

The Interview Part I Part II



Christopher Silvester

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- The Interview by Christopher Silvester is an excerpt taken from his Penguin Book of interviews. In this, he talks about various opinions of the celebrities regarding an interview; its functions, methods and merits.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Silvester is a freelance journalist, ghostwriter, copywriter and media relations consultant. He lives in London, England.) He was educated at Lancing College Sussex, and Peter House, Cambridge, where he read history. From 1983 to 1994, he worked for Private Eye, initially writing the 'New Boys' column. He has written for several newspapers and magazines.

SHORT SUMMARY

The Interview is a simplified version of the chapter using easy language.

In this chapter, the author talks about the technique of 'interview' as a new way of interrogating. He talks about it with regard to the field of Journalism. Moreover, he also discusses the importance of this new technique. He goes on to state how the interview has become an important aspect in everyone's life, regardless of the class, literacy or anything. We learn about the views of many celebrities concerning an interview. Thus, it teaches us about the functions, methods and merits of an interview. Moreover, the author

also incorporates an excerpt from an interview with the notorious writer, Umberto Eco. This part allows us to get a glimpse at his literary method.

Eco is a professor at the University of Bologna in Italy. He has a daunting status as a scholar for his philosophies on semiotics (the study of signs), literary interpretation, and medieval aesthetics before taking up writing fiction.



In the interview, we see it centers on his successful novel, The Name of the Rose. His novel sold more than 10 million copies. Mukund begins by asking him how he manages to do such different things. Umberto replies saying he is doing the same thing. Further, he goes on to justify his books that revolve around peace and non-violence. We learn that Umberto classifies himself as an academic scholar. He attends various academic conferences throughout the week and writes novels on Sundays. Moreover, he expresses that others considering him as a novelist and not scholar does not affect him at all. He agrees it is rather tough to influence millions of

people with academic work. Speaking about his novel, he remarks that it is not an easy read. It has got a detective feature to it alongside metaphysics, theology and medieval history.

संक्षिप्त सारांश

साक्षात्कार आसान भाषा का उपयोग करते हुए अध्याय का एक सरलीकृत संस्करण है।

इस अध्याय में, लेखक पूछताछ के एक नए तरीके के रूप में 'साक्षात्कार' की तकनीक के बारे में बात करता है। वह पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र के संबंध में इसके बारे में बात करते हैं। साथ ही उन्होंने इस नई तकनीक के महत्व पर भी चर्चा की। वह बताते हैं कि किस तरह से वर्ग, साक्षरता या कुछ भी हो, साक्षात्कार सभी के जीवन में एक महत्वपूर्ण पहलू बन गया है। हम एक साक्षात्कार के संबंध में कई मशहूर हस्तियों के विचारों के बारे में सीखते हैं। इस प्रकार, यह हमें एक साक्षात्कार के कार्यों, विधियों और गुणों के बारे में सिखाता है। इसके अलावा, लेखक कुख्यात लेखक, अम्बर्टो इको के साथ एक साक्षात्कार का एक अंश भी शामिल करता है। यह भाग हमें उनकी साहित्यिक पद्धति पर एक झलक पाने की अनुमति देता है।

इको इटली के बोलोग्ना विश्वविद्यालय में प्रोफेसर हैं। उपन्यास लिखने से पहले लाक्षणिकता (संकेतों का अध्ययन), साहित्यिक व्याख्या और मध्ययुगीन सौंदर्यशास्त्र पर

