, 2008)

Strouboulopoulos reveals that he asks hypothetical questions to political leaders deliberately. He interrupts Layton with a question. Layton is not interrupted again before the interview comes to an end with the prompting of Strouboulopoulos.

Strouboulopoulos asks a hypothetical question similar to that asked of Jack Layton in the previous example. The following example demonstrates O'Keefe's (2006) three-step response model, as Strouboulopoulos departs from simply asking questions and comments on Dion's response.

Example 6.4

GS: If you win the election you are the Prime Minister. If you, if you do not win the election, are you still the Liberal leader of Canada?

SD: I will win this election and be confident and I have a party strongly supporting me. I am a team player and my party give me an incredibly good team. If you compare with Mr. Harper, Mr. Harper has a, a, very weak team as you know, and he's –

GS: Whoa, whoa, I don't know that! I mean, currently they're the Government of Canada. They're the ones that the people sent to Ottawa to ...

SD: Yeah?

GS: ... Be the Government of Canada.

SD: Yeah, and he gave to Canada a Minister of Foreign Affairs that has been an embarrassment, a Minister of Finance that said that ...

GS: Yeah, but you know, sir, that that's not a 'Conservative Party thing.' Liberals parties have lots of embarrassing people as well, over the course of elections, right?

SD: I never saw that...

GS: Yeah?

SD: A Minister of Finance who said to the world, "don't invest" is the biggest province of the country. When he said "don't invest in Ontario" he should have been fired right away.

GS: Come back again when you are ready and we'll talk to you more—

(Interview with Stéphane Dion, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos begins by setting up and asking a hypothetical question about a possible situation. Instead of answering the question, Dion addresses Stroubouloupoulos' set up by asserting his confidence towards the outcome of the upcoming election. As he continues, he says "Mr. Harper has a, a, very weak team as you know," when Stroubouloupoulos then interrupts to disagree with Dion by pointing out that it was the Canadian people who voted them in and that the Conservative Party is currently the Government of Canada. Dion proceeds to defend his perspective. Again, Stroubouloupoulos breaks Dion's response, now with obvious agitation. As Dion continues to defend his position, Stroubouloupoulos tries to end the interview, reasserting his position of power as interviewer, but is unsuccessful. The focus on their conversations remains about current political positionality, only because Dion refuses to answer the hypothetical question.

Hypothetical questions are typical of traditional, journalistic methods of interviewing. In these cases, hypothetical questions are used to test the ability of politicians to improvise and to test consistency in their political positionality over time. This evidence demonstrates that the use of hypothetical questions result in varying outcomes, and sometimes disables the conversation from providing current or relevant information to viewers.

Qualitative Discourse: Making Connections

There is evidence in the examined interviews of a type of questioning that allows guest to offer personal anecdotes connecting lived experiences of interviewees to the highlighted social issues. I define qualitative discourse as descriptions of lived experiences of or within a social movement or issue. These discourses are qualitative in nature because the data produced is subjective, rather than objective. Stroubouloupoulos invokes personal and emotional accounts in the context of political broadcast interviews, making the primary connection required in a social justice paradigm (connecting personal narrative and emotion to social issues). In the following three examples, the guest is

questioned so that they might share their experiences. On two of these occasions, the guest speaks to a lived experience of difficulty not directly associated with the reason for their visit, although not necessarily separate.

Qualitative discourse is first generated when Stroubouloupoulos talks to Ingrid Newkirk of PETA about how she became an environmental activist. His question evokes the candid telling of how she came to be an environmental activist. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model is demonstrated, in standard question-answer format.

Example 7.1

GS: What was your moment? Where you thought, "I'm going to be, this is who I am going to be."

IN: Eighteen thousand moments. I am the world's slowest learner. Um, I had a fur coat when I was nineteen...

GS: Mmhmm.

IN: ... I think my father and I were eating our way through the animal kingdom, but uh...

GS: Did you, did you did you get to rattle snake?

IN: [laughs]. No, you know, we didn't...

GS: It's taste uh not tasty.

IN: ...Luckily. I was always envious of the people who grew up vegetarian and didn't get to any of it. But um, I was a law enforcement officer I went out on a cruelty complaint. Someone had abandoned all these animals on a farm, and all dead, except for one little pig and this little pig was so weak I had to actually hold his head up to allow him to drink water from my cupped hand. And when I had sent him off to the vet, I was going to prosecute these people, I was looking for evidence. I was driving home and I was wondering, this is before you had uh microwave ovens, what had I defrosted for dinner and I thought "oh yes, I've got those pork chops." And then the lights came on. And I thought, I hadn't been to a slaughter house then, I've been to many since but we all know they're hideous places....

GS: Sure.

IN: ... And I thought I am going to prosecute one person for being cruel to a pig, but surely this pig I'm about to eat couldn't have had a picnic either.

Here, she tells the audience about how she came to realize how cruelty against animals was engrained in her young adult life. Stroubouloupoulos interrupts her, but allows her to speak candidly about making the connection which would lead her to found an animal rights organizations and assume a position as an influential animal rights activist. There is a break in her story as she is interrupted by

Stroubouloupolos to answer another question related to her tale. Newkirk then resumes sharing her story; Stroubouloupolos gives indications of active listening and agreement.

In the second example, Stroubouloupolos poses an identical personal question to Erin Brockovich to reveal qualitative discourse. Instead of discussing her position as an environmental activist, Brockovich responds to the question by disclosing personal information about growing up with a learning disability. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model is demonstrated again, demonstrating use of a journalistic paradigm to reveal qualitative discourses.

Example 7.2

GS: Is this the person you thought you were going to turn into? Is this the job you thought you were going to have?

EB: No! [laughs]. I mean you know as a child, I have a learning disability, I am a dyslexic, so things were difficult for me but I always fought um being put inside of a box because there's more than one way to skin a cat and there's more than one way for us to think and and be educated, so I fought a lot the system, I didn't want to be confined...

GS: Yeah.

