

Death Sentences
The Aesthetics and Politics of Last Words in *In Cold Blood*, *Capote*, and *Infamous*

Hannah Melville
Senior Thesis
Department of English
Spring 2020

Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible through the help and support of many people. I would like to thank my advisor Lindsay Reckson whose thoughtful feedback and dedication guided me through the process, turning rambling drafts into a coherent work. Professor Gustavus Stadler introduced me to the novel and alerted me to its adaptations. The librarians at Haverford College helped me locate texts while on campus and aided me from afar, once I was home. I cannot thank them enough for their devotion to the students at Haverford College in these remarkable circumstances. Julie Hanss motivated me throughout this process, offering an ear whenever I needed to discuss an idea. My suitemates provided endless encouragement. I would also like to thank my family for supporting and accommodating me during this unstable time.

When Truman Capote was initially sent to Holcomb, Kansas, in 1959, his assignment was to write an article about a recent murder for *The New Yorker* (Giordano). Upon his arrival, his inability to control his word count caused the intended article to evolve into the book *In Cold Blood*. Since its publication in book form in 1966, *In Cold Blood* has been adapted four times.¹ Each adaptation presents different nuances to the story but respects the progression of events within the original text. The narrative unfolds as two men – Perry Smith and Richard “Dick” Hickcock – murder the Clutter family and attempt to evade the police. The two travel to Mexico because Smith, driven by a childhood dream to go treasure hunting, believes Mexico would give him the opportunity. His naivete, however, is outmatched by Hickcock’s impulsivity, and after a skirmish that reveals Smith’s unresolved childhood stemming from his alcoholic mother, the men return to the United States. There the two are caught, sentenced to death, and executed. The book was a huge success and remains popular today, but Capote continues to face criticism for misrepresenting portions of the text: particularly those about Smith. Phillip Tompkins outlines many of the creative liberties, ranging from inventing a different future for Babe who was the horse of Nancy Clutter, the elder Clutter child, to redesigning Smith’s confession and final moments on the gallows.

Although there are many identified instances of inaccuracy, the depiction of Smith’s last words is uniquely important since last words hold cross-cultural significance (Guthke 6). In his book *Last Words: Variations on a Theme of Cultural History*, literary historian Karl Guthke writes that society both historically and today “expects significant persons to die with significant

¹ Leitch argues that repurposing a narrative or presenting it through a different perspective does not disqualify the piece as an adaptation (97). For the purpose of this paper, I consider any work that significantly re-deploys the central plot points of Capote’s text an adaptation. As long as the piece includes the murder of the Clutters, investigation of the crime, and execution and Smith and Hickcock (explicit or implied), I qualify it as such.

last words” (9), explaining that pervasive respect for last words is because such finality commands attention. Since death forbids any addendum and last words, unlike all others, cannot be taken back, last words are taken conclusively. Thus, the final remark made by an individual is recorded as the culmination of their life. The pervasive respect given to last words affirms their widespread significance.

Since last words serve to summarize a life, Capote’s report of Smith’s last words is extremely important. The understood significance of last words means the social impression of Smith is contingent on their content and framing. As such, examining the presentation of Smith’s last words within *In Cold Blood* allows a closer analysis of the novel.² While Hickcock’s execution is also described in the novel, Capote’s attachment to Smith suggests that greater consideration went into the articulation of Smith’s final moments.³ As such, the depiction of Smith’s last words holds particular significance. Since *In Cold Blood* as a nonfiction novel does contain factual transgressions, the focus of certain aesthetic decisions has greater nuance. If Smith is understood as the primary character in the novel, it follows that exploring the novel through Smith is an important framework through which to examine *In Cold Blood*. As such, approaching the novel through Capote’s description of Smith’s last words then reveals the undertones of their presentation as it reframes the meaning of the novel.

² Since this paper seeks to investigate the power of presentation, the analysis focuses on the creative portions of the text – the characteristics of the book which correspond with its existence as a novel. Reference to it as a novel comes from Capote’s own description of the book and subsequent criticisms. Capote insisted he created a new genre, calling *In Cold Blood* the first nonfiction novel. There is significant controversy surrounding such a term, the backlash stems from objecting to the unification of such contrasting terms (Plimpton) and qualifying the book as “non-fiction” since Capote misquoted numerous people (Tompkins). Thus, to refer to the book as a novel adopts the latter part of Capote’s own description but acknowledges the criticism by adopting the unchallenged terminology.

³ Literary scholar Douglas Schaak is one of a litany of scholars that interrogate *In Cold Blood* through Capote’s editorial decisions about Smith. Schaak unpacks the use of quotation marks in *In Cold Blood* and explores the motivation behind Capote’s misquoting. At the end of his essay, Schaak concludes that Capote’s misquoting was “due to his close relationship with one of the killers, Perry Smith” (132). Schaak establishes Smith as the basis for much of Capote’s misrepresentation and, thus, the primary focus of the narrative.

Although *In Cold Blood* is an interesting piece on its own, exploring the portrayal of Smith's execution across *Capote* (2005) and *Infamous* (2006) reveals that their cinematic representation of Smith's last words has the same implications as Capote's: destabilization of finality. The representations of the execution and interpretations of Capote's representation offer perspectives about the subtleties of Capote's depiction of the scene. Analyzing the content of Smith's last words, the scaffolding of the scene, and the audio (in the case of the movies), uncovers unique themes. Each iteration presents Smith and his last words differently, and, in doing so, sends a distinct message to the audience. The differences across iterations provide alternative perspectives and undertones. Through the recreation and reframing of Smith's final moments their finality is undermined. Specifically, the ability of the state to execute Smith and end his life is called into question since each work resuscitates Smith for the duration of the narrative. Similarly, the concept that a murderer is beyond redemption is threatened by each representation of Smith. The existence of multiple versions of Smith challenges the idea that his character is fixed or even fully determinable. Each depiction of Smith's final words threatens the concept of last words. The changes made by each adaptation offers Smith another chance to speak. All in all, looking at Smith's last words in the novel and two movies interrogates social expectations about the law, character, and last words: the finality of law referencing the death sentence's refusal to imagine a future of redemption; the finality of character is parallel but distinctly textual, addressing the social understanding of character as fixed or unchanging in time; the finality of last words referring to an attempt to secure final meaning or judgement. Ultimately, the narrative and its adaptations challenge the nature of finality in these three domains, undermining the concept of finality as a whole.

The cinematic reimaginings of *In Cold Blood* provide essential commentary on the original novel and extend its destabilization of finality. In a broad sense, adaptations serve as investigations of an original text. Literary scholars and experts in adaptation theory Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins write, “Adaptations should be seen as responses to other texts that form a necessary step in the process of understanding” (17). In order to fully understand and interrogate the novel, therefore, it is important to integrate the adaptations into the discussion. Otherwise, several steps “in the process of understanding” are ignored. This ‘process of understanding’ is achieved through adaptations because “[a]dapters cannot ‘transpose’ or transfer a novel, or even another film, to the screen. They must interpret, re-working the precursor text and choosing the various meanings and sensations they find most compelling (or most cost effective), then imagine scenes, characters, plot elements, etc., that match their interpretation” (16). In other words, through the selection and interpretation required in the translation of a narrative, certain themes and meanings are emphasized. The adaptations uncover and highlight certain underlying messages; investigating the iterations allows a closer examination of these aspects of the novel.

It is important to note that the original text exists as an adaptation on its own. As Derrida argues, the process of mimesis is influenced by the framework of language (Derrida 157-158). Since Capote presents physical occurrences within the written word, Capote adapts the actual moments into the English language. Just as adaptations cannot ‘transpose’ a novel, Capote cannot simply ‘transpose’ reality into written word. As such, Capote “must interpret, reworking,” in this case the series of events, “choosing various meanings and sensations [he] finds most compelling.” In that way, Capote’s depiction of Smith’s execution has “certain underlying

messages” that the adaptations investigate. Interrogating the undertones in the adaptations uncovers the implications of the original representation of the execution. When the adaptations explore Capote’s depiction of Smith’s execution and emphasize the implications of his presentation, they continue his challenge of finality. After all, the story is recreated, denying it an ending. Since the films operate within ‘the process of understanding,’ the adaptations serve as a continuation of the narrative. Ultimately, the representations of *In Cold Blood* ensure that Smith is continually resuscitated despite the state’s attempt to execute him. Further, the films give Smith another opportunity to redeem himself and amend his last words.

In the case of *In Cold Blood*, the most recent cinematic recreations, in particular, help to examine the impact of Capote’s artistic decisions and continue to destabilize the notion of finality. Although there are four cinematic adaptations of *In Cold Blood* including a movie and TV series titled *In Cold Blood* released in 1967 and 1995 respectively, the importance of the movies *Capote* (2005) and *Infamous* (2006) resides in their interpretative work. Whereas the first movie and the television series largely recreate the novel’s narrative, *Infamous* and *Capote* comment on the novel. Legal scholar Shulamit Almog analyzes their commentary when he writes, “Both films, that were produced decades after *In Cold Blood* was written, transform Capote, the hidden narrator of the murder affair, into a character who assumed a central role in shaping the reality he depicted.” He continues “The films expose what Capote probably wished to leave covert. They subvert under the allegedly objective nature of a heterodiegetic narrator, and expose a new narrator, who is an active, even influential character in the story he tells” (361). Almog highlights the exploratory position present in both *Capote* and *Infamous* and affirms their search for Capote’s role in constructing the narrative in *In Cold Blood*. The films

reveal the ability of a narrator to selectively report material and influence the presentation of the narrative. The very act of re-presenting Smith, however, reinvents Smith in order to prioritize certain aspects of the narrative. The decision to insert Capote as a character within the narrative emphasizes the instability of the narrative and the possibility of redemption, unfixed character, and misguided final judgement. Moving Capote into the conversation exposes the ability of authors and directors to reimagine individuals in different manners. This destabilizes the character of Smith, suggesting that perspective and context dictate whether or not he is redeemable. Although the adaptations call attention to Capote's misrepresentation of Smith's final words, neither *Capote* nor *Infamous* report factually accurate last words. In this way, the films also undermine the finality of Smith's last words. In short, when *Capote* and *Infamous* recreate *In Cold Blood* and interrogate Capote's work, calling attention to the instability of the narrative, they challenge the concept of finality.

