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‘I am the centre of fame’:

***doing* celebrity, performing fame and navigating cultural hierarchies**

in Grace Jones’ *I’ll Never Write my Memoirs*

Abstract

This article outlines the concept of *doing* celebrity: whereby celebrity and pop stardom are presented as a deliberately constructed set of actions and behaviours, rather than an ontology. It does so by conceptualising celebrity as something one *does*, not something one *is*. The article examines Grace Jones’ 2015 memoir, *I’ll Never Write My Memoirs*, as an example which contravenes the claim - in both celebrity culture and autobiography - to offer up access to an authentic self. This article reveals an embrace of performativity over authenticity that Jones presents as part of a wider art practice. This self-representational move claims the masculinised status of creative agent and author of the star image, and seeks a level of cultural value otherwise often denied to the female pop star celebrity. The concept of *doing* celebrity, therefore, opens up new ways to consider the means available to public women to navigate the negative value judgements associated with female celebrity as a cultural field.

Keywords: Grace Jones, performance, gender, agency, memoir.

“Ladies and Gentlemen: Miss Grace Jones”

Jamaican born star Grace Jones has been fêted by both popular and academic audiences for her longevity as a (sub)cultural/ gay/ style ‘icon’ (Cafolla, 2017, Schulman, 2015, Tang, 2016, Guzman, 2010, Royster, 2009, Shaviro 2010). This may in part be due to her ability to traverse different cultural fields, and to move up and down cultural hierarchies. She has had success as a runway model for high-fashion designers such as Issey Miyake, and as an actor in films including Bond film *A View to a Kill*. However, Jones is predominantly known for her bold, androgynous, often *avant garde*, aesthetic as a pop singer, and controversial celebrity appearances which include slapping her (white, male) interviewer on a BBC talk show (The Russell Harty Show, 1980). She launched her first album, *Portfolio*, in 1977 and a further eight studio albums before a 19-year hiatus. This was broken in 2008 by her ‘come back’, at the age of 60, to the music scene with the album *Hurricane*. The idea of Jones as a cultural icon is further supported by her 2008 ‘Icon’ award given by Q magazine, and a 2012 performance at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, throughout which she simultaneously sung and hula-hooped. She continues to record music today, releasing the single *Charger* with UK band *Gorillaz* in 2017 which was followed by the release of the documentary, *Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami*, celebrating her life and work. Her wider significance as an artist can be seen in exhibitions such as *The Grace Jones Project* in 2016 at the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, and an academic conference dedicated to her work and star image at Edinburgh University in 2017, titled *Ladies and Gentlemen, Miss Grace Jones* after her 1985 single.

Academic interest has coalesced around the themes of the ‘aging star’ (Gardner, 2012, Weidhase, 2015,) Jones’ queerness, androgyny or ability to destabilise femininity (Guzman 2010, Weidhase, 2015, Kershaw 1997), and the Othering of her black, female sexuality (Royster, 2009, Hobson 2013, Gardner, 2012). Jones has even inspired academics to write autoethnographically about her cultural and personal significance (Royster, 2009, Guzman, 2010). Amongst these varied

readings of Grace Jones, there is a fault-line through discussions of her agency. 'To what extent,' asks Carolyn G. Anderson, 'does she herself promote these images and to what extent has she been mythologized by others?' (1993, p.493). There are those who point to the role of her ex-husband and art director, Jean-Paul Goude, in fashioning her visual identity, as well as the racist, objectifying stereotypes that abound within it. For example, Goude's book *Jungle Fever* featuring Jones naked and caged, crouched over a hunk of meat with a sign reading 'don't feed the animal' is viewed by Janelle Hobson as 'recreat[ing] racial and sexual myths [to reinforce] black women's sexual savagery' (2005, p.99). Jan Nederveen Pieterse, similarly, sees in Jones' image 'the construction of the exotically and erotically dangerous black woman' (1995, p.184). In contrast, there are scholars for whom these very examples offer evidence of Jones' deliberate, agentic engagement with the construction of her star image and the meanings contained within it. Francesca T. Royster argues that it is precisely through the deliberate invocation and performance of these racist stereotypes that Jones is able to critique them (2009). Likewise, for Miriam Kershaw, Jones is a performance artist whose self-directed work is both politically and art historically engaged (1997).