EB: ...And I wanted to work outside of the box. I always felt I might do something, but I never stopped to think, "Are you kidding me?" I mean sometimes I feel like I have you know, toxic stamped on my head and I didn't aspire for any of that. I I did feel, and I would aspire to do something to help human beings. I mean that is my passion.

GS: Is that, you know, when you were a kid and and and and you were dealing with dyslexia, I am sure there were a lot a people, or there was a time that you thought that you couldn't do things because of that?

EB: Oh yeah. Many many times. I was labelled you know special needs, I was called stupid I couldn't get things accomplished and I share all this, I am actually glad you asked this because I share this with people so often. You know my mom was a huge cheerleader for me and she always taught me the value of a little unknown underused word called 'stick-to-itiveness' and she used to tell me every time I would come home from school feeling dejected with another bad grade, she would say "You just have to have stick-to-itiveness, Erin" and I didn't know what it meant. And you know, I challenged her one day, and I told her she made it up and she pulled out the Webster's dictionary and read me the definition and its "propensity to follow through in a determined manner, dogged persistence borne out of obligation and stubbornness." And I am like, it really struck me and that word, became, I became the little engine that could "I think I can I think I can I know I can I know I can" and everything that I do, I apply stick-to-itiveness and it works. When we get involved, especially in these huge environmental issues and even as we all get involved in the green movement, you can't get started and then just stop next year, its it its going to be an ongoing thing and its going to take a lot for us to make this chance but having stick-to-itiveness, being persistence, born out of obligation and stubbornness we can start to effect change.

(Interview with Erin Brockovich, 2009)

As Brockovich answers, Stroumbouloupoulos gives an indication of active listening, and then asks another question specific to her struggles with a learning disability. Brockovich continues her response by making a comparison to the personal qualities needed to overcome both dyslexia and “these huge environmental issues.” She also provides insight into the complexity and gravity of environmental issues and invites people to join the cause.

In the next example, Stroumbouloupoulos speaks to Barbara Becnel and reveals a qualitative, narrative discourse. In the opening of the interview, Stroumbouloupoulos and Becnel discuss a larger issue to gang violence and anti-capital punishment. This interview occurs a few days after the inauguration of US President Barack Obama in January 2009, when public discussions of race have been prevalent in the media for a period of time. Here, Stroumbouloupoulos exercises a question-answer response model, but also provides feedback and makes general contributions to Becnel’s historical anecdotes about black/white race relations in America. O’Keefe’s two-step model is demonstrated, and reveals a qualitative discourse.

Example 7.3

BB: Well, pretty good. I just got in this morning from uh Washington DC, I was there.

GS: Why was something going on there or something?

BB: I was at the inauguration, yes!

GS: What was that like?

BB: Um, it was absolutely incredible. Um, it was incredible because well for all of the obvious reasons, one of which of course, Bush is gone. But it was also incredible because given our culture and our history in the United States, to be in the middle of one point eight million people and to have folks, Wall Street looking white guys with cashmere um scarves and wire rim glasses standing next to folks from the hood, where the twain never meet, in our nation

GS: They only see each other in the movies.

BB: Exactly. Or on the news, you know, and uh, to see them sort of coexisting and everyone was happy and hundreds of thousands of black folks waving flags that is just. We’re not always the most patriotic people in the world because things didn’t always go so swell for us in the United States but um—

GS: What did Ice Cube say, we didn’t land on Plymouth Rock, it landed on us.

BB: Exactly. But anyway it was an amazing experience, so, I was there.

(Interview with Barbara Becnel, 2009)

After prompting Becnel to discuss her experience of being at the Presidential Inauguration, Stroumboulopoulos offers two thoughts on the topic. First, he says “They only see each other in the movies” (Stroumboulopoulos, 2009) and then “What did Ice Cube say, we didn’t land on Plymouth Rock, it landed on us” (Stroumboulopoulos, 2009) and makes reference to popular rapper. Stroumboulopoulos makes this reference to indicate a level of understanding of racial history and struggle.

Qualitative discourses are only evoked in interviews with female activists. They are also evoked using O’Keefe’s (2006) two-step model. This indicates that narratives are produced in broadcast interviews as a result of traditional, question – answer formats. Two of these narratives are not on topically/ on topic of their interview; Erin Brockovich speaks about her struggles with a learning disability and Barbara Becnel speaks explicitly about race. Stroumboulopoulos also uses a popular culture reference while speaking with Barbara Becnel to indicate a higher level of understanding, that ultimately enriches the interview.

Missed Connections/Opportunities

This section outlines a lack of discussion on *The Hour* about major social issues stemming from a dominant, oppressive social structure. Capitalist and patriarchal social structures that perpetuate social inequities are never addressed on the show. The opportunities to raise such issues arise frequently in interviews with activists and with previous Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, but never with political party leaders. The reasons for these omissions are speculated in the Discussion section of this paper. *The Hour’s* ability to be transformative, and to not simply provide news and entertainment, but also act platform to discuss social justice issues, is affected by instances of missed opportunities.

These missed opportunities serve as the missed connections needed to complete the social justice paradigm, between that of social issue and an oppressive social structure .

In this example, Stroubouloupoulos misses the opportunity to have Erin Brockovich elaborate further on the “fog of deregulation” and does not connect massive environmental degradation and disaster with a capitalist economy that benefits from deregulation. O’Keefe’s (2006) two-step model is demonstrated, indicating a Stroubouloupoulos’ journalistic interviewing model.

Example 8.1

GS: Tell me what is going on in Tennessee right now.

EB: Oh my gosh, you know, when, I even thought after the Hinkley incident and the movie came out and many people just thought that that was the end of all of the problems but it was just the beginning. And I am amazed at how many people contact me not only from the United States, but throughout the world who have environmental issues. Ah, it’s very very concerning to me and the event that, well, first of all if I go back to the now famous case that the movie was about, even in Hinkley and everything else I am working on, even what I am seeing in Tennessee is, this is a fog of deregulation and we can’t have industry self monitor anymore and we are going to continue to have more and more disasters. And there is always some form of deceit behind it, and I think that is what bothers me so much is because they actually knew and something could have been done to prevent it. So I am really hopeful, and part of my work is becoming an advocate in the US and throughout the world to get a message out that we have got to become more preventative than just coming in and rescuing because public health and safety, along with the environment, is in jeopardy.