The variant presentations of last words within each iteration challenges the finality of character and last words. Since last words serve as a narrative framework, the different last words are demonstrative of the fluidity of the narrative. Thus the shift in the last words indicates a shift in Smith's overall character. In his theory of narrative, Peter Brooks writes that the hermeneutic, the desire to make sense of a narrative through its conclusion, is so powerful it results in his theory of "anticipation of retrospection." This Brooks defines as a premature expectation of coming into meaning which the reader can then apply afterwards. The power of the hermeneutic in a biography, one that inevitably contains the death of an individual, is subject to Brooks's "anticipation of retrospection" in a more sophisticated fashion. Rather than reading towards the end of the novel, the narrative travels towards the end of a life, towards the subject

of the biography's final moments and last words. In anticipation of the "anticipation of retrospection," authors adjust their works in order for readers to apply the meaning as the novel progresses. Guthke describes the position of last words in biographies, writing:

Biographies – straddling the fine line between literature and science in that they combine factual and 'mythical' truths – frequently start out with the death of their subject; and even when they do not, they often seem to have been written all along with at least one eye on the end or, more specifically, on the dying word, which is felt to give a summary of the life and to throw into relief its real significance. (22)

In order to appease the desires to reframe a narrative in context of last words, Guthke explains, authors will supply the words at the onset. Since last words serve as 'a summary of the life' and are indicative of its 'real significance,' readers are thus able to interpret the progression of events with a predetermined understanding of the person's character. Last words in biographies, therefore, serve as a framework through which readers understand the subject. If Smith's final words are viewed as the culmination of his life, their recreation reframes his entire character. This paper will argue that as each adaptation reimagines Smith's last words, they challenge the social assumption that murderers are beyond character development and can be reduced to their crime. Overall, the changes to the last words suggest that Smith is capable of evolution and that his personal value is contingent on context. After all, if Smith was simply a murderer, the narratives would present his final words in a consistent manner. The fluidity of the presentation leaves room for collective reassessment as to his character and worth.

Each reinvention of Smith's character, marked by the changing last words, suppresses the finality of his execution. Interrogating the depictions of Smith's character displays the fluidity of his personhood and its dependence on perspective. Ultimately, the reimaginings challenge the finality of his execution. Literary theorist Diana Fuss examines the nuance of last words in literature and argues that their depiction is indicative of certain personal characteristics. Focused

on the question “What words are the right words for one’s final conscious moments?” (877), Fuss illustrates the primary categories of last words seen in literature and describes the character that corresponds. She describes the historically standard “good death” and explores how it evolved into four separate entities. Fuss works through each category, beginning with what she terms “the consoling last word” before moving to “the defiant last word,” “the banal last word,” and, ultimately, “the new last word.” In each section she illustrates the qualifications associated with each type of last word, the standard content, intention of the dying, and role of the living. Adherence to each of the standard tropes, Fuss argues, indicates different cultural and audience values. By interpreting Smith’s last words across each piece through Fuss’ taxonomy of last words, different authorial intentions and representations of Smith emerge. Using Fuss’ framework allows a closer look at the social implications of the artistic decisions made in the portrayal of the execution.

Although the standard literary execution is designed to offer closure for a reader, in the case of *In Cold Blood*, Capote does the opposite. While Capote includes the elements of a standard telling including a description of both the crime and its impact, a further examination of the culprit’s past, and an account of the last words and execution (Garland 5), by overwriting Smith’s final words he interrupts the anticipated culmination. *In Cold Blood* seemingly abides by the traditional format but disrupts the finality associated with the condemned person’s final moments. Barton describes how the trial carries a narrative arc, citing the execution as the conclusion audiences desire, writing

The criminal and especially the capital trial— with its investigation, testimony, courtroom drama, verdict, and execution (or prevention of one) operates according to dramatic structures and principles, then an execution makes for the ultimate dénouement in the dispensation of justice. (21)

Capote flips this structure – blurring the execution and providing an amended version – thereby deconstructing the plot.

An examination of Smith's last words in *In Cold Blood* and the cinematic adaptations, *Capote* and *Infamous*, challenge the possibility of a final judgement. Each revamping of the story inherently destabilizes Smith's execution. Keeping the narrative alive and within the public ensures that Smith persists. In regards to his character, since last words serve as an overall representation of a person's character, the changing last words reframes Smith's entire narrative. Although last words can be powerful in their finality, the different depictions of his final moments contradict that very principle. As each iteration builds upon the ones prior in a palimpsestic manner, the variance of the last words challenges their fixed nature. In this manner, the editing of Smith's last words also undermines his execution. The reframing of his final moments offers him an additional opportunity to impress his message on the audience.⁴ As a result, the different depictions of his execution and its vulnerability to edits suggest that executions, morality, and final words are fluid. In this way, Smith's last words call into question the very concept of finality.

In Cold Blood: Defiance, Uncertainty, and Redemption

Subject to praise even before its publication (Kauffman), *In Cold Blood* has long been considered a remarkable piece of literature. The bestseller is featured on the Guardians list of the 100 best books and lauded as “a tale of spine-tingling suspense and extraordinary intuition” (McCrum). Alongside the praise and intrigue, there was backlash in response to the novel, as well. Capote's description of the book as a “nonfiction novel” left readers uncertain about the

⁴ Audience here refers to the attendants of the execution, the reader's of *In Cold Blood*, and viewers of *Infamous* and *Capote*.

veracity of the tale (Keenan). The graphic descriptions of the violence led Tom Wolfe to accuse Capote of creating a tale of ‘pornoviolence.’ Wolfe asserted that Capote used the gruesomeness of the murder in order to entice readership. Despite contradictory opinions as to the quality of the text, however, a common thread does exist in most reviews: the manner in which Capote’s relationship with Smith influenced the narrative. While Ken Tynan argued that Capote impatiently waited for the execution so it could serve as a proper climax for his book,⁵ as cited by Allen, he acknowledged the closeness of the relationship in their discussion of anticipation of Smith’s death. After all, had Capote remained emotionally distant from Smith, his desire for Smith’s execution would not have been so controversial. Given the stakes of the execution – its role as the climax of the novel and the scrutiny about Capote’s mixed emotions surrounding the event – Capote’s depiction of the scene is of particular importance. The conflict between Capote’s desire to create a strong piece of literature and his emotional attachment to Smith ultimately destabilizes the climactic scene. Within each desire there is further conflict as well. Capote’s need to create an enticing narrative (a novel) runs against his desire to accurately describe the events (nonfiction literature). Capote’s need to provide closure for himself and the reader is complicated by his relationship with Smith. The resulting instability of the description, Capote’s wavering between two versions of Smith in response to such tension, undermines the finality of Smith’s character and the nature of last words.

Capote’s presentation of the moments preceding Smith’s execution presents Smith in two contradictory manners, destabilizing his character. Capote initially depicts Smith as an overly confident, careless character who is unphased by his execution, before highlighting Smith’s

⁵ Although Capote refuted this in an interview, the speculation has not died down (“Capote Answers Tynan’s Attack”).

sensitivity and compassion, and emphasizing Smith's understanding of the gravity of the situation, writing:

As he was brought into the warehouse, Smith recognized his old foe Dewey; he stopped chewing a hunk of Doublemint gum he had in his mouth, and grinned and winked at Dewey, jaunty and mischievous. But after the warden asked if he had anything to say, his expression was sober. His sensitive eyes gazed gravely at the surrounding faces, swerved up to the shadowy hangman, then downward to his own manacled hands. He looked at his fingers, which were stained with ink and paint, for he'd spent his final three years on Death Row painting self-portraits and pictures of children, usually the children of inmates who supplied him with photographs of their seldom-seen progeny. (340)

The detail of Smith chewing gum underscores his blasé attitude about the affair. By chewing “a hunk” of gum, Smith appears inappropriately casual and less civilized, the chewing marking him as consuming, animalistic, and menacing. Opting for ‘a hunk’ rather than a single piece of gum, Smith is presented as someone with little self-control. When he stops chewing his gum in order to “grin” and “wink,” Smith comes across as unreformed. His immature attitude and childlike egotism is rooted in the ‘grin’ and ‘wink’ and further enforced in the description of Smith as “jaunty and mischievous.” The presentation of Smith and Dewey as “old foes,” reminds the reader that Smith is at odds with the law. Since Dewey was the primary police agent involved in the case, Smith's criminality is foregrounded. That shift in his behavior after “the warden asked if he had anything to say,” though, provides an entirely different view of Smith. When Capote writes “his expression was sober” the description contradicts all the characteristics within the previous sentence. Referring to “his sensitive eyes” and the manner in which they “gazed gravely” humanizes Smith and suggests that he is aware of the seriousness of the moment. When contrasted with the ‘grin’ and ‘wink,’ the two versions of Smith appear irreconcilable. As Capote tracks the movement of Smith's eyes from “the surrounding faces,” “up to the shadowy hangman, then downward to his own manacled hands,” the reader enters Smith's perspective

while simultaneously remaining as one of ‘the surrounding faces.’ The movement of the focus from the audience to the hangman to the chains on Smith highlights Smith’s vulnerability in the moment. The audience and hangman outnumber Smith and the chains restrain him. No longer grinning and at the mercy of the spectators, Capote blurs the distinction between good and evil. Just as Smith restrained the Clutters before murdering them, Smith is restrained during his own execution. The hangman becomes the murderer and the audience co-executioners, all working together to kill a man so ‘sensitive’ he spent his final days painting portraits of children for their parents (Barton 3).⁶ This second description of Smith, entirely at odds with the first, calls into question the ethics of capital punishment by showing the depths of Smith’s character. While the criminal justice system identified Smith as beyond redemption by sentencing him to death, Capote presents his execution in a manner that questions the inability of a murderer to grow.