उनके दर्शन के लिए एक विद्वान के रूप में उनकी एक कठिन स्थिति है।

साक्षात्कार में, हम इसे उनके सफल उपन्यास, द नेम ऑफ द रोज़ पर केंद्रित देखते हैं। उनके उपन्यास की 10 मिलियन से अधिक प्रतियां बिकीं। मुकुंद उससे पूछता है कि वह इस तरह के अलग-अलग काम कैसे करता है। अम्बर्टो ने जवाब दिया कि वह वही काम कर रहा है। इसके अलावा, वह शांति और अहिंसा के इर्द-गिर्द घूमती अपनी किताबों को सही ठहराते हैं। हम सीखते हैं कि अम्बर्टो खुद को एक अकादमिक विद्वान के रूप में वर्गीकृत करता है। वह पूरे सप्ताह विभिन्न शैक्षणिक सम्मेलनों में भाग लेते हैं और रविवार को उपन्यास लिखते हैं। इसके अलावा, वह व्यक्त करता है कि अन्य लोग उसे उपन्यासकार मानते हैं और विद्वान नहीं मानते हैं। वह मानते हैं कि अकादमिक कार्यों से लाखों लोगों को प्रभावित करना काफी कठिन है। अपने उपन्यास के बारे में बोलते हुए, उन्होंने टिप्पणी की कि यह एक आसान पढ़ा नहीं है। इसमें तत्वमीमांसा, धर्मशास्त्र और मध्ययुगीन इतिहास के साथ-साथ एक जासूसी विशेषता भी है।

KEY WORDS

Extravagant- excessive or elaborate

Despise- hate, dislike

Unwarranted- not justified or authorised

Intrusion- the action of intruding; intervention

Primitive- ancient, olden

Lionized- give a lot of public attention and approval

Repel- drive or force back

Persistent – continuous

Petitioners- a person who asks for something

Amusement- the provision or enjoyment of entertainment

Condemnatory- expressing strong disapproval

Wrecked- destroyed or severely damaged

Assault- make a physical attack on

Vile- extremely unpleasant

Perpetrated- committed; performed

Formidable- inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, intense or capable

Medieval- relating to the Middle Ages

Aesthetics- a branch of philosophy that deals with nature and appreciation of beauty

Staggeringly- to an astonishing or shocking degree

Philosophical- relating or devoted to the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.

Pursue – follow

Ethical – relating to moral principles

Eliminate – remove

Fist – a person's hand when the fingers are bent in towards the palm and held there tightly, typically in order to strike a blow or grasp something.

Interstices – space, gap

Elevator – a lift

Dissertation- a long essay on a particular subject, especially one written for a university degree or diploma

Hypotheses – theory

Frustration – the feeling of being upset or annoyed as a result of being unable to change or achieve something

Narration – the action or process of narrating a story

1. THE INTERVIEW PART I&II

- A meeting at which a Journalist asks Somebody questions in order to find out his/her opinion, etc.
- A meeting at which somebody is asked questions to find out if he/she is suitable for a job, Course of study, etc.

2. AUTHOR: CHRISTOPHER SILVESTER

- A freelance Journalist and author
- writes for several UK newspapers and magazine publications.
- Born in 1959.

- Educated at Lancing college, Sussex

3. GIST

- **The Interview by christopher silvester is a selection taken from his penguin Book of meetings. He discusses different assessments of famous people. It informs us concerning the significance of meeting as a mechanism of discussion.**
- **The interviewer is Mukund Padmanabham from “The Hindu.”**
- **The interviewee (a person who is questioned in an interview) is Umberto Eco who considers that he is an academician first and a novelist later on.**

4. TECHNICAL WORDS

- Journalism - the Job of writing for newspapers, magazines, TV, etc.
- Unwarranted- groundless, unjustified Intrusion - interference
- Consent - give permission
- petitioner - one who makes a written request.
- Autograph - a famous person's signature given to an admirer.
- Seminal Original
- interstices - a space that intervenes between things.

5. IMPORTANT POINTS:

PART I

- Interviews have become a Common feature of Journalism.
- Celebrities have been interviewed over the years.
- It is often considered as a source of truth. and an art Some take it as an unnecessary “intrusion” in their lives.
- V.S. Naipaul feels that during an interview People lose a part of themselves”
- Lewis Carroll considers it an offence against his person.
- H.G. Wells calls it an’ ordeal.’
- Saul Bellow describes interviews as “thumbprints On his windpipe.”

PART II

- Mukund padmanabham interviews a celebrated novelist and academician Umberto Eco,
- Eco tells, “he considers himself a University professor who writes novels on Sundays”
- Eco tells a secret “We have a lot of “empty”Spaces” in our lives. He calls them interstics.’
- The success of his novel “The name of the Rose” was perhaps due to its medieval historical background.

- Its Success seems to be a mystery.
- His publisher didn't hope to sell more than 3000 copies. But two to three million copies were sold in the U.S. alone.
- Its Success Seems to be because of its timing.