GS: Is this the person you thought you were going to turn into? Is this the job you thought you were going to have?

(Interview with Erin Brockovich, 2008)

Stroubouloupoulos asks Brockovich to explain the current environmental problems in Tennessee. She details how a “fog of deregulation” (on the behalf of lawmakers) and “some form of deceit” (on behalf of corporations) produce massive environmental problems. When Brockovich finishes answering Stroubouloupoulos’ question, he does not remain on this topic, and instead changes the subject by asking Brockovich a question about herself, and not about the systemic relationship to corporations, the law and environmental degradation. Following her explanation with a question about herself, Stroubouloupoulos does not remain on this subject, and misses the opportunity to talk about the

relationship between corporate businesses and lawmakers and the resulting environmental degradation and how these two things combined are the cause of some of the biggest environmental disasters.

In the interview with Ingrid Newkirk, Stroumboulopoulos turns the focus on the internal problems of PETA instead of the reasons why an organization like PETA needs to exist in the first place. Stroumboulopoulos starts by asking Newkirk to clarify her position on vegetarianism. This time, Stroumboulopoulos demonstrates O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step model of talk interaction, as the dialogue is fragmented and includes an indication of Stroumboulopoulos’ personal experiences with social activism.

Example 8.2

GS: Can you, you don’t have to be a vegetarian to...

IN: No. You don’t have to be the Buddha. You know, I see it all as people’s eyes are opened bit by bit. And most people come to us because they found out something is wrong with fur for example, or with dogs. And then as they see more and more, they think, ‘oh I don’t want to do that’ and ‘I want to help with this.’ So no one is hundred percent pure or none of us would be alive but we all do the best we can. So if some celebrity says, “I wouldn’t be seen dead in fur” good for you and maybe in a year or so, two months, next week, they won’t wear, uh, they won’t eat animals either.

GS: Who is harder to deal with for you? The people who don’t agree with what PETA does or the people who are a member of PETA? ...

IN: [laughs]

GS: ... Because I have learned—

IN: You are perceptive.

GS: Well yeah because I have learned that anytime you deal with any sort of activism, within the world of activism, um, ii are levels of engagement that go from passive to borderline nuts...

IN: Yeah.

GS: And you see it at every level. And I know like, lots of people have lots of criticisms about what you guys do...

IN: Who?

GS: ... and they are not all Attila the Hun...

IN: Mmhm.

GS: ...There are reasonable criticisms of what PETA does but in your own group of people, you um is it true you have a lot of issues.

IN: Yeah. Also, I think you put two human beings in a room and sooner or later they are going to disagree on something. Uh, we had a rift recently not that long ago because I thought it was a great idea to offer a million dollar reward to the first scientist who came up with commercially viable fake chicken, that’s grown in tissue...

(Interview with Ingrid Newkirk, 2008)

Newkirk explains different ways to support PETA, clarifying that she just asks people to do the “best they can” in terms of animal activism. Instead of asking questions to allow Newkirk to continue explaining how people can get involved, he changes topics by drawing attention to PETA’s radical members. Stroumboulopoulos misses the opportunity to continue talking about the issue at a macro level, that is, the social issue’s relationship to the social structure and capitalism, and instead, focuses on the micro “issues” PETA has within its own organization of supporters. Stroumboulopoulos also asks this question from experience, (“Because I have learned...” Stroumboulopoulos). Newkirk answers this question by pointing out that people in the world of activism disagree all the time, and no organization is without conflict.

In the interview with David Suzuki, Stroumboulopoulos again points to problems with environmental activists instead of systemic roots of the problem. At this point in the interview, Suzuki has already given numerous examples of critiques against himself as an environmentalist. Even after Suzuki points to Walmart as an unsustainable model of corporate business, Stroumboulopoulos proceeds by talking again about Suzuki’s personal problems with the environmental movement. Both O’Keefe’s (2006) two and three step models are present in this excerpt of dialogue.

Example 8.3

GS: ...People who are very much in favour of action against climate change in a climate crisis, they often cause as many problems just by being that extreme, don’t they?

DS: Well, yeah. I mean we’ve all got to start in the best way we can, but if you want to be, you demand absolute perfection or nothing at all. Common, gimme a break. We have it’s like when I began to talk to Walmart. Walmart is the kind of business that is totally unsustainable.

GS: And you got a lot of criticism.

DS: I got a lot of flak from my fellow environmentalists who, you know, are saying “that’s the enemy” and “how can you consort...” You know, Walmart is bigger than most countries in the world in terms of the economy. If Walmart is willing to throw some shifts, you gotta encourage that, it seems to me. Uh, so the idea of being fully green is something we’re all aspiring to but we’re.

GS: I bet people expect you to be the eco-cop, don’t they?

DS: And that, I hate that. I really do. I hate that, although, I have to say in the green room here, what did I find? 6 Bottles of Figi water...

(Interview with David Suzuki, 2008)

Again, Stroumboulopoulos' focuses on problems within the field of environmental activism instead of asking questions that allow Suzuki to elaborate on ways to support the environmental movement. The focus is on the negative aspects of the movement instead of on capitalist business models that benefit from destroying the planet.

While speaking with Barbara Becnel on the subject of Stan Tookie Williams and the death penalty, Stroumboulopoulos fails to ask direct the interview to societal causes of gang violence and the need for the death penalty. Throughout this interview, Becnel ties a number of factors to gang violence, including a lack of strong male role models, and racism leading to a lack of self worth. Each time, the societal cause is not explored. As Becnel explains that the act of administering the death penalty is not without problems, she introduces "the system" into the discussion. O'Keefe's (2006) two-step models are present.

Example 8.4

GS: They couldn't find a vein, right?

BB: They couldn't find a vein, they also didn't hook up all of the stuff that they were supposed to hook up, they didn't give him the right dosages so he woke up in the middle of it, excruciating pain, and they admitted this nine months later and it took him thirty five minutes to die. That's why I said it's the worst experience I've ever had, and imagine what it was for him for me just watching it. Um but the reason why um that that was so awful was not just that part. It was the way the system is set up to try to destroy the person ...