Easily bisected into two distinct moments, the content of Smith’s last words interrogate the finality of character. The representation of the moment has similar implications while also destabilizing the idea of last words. Capote writes:

‘I think,’ [Smith] said, ‘it’s a helluva thing to take a life in this manner. I don’t believe in capital punishment, morally or legally. Maybe I had something to contribute, something—’ His assurance faltered; shyness blurred his voice, lowered it to a just audible level. ‘It would be meaningless to apologize for what I did. Even inappropriate. But I do. I apologize.’ (340)

The first portion thematically qualifies within Fuss’s description of the “defiant last word.”

When Capote writes “‘I think’ [Smith] said, ‘it’s a helluva thing to take a life in this manner. I don’t believe in capital punishment morally or legally’” (340), he falls well within the subsection of last words that Fuss identifies as typically coinciding with “spectacular, violent, and

⁶ Barton credits Quinby with the theory that all civilians are responsible for murder since they allow the execution to occur. I explicitly mention the attendees since their attendance facilitates intervention, whereas Quinby argues existence in a society with capital punishment involves a complacency which carries guilt as well.

irreligious ends.” Understanding an execution as an inherent spectacle – given the frequent gathering of viewers and that the purpose of these gatherers is to observe the systematic killing of a state-deemed ‘irreligious’ figure – fully plants Smith within the standard context for ‘defiant’ last words. Fuss further notes that ‘defiant’ last words feature “few penitent deaths and even fewer distraught mourners. Indeed, more often than not, the mourner may turn out to be the murderer, exposed and condemned by the victim’s last words” (886). The absence of an apology at the forefront of Smith’s final moments certainly suggests a lack of penitence. Furthermore, the people gathered to witness the execution are almost universally there for closure, not to mourn Smith’s passage.⁷ Lastly, Smith’s decision to undermine the morality of capital punishment positions the executioner and law enforcement present as murders in their own right, thereby ‘exposing and condemning’ them. The statement against capital punishment could be interpreted as defending his character since Smith demonstrates a level of awareness and intelligence which is lost to society after his execution, Capote disrupting Smith’s speech at “I think” emphasizing Smith’s self-reflection. That said, the moment is still egotistical as Smith focuses on saving his own life. Reminiscent of the immaturity in the description of his entrance, the first half of Smith’s last words are extremely self absorbed. The ‘defiant’ beginning of Smith’s last words establish Smith as a reproachable character: unrepentant and focused on justice exclusively for his own well-being.

Although Smith’s reprehensibility is momentarily confirmed by the ‘defiant’ beginning

⁷ I qualify the mourners as “almost universally there for closure, not to mourn Smith’s passage” because Capote’s presence – although the degree to which he was present for the execution is hotly debated – certainly was not inspired by a need for closure. Although Capote’s motivation for his attendance could *include* his mourning of Smith’s passage, it is safe to assert he was also present in order to properly write his book. Thus, although Capote could have been a singular mourner, that was not his exclusive role.

of his last words, the second portion contradicts a reader's assumptions, coinciding with Fuss' definition of a 'good death.' When Capote has Smith continue "'Maybe I had something to contribute, something –' His assurance faltered; shyness blurred his voice, lowering it to a just audible level. 'It would be meaningless to apologize for what I did. Even inappropriate. But I do. I apologize'" (340) he rewrites Smith's death as "a slow, painful, but fully conscious demise, borne with great fortitude and equanimity" (Fuss 877).⁸ The 'slow' and 'painful' aspects of the execution are grounded in the portions of the novel describing the length of time it takes for Smith's heart to stop beating after the hanging occurs. The apology signifies a 'fully conscious demise borne with great fortitude and equanimity' as it presents a Smith as both strong and composed enough to consider the broader implications and unsatisfactory nature of his apology alongside complete understanding and awareness of imminent death. It also satisfies Fuss' additional criteria as Smith does "offer proof of salvation through words of contrition, confession, conversion, faith, forgiveness, wisdom, or grace" (Fuss 878). Through the inclusion of contrition and confession, Capote challenges the reader to see the humanity within Smith and understand him as worthy of life. The moment when "his assurance faltered; shyness blurred his voice" humbles Smith even further, reminding the reader of his sensitivity. Ultimately, the second part of Smith's last words contrasts the implications of the first, destabilizing the finality of character. By making the second part of Smith's last words 'just audible,' Capote demonstrates that the listener must make an effort to hear it. The responsibility shifts to the audience when Capote establishes that if a person were to pay close attention, they would recognize Smith as redeemable. Having the readers lean in to hear the apology recognizes the

⁸ Fuss credits Historian Pat Jalland as the one who identifies these "as the central distinguishing features of an Evangelical good death," (877).

Smith's exterior masks his sensitivity. Capote ultimately shows that underneath the defiance, if people listen carefully, they will recognize the redeemable characteristics Smith possesses.

If Capote left Smith's words as exclusively defiant, the novel would serve as an exploration of a brutal murder and a defiant killer. The subsequent apology, however, challenges the reader to perceive Smith as a redeemable character and his execution as a loss to society. The combination of the two entirely reframes Smith's character, ultimately complicating the otherwise black and white narrative of good and evil. The moment of introspective apology is indicative of what Guthke describes as "ending a less than beautiful life with a beautiful line that will survive" (26). Positioning the "good death" second presents it as Smith's final contribution and the culmination of his life. Capote synthesizes Smith's life, identifying a phase of egotism with selective morality succeeded by an attempt to participate in larger society and an awareness of the limitations of regret. The juxtaposition of the defiant and good aspects of Smith's character complicate the narrative entirely, until the very title of the novel becomes applicable both to Smith's murder and the murder of Smith. The two contrasting portions of Smith's last words preserve the reprehensible aspects of his moral character and present them alongside the admirable ones. Ultimately, Capote ensures that the reader is unable to perceive the character as fixed, suggesting a person can always change.

Capote's presentation of Smith's last words undermines social assumptions about final words. Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins argue that any text is a representation and therefore cannot truly be the original thing. That said, she asserts that all representations are structured towards a central message (17). Understanding the implications of Capote's *In Cold Blood* thus requires the interpretation of the artistic decisions provided to support Capote's desired narrative. Hustis

identifies Capote's careful wording and ordering of Smith's last words as a demonstration of 'creative shaping.'⁹ Capote described his tendency to use creative shaping in a 1966 interview with the NYTimes where he discussed his ability to artistically contextualize in order to preserve his preferred narrative (Plimpton). Capote used aesthetic decisions as a means of presenting a specific narrative. The critical response to his creative shaping varies. Whereas Wainwright identifies this artistic presentation in a rather negative light, arguing that it is indicative of Capote's contentedness with 'factual adequacy' at the expense of 'factual accuracy' (30), Almog offers a far less critical analysis, explaining that Capote's abandonment of journalistic recounting was an inevitable part of the process, since "the materials assembled by Capote were metamorphosed into unity by meticulous artistic labor, not by mere assembling" (357). The 'artistic' labor offered Capote the opportunity to frame Smith's last words in a particular light, one that differs from an objective recounting of events. Instead of simply "assembling" the facts, Capote reconstructs Smith's last words and, in doing so, challenges their finality. That the last words can change as a result of 'creative shaping' suggests that they are not fixed and, by extension, not final at all. The artistry involved in the description of the execution of Smith also disrupts the finality of character. Guthke analyses the significance of last words and explores the incentive to meticulously craft 'good' final words. He writes that the value of last words is rooted in a person's desire "to transform their ideal identity into an artifact" (25). Understanding that last words have the power to serve as an artifact of a person Capote's production of Smith's last words frames his entire character. The use of creative shaping in the depiction of Smith's last words thus alters the reader's assumptions about Smith's character. Specifically, the artistic

⁹ Hustis borrows the terminology 'creative shaping' from Lackey's discussion of postmodernists.

adjustments to Smith undercut the predictable narrative by complicating an otherwise seemingly condemnable murderer. In this manner, character divorces finality and becomes fluid.

Capote's creative shaping challenges common assumptions about Smith, reframing the entire narrative. Peter Brooks argues in *Reading for the Plot*, narrative produces in readers the "anticipation of retrospection" which he defines as "read[ing] in a spirit of confidence and also a state of dependence, that what remains to be read will restructure the provisional meaning of the already read" (23). In the case of *In Cold Blood*, however, Capote challenges readers' preconceived assumptions, providing an unanticipated depiction in the novel which interrupts and transforms the reader's "provisional meanings of the already read," thus altering their understanding of the novel's message in its entirety. Hustis explores this tension, writing about "Capote's tendency to adjust the novel's focal point by blurring and conflating the distinction between the victim and perpetrator" (192). Through careful description including an interjection into Smith's last words, Capote disrupts assumptions about Smith's character and character in general. When Capote writes that "[Smith's] assurance faltered; shyness blurred his voice, lowering it to a just audible level" (340), he positions Smith as insecure and heavily repentant. Using creative shaping, Hustis argues that "Smith's execution is designed to turn [sic] the tables on its audience: those who order and condone Perry Smith's hanging have participated – "in cold blood" – in the death of an artist" (193). Smith's artistry, illustrated by the description of his ink stained fingers, refigures Smith as a creator and the execution as the destruction of Smith's potential artistic contribution.¹⁰ Presenting Smith as a creator and not merely a murderer, reframes him as redeemable and suggests that the execution was unjustified. The exploration of

¹⁰ The destructive nature of the execution is also exemplified in Smith's statement, "Maybe I had something to contribute, something –" (Capote 340).