6. CONCLUSION / LEARNING OUTCOME:

- We learn how many people differ when it comes to interviews, nonetheless, they are very interesting and informative.

MCQ:

1. What do Rudyard Kipling and his wife express about interviews?
 - (a) immoral
 - (b) not good
 - (c) very bad
 - (d) immoral and offensive crime against a person
2. Why were the journalists and publishers puzzled by the success of The Name of the Rose?
 - (a) because readers like trash and it was a serious novel
 - (b) because it was becoming popular
 - (c) because of its high rated success
 - (d) none
3. What was Lewis Carroll's opinion of interviews and autographs?
 - (a) wonder
 - (b) terror
 - (c) horror
 - (d) none
4. Which period of history do Umberto's novels deal with?
 - (a) Renaissance
 - (b) dark age
 - (c) modern era
 - (d) Medieval period
5. Why did Umberto start writing novels?
 - (a) to avail an opportunity
 - (b) to be in limelight
 - (c) to share his views
 - (d) to make best use of empty spaces means free time
6. What facts are being showcased in the interview held between Eco and Padamanabhan?
 - (a) because readers like trash and it was a serious novel
 - (b) because it was becoming popular
 - (c) because of its high rated success
 - (d) none

- (a) he takes pride in being an academician, a university Professor first
- (b) Being a novelist is a secondary thing for him
- (c) uses his free time for writing novels
- (d) All these
- (d) All these**
7. How many novels has Umberto written?
- (a) 10
- (b) 8
- (c) 15
- (d) 5
- (d) 5**
8. What do his works for children speak about ?
- (a) his passion for children
- (b) children are nuisance
- (c) children love to be happy
- (d) non-violence and peace
- (d) non-violence and peace**
9. Explain 'Denis Brain's statement "Almost everything of moment reaches us through one man asking questions of others.'
- (a) The interviewer has the power
- (b) The interviewer has status
- (c) The interviewer can elicit the truth and has the power to influence
- (d) All these
- (d) All these**
10. Enumerate 'An Interview is a supremely serviceable medium of communication?
- (a) a medium to gossip
- (b) a medium to be the talk of the town
- (c) a medium to prosper
- (d) a noble medium of interaction and introspection
- (d) a noble medium of interaction and introspection**
11. What satisfied Umberto's taste for narration?
- (a) stories
- (b) children's works
- (c) interviews
- (d) Novels
- (d) Novels**
12. What do you understand by the expression 'Thumbprints on his windpipes'?
- (a) creating excessive pressure

- on throat
- (b) creating excessive pressure on vocal chords
- (c) creating excessive pressure and tension for someone
- (d) none
- (c) creating excessive pressure and tension for someone**
13. Why do celebrities feel embarrassed most often?
- (a) because of question attacks during interviews
- (b) because of interviewer's gestures
- (c) because of interviewer's appearance
- (d) none
- (a) because of question attacks during interviews**
14. At what age did he start writing novels?
- (a) at the age of 55
- (b) at the age of 52
- (c) at the age of 57
- (d) at the age of 50
- (d) at the age of 50**
15. Why do most celebrity writers despise being interviewed?
- (a) they don't like journalists
- (b) unwarranted intrusion in their life
- (c) their privacy is hurt
- (d) none
- (b) unwarranted intrusion in their life**
16. What is the reason for the huge success of the novel The Name of The Rose?
- (a) mystic
- (b) metaphysics and medieval history period used
- (c) detective style and theology
- (d) All these
- (d) All these**
17. How does Umberto Eco find so much time to write so much?
- (a) using early morning time
- (b) using his office time
- (c) using his family time
- (d) using empty spaces (free times) like waiting for someone, break time
- (d) using empty spaces (free times) like waiting for someone, break time**
18. What did he present in this book?
- (a) varied opinions of politicians