GS: Mmhmm.

BB: ...So that the time they get into that death chamber they want you to have just lost your identity and almost crawl in there and they admitted that. What I thought was that that was um as ugly and as an as awful as um the the act itself. It was it was just awful the whole thing.

GS: Why do you think he wasn't granted clemency or why he wasn't why that wasn't stated?

BB: I think it was all political. I think it was because, um, the Governor was facing an uh an election and the Governor was weighing um "should I satisfy the vengeance that mainstream society who votes that that's what they want" and "or should I um save allow him to work on saving the lives of low income black and brown boys."

(Interview with Barbara Becnel, 2009)

Becnel speaks directly to the penal system ("Um but the reason why um that that was so awful was not just that part. It was the way the system is set up to try to destroy the person ..." Becnel). At this

moment, Strouboulopoulos fails to discuss the penal system further. Instead, he asks another question (“Why do you think he wasn’t granted clemency or why he wasn’t why that wasn’t stated?” Strouboulopoulos) that remains on topic, that is, on the Stan Tookie Williams case, but does not tie the issue to societal racism or a racist penal system.

Although many issues relating to societal racism are discussed in *The Hour*’s interview with Michaëlle Jean, societal racism as a cause is never addressed. Jean’s own race is addressed, as well as many issues in the First Nations communities including a lack of resources. Strouboulopoulos asks a question directly about the problem (“Why doesn’t it get fixed?” Strouboulopoulos) but is not specific about connecting systemic or societal racism to the reasons why these issues persist.

Example 8.5

GS: Then in a sense then, because you are right, I think that that applies to almost all of Canada except the way this country treats it's First Nations people...

MJ: Mmm.

GS: ... So lots of Prime Ministers have made a million overtures. And I think Paul Martin may have gotten closer...

MJ: MmHmm.

GS: ... with what he came up with on the West coast before he lost his job but this, the country doesn’t treat the First Nations people the same way you talk about, like, an, and that’s a reality. I mean, I am sure you deal with it all, you’ve talked about the Canada’s North...

MJ: Yeah.

GS: ... being, it's sovereignty is more than just military.

MJ: Thank you for raising that because I find that uh, there are situations that are really troubling, troubling, and that involve uh, the Aboriginal communities and we know what the problems are, we know. We know them. We had an oil commission that really surveyed every aspect of the problems --

GS: Why doesn’t it get fixed?

MJ: And uh, and um, I think what we really need to do is really to recognize the solutions coming from the communities also themselves...

(Interview with Michaëlle Jean, 2009)

Although Strouboulopoulos addresses the persistence of the issues, his question is vague. Jean answers the question with positivity and optimism, focusing on the initiatives of First Nations people themselves and not discussing societal or systemic racism, or oppressive social structure. Had

Stroubouloupoulos asked more specifically, Jean might have had an opportunity to speak to a social structure that perpetuates inequality and oppression.

The significance of these missed connections is tied to *The Hour's* ability to be transformative and engage in a social justice paradigm instead of a news and entertainment paradigm. The examples provided point to a lack of discussion about major social issues stemming from a dominant, oppressive social structure and thus suggests *The Hour* is far less transformative than its “cool” style might suggest. The opportunity arises with activists who appear on *The Hour* and with Michaëlle Jean, but never with political party leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

I set out to explore the role traditional and non-traditional talk television plays in the creation of space to discuss social justice issues and current events in a broadcast setting. My results suggest *The Hour* does successfully highlight and personalize social justice issues using formal and informal talk techniques. I therefore demonstrate my hypothesis that *The Hour* does not make connections between social justice issues and the social structure that perpetuates inequality and oppression. I also demonstrate my hypothesis that *The Hour* does not operate through a social justice paradigm but rather, an entertainment and news paradigm.

The Hour models Hackett and Zhao's (1998) conceptualization of public communication and sustainable democracy through broadcast talk. For both *The Hour* and public communication, as described by Hackett and Zhao (1998), dialogue is privileged. To Stroubouloupoulos, dialogue is the most effective tool to learn about current events and social issues. Stroubouloupoulos made a number of statements in our conversation that indicate his conviction for the relationship between talk and civic involvement (Example 1.0 and 1.1). *The Hour* and Stroubouloupoulos lead by example to “promot[e] communal dialogue about matters of shared concern” (Hackett and Zhao, 1998: p. 224) by teaching its

viewers about social and political issues simply by *talking about them in a broadcast setting*. *The Hour* “foster[s] civic competence and democratic values on the part of ordinary citizens in the microworlds of everyday life” (Dahlgreen in Hackett and Zhao, 1998: p. 224) by featuring a variety of interviews with public figures from different political domains and engaged politically in different capacities. The perspective that informs this type of broadcast conversation is also demonstrated in Stroubouloupoulos’ interview with me, as he explained the value in sharing activists’ work on *The Hour* (Example 3.0). *The Hour*, therefore, demonstrates Hackett and Zhao’s definition of sustainable democracy also known as the “development of democratic subjectivity” (Dahlgreen in Hackett and Zhao, 1998: p. 232). *The Hour* creates an environment for public figures such as activists and politicians to engage in a broadcast conversation about current events and social justice issues pertaining to democracy and everyday society. *The Hour* fosters an environment for the democratic subject to share his or her perspective in a broadcast setting. Activists fill the role of ‘democratic subject’ by educating audiences about the issues that plague modern day society, from their perspective. Politicians fill this role, equally committed to the idea of informing Canadian citizens, but at the time of the interviews are more concerned with educating the public about their political platforms. Politicians are less concerned with social issues themselves in this setting, because in broadcast environments, attention is placed on how they fare as leaders, not as informants to the Canadian public.

The Hour aids in the creation of an informed citizenry. For those ‘tuned in’ to *The Hour*, there is much to learn about social issues, book and film releases about social issues, politics and humanity. David T.Z. Mindich (2008) believes that the more news programming citizens are engaged in, the more concerned they become for their country, and the more likely they are to vote. *The Hour*’s creation of

space for conversation has the potential to reengage young people through the use of informal talk to provide discourse on social justice issues.