Smith's potential to contribute positions the execution as a potential loss to society at large. The tension created by Smith's last words is emblematic of Capote's larger mission to present the execution of Smith as comparable to his murder of the Clutters. Instead of permitting the reader to operate under the guise of absolute good and evil, Capote disrupts assumptions and challenges the reader to interrogate the legal assumption that murderers have fixed characters.

In Cold Blood and Capote: The Role of the Audience

When *Capote* was released in 2005, two cinematic adaptations of *In Cold Blood* already existed. Director Bennett Miller, however, opted to reframe the narrative unlike his predecessors. Inserting Capote as a character within the film gave space for others to directly contradict Capote's report of what transpired during the investigation and execution. This artistic decision is still lauded for its exposition of Capote's creative shaping – a conversation topic since the novel's publication. Ebert describes *Capote* as “a film of uncommon strength and insight” and writes that the movie depicts Capote as a “man whose great achievement requires the surrender of his self-respect.” *Capote* primarily focuses on how Capote favors Smith over Hickcock in his narrative and the degree to which Capote's relationship shaped the narrative. Although there is a general consensus that Smith was the focus of Capote's misrepresentations,¹¹ reviews disagree on the reason Smith had such a grip on Capote. Almog argues that there are two viable explanations present in *Capote*: “cold manipulation” or “meeting with [Smith] actually touched the darkest parts of [Capote's] soul” (361). While he views these two possibilities as divorced, Scott considers them entangled: “the film suggests that Capote's obsession with the Clutter murders, and his drive to alchemize their ugly pointlessness into deathless prose, might better be

¹¹ von Tunzelmann, for example, argues that *Capote* focuses on “the peculiar tenor of [Smith and Capote's] relationship.”

described as a Faustian bargain.” That said, in order to emphasize Capote’s creative liberties and explore the complicated relationship that Capote had with Smith, *Capote* includes numerous misrepresentations of its own (von Tunzelmann). Although *Capote* seeks to expose Capote’s factual inaccuracies, it ultimately operates in a similar manner. In particular, *Capote*’s depiction of Smith’s execution differs from both the description within *In Cold Blood* and the accounts of other witnesses. While the decision to depart from the original text is meant to lay bare Capote’s personal influence on the material within the novel (Ebert), the film’s representation of Smith’s execution and last words have similar implications to their counterparts within the novel. As in *In Cold Blood*, the presentation and content of Smith’s last words in *Capote* comments on the inethics of capital punishment as it demonstrates that the rigid nature of the justice system is founded in misconceptions about character.

The different presentation of Smith’s last words in *Capote* refutes the inflexibility of a death sentence – a sentence which refuses room for character development – and advocates for a multidimensional understanding of character. Inevitably, the recreation of Smith’s last words destabilizes the final words in a similar manner as *In Cold Blood*. The flexibility of last words also establishes the fluidity of character. Additionally, through the movie’s reimagining of Smith, the execution is undermined, since the piece restores Smith for the duration of the film. In short, *Capote*’s recreation of Smith’s execution and last words does more than expose Capote’s creative shaping, it continues his work of interrupting assumptions about finality. Even though *Capote* restructures the novel’s framework by including Capote and offers an alternative representation of Smith’s execution, it replicates the aspect of the text that it seeks to expose. Despite different means, by reproducing *In Cold Blood*’s narrative, *Capote* does very similar

work to the novel, amplifying its message and propagating it further.

In the film *Capote*, Smith's last words are rendered in very different terms. Instead of using the moment to provide closure the viewer craves, the film establishes the absurdity of condensing an entire life into a singular sentence: legal and personal. With the noose already around Smith's neck, a guard reminds Smith he is allowed a final statement. The tension of the moment proves too much for Smith who, after hesitating and asking if any Clutters were present, remarks, "I can't remember what I was going to say for the life of me." The tension created, though, – both the intangible tension in the scene and tangible tension in the rope – denies Smith any true opportunity to properly summarize or signify his life. While "the dying word...is felt to give a summary of the life and to throw into relief its real significance" (Guthke 22), Smith falters, forgetting his intended message, and is executed with his final message unspoken. By declaring that Smith could not remember his intended message "for the life of [him]," the film explicitly foregrounds and interrogates the idea that a sentence is supposed to equate a life. The placement of the noose around his neck reminds the viewer that the content of the sentence does not affect the outcome of Smith's future. Rather, in the eyes of the law, murdering the Clutters is socially regarded as the singular defining moment of Smith's life. In this manner, the death penalty is called into question. Condensing Smith's entire worth into a singular action and declaring that such an action should dictate the entirety of a person's future independent of their future deeds demonstrates the rigidity of the legal system. When Smith is unable to summarize his life into a final remark – understanding "for the life of me" as the equivalent of 'for the understanding of my life' – he contradicts the legal perspective, suggesting that life cannot be condensed into a singular sentence. While the judicial system decides that murdering the

Clutters is Smith's entire identity, after all, a death sentence denies space for redemption or personal development, Smith is unable to find the words which "give a summary of [his] life and [throw] into relief its real significance." In this manner, Smith's last words interrogate the morality of a death sentence and the unreasonable expectations of a final sentence. While capital punishment is founded on the fixed nature of human character (Morisi 1), and the ability to condense a person into a singular instance, Smith's inability to signify himself in his final moment implies that even the final moments of a life are fluid enough that an accurate summary is impossible. Furthermore, since *Capote* presents different last words than *In Cold Blood* – which presents different last words than Smith in actuality – *Capote* shows that even after death such a summary is inaccessible. All in all, *Capote* destabilizes death sentences and last words by implying that a person possesses a multiplicity of characters.

While *Capote* presents Smith's execution differently than *In Cold Blood*, there are shared implications as both conflate Smith with the Clutters. This move is a traditional one in media addressing capital punishment. Garland describes the manner in which audiences are kept engaged through "The dramatic relation between these paired killings – the murder and the execution – draws the audience in, ensuring popular interest, emotional involvement, and continuing engagement with the story" (6). In the case of *Capote*, Smith's failure to provide last words serves as the point of comparison, challenging the morality of capital punishment. Outside of offering Smith a chance to overwrite his life, the gesture is a symbolic means to affirm the humanity of the execution. The executioner and attendants seek to morally differentiate themselves from murderers by providing Smith a moment to reframe his legacy before his execution. In this manner, the request for last words is an extension of the police interrogation,

where the executioner attempts to “impos[e] a controlling narrative, [prevent] a suspect’s choice of silence...and [maintain] the conditions in which speech will break forth” (Brooks 42) so as to relieve those involved with the process of personal responsibility by reaffirming Smith’s status as a convicted criminal. *Capote* explores how the provision of a platform to say last words allows for the juxtaposition of the execution and the murder scene, where the Cutters are killed with little to no warning, giving each of them no time to speak last words. Smith’s ultimate failure to remember what he meant to say, though, denies the executioner and all those present the distinction they crave.¹² Instead, the moment completely backfires, and Smith’s failure to speak positions Smith’s death as not unlike his victims. That Smith’s death is absent of a final declaration, just like the Clutters, establishes a parallel. That Smith is unable to recall his intended last words results in a definitive societal contribution left unsaid. *Capote* thus presents the death penalty as a social deprivation and a murder comparable to the ones that Smith committed. By correlating Smith’s murder of the Clutter’s with the state murder of Smith, Smith’s death is destabilized. Ultimately, Smith’s death refuses a sense of closure; denying the state the ability to dictate the setting, context, or actual occurrence of Smith’s end.

The audio during Smith’s final breaths also conflates Smith’s execution with the murder of the Clutters, challenging the ethics of final sentences – both legal and personal in nature. After Smith fails to produce his final remarks, a black bag is pulled over his head. In the brief moments before he hangs, the viewer watches him suck in the black cloth with every breath and the only

¹² Hustis argues that the demand for last words inherently destabilizes the veracity of the last words by “blurring distinctions between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ and deliberately conflating ‘fact’ and fiction” (183). Thus, even if Smith did remember and contribute last words, the words would be an unstable representation of himself. Nonetheless, by failing to recall his intended remarks, *Capote* has Smith avoid the contention of such an argument, allowing for a simpler conflation between Smith and the Cutters.

audio is the sound of his heavy breathing. He dies chest heaving against the backdrop of the sound of his breathing which is not unlike his condition during his execution of the Clutters. The comparable nature of the two scenes highlights the misguided social tendency to differentiate between the execution and murder. Smith's murder of the Clutters depicts his chest rising and falling in a similar manner to his own execution. It is worth noting that during the Clutters' final moments the audio features the sound of ominous music and the sudden noise of the gun, whereas music is entirely absent during Smith's execution, leaving the sound of his frantic breath accessible to the viewer. This difference allows the murder a classic cinematic depiction, with music establishing the proper mood, but the sound of Smith's breath in his own execution reminds the viewer of his humanity. The film avoids the responsibility of dictating the viewer's mood during Smith's execution by omitting the inevitable bias of a music selection, but forces the viewer to acknowledge that a life is ending. Although the audio is different during the two moments, the parallel of Smith struggling to catch his breath indicates the scenes are not entirely different.