- (b) varied opinions of civilians
- (c) varied opinions of army men
- (d) varied opinions of celebrities regarding an interview
- (d) varied opinions of celebrities regarding an interview**
19. What does Naipaul present in his travel books?
- (a) his feelings
- (b) his feelings about interviews
- (c) impression of the country of his ancestors that is India
- (d) none
- (c) impression of the country of his ancestors that is India**
20. Who is the author of the lesson 'The Interview'?
- (a) Christopher Priest
- (b) Christopher Silvester (1959)
- (c) J.B. Priestley
- (d) Alfred John Churchley
- (b) Christopher Silvester (1959)**
21. What kind of a novel was The Name of The Rose?
- (a) hilarious
- (b) fiction
- (c) non-fiction
- (d) a serious one
- (d) a serious one**
22. In what way interviews have become a common place of journalism?
- (a) because of its power, influence and medium of communication
- (b) because of its pomp
- (c) because of its glory
- (d) because of its rapport
- (a) because of its power, influence and medium of communication**
23. Who has written Alice in Wonderland?
- (a) Christopher
- (b) Mukand
- (c) Rudyard Kipling
- (d) Lewis Carroll
- (d) Lewis Carroll**
24. Why does Eco call the success of his book a mystery?
- (a) because of its success
- (b) because of its popularity
- (c) because of many factors
- (d) because of many factors and

many other books were written on the same medieval period

(d) because of many factors and many other books were written on the same medieval period

25. According to Umberto what will happen to the world if we eliminate empty spaces from the universe?

- (a) The world will become beautiful
- (b) The world will be completely ours
- (c) The world will shrink and will become as big as a fish.
- (d) The world will be round
- (c) The world will shrink and will become as big as a fish.**

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Question 1. Why did Umberto Eco prefer to be called an academician than a novelist?

Answer: Despite achieving fame as a novelist, Eco preferred to associate himself with the academic community because his non-fictional work occupied him for the first fifty years of his life. He wrote his first novel at the age of around fifty. He identified himself more with the academic community and resorts to writing fiction only when he was not pursuing some scholarly work.

Question 2. Why do most celebrity writers despise being interviewed?

Or

What are the views of writers like V.S. Naipaul and Lewis Carroll in interviews?

Answer: Celebrities like V.S. Naipaul, Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll and H.G. Wells have expressed their strong disdain for interviews. They consider interviews immoral - 'an assault' because they feel interviews leave a rather disparaging effect on their personalities and are an encroachment on their privacy.

Question 3. What was unique and distinctive about Eco's academic writing style?

Or

What do you learn about Umberto Eco's distinctive style in his doctoral dissertation?

Answer: Umberto Eco's academic writing style is personal, informal and playful. He fills his research stories with all the trials and errors so that even his research work has the uniqueness of creative writing and reading. It is not only informative but also interesting.

Question 4. "The Name of the Rose" deals with medieval history. Was it responsible for the novel's success?

Answer: The success of the novel 'The Name of the Rose' did not depend on merely one factor. Many other novels

dealt with medieval history but did not achieve much success. Its success is more attributed to the timing of its publication, its narrative style and detective yarn and also the fact that it delves into metaphysics and theology along with medieval history.

Question 5. What drawbacks of interviews have been pointed out by Lewis Carroll?

Answer: Lewis Carroll considers interviews as an 'unwarranted intrusion' that is immoral and an offence against his person. He shunned interviews for fear of being projected as larger than life. His vehement refusal for interviews

enabled him to keep his fans as well as interviews at an arm's length.

Question 7. Why do most celebrity writers hate to be interviewed?

Answer: Most of the celebrity writers shun interviews as they feel that interviews leave a disparaging effect on their personalities. They consider them as an encroachment on their privacy. Writers like V.S. Naipaul feels that they are being wounded by interviews and thus losing a part of themselves.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS:

1. The Interview as a communication genre is here to stay. Discuss with reference to the interview with Umberto Eco

Answer: The interview today is a communication genre that has

come to stay. Its detractors—mostly celebrities—despise it as an intrusion into their lives. However, a good interview can be a source of truth, it is an excellent medium of communication and in the modern world our most vivid impressions of contemporaries are through interviews. It is through the interview that we learn about Eco's diverse writings, his interest in the philosophy of non-violence and peace and his ability to put every spare moment to constructive use. At the interviewer's prompting, he tells us why he writes scholarly works in an informal style and how he started writing novels. We realise that he is an academician at heart. He honestly talks of the success of his book as a mystery saying that it might not have sold so well in another time.