However, in order for *The Hour* to fall within the parameters of a social justice paradigm, it must go further than simply providing the space to articulate social justice issues in a broadcast setting. More specifically, it must make a connection between the social issue and the social structure that allows for the perpetuation of inequality and injustice to exist. Not only does *The Hour* fail to make the connections to dominant, oppressive ideologies, but it also fails to offer an alternative perspective to capitalism and patriarchy.

Evidence of both conversational and journalistic talk techniques are employed on the *The Hour* as demonstrated using O'Keefe's (2006) two and three-step models. O'Keefe's models determine either a journalistic or conversational interviewing approach. Both of these approaches play different roles in interviews with public figures on *The Hour*.

For one, the presence of O'Keefe's (2006) two-step model, that is, initiation-response, is indicative of traditional journalistic interviewing technique. Indications of a journalistic technique are found in all themes, including questioning, platforming with activists and politicians, hypothetical questionings, and the presence of qualitative discourse. I discuss each of the themes found in broadcast interviews on *The Hour* and discuss the significance of the uses of both traditional and conversational interviewing techniques.

A 'tough' approach to questioning with politicians is demonstrated in interviews on *The Hour*. In interviews with politicians, especially in interviews with Jack Layton, Elizabeth May and Stéphane Dion (each of whom were running for Prime Minister at the time), J.T. Dillon's (1990) theory of positionality is demonstrated as Stroubouloupoulos questions them aggressively, in opposition to their political stance. Dillon's (1990) theory states that journalists question politicians on the belief that

politicians actively evade questions. Although this style of questioning is considered traditional in the field of journalism, the ‘initiation’ and ‘feedback’ in these instances indicates conversational elements. In both ‘initiation’ and ‘feedback’ Stroubouloupoulos contributes information and a perspective *in opposition* to that of the interviewee.

For one, Stroubouloupoulos only asked questions in opposition in question-answer format in interviews with Jack Layton (Example 2.1) and Stéphane Dion (Example 2.5). In all other examples of questioning in opposition, questions are initiated using statements instead of explicit questions, or using statements that lead into questions (Examples 2.3, 2.4, 2.6). O’Keefe’s (2006) three-step model indicates ‘feedback’ which I believe allows Stroubouloupoulos to take a *stance in opposition* instead of just asking questions in opposition. However, I believe it is Stroubouloupoulos’ stance in opposition that creates an effect of scepticism towards the political party leaders. The effect of scepticism on *The Hour* renders dialogue on social issues especially ineffective at providing rich information on social issues to inform viewers and the creation of an informed citizenry.

The instances of scepticism render conversations on *The Hour* politically ineffective (Example 2.2, Example 2.4). Although the focus of these conversations is to platform for their respective political parties, the conversations are often inhibited by Stroubouloupoulos’ aggressive approach. Instead of accepting what the politician stands for, he is dismissive of their stance while holding a position of opposition. This is best demonstrated in Example 2.1 in the interview with Jack Layton. Jack Layton explicitly states where he expects to win seats in the 2008 Federal Election and Stroubouloupoulos tries to interrupt “But” three times throughout the example. Instead of letting Layton answer and then move on, the effect of Stroubouloupoulos’ constant interruption is complete disbelief.

A disjunction appears at the point of questioning in opposition. In interviews with politicians, Stroubouloupoulos believes his role to be that of journalist in order to hold politicians accountable.

When a conversational element, such as a stance or feedback, is used to take a stance in opposition to that of the politician, the conversation is at times rendered ineffective because more time is spent debating the stance instead of really hearing and listening (although indications of active listening are present) to the guest. This makes it difficult to place Hackett and Zhao's (1998) theory of celebrity journalism in interviews with politicians, because these interviews are meant to educate the audience. It does however fall within the parameters of an entertainment paradigm, as per Example 2.2. In this instance, Stroubouloupoulos and Layton are so firmly opposed that they jovially place a bet on national television, shaking hands and laughing for the audience. *The Hour's* interview with Jack Layton is rendered a prime example of Tolston's (1991) definition of broadcast chat, whereby the interview is found to possess flexibility to be both informative and entertaining. The audience learns about Layton's stance as a political leader, how he deals with the pressure of an audience and the pressure from Stroubouloupoulos.

Questioning on *The Hour* is not always aggressive. In fact, most times it is not. The second major trend found through analysis of broadcast talk on *The Hour* is platforming. The concept for platforming is similar for both activists and politicians, that is, the presence of verbal cues provided by the host, with the intention to allow guests of *The Hour* to speak about their work in the political and public domain, and yields two different results. I begin by explaining the significance of platforming with activists on *The Hour*.

Both traditionally journalistic and conversational elements are present when Stroubouloupoulos allows his activist guests to articulate social justice issues. The significance of the use of both styles in examples of platforming with activists is the ease in which Stroubouloupoulos weaves between O'Keefe's (2006) models, demonstrating a fluidity and flexibility in style. In fact, I believe interviews where conversational elements yield rich details about the subject matter. Where Stroubouloupoulos gives 'feedback' such as commentary or reaction to the story or current events

issue, he not only encourages the guests to continue talking about their work, but he contributes relevant information about the field or domain to which the activist speaks. It is by way of this analysis that I accept that Stroumboulopoulos' interview objective is to actively share the work of activists via broadcast talk on *The Hour*, as articulated in Example 3.0.

Stroumboulopoulos also utilizes broadcast talk to allow politicians to share their political platforms. Again, we find that in all interviews with politicians, he positions himself as politically opposite his guests, and demonstrates J.T. Dillon's (1990) theory of journalistic positionality. This oppositional stance is maintained to hold politicians accountable, as explained in the quotation from our interview. However, there are questions that indicate Stroumboulopoulos' genuine investment in allowing politicians to platform and to clarify where they stand on certain issues, such as Examples 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 and 4.7. These examples are found to be less combative and aggressive, and ultimately more politically effective.