A clear commentary on the corruption of a final legal sentence, *Capote* implies that the execution is an act of murder in its own right. By connecting Smith to the Cutters, though, the movie also implies that Smith died alongside them. In that manner, Smith was sentenced to death even before the official trial. Once the crime was committed, he was condemned to die because of the existing legal system which would inevitably declare as much as well as the public mentality that Smith was purely bad. As soon as he earned the title of "murderer" he essentially lost the ability to redeem himself; he became the worst thing he had done.¹³ No longer able to grow and

¹³ Challenging the systemic assumption that a person can be reduced to their largest mistake, *Capote* highlights a prominent theme in Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*. Stevenson, like Miller, argues that "each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done" (18).

change in the eyes of society, Smith's life and character would have ended in that moment if Capote and Miller did not recreate the narrative. The artistic depictions of Smith as a multidimensional character and *Capote's* interrogation of the unethical death sentence, restores Smith's humanity. Thus, Smith, dead long before his execution, is able to live after it. Ultimately, the sound of Smith's breath during his execution calls attention to his personal value which, in turn, illustrates the impotence of the judicial system and falsity of finality.

In the final scene of the film, *Capote* interrogates the concept of finality, suggesting that ends are constructs. The film leaves room for last words to exist in another medium, and, in doing so, demonstrates the fluidity of last words and the possibility of existence beyond death. In the final scene of the movie, Capote clutches Smith's diary (see Fig. 1, below):

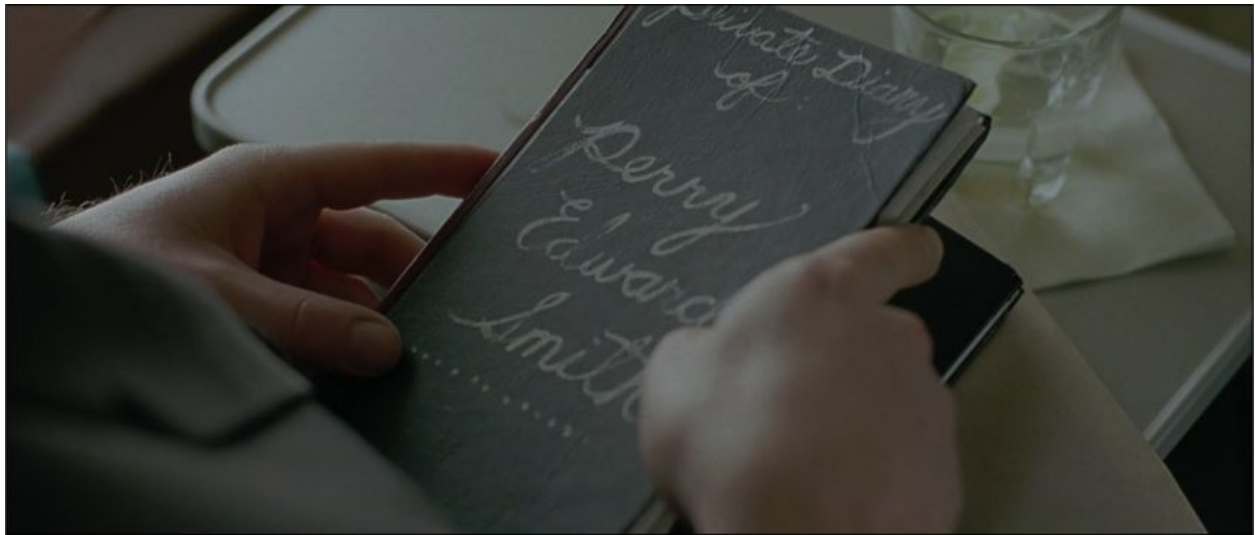


Fig. 1. Still from Miller, *Capote* (1:47:23).

The writing on the cover – “Private Diary of Perry Edward Smith” – blurs Capote and Smith. Capote's ownership of the diary indicates that the execution of Smith does not silence Smith's consciousness. The persistence of the diary becomes an artifact in lieu of Smith's last words. That Capote owns and opens the diary, though, suggests that relationships operate as an artifact

in themselves. Capote's possession of the "Private Diary" demonstrates that communication and shared experience create a third entity that persists even after the death of one party. Since Capote gains access to Smith's private thoughts, it is clear that Smith's consciousness is preserved within Capote. Furthermore, the preservation of Smith's material items encapsulating the life of Smith, serves as a form of textual last words in place of spoken last words. Since text is a representation of reality (Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins 17), a summary of Smith's existence is transmissible through written word. The physicality of the diary—its existence as a book—demonstrates the textual archive of Smith's existence. As such, not only does Smith deny the viewer his final words, his diary calls upon *In Cold Blood* to interrupt the very idea of finality.

The contents of the diary also establish *In Cold Blood* as Smith's archival future. By presenting alternative media as a viable means of preservation, *Capote* continues the work in *In Cold Blood*. Two photographs are contained within the diary's pages, one of Smith's past (see Fig. 2) and one of his future (see Fig. 3):



Fig. 2. Still from Miller, *Capote* (1:47:31).



Fig. 3. Still from Miller, *Capote* (1:47:43).

The first image, the photograph of Smith and his sibling, operates as a representation of Smith's past. Photography as a medium appears to preserve a singular moment concretely; the image appears fixed and as objective as art can be. That said, similar to Capote's ability to invoke 'creative shaping' a photograph can selectively capture a posed moment. So, although the photograph is a still image, it exists within the moving film; as such, it "fixes" Smith in time, in contrast to the film which is able to present him as ongoing, having both past a future. The second image, a drawing of Capote, represents Smith's future. Hand drawn by Smith, the drawing introduces a type of mirroring; Smith produces a portrait of Capote that precedes Capote's portrait of Smith, allowing creative shaping in both directions. Ultimately, in a nod towards *In Cold Blood*, the diary foreshadows the novel's preservation of Smith. Not only does the novel prove that last words are fluid, since Capote writes over Smith's spoken words, the reproduction of the text continues to destabilize the idea of last words. The process of indicating that Capote's novel is an archival continuation of Smith, inevitably does the same work. Through the replication and adaptation of Capote's depiction, *Capote* recreates Smith and similarly

suggests that death is not final. When the film overwrites Smith's last words, like Capote did, it also disproves the finality of last words.

Although *Capote* takes a different approach to the narrative in *In Cold Blood* and focuses on Capote's influence on the text, the film has similar implications about the falseness of finality. While Ebert writes that *Capote* "looks with merciless perception at Capote's moral disintegration" a careful examination of the cinematic depiction of Smith's last words makes it clear that Capote is not alone in his alleged 'moral disintegration.' Rather, the creative shaping within the cinematic remastering continues Capote's original work. To begin, the very notion of last words is called into question by introducing alternative media for such a message. The introduction of which establishes that textual recounting and adaptations can challenge death. By recreating the original plot, albeit in a different form, *Capote* resurrects the narrative in *In Cold Blood*, further destabilizing understood limits about personhood. The continued discussion about the multifaceted nature of character and the manner in which it transcends the boundaries of any singular action undermines the assumptions on which capital punishment is founded.

In Cold Blood and *Infamous*: Remediated Last Words

Whereas *Capote* discusses the morality of the death penalty and the use of creative shaping in *In Cold Blood*, Douglas McGrath's *Infamous* examines the influence of Capote and Smith's relationship on the original text. As Ebert writes, "the movie centers on the symbiotic relationship between Truman and [Smith]." Klemzak argues that their relationship involves a "moral dilemma" for Capote. As Capote struggles to balance "sincere feelings for Smith" with the knowledge that "his book can't be completed until the two condemned killers hang for their crime," "his obsession for his book project is in direct conflict with his affection for Smith"

(Klemzak). Through its commentary on the interpersonal reason for Capote's creative shaping, *Infamous* calls attention to the artistic liberties present in the novel and furthers the text's work. Exploring creative shaping requires *Infamous* to present the manner in which *In Cold Blood* transcends understood boundaries, calling attention to the implications and thus presenting Capote's challenge to finality. After all, a consequence of the exploration of Capote and Smith's complex relationship is the presentation of Smith as a multidimensional character. The fact that Capote could form "sincere feelings for Smith" demonstrates Smith is not merely a "condemned killer." Thus, Smith and Capote's creative shaping are seen as redeemable. The film does similar work the novel beyond simply restating Capote's argument; *Infamous* also blurs "the 'real' and the 'fictional'" (Ebert) in an attempt to focus on the interpersonal influence. As Frus writes, "*Infamous* takes a less dispassionate, more subjective attitude toward what it presents as a more vulnerable protagonist" (55). Throughout *Infamous*, Capote's vulnerability is portrayed by the film's own creative shaping. Artistic liberties are particularly present in the representation of Smith's execution and last words. Using multiple artforms in lieu of concrete last words, the film breaks down the assumptions about last words. While the multimedia substitution serves its cinematic purpose of demonstrating Capote's emotional reaction to Smith's execution, the shift carries implications about the understanding of last words. By recreating Smith's execution and words, *Infamous* destabilizes the spoken last word and introduces alternative means of speech.

