



# ORDER OF THE DAY



FRIDAY 13TH JUNE

*In the Marquee*

11:00 ~ 11:50 *Alistair Horne*

Paris: Biography of a City, a Sentimental journey.  
Introduced by John Baxter. In English with bilingual Q&A.

12:00 ~ 12:50 *Victoria Glendinning*

Memoirs versus Biographies.  
Introduced by Chip Martin. In English.

13:00 ~ 13:50 *Rachel Cusk*

Motherhood and Memoir.  
In conversation with Janine di Giovanni.  
In English, extract read in French.

14:00 ~ 14:50 *English PEN*

Another Sky in Paris chaired by former  
English PEN president Victoria Glendinning. In English.

15:00 ~ 15:50 *A.M. Homes*

Secrets, Lies and the Truth In Between.  
Introduced by Ian Jack. In English.

16:00 ~ 16:50 *Antonia Fraser*

From Mary Queen of Scots to Louis XIV with Love.  
Introduced by Jeanette Winterson.  
In English, extract read in French.

17:15 ~ 18:30

*Béatrice Commengé and Amélie Nothomb*

I Am the Other: Conversation in French.

Books are available for purchase at Shakespeare & Company and in French at the independent French bookseller stand outside square René Viviani. There will be a signing by authors following most Festival events.

# THE GAZETTE

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## Inside: Dispatches from Day 1

**Anton Gill  
Alicia Drake  
Teté-Michel Kpomassie  
Blake Morrison  
Carolyn Burke  
Jung Chang  
Diana Souhami  
&  
Jeanette Winterson**

## Gearing Up

In the damp early morning, even before the marquee was broken in, the atmosphere was kinetic at the shop and in the Square. Speckled coffee-lips muttered anxious words about menacing skies. Volunteers compared clipboards and, marking anomalies, frowned... and then smiled again for what else could be done now? Authors hove, bear-like, around corners and up flights of metro steps before disappearing into the green room – for one doesn't live hand to mouth as a young scribe without knowing, instinctively, where the coffee and croissants are served. Guilty cigarettes were smoked in purloined moments of leisure. A bearded fellow glanced about shiftily and then, sensing all that was clear, nailed something to a tree. Keys were lost, found, and lost again...

*...And then, as though in an immaculately choreographed pincer, the audience arrived...*

Written for Festival & Co. by Adam Biles. A collection featuring his work *The Place In Which We Find Ourselves* is available instore.

# DISPATCHES

## Day 1

### Fun While It Lasted

Setting the pace early, Mr. Anton Gill tore into the life of Peggy Guggenheim, surrendering to his enthusiasm for a woman who – to his evident disagreement – was once described by an acquaintance of Guggenheim's as “interesting... but not that interesting.” Guggenheim as collector was overshadowed in Mr. Gill's talk by Guggenheim as woman, as wife and as hyper-sexualised devourer of artistic men. Her marriages – first to Laurence Vail, then to Max Ernst – were turbulent, violent affairs, Mr. Gill explained, owing not only to Guggenheim's temperament but also the temperament of the men to whom she was attracted (Vail's book about their marriage is soberly entitled “Murder, Murder”) Samuel Beckett, one of Guggenheim's battalion of paramours, proved, it seemed, particularly difficult for her to pin down. After a bed bound night and day together Beckett was said to have dressed to leave before turning to Guggenheim, still in bed recovering from the ordeal, and declaring, “Thank you. It was fun while it lasted.”

### Drake VS Lagerfeld

The imperious nimbostrati finally discharged their burden as Mrs. Alicia Drake treated the festival audience to a lesson in the law. After the publication, in English, of her book *The Beautiful Fall*, one of its principal protagonists, Mr.

Karl Lagerfeld, took umbrage at the content and sued Mrs. Drake for one hundred thousand Euros, plus ten thousand more for every copy of the book sold in France. Accusing Mrs. Drake of “exploiting the morbid curiosity” of the general public and possessing a “relish for salacious detail,” the case, which cited 18 passages of the book – claims of homosexuality and cocaine parties among them – was finally dismissed by the judge. Such an experience, Mrs. Drake confided, provoked deep reflection concerning the biographer's role. How much of a biography, she asked herself, is necessarily fantasy and projection on the part of the biographer, and how much does the obsession with the subject effect the final outcome? From now on – although not, she stresses, as a direct result of this experience – Mrs. Drake plans to concentrate on fiction.

### African Eskimo

Fear of snakes can drive a man to great lengths. In the case of Mr. Tété-Michel Kpomassie, it drove a Togolese as far as Greenland. As a child in his native Togo Mr. Kpomassie, who charmed the damp assembly with his intelligence and warmth, narrowly escaped death from fever caused by a snake bite. Not long after he chanced upon a book entitled *Les Esquimaux de Groenland*. In it he read that there existed a country in which snakes were unheard of and asked himself, “Where is this paradise?” Without word to his family, at the age of sixteen, he set off in search of it. Twelve years later, he arrived by cargo ship in Greenland and, although at first terrifying the natives with his dark skin and comparatively tall stature

(local children mistook him for the Devil coming to eat them) he lived among the people for two years, learning their language, eating their food (Seal intestines a recurring gastronomical theme), and – he suspects – fathering some children as a result of the relaxed sexual mores of the Greenlanders.