Tension also lies in Stroumboulopoulos' distaste for 'press release' style interviews and the political need to 'platform' and articulate one's political platform, especially for those politicians running in the 2008 Federal Election. More specifically, the interview with Stéphane Dion (Example 4.6 and 4.7) reveals genuine verbal cues that assist Dion, a politician often criticized for his poor communication skills, in clearly articulating his platform in a time of need. (It should be noted that shortly after this interview aired, Dion lost the 2008 Federal election, and his position as Liberal Party leader). It is also revealing that Stroumboulopoulos allows Dion to more clearly articulate the Liberal platform, despite Dion's elusive responses to most of the questions posed on the interview with Stroumboulopoulos.

Verbal cues for pointed clarification appear in all interviews with politicians, as well as with Michaëlle Jean (Examples 4.9a and 4.9b). However, where Michaëlle Jean is able to platform and clarifies her position on two controversial issues, the prorogation of Canadian parliament and the seal-

eating situation, Strouboulopoulos uses a conversational approach to extract her responses. I believe this is done so because her position at the time is not elected, but rather, appointed. Not only this, but Jean and Strouboulopoulos share the same philosophy of conversation as the truest point of communication and learning, as she speaks describes in her interview on *The Hour*. Elizabeth May is also met with a conversational approach to platforming. In her case, it is Strouboulopoulos' combative stance (another demonstration of J.T. Dillon's (1990) theory of journalistic positionality) that allows May to more precisely articulate her political platform for Canadian audiences (Examples 4.3 and 4.4).

Strouboulopoulos indicates positionality in four examples from interviews on *The Hour*. The use of conversational elements in interviews on *The Hour* aids in the creation of space for Strouboulopoulos to position himself within the dialogue. It should be noted that although the space is created to position oneself within broadcast interviews on *The Hour*, Strouboulopoulos never positions himself as a white, middle class man in any of these interviews.

Strouboulopoulos' exercise of that space provided in conversation through the 'feedback' component (O'Keefe, 2006) is problematic. In interviews with May and Suzuki (Examples 5.2 and 5.4), Strouboulopoulos appears sceptical of the possibility of democratic change. The problem with assertions of scepticism made by Strouboulopoulos in interviews (or in the case of Example 5.2, in the set-up to May's interview) is that although audiences may read this approach as 'realistic,' scepticism disables conversation about democratic change to deepen. The discussion remains on the disbelief that progressive change is possible instead of on the issues, or for that matter, how progressive change might appear should it occur. In these cases, the conversational element disables political conversation from reaching new depths, but only when discussion about change is met with scepticism. Conversational depth on the subjects of social and political issues on *The Hour* is stalled, and scepticism therefore reads as a way to entertain, instead of inform.

In my interview with Stroubouloupoulos, he states his opinion that positionality by celebrities is best kept a secret. However, in the interview with Michael Ignatieff Stroubouloupoulos makes an assertion of his political distance from the Liberal Party (Example 3.1). Whether he means that he is not a member, a leader, or a supporter, this assertion is still found to be contradictory to his statements made to me in our interview. In this case, there are no real potential repercussions to Stroubouloupoulos' statement in Example 3.1. However, in the interview with Ingrid Newkirk (Example 3.3) Stroubouloupoulos expresses distaste for vegetarianism, and justifies his response. Although this matter is joked about later in the interview with Newkirk, Stroubouloupoulos distances himself from social justice discourses surrounding animal activism and food politics. An alternative approach to assertions of positionality that ultimately disable discussion about social justice issues to deepen in scope, would be to ask questions in order to engage the activist to address ways to get involved in the organization. For example, in the case of Example 3.3, Stroubouloupoulos could have answered, "I am not currently vegetarian, but how would someone go about that if they wanted to become vegetarianism?" This would have lessened the damage caused by a complete dismissal of the issue.

These examples of assertions of positionality prove contradictory to research on feminist research practices. Anne Oakley's (1981) research on feminist interviewing practices indicates personal disclosure of the interviewer is favourable to yield the richest information. If we borrow Oakley's (1981) theory and position Stroubouloupoulos as researcher and guests as researched, I believe Stroubouloupoulos' attempts to position himself within the debate are problematic in these cases, because ultimately they disable the conversation from yielding the richest information. *The Hour* does not foster a platform for political discussions about transformative change through positionality by Stroubouloupoulos, because, too frequently, assertions of positionality are read as scepticism and disinterest.

Another method of interviewing that disables political conversation from reaching new depths is the use of hypothetical questions. Stroubouloupoulos only asks hypothetical questions to politicians who appear on *The Hour*. The use of hypothetical questions indicates a traditional journalistic approach to interviewing. To reiterate, the purpose of asking hypothetical question is to test the politician's ability to improvise in interviews and for the politician to demonstrate consistency. The usefulness of posing hypothetical questions therefore becomes personality focused, as described by O'Keefe's (2006) and Carbaugh's (1988) research. Their theories applied here reveal *The Hour* is considered a chat show, and not a talk show, when politicians appear in interviews because the discussion of political issues is disabled with discussion that instead tests their personal inconsistencies and ability to improvise. Discussing actual *current* events renders *The Hour* as an informative news-show but instead, the focus on hypothetical situations, specifically when speaking with politicians, serve as a distraction from potentially productive political discussions and find it more chat and entertainment focused. It should also be noted that in all cases but one, (Example 6.4) each time a hypothetical question was posed, the politician identified the question as such (Example 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3). This reveals that hypothetical questions in broadcast interviews is likely something politicians prepare for.