The use of rain in *Infamous* supports and expands Capote's presentation of Smith as a redeemable character. In the film, Capote lingers in the hotel before departing for the prison on the day of the execution. While gathering the emotional strength to leave, Capote has a brief exchange with his editor Bennett Cerf. Seated by the window, Capote presses his face up against

it and watches the rain stream down the glass remarking, “Rain is good. I really hope he apologizes. That would make him sympathetic” (1:39:50). By commenting on the rain immediately before discussing an apology and the “sympathetic” image it would portray reveals the symbolism of the rain. Conflating the benefits of the apology with the benefits of the rain connects the rain to the message that Smith is redeemable. Since the importance of a sympathetic appearance is primarily motivated by Capote’s desire to portray Smith this way in his book (Frus 55), in this moment, *Infamous* draws attention to Capote’s emotional attachment to Smith and its artistic influence on the novel. Capote’s wish that Smith appear ‘sympathetic’ humanizes the author by showing how his dedication to Smith’s image is emotionally founded. Lingering in the hotel, Capote demonstrates his struggle to cope with the execution. Associating rain, a precipitant which closely resembles tears, to Smith’s execution, Capote situates Smith as a grievable life.¹⁴ Emphasizing the possibility of grieving over Smith, *Infamous* foreshadows Capote’s personal grief. Capote’s intention was to depict Smith as redeemable is also clear in the mere image of the rain; rain is often included in novels to emphasize a depressed mood or moment. In this manner, *Infamous* opts to explain the motivation behind the rain rather than accuse Capote of selectively reporting. Explicitly acknowledging that Capote included the description of rain because it fulfilled his vision for *In Cold Blood*, *Infamous* highlights the artistic significance of the weather. The decision to call attention to the impact of the rain, though, involves a personal inclusion of the weather. Thus, *Infamous* presents Smith as

¹⁴ Judith Butler discusses the idea of a ‘grievable’ life in *Frames of War*. She argues that through media coverage, societies distinguish lives worthy of grief from lives which are not, suggesting the categorization is cultural and political. Similarly, Eve Morisi writes that capital punishment “interrogates the limits of humanity in several respects – the limits we impose on certain human lives and those through which we define humanness” (1). In this case, the media coverage – the movie itself – and the visual of tears suggest that Smith has cultural value and challenge the ethics of the death penalty, interrogating the limits imposed on Smith and the definition of humanness.

redeemable by exposing the implications of including the rain. While Capote reported reality in such a manner that it fit within his narrative, *Infamous* also selectively relayed reality. The decision to include the detail of the rain, thus, exposes the artistic significance of it within *In Cold Blood* and carries that commentary into the movie. Ultimately, *Infamous* represents Smith as redeemable by including the image of rain and its “sympathetic” air.

Infamous explains Capote’s addendum to Smith’s actual last words and reveals Smith’s humanity is restored by his refusal to apologize. Although Capote seeks an apology so that Smith can appear “sympathetic” by refusing to protect his image Smith demonstrates character growth and his redeemable qualities. During their final moments together in the prison before the execution, while Hickcock is prepared for execution, Capote pulls Smith to the side and says to Smith “They’re going to ask if you have anything to say and you must apologize.” After Smith questions the merits of the apology, responding “That won’t bring them back” Capote asserts “No, it restores your humanity to you” (1:40:30). When Capote explains that Smith’s humanity could be restored through an apology, *Infamous* shows that the inclusion of an apology was an artistic means to portray Smith as redeemable. The reason that Capote is able to include the apology, however, is because Smith refuses to apologize. When Capote does ask Smith to apologize, *Infamous* establishes that Smith understands the limits of an apology; that the apology will not redeem him since it does nothing to change the past. Smith’s response presents his character as one that has come to terms with his crime and the unforgivable nature of it. His focus on his inability to undo the damage he caused suggests he does feel regret. By placing the harm he has done above the public perception of his character, he shows true conscientiousness. While there is no indication whether the regret is simply because he wishes to avoid his

imminent death, there is a degree of conscientiousness that *Infamous* attributes to his character. Therefore, by interrogating Capote's intention, *Infamous* defends the redemption narrative that Capote attributes to Smith.

Infamous uses camera work during Hickcock's execution to emphasize the importance of Capote's experience and employs the cinematic perspective during Smith's execution to deny the state what it seeks. Through careful camera movement, *Infamous* foregrounds Capote's perception of the executions. The film establishes the cinematic focus on Capote's consciousness by moving the camera from Hickcock, during his execution, only to display Capote's face and subsequently follow his eyes. The film first shows Capote glance over toward the entrance when Hickcock arrives, before mirroring Capote and shifting the camera onto Hickcock. During the scene, the camera only moves away from Hickcock to Capote to reaffirm that Capote has his eyes fixed on Hickcock or show Capote momentarily averting his eyes. When Capote fixes them downwards, the camera remains on his face – inviting the viewer to imagine Capote's inner thoughts, underscoring the importance of Capote's internal monologue. While the attendants wait for Hickcock's breathing to stop, the focus returns to Capote as he watches, wide-eyed. As such, Capote's experience is the access point for the viewer, and the viewer learns that Capote's narrative is their window into the reality.

The established significance of Capote's experience is enlisted in the cinematic depiction of Smith's execution. When Smith enters, Capote's attention and emotional connection to Smith is foregrounded. Smith emerges from the car and immediately climbs the stairs of the gallows, stumbling up them. Nearing the top, Smith grabs the banister for support and the camera moves to Capote who reacts as though he was tripping up the stairs himself. The result is a conflation of

Smith and Capote; Capote experiencing these moments with Smith rather than simply observing them. After Smith is asked for last words, Smith stares straight into the camera which is positioned in Capote's place showing the intense connection the two men share. Instead of continuing the scene and depicting the entire execution, the camera switches to Smith, in prison, recording himself speaking and singing on a cassette which Capote sent to him. Understanding that the film is following the events as they transpire in Capote's head, it is clear that Capote cognitively shifts to listening to the cassette: he is no longer focused on the moment at hand. The connection established between Capote and Smith further suggests that Smith is remembering the very same cassette. The focus moves back with the song still playing and shows Capote gazing up at Smith while Smith rocks on the gallows; the physical rocking mirroring the disjointed depiction as it oscillates. As the camera continues to alternate between Smith singing in prison and the moment at hand, the images in the 'present' continue to connect the physical experiences of Capote and Smith as *Infamous* depicts Capote with his chest heaving and Smith hyperventilating with the black cloth over his head. The audio switches to the sound of breathing, and since Smith and Capote's chests both rise and fall, it is unclear whose breath is being heard. This blurring of the characters emphasizes their connection. Once the noose is around Smith's neck, the song ends, and Capote runs for the door. That the camera remains fixed on Capote sobbing in the rain,¹⁵ though, means that Smith's death is not featured. Bringing the visual of the rain back into the conversation, this time explicitly displaying the parallel of the precipitant and Capote's tears, *Infamous* features a meta-commentary on its own portrayal of

¹⁵ The use of the rain, in *Infamous*, also reorients these scenes as through Capote's perspective. Whereas *In Cold Blood* mentions that it was raining, *Infamous* only depicts the weather through Capote's interactions with it: at the hotel and execution. As Capote moves between observing the rain from indoors to standing outside in the downpour, Capote moves from the role of an observer to a participant. The shift is mirrored in the contrast of the execution of Hickcock – which Capote watches – and the execution of Smith – which Capote experiences.

Capote as a sympathetic character. The image of Capote alive in lieu of Smith dead, since Capote and Smith are firmly established as connected – in physicality and humanity – refuses the intended death of Smith. Capote’s grief replaces Smith’s hanging and Smith persists through Capote.

The song on the cassette emphasizes Capote and Smith’s relationship and serves as a commentary on the perpetual possibility of redemption. When Smith sings “There’s a Gold Mine in the Sky” (Craig), he calls attention to the difficulties of life and the importance of forgiveness:

There's a goldmine in the sky far away
 We will find it, you and I, some sweet day
 There'll be clover just for you down the line
 Where the skies are always blue, pal of mine

Take your time, old mule, I know you're growing lame
 But you'll pasture in the stars when we strike that claim
 And we'll sit up there and watch the world roll by (The world roll by)
 When we find that long lost goldmine in the sky (In the sky)

Mmm-mmm-mmm (Far away, far away), mmm-mmm-mmm (Far away, far away)
 Mmm-mmm-mmm-mmm-mmm-mmm-mmm-mmmmm
 And we'll say hello to friends who said goodbye (Who said goodbye)
 When we find that long lost goldmine in the sky (Far away in the sky).

The reference to the lame mule within the song seemingly refers to Smith himself, whose motorcycle accident caused a limp visible during his ascent of the gallows. While the “pal of mine” within the song is written to be the mule, that Smith sings the song to Capote on the tape reframes the narrative, positioning Capote and Smith as the two who will find the goldmine in the sky and “sit up there and watch the world roll by.” The promise of “clover” “down the line” indicates the past and present were full of strife, but the sweetness of forgiveness and the life after life mediate the present difficulties. The song also suggests that the two will find the goldmine together, indicating that Capote and Smith’s existence is entangled.¹⁶ The medium of

¹⁶ Mules, a type of animal which cannot reproduce, parallel homosexual relationships which *Infamous* suggests that Capote and Smith share.

song establishes that Capote and Smith's relationship is rooted in more than a similar childhood,¹⁷ and that Smith, like Capote, embraced art at a young age in order to survive.¹⁸ The song indicates that Capote and Smith are two people who endured hardship but will reach Heaven (the "goldmine") since they persisted. *Infamous* thus inserts a biblical message into the argument, calling attention to Christian belief that no one is beyond saving, suggesting that character is more fluid than the legal system assumes.