2. How did Umberto Eco assess his style of writing in *The Name of the Rose*?

Answer: Umberto Eco considered himself to be an academician who was happy writing novels on Sundays. Though he did not feel he was a novelist, he felt the novel fulfilled his desire for narration. In fact, he spoke of himself as a university professor who wrote novels on Sundays. The novel, according to him, enabled him to reach a larger audience. *The Name of the Rose* was a very serious novel. It was a detective story that delved into metaphysics, theology and medieval history'. It enjoyed a huge audience as, according to him, people did enjoy difficult reading experiences. Like him,

many did not like easy experiences all the time. The novel deals with a period of medieval history and the publisher did not expect to sell so well in a state where nobody had studied Latin or seen a cathedral. He felt the timing was crucial. Perhaps its popularity would have been less, had it been written earlier or later. ‘

3. How do celebrity writers despise being interviewed as given in ‘The Interview’?

Answer: Since its invention a little over 130 years ago, the interview has become commonplace journalism. Over the years, opinions about its functions, methods and merits vary considerably. Some say it is a source of truth and in practice, an art. Others despise it being an unwarranted intrusion into their lives. They feel it diminishes them. They equate it to taking a photographic portrait of somebody which in some primitive cultures means ‘stealing the person’s soul.’ Some people feel wounded by interviews and lose part of themselves. They call it immoral, a crime and an assault. To some it is cowardly and vile or an ordeal.

4. How does Eco explain that he is convinced he is always doing the same thing?

Answer: Umberto Eco explains to Mukund Padmanabhan in an interview that all the people have a lot of empty spaces. These he calls ‘interstices’.

He explains them through an example. He says that one is to come to him and is in an elevator and he is waiting for him. While waiting for the guest’s elevator to appear before him. He has already written an article. It means he writes in snatches of time. However, his creative ideas flow in his mind every time even when he is hosting his guests. Though he relaxes on Sundays, he is very much busy writing novels. On other days he is busy with his academic work.

5. How does Mukund Padmanabhan comment on Eco’s academic writing style? What does Eco say about it?

Answer: Mukund Padmanabhan states that Eco’s non-fictional writing, that is, his scholarly work has a certain playful and personal quality about it. It is a marked departure from a regular style. That regular style is invariably depersonalised and often dry and boring. To a question if he consciously adopted an informal style, he cited the comments of one of the professors who examined and evaluated his first doctoral dissertation. The professor said that scholars learned a lot of a certain subject, then they made a lot of false hypotheses, then they corrected and put conclusions at the end. But Eco told the story of his research, including his trials and errors. At the age of 22, Eco understood that scholarly books should be written by telling the story of the research. His essays, therefore, have a narrative aspect. That is why he wrote novels to satisfy his taste for narrative.

6. How does Mukund Padmanabhan impress you as an interviewer? Do you consider his interview with Umberto Eco a success?

Answer: Mukund Padmanabhan's interview with Umberto Eco tells about his capabilities as a successful interviewer. He does not encroach upon his privacy or embarrass him with personal questions. He does not come in-between the celebrity and the readers. His questions are well worded. His questions • draw out of him what his fans would like to know. The questions asked by Mukund cover all the aspects of his works and personality. Eco gives elaborated answers to all his questions. With every question, the interviewer withdraws to the background leaving the interviewee in the limelight. The whole interview does not appear to be an ordeal for the interviewee. In short it is crisp at the same time informal.

7. What are the opinions of some of the celebrities on interviews?

Answer: Celebrities have often seen themselves as victims of interviews. In V.S. Naipaul's opinion, interviews have left people wounded and part of them stolen. Lewis Carroll was in horror of the interviewer and he never consented to be interviewed. He often silenced all those who sought to interview him or ask for his autographs. Rudyard Kipling too held a very critical attitude towards interviews and disapproved of them after he was left almost wrecked by two reporters from Boston. According to his wife, since then he found interviews were vile, immoral and a crime. To H.G. Wells, being interviewed was an ordeal, while to Saul Bellow, interviews were like thumbprints on his windpipe, an extortion of personal details by an overbearing interviewer. They all seemed to be terrified of interviews.