Qualitative discourses on *The Hour* reveal a gendering of human-interest discourse on *The Hour*. Qualitative discourse is defined as qualitative descriptions of lived experiences of or within a social movement or issue. Three instances of prompts focused on evoking qualitative narratives exist only in interviews with female activists who appeared on *The Hour*. Each time the focus reveals qualitative discourse, a journalistic, not a conversational method, is used. However, after Barbara Becnel responds, Stroubouloupoulos employs a conversational element to engage the conversation further (Example 7.3). He makes reference to a popular icon to demonstrate his understanding of advanced issues of race in America to relate to Becnel's narrative. The conversational element is used

effectively to and is best understood as Helen MacGill Hughes's (1940) 'human interest story'. These stories humanize the subject matter as described by Judy Polumbaum (2009) and serve to not only create interesting, entertaining content, but also to appeal to the broadest audience. The conversational element of 'feedback' (the third step in O'Keefe's 2006 three step model) allows Stroubouloupoulos the space to express a public understanding of advanced race issues to Becnel and viewers of *The Hour*. It is at these moments, *The Hour* creates discourse that connects the lived experience to social issues. However, the relationship from individual to the social issue is only one relationship of the social justice paradigm.

The second relationship required for a social justice paradigm to be demonstrated, that between social issue and the social structure, is never articulated on *The Hour*. In fact, a number of 'missed opportunities' disable *The Hour*'s ability to be transformative. The social structure that perpetuates each of the social issue discussed on *The Hour* is never addressed. This is in large part to do with Stroubouloupoulos' own analysis of social justice issues as disclosed in interviews on the show.

Firstly, the examples are drawn from interviews with activists, and Michaëlle Jean, but not with politicians. The subject appears to be completely unapproachable when interviewing politicians, for a number of reasons. It is likely that at a time of interviews with Stéphane Dion, Elizabeth May and Jack Layton, each of whom were running for Prime Minister of Canada, and all the time allotted was best used by Stroubouloupoulos and politicians on the show to platform. In the case of Michael Ignatieff, the then-newly elected leader of the Liberal Party, it was not Ignatieff's prerogative to discuss social issues at macro-level; it was instead to establish him as a viable leader for the Liberal Party of Canada.

However, the opportunity to discuss social justice issues and their relationship to the capitalist and patriarchal social structure is barely touched on. In fact, it only occurs once. This is in part due to Stroubouloupoulos on air analysis of social issues. Stroubouloupoulos' on-air analysis is more frequently micro, that is, focuses instead of issues within a social movement, instead of focusing on the

reasons why social issues exist at all. (I would also like to note that interviews on *The Hour* fall between 8 – 35 minutes total. It is entirely possible the time constraints of the show do not allow for the connection between social issue and the social structure to be made at all).

In all examples of missed opportunities with activists, reference is made to the issue at a macro, or structural level. Stroubouloupoulos misses the opportunity to discuss what Brockovich calls a “fog of deregulation” (Example 8.1). Instead, he asks the question to evoke a narrative response. When faced with the option to continue on the line of questioning at the micro or at the macro-level, Stroubouloupoulos chooses to focus at the issue at the micro-level. Brockovich’s response reveals an alternative discourse to environmental degradation and instead focuses on her personal struggles with a learning disability (Example 8.1).

Stroubouloupoulos refocuses discussion on social issues on the problems within the social movement instead of making the connection between social movement and social structure. He speaks from experience stating “in my experience” to lead into questions about the internal issues faced within organization or social movements (Example 8.2 and 8.3). Stroubouloupoulos asks Barbara Becnel “Why do you think he wasn’t granted clemency or why he wasn’t why that wasn’t stated?” which begins to address the issues surrounding a racist penal system, but at the moment Becnel finishes answering this question, the moment is lost (Example 8.4).

Only while speaking with Michaëlle Jean does Stroubouloupoulos ask an explicit macro-level question (Example 8.5). He asks “Why doesn’t it get fixed?” while speaking with Michaëlle Jean about aboriginal struggles. She speaks about the good coming from within the communities themselves, and again, the discussion takes another direction. The question posed by Stroubouloupoulos is too vague, and is not insisted upon.

Based on this analysis, I conclude that *The Hour*’s classification weaves between a chat show, and a talk show. O’Keefe’s (2006) research correlates *issue focus* broadcast talk with *talk television*,

and a *personality focus* on *chat television*. Therefore, when speaking with activists, *The Hour* successfully articulates and teaches its audience about social justice issues using both journalistic and conversational elements of talk. The richest and most informative content is often a result of conversational, and informal approaches to interviewing, as the space is given to make contributions to challenging subject matter. But again, when Strouboulopoulos positions himself within interviews with activists (Example 5.3 and 5.4), the effect disables the conversation from reaching new depths because sarcasm and scepticism are used.

The Hour is considered a ‘chat’ show when it engages in interviews with politicians. O’Keefe (2006) and Carbaugh’s (1988) would describe these interviews as ‘personality focused,’ because the focus is not on social issues, but rather, platforming for their political party, demonstrating the ability to communicate, and the ability to improvise when asked hypothetical questions. Although social issues are mentioned or ‘brought up’ in interviews with some politicians, interviews with activists tend to focus on social issues themselves. However, the role of Strouboulopoulos himself is most certainly that of journalist while interviewing politicians on *The Hour*. Not only does he question in opposition, with the responsibility to hold politicians accountable for their statements and actions, but also he asks hypothetical questions and allows them to clarify and share information on their political party platform. These instances indicate that *The Hour* does in fact fall into a journalistic paradigm, with the intention to inform a Canadian citizenry about social and political issues.

There are other instances, where *The Hour*’s focus is that of entertainment. In fact, I believe this is the main role of a conversational approach on *The Hour*: to be entertaining. The ‘betting sequence’ (Example 2.2) in the Jack Layton interview shows Strouboulopoulos’ playful side. Strouboulopoulos makes references to popular culture to demonstrate his understanding of the role and position of activists on the show (Erin Brockovich, Example 3.6; Barbara Becnel, Example 7.3). Interviews hit a variety of emotional points that allow *The Hour* to transgress a journalistic paradigm.

However, *The Hour* ultimately creates content using talk that indicates it is *both* an entertainment and a news show. The most significant way in which *The Hour* is considered a hybrid show of entertainment and news journalism is by making connections between narratives of female activists to social issues. These narratives evoke emotion and allow the interviews to hit a number of emotional markers as quoted from Strouboulopoulos (Example 4.0). The connection from qualitative narrative to social issue is an important one, and in fact, the first half of the social justice paradigm. It is the hybrid position of the show that allows *The Hour* to make this contribution to social justice discourses.