While Smith further establishes the emotional relationship by leaving all his belongings to Capote, their content is indicative of a shared appreciation for artistry and artistry's fluidity. As Capote unpacks the box containing Smith's belongings, he hesitates over the dictionary which connects the writer with its previous owner. The presence of the dictionary proves that the connection formed between the men exceeds 'seduction' (Frus 59) and their similarly troubled childhood (Ebert). Rather, Capote and Smith's shared love of words is demonstrative of their selection power. The stakes of each word are brought into view as *Infamous* calls attention to the artistic power of word choice. In doing so, the film also acknowledges the limitations of the English language. As Leitch argues, literature is limited in its ekphrasis as it struggles to translate visual and audible happenings into written word (93). The physical dictionary reminds the reader that the composition of the novel is inherently modified by translating events into language. That said, the dictionary also establishes instability of art. With several definitions for individual words and numerous synonyms for each definition, the dictionary shows the flexibility of language. Ultimately, the dictionary represents the limits and limitless nature of art: its inability

¹⁷ Too Brief a Treat (390-391) In a letter to Smith, Capote identifies several childhood experiences they share including: divorced parents, estranged fathers, late-mothers lost because of complications with alcoholism, and personal emotional struggles.

¹⁸ Frus describes Smith and Capote's similarities when explaining the reason for their close relationship, "[Smith and Capote] shared a similar unhappy childhood and artistic bent" (53).

to entirely capture happenings and multiple possible interpretations.

Capote also inherits the guitar that Smith strums on the recording which, in calling back to the earlier song, provides a lens to read the third and final object that Capote removes from the box – a pile of artwork. Aside from simply iterating an additional medium that Smith uses to create art, the guitar is palimpsestic in its reference to the song Smith plays; unpacking the drawings' symbolism through the context “There’s a Gold Mine in the Sky” reveals the fluidity of character. Flipping through the drawings slowly, Capote first inspects a drawing of a yellow bird (see Fig. 4 below):



Fig. 4. Still from McGrath, *Inferno* (1:51:07).

While the noun goldmine is typically presented as one word, the split into the discrete “gold” and “mine” within the title lends itself to said yellow bird. Understanding yellow as not dissimilar to gold and the bird as Smith’s savior when he struggles, the “goldmine” becomes the yellow bird,

which has frequently been read as Jesus.¹⁹ The inclusion of a Biblical reference and the implication that Jesus is a savior for Smith further cements Smith's redemptive arc. The second drawing is one of Smith's dad (see Fig. 5 below):



Fig. 5. Still from McGrath, *Infamous* (1:51:20).

This drawing positions Smith's dad as the singer with the horse he is riding as the mule, given the relative species within the lyrics. The previous conflation of Smith with the lame mule, though, creates a reading that the horse is Smith and the singer his father. Through this lens, the lyrics "you'll pasture in the stars when we strike that claim" are reminiscent of Smith's venture into Alaska where they "strike [a] claim" building a roadside lodge which ultimately fails. The song offers an opportunity to rewrite their negative history, suggesting that Smith has forgiven his father, highlighting the possibility of redemption. The third drawing is of Capote (see Fig. 6

¹⁹ Too Brief a Treat, 296, "[Perry] has lost his mind: believes that he is in continuous communication with God, and that God is a great bird hovering above him and waiting to wrap him in His wings."

below):



Fig. 6. Still McGrath, *Infamous* (1:51:31).

Introducing “friend Truman” into the song returns the focus to the relationship that Capote and Smith formed but with a new message. Since “dad” and “friend Truman” can both be read as the rider of the mule, Capote is similarly presented as a person who has wronged Smith. In this manner, Smith forgives Capote’s potential misrepresentations of the events and the possibility that Capote may adjust reality to fit his narrative. In contrast with Smith’s paranoia that Capote is writing a novel which will depict Smith as an antagonist, the drawing of Capote indicates that Smith is willing to allow Capote to frame his future. While it is not disputed that Smith’s father used Smith to advance a personal agenda, it is possible to read this as an understanding that Capote is doing the same. That said, the inclusion of “friend” signals that Smith does not resent Capote for this. Cumulatively, the drawings all hint towards redemption; challenging the viewer

to understand that Smith should be forgiven just as he is able to forgive.

The different media in the three drawings is also a commentary on character development. That the drawing of Capote is in pen whereas the others are in colored pencil reaffirms Smith's character growth. Shifting from a colorful and childlike medium to a far more definitive and mature one indicates personal evolution. The use of ink is also reminiscent of the printed page, suggesting that Smith understands his future will exist within *In Cold Blood*. Although pen is a more permanent medium, the interpretative freedom associated with art is still present. Thus, Smith is not asserting his future is fixed. After all, the inked pages of *In Cold Blood*, can be read countless times and credited with different meanings. Smith's drawing of Capote is not different. After highlighting the power of artistry, the contents of Smith's belongings reveals Smith's personal development during his time in prison and leaves room for Capote to continue this work.

Capote's creative liberties in his presentation of Smith's execution and the versatility of audio highlight the malleability of last words. After the execution, Capote is seen discussing Smith's final moments with his friends. In between Capote's emotional explanation that Smith did speak and he did apologize, the film cuts away to an interview with his editor, Cerf. There, Cerf contradicts Capote's claims, stating "Smith did not speak, just chewed his gum" (1:47:50). By playing a recording over Smith's final moments, these two accounts are destabilized. Although viewers may imagine that Capote's emotions inhibit his recollection, the film's alternative message is that Smith said nothing at all. That said, historic records contradict both Capote and Cerf, and the viewer is limited to hearsay. A demonstration that any historical record is created by a person and full of bias, the film offers the cassette as a replacement to a fleeting

moment. Although the audio appears a fixed recording and an objective record, demonstrating the movement of the audio through time undercuts its permanence; the tape is recorded at one moment and heard in another, recollected in various contexts, and processed by a variety of viewpoints. The survival of the tape, therefore, carries Smith into each moment, encapsulating his personhood even after his physical death. Furthermore, if Smith did not speak as Cerf suggests, interpretations of the tape allows Smith to speak beyond death. Fuss writes about “the new last word,” describing how, when someone dies without last words, it “shifts the burden of last words from the dying to the watcher” (598). When last words are missing, they are imagined, rooted in a personal understanding of the dead. By featuring the audio of the tape over Smith’s last words, the movie calls attention to the fact that a preservation of a recording allows Smith to speak after his own death and provides the necessary material to manage the ‘burden of last words.’ Although, post-execution, Smith physically cannot create new words and his last words become inaccessible, the recording allows his voice to continue. That Capote can listen to this tape repeatedly, in various locations, suggests that the same content can be resituated and reinterpreted. The ‘burden of last words’ becomes a perpetual problem as each interpretation of Smith lends another opportunity to reinvent them. Therefore, Smith’s last words evade the fixed content of the gallows and possess a fluidity realized through their remediation.

While, as Garland argues, the desire for capital punishment is grounded “in the wish for narrative closure following the disruption of a murderous act” (296), *Infamous* denies its viewer any finality through its construction of Smith’s execution. The use of a recording obstructs the possibility of last words and destabilizes the concept of objectivity. In doing so, a clear conclusion for the viewer and the state are denied in favor of continuing Smith’s narrative. The

act of passing down belongings similarly suggests that a person can exist beyond the understood limits of life. The contents and implications of Capote's inheritance fuels the overarching message; that the state was unable to execute the meaning of Smith. The additional theme of redemption is present in the execution and audio. By highlighting Smith's difficult past and illuminating the possibility of a future in heaven, *Infamous* reminds the viewer that redemption is available to all. The accompanying drawings which illuminate the message of the song call attention to the different artistic forms which offer a variety of interpretations; ensuring that even murders have multifaceted characters. Furthermore, suggesting Smith desires to do good rather than improve his image attributes a depth to Smith that initially seems lacking. Ultimately, *Infamous* challenges the viewer to see the humanity in Smith.

Last Words

Often considered Capote's last work, it is said that *In Cold Blood* drained Capote. Capote himself asserts in an interview that writing the novel "scraped me right down to the marrow of my bones. It nearly killed me. I think, in a way, it did kill me" (McCrum). That being the case, *In Cold Blood* represents a textual artifact of Capote's last words as much as Smith's. Consequently, Smith's last words in *In Cold Blood* and each iteration cumulatively challenge the concept of finality. The content and portrayal within the novel and films break down social expectations about redemption, execution, and last words. While largely considered final, the existence of *In Cold Blood* and its adaptations disproves this prevalent assumption. Presenting Smith as redeemable despite the brutal murder of the Clutters establishes the permanent possibility of redemption and undermines the tendency to declare a murderer evil and unchanging. The concept of death is destabilized as the narrative within the novel serves to

immortalize Smith's character despite the execution – a socially dictated end. Finally, the understanding of the role and limits of last words is deconstructed through recreation and reframing of Smith's last words and Capote's final work across the adaptations. In short, the structure and content of *In Cold Blood*, *Capote*, and *Infamous* interrogate formal and narrative assumptions about finality.

Each version refuses finality of the death sentence by continuing to produce more last words. The legal death sentence is overridden by the re-presentations of Smith across the adaptations and the finality of last words is disproven through each reinvention. Each iteration of *In Cold Blood* provides a different interpretation of Smith's last words in the novel. A close examination of the novel, alone, shows the effects of Capote's addition. In the novel, Capote edits Smith's last words, leaving room for his redemption and complicating an otherwise predictable narrative. While *Capote* highlights Capote's factual transgression in its demonstration of Smith's last words, it is not accusatory. Rather, the movie uses the creative license Capote models and further alters Smith's words to highlight the unethical nature of the death penalty. In doing so, the movie blurs the factual further, and demonstrates the fluidity of Smith's last words. Released third, *Infamous* provides a different narrative altogether. Instead of repurposing the moment to convey a social narrative like *Capote*, *Infamous* demonstrates the retrospective invention of the final sentences and the artistic liberties inherently involved in creating a narrative. The narrative in its various forms becomes the antithesis of finality.