### All In The Family

Mr. Blake Morrison then engaged in a touching conversation with Mr. Chip Martin about his attempts to “bring a man back to life by writing about him,” – an experience out of which two books grew (*And when did you last see your father?* and more recently *Things My Mother Never Told Me*). He also dwelt upon the issue of how the British press handled the case of murdered infant James Bulger, upon which he has also written. The presentation of the case, Mr. Morrison said, “was very much that these two boys were evil seeds, that they belonged to another planet. In other words, let's stop thinking about this, let's not even acknowledge that they belong to our world. It was a very punitive and very naïve attitude. For me it was important to find out what had driven them to kill another child. To drag it back into the normal world, to look at families and what happens in families, and that meant looking at my own.” Mr. Morrison also gave voice to his view concerning why memoirs have experienced a recent surge in popularity. Readers, he thinks, have developed a need for authenticity that didn't exist as much in the past. They demand contact between themselves and the writers, and memoirs provide them with that contact.

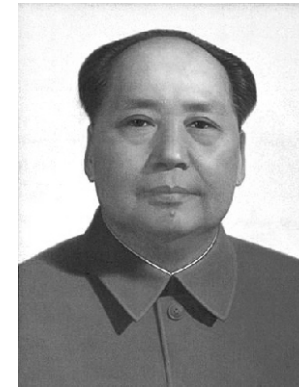
### Hearing Voices

After her talk on the life of Edith Piaf Mrs. Carolyn Burke gave some advice to would-be biographers in attendance. “Do not wait until you feel you have done all of your research before beginning to write, otherwise you will never start! The material will give itself form. Write as fast as you can. Write when it seems right to do so. You can always go back and revise. You will never have the full picture. If you expect to have the full picture before starting, then you will wait forever.” Mrs. Burke was the second biographer of the day (the first being Mr. Morrison speaking about his book on Gutenberg) who reported experiencing an internal voice, a voice not her own, dictating what she was to write – a liberating sensation and one that this writer, at this very moment – precisely 2:13, the morning of Friday the thirteenth – deeply envies his colleagues!

### Demystifying Mao

The extent to which Mao's China departed from the communist ideal was illustrated by Mrs. Jung Chang as she recounted that, upon visiting England for the first time, she considered it a “wonderfully classless” place. It is an opinion she has since modified. Mrs. Chang's address – a very human and impassioned one – dealt with the horrors of life under Mao and the cathartic experience of researching the biography she wrote with her husband Mr. Jon Halliday. Mrs. Chang spoke about her personal experience of Maoist persecution – both of her parents were denounced and tortured – and the difficulties of shaking off the view, inculcated into all Chinese,

that Mao was omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. In short, a God. Particularly chilling was his attitude to morality. On this subject, Mrs. Chang let Mao's words speak for themselves: “People like me want to satisfy our hearts to the full, and in doing so we automatically have the most valuable moral code. Of course there are people and objects in the world, but they are all there only for me.”



Mao Zedong

### Write What You Want and Damn It!

Day One's proceedings were rounded off by Mmes Winterson (Jeanette) and Souhami (Diana) in conversation. Taking Woolf's Orlando (described by Winterson as “a war against the nineteenth century”) and Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (described by both as “simply awful”) as opposing, though temporally and in some ways thematically linked, poles, they cut a stimulating trail across a wide variety of topics. Concerning the two texts; that Hall's rather limp account of “sexual inversion” should be censored, but Woolf's complex and barrier breaking text should escape similar restriction they attributed to the simple oafishness of the British government at the time – unable as they were to understand a book as intelligent as

Woolf's. They also spoke about the lingering perception that “Women's writing” – as people still insist upon categorising it – is somehow to be taken less seriously than writing by men. About this perception Mrs. Winterson declared defiantly, “It will go!” stirring the audience into affirmative applause.

The confabulatory juxtaposition of Mrs. Winterson, a fiction writer, with Mrs. Souhami, a biographer, also produced some provocative exchanges. On the subject of truth, Mrs. Winterson said the following, “People mistake what they see as real with what they think is true. They mistake autobiography with authenticity. In order to tell an emotional truth it may be very necessary to alter the facts of a perceived or objective truth, then you may get closer to what really needs to be said. My feeling is that anyone who is a writer should just write what they want to write and damn it!” To this Mrs. Souhami added succinctly; “Biography is ambiguous, but then again so is memory.”

Robert Skidelsky: *America & Empire*  
The New York Review of Books  
FICTION ISSUE  
Jonathan Raban: *John Updike's 'Terrorist'*  
How to Read Beckett  
Jim Hansen: *THE THREAT TO THE PLANET*  
Joan Acocella: *'Beware of Pity'*  
Darryl Pinckney: *'Dancing in the Dark'*  
Sanford Schwartz: *The Best of Ingres*

The *Festival and Co.* team are very grateful to the good people at *The New York Review of Books* for all their support during the organisation of this year's event. We would like to remind our visitors that copies of the latest edition are available in the shop. Thanks.