Strouboulopoulos' interviewing style and approach weaves in between journalistic and conversational. The presence of a conversational approach is enough to challenge conventions of traditional journalism (Hackett and Zhao, 1998). While his conversational style does illicit richer content in conversation, it still fails to complete the social justice paradigm by making explicit connections of social issues to a capitalist and patriarchal social structure.

Before closing, a number of points need to be addressed. I also have not addressed my positionality as a white, gay, feminist woman until the end of this project, nor did I explicitly expose this while performing my interview with Strouboulopoulos. Also, I fear my sample runs the risk of being considered 'tokenist' because in my search for inspirational interviews representing Canadian diversity, I immediately was drawn to non-white activists who appeared on the show. Should I continue with this research, there is a vast archive of interviews featuring a greater representation of diversity to choose from. Should I continue this research, I would also greatly improve my sample size. Although my transcripts and analysis of transcripts yielded countless pages of data to interpret, I do not believe my sample to have been large or diverse enough.

Another issue with my research is the amount of time it took me to complete my research. This research, from start to finish, took just under four years to complete. In that time, Jack Layton has

passed away, Michael Ignatieff is no longer the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, and Prime Minister Harper has been re-elected to his Conservative Majority Government. Not only have the political climates, current events, and debates on social issues changed, but the show has also changed. *The Hour* is now called *George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight*, and begins running at early prime time this year (CBC, 2012).

This research makes contributions to the fields of communications, broadcast talk, Conversation Analysis, journalism and social justice. No other literature about broadcast talk in a Canadian setting takes place, because no research exists about *The Hour* as a topic of interest. My research places American research in the field of Conversation Analysis into a Canadian perspective, which I believe to be important in the creation of Canadian discourses. I have demonstrated the significance broadcast talk plays in Canadian democracy and the importance of the news.

This process and this project have affirmed my belief that talk is perhaps one of the most important and valuable tools for transformative change, growth, and learning. Talk allows us to learn about one another, about social issues, and the communities and the world we inhabit. Talk is accessible and digestible, and misunderstandings are easily reparable. We only need to ask questions in the face of confusion. I have learned that conversation serves to both inform *and* entertain, and has the potential to infuse the personal into political dialogues. I have also learned that true talk and conversation are collaborative experiences, which I believe is ultimately the only way true change in the name of social justice is made.

CONCLUSIONS

CBC's *The Hour* officially ended in May of 2010 but continues to air five nights a week under a different name: *George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight*. Interviewing celebrity and public figures remains central to the show, gone are other elements of the show not examined in this study. And although the

staple twin red chairs remain on stage, Stroumboulopoulos' personal style, both in demeanor and in interviewing, is still the main feature of the revised CBC late night show. Stroumboulopoulos continues to defy how 'the news' is defined for a variety of audiences by featuring advocates of social justice and democracy to the set of his show and by engaging in a hybrid style of interviewing.

Dialogue on *The Hour* is found to have integrative elements of both talk and chat. By changing his approach to questioning and conversation throughout interviews, Stroumboulopoulos weaves between the role of journalist and the role of entertainer. *The Hour* relies on this ambiguity to produce content to attract a diverse audience. It manages to retain elements of talk, and create both issue-based and personality based 'interviews' without giving up journalistic or entertainment value.

Stroumboulopoulos can speak with politicians and ask hard questions as well as be playful, so that they might show a more 'natural' side to audiences and also speak candidly with activists about their lived experiences with social justice issues so that they might successfully educate *The Hour's* audiences on social issues and current events. *The Hour's* pre-interview "set-up" or "biography" is essential for new viewers or disengaged citizens to join the conversations had on the show.

Where democracy is concerned, there is no evidence that demonstrates that *The Hour* causes Canadians to vote, but now, evidence that *The Hour* might assist in the creation of an informed citizenry by hosting in dialogue with public figures already engaged in social issues exists. David T. Z. Mindich's (2008) argument suggests that the presence of 'news consumption' might already be enough to direct voters to the polls on election day, and so if Stroumboulopoulos' ratings continue to increase, as suggested by the renewal and revamp of Canada's only late night talk show, the show could very much be a starting point for young Canadians looking to get involved in the political process.

What *The Hour* offers its viewers is essentially a general survey on current events. Not particularly neutral, *The Hour* presents social issues through its guest personalities. Activists appear on

the show to talk about their issue, but there are limitations to these discussions. Although guests of *The Hour* present critical perspectives on social issues, and are encouraged to speak of personal experiences, conversations on *The Hour* fall short because solutions to seemingly impossible social issues are never explored because they are never asked about.

Conversations with politicians function to allow elected officials to explain their political platform while demonstrating their communication and leadership abilities. These discussions hinge on approach to social change via legislation, and that method is never challenged. Conversations with activists on the other hand, tend to focus on social issues but are met with scepticism, and often times, a focus of problems arising from social activism at a micro – not macro – level.

George Stroumboulopoulos is sceptical that change will come about via legislation as evidenced throughout interviews with guests and our interview. His opinion that little change can be made through democracy is obvious in interview with political leaders. His sceptical stance and general disbelief in the possibility of change on a number of occasions disables the conversation from reaching in depth analysis of the social structure. Perhaps it is for this reason that Stroumboulopoulos never takes the opportunity to challenge the capitalist social structure, or address and discuss social change.

Stroumboulopoulos' role in Canadian media might be examined in comparison to other late night talk show hosts, such as Stephen Colbert or Jon Stewart, whose work is also political in nature, and or now, he continues to hold the throne as Canada's only late night talk show host. Unique in style and approach, Stroumboulopoulos brings awareness to current events in social issues via broadcast talk on *The Hour*. Fulfilling a hybrid role of journalist and entertainer, *The Hour* makes a unique contribution to the history of Canadian media and CBC. My research, however, finds it difficult to situate *The Hour* among a social justice paradigm, because although Stroumboulopoulos connects the lived experiences of individuals with social issues, the social issues are never connected to a capitalist,

patriarchal social structure that perpetuates a culture of various forms oppression and degradation.

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