The continuation of the narrative renders Smith's execution a failure and challenges the finality of law. Although the state of Kansas sentences Smith to death and carries out the execution, the reproduction of his life story across the decades keeps his narrative alive. While

the judicial system attempts to end his life, Capote's narrative allows Smith to survive. The preservation of the novel means Smith continues in the minds of *In Cold Blood*'s readers. While Guthke writes about the power of last words to serve as an artifact of a person after their death (25), Capote's novel overwrites Smith's execution, providing a temporary artifact. Each time the novel is adapted, though, Smith's narrative is resurrected and another artifact is formed. The numerous adaptations and reimaginings continue Capote's work, interpreting it and Smith to a new audience. Replicating Smith's existence repeatedly, often restoring his humanity in the process, denies the legal system the ability to terminate his livelihood. The recreation and dispersion of Smith's narrative allows him to persist beyond his lifespan. Time and again, Smith murders the Clutters, is sent to jail, and hangs. The hangings fail to achieve their intended finality, though, because the subsequent adaptation allows the narrative to reoccur. Thus, although Smith is executed at the end of the narrative, the next telling resurrects him, marking the previous execution as incomplete. *In Cold Blood* and its adaptations, therefore, challenge the legal system's pursuit of finality, by regenerating Smith and preserving him in narrative.

The social concept that the judicial system can accurately render a final judgement of a person's character is challenged in *In Cold Blood* and its adaptations. Instead, the narratives indicate that even those guilty of heinous crimes are redeemable. The pervasive social understanding that murder is unforgivable and the perpetrator deserves no second chance is evidenced by death sentences and life without parole. When Smith was sentenced to death, the state of Kansas and the society that created it deemed Smith unredeemable. In other words, his opportunity to prove himself of worth was past and he was considered entirely evil. Creating such a generalization is another form of finality. After all, judicial systems pass such sentences

based on the impression that the person's character is unchanging and that their crime indicates their immorality is indefinite. Capote's addition to Smith's last words, however, undermine this social misconception. By having Smith not only apologize but recognize the futility of the apology, Smith demonstrates dramatic shift in character. He does not resemble a man beyond intervention. Instead, Capote describes a repentant and redeemable person. *Capote* continues this narrative in its depiction of Smith's final moments. By restoring Smith's humanity on the gallows, it contradicts social assumptions that he is entirely immoral. Representing Smith as a human, challenges the ability of a judge or jury to make a final declaration as to the worth of a person. Instead, *Capote* suggests that no singular action should be a final determinant of a person's character. Although *Infamous* is less explicit in its conversation with the death penalty, by portraying the emotional relationship that Capote and Smith form the movie demonstrates that Smith is lovable. That Capote could form such a strong reciprocal relationship with Smith is evidence that Smith is worthy and capable of love. Thus, the inclination to disregard Smith as capable of redemption is challenged in all three narratives. By suggesting that Smith is redeemable, the social tendency to credit the judicial system with the ability to make a final judgement is undercut and undermined.

Misquoting Smith's last words breaks down the expectations of their finality. Although Guthke writes that last words are considered a window into the culmination of a life and that the intrigue of the words is rooted in their finality (11), Capote interrupts this expectation. By rewriting Smith's last words and offering the version in his novel as a replacement, he denies them their fixed finality. The very act of misrepresenting the words proves the words are not the culmination of Smith's life, nor are the words as final as Guthke argues. Rather, last words

become fluid, subject to amendment as the living see fit. Through each subsequent iteration, Smith's last words are represented differently. When *Capote* alters them entirely, repurposing the moment to address a different agenda, Smith's last words effectively change to their new represented form. Additionally, when Smith states that he cannot remember what he wanted to say, the film nods to the social ignorance of Smith's actual, intended last words. All in all, *Capote* acknowledges the instability of Smith's last words and adds to it, highlighting the fluidity of final words. *Infamous* eliminates Smith's last words altogether, asserting that he said nothing at all. This, in turn, further challenges the finality of last words. *Infamous* also challenges the finality of last words by exposing the possibility of their misrepresentation. The film depicts Capote and another attendant reporting contradictory testimony about Smith's final moments. Thus, *Infamous* displays the instability of last words. Ultimately, *In Cold Blood* and its iterations destabilize the finality of last words through their display of Smith's execution.

Works Cited

- Albrecht-Crane, Christa, and Dennis Ray Cutchins. Introduction: New Beginnings for Adaptation Studies. *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010, pp 11-22.
- Almog, Shulamit. "Representations of Law and the Nonfiction Novel: Capote's *In Cold Blood*"
- Allen, Walter. "London Letter." Review of *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote. *New York Times*, 10 April 1966.
- Revisited." *Springer Science+Business Media*, 30 July 2011, pp. 355-368.
- Barton, John C. Introduction: The Cultural Rhetoric of Capital Punishment. *Literary Executions: Capital Punishment and American Culture, 1820-1925*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014, pp 1-25.
- Brooks, Peter. "Confessor and Confessant." *Troubling Confessions*. University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp 35-64.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the plot: Design and intention in narrative*. Harvard University Press, 1992, pp 3-37.
- Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*. Verso Books, 2016.
- "Capote Answers Tynan's Attack." *NY Times*, 27 March 1966.
- Capote, Truman. "Four Murders and a Ball in Black and White." *Too Brief a Treat: the letters of Truman Capote*, edited by Gerald Clarke, Random House Publishing Group, 2004, pp 271-476.
- Capote, Truman. "In Cold Blood: An unspeakable crime in the heartland." *New Yorker*, 18 September 1965.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. Random House Digital, 1965.

Cartmell, Deborah. "100+ Years of Adaptations, or, Adaptation as the Art Form of Democracy."

A companion to literature, film, and adaptation, John Wiley & Sons, 2012, pp 1-13.

Craig, Daniel. "Gold Mine in the Sky." *Infamous*, 2006.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Spivak. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Ebert, Roger. "'Capote' True to Truman's Dilemma." Review of *Capote*, by Bennett Miller.

RogerEbert.com, 20 October 2005.

Ebert, Roger. "Truman on the rocks." Review of *Infamous*, by Douglas McGrath.

RogerEbert.com, 12 October 2006.

Frus, Phyllis. "'Capote and Infamous.'" *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 2008, pp 52-60.

Fuss, Diana. "Last Words." *ELH*, vol. 76, no. 4, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009, pp 877-910.

Garland, David. *Peculiar Institution: America's Death Penalty in an Age of Abolition*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

Giordano, Medea. "'In Cold Blood,' Truman Capote's Achievement and Undoing." *NY Times*, 25 August 2016.

Guthke, Karl S. "Last Words in Everyday Culture: Forms and Meaning of a Convention in Life and Letters." *Last Words: Variations on a Theme in Cultural History*. Princeton

University Press, 1992, pp. 4-47.

- Guthke, Karl S. "Why the Interest in Last Words? Completion, Immortality, Mystique." *Last Words: Variations on a Theme in Cultural History*. Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 48-66.
- Hustis, Harriet. "'A Different Story Entirely': Crafting Confessions in Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Atwood's *Alias Grace*." *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2018, pp. 179-196.
- Kauffmann, Stanley. "Capote in Kansas." *The New Republic*, 22 January 1966, pp 11.
- Keenan, John. "Truman Capote and the old failings of New Journalism." Review of *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote. *The Guardian*, 5 December 2014.
- Klemzak, Jeff. "Reel Critic: 'Infamous' is a true depiction of Capote." Review of *Infamous*, by Douglas McGrath. *LA Times*, 1 November 2006.
- Leitch, Thomas. "Adaptations and Intertextuality, or, What isn't an Adaptation, and What Does it Matter?." *A companion to literature, film, and adaptation*, edited by Deborah Cartmell, John Wiley & Sons, 2012, pp 87-104.
- Leitch, Thomas. "The Ethics of Infidelity." *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*, edited by Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010, pp 61-77.
- McCrum, Robert. "The 100 best novels: No 84 – *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote (1966)." *The Guardian*, 27 April 2015.
- McGrath, Douglas, director. *Infamous*. Produced by Christine Vachon and Jocelyn Hayes, 2006.
- Miller, Bennett, director. *Capote*. Produced by Caroline Baron, Michael Ohoven, and William Vince, 2005.

- Morisi, Ève. Introduction: Capital Literature. *Death Sentences, Literature and State Killing*, edited by Birte Christ and Ève Morisi. *Studies in Capital Literature* 49, 2019, pp 1-10.
- Plimpton, George. "The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel." *NY Times*, 16 January 1966.
- Schaak, Douglas. "Truman Capote's Use of Quotation Marks in *In Cold Blood*." *The Explicator*, vol. 72, no. 2, 2014, pp. 131-134.
- Scott, A. O. "Big-Name Novelist, Small-Town Murders." Review of *Capote*, by Bennett Miller. *New York Times*, 27 September 2005.
- Stevenson, Bryan. *Just mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. Spiegel & Grau, 2019.
- Tompkins, Phillip K. "In Cold Fact." *Esquire*, 1 June 1966.
- von Tunzelmann, Alex. "*Capote* adds more half-truths to the murky story behind *In Cold Blood*." Review of *Capote*, by Bennett Miller. *The Guardian*, 7 February 2014.
- Wainwright, Michael. "Truman Capote's Contribution to the Documentary Novel: the Game-Theoretic Dilemmas of *In Cold Blood*." *Papers on Language & Literature*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2014, pp. 24-58.
- Wolfe, Tom. "Why They Aren't Writing the Great American Novel Anymore: A treatise on the Varieties of Realistic Experience." *Esquire*, 1 December 1972.