To ask, as Anderson does (1993, p.493), 'to what extent' a star has agency is to raise a question to which the answer can only ever be inferred. What we can do is shed light upon is how a star is *represented* as having or lacking control of their star image, and the strategies available to them. This is what I shall be examining through the claims of deliberate self-representation and autonomous construction of her star image within Jones' 2015 memoir, *I'll Never Write My Memoirs*, drawing its ironic title from the lyrics to her 1981 single *Art Groupie*. Rather than seeking to determine whether Jones has or lacks agency, as has dominated the debates surrounding her image thus far, I shall use her as an example to explore how deliberate, self-reflexive performance of celebrity is a tool for negotiating celebrity agency and evading the denigrations associated with female celebrity. I shall argue that the hue of deliberate performance, that Kershaw and Royster identified in Jones'

star image, can be instrumental in accessing 'higher' cultural value through a knowing embrace of self-reflexive performativity at odds with the sincere stance claimed in the prevalent, confessional tropes of celebrity culture (Redmond, 2008). Rather than, like Hobson and Pierterse, positioning myself as arbiter of what is and is not racist in Jones' performance of a racialised celebrity identity, I shall consider how racial politics, in combination with gender and hierarchies of cultural value, may support or circumscribe how her performance is received and how Jones contests the figure of the white, male creative genius through her determination to be understood as a creative genius while black and female.

I shall demonstrate the ways in which Jones navigates society's denigration of female celebrity by eschewing association with this category and seeking instead to reframe her star image as a deliberate work of performance art that uses celebrity as its subject matter. I call this *doing* celebrity, whereby celebrity and pop stardom are presented as a deliberately constructed set of actions and behaviours, rather than an ontology: celebrity as something one does, not something one is. The field of celebrity studies has long examined celebrity culture through the lens of authenticity (Dyer, 1986; Holmes, 2005; Redmond, 2008). In celebrity culture and especially in memoir, authenticity is gendered, held to be located in access to the female celebrity's private life, body, or unchecked emotions (Yelin, 2015; Yelin, 2017). In line with her wider star image and creative output, Jones' memoir instead adopts a strategy of deliberate performance, of 'doing' celebrity. I borrow my terminology from scholars before me who have theorised gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1988), class and race (West and Fenstermaker, 1995) and femininity (Skeggs, 2001) as performances constructed through the *doing* of them. For these theorists of performativity, conceiving of social identities in terms of *doing* instead of *being* offers a means of understanding the (unequal) distribution of social value. West and Zimmerman see 'a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production' which emerges as 'an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating'

certain subjectivities over others (1987, p.126). Likewise, for Butler, key to the 'doing of gender' is 'that one does it in accord with certain sanctions and proscriptions' (1988, p.525). Skeggs (2001) links the *doing* of femininity to Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus': the embodied behaviours that mark social standing as one moves through social spaces (1986, p. 190). Following these scholars, my theorisation of the *doing* of celebrity is also a consideration of a performance which necessarily negotiates the unequal distribution of cultural value. Following Skeggs in particular, I offer a consideration of performative *doing* whilst drawing upon Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural negotiation to examine the tools available to the female celebrity to assert her status within and beyond her cultural field. As a result, we shall see Jones' embrace of performativity over authenticity as something that is situated as being part of a wider art practice: a move which makes claim to the status of creative agent and author of the star image, seeking a level of cultural value otherwise often denied to the figure of the female pop star celebrity.

"I'll Never Write My Memoirs"

The (ever slippery) concept of authenticity has been understood to be central to both celebrity culture and the autobiography genre, as both claim to offer access to their subjects' authentic selves through 'intimate' revelations and self-disclosure of personal truth. As such, their respective scholarly fields have been much concerned with theorising and problematising the claims to authenticity commonly made throughout celebrity culture and in the memoir genre (Dyer, 1986; Turner, Bonner and Marshall, 2000; Holmes, 2004; Spicer, 2005, Evans, 1999). *I'll Never Write My Memoirs*, however, is an example which contravenes the structuring tendency in both celebrity culture and autobiography, (particularly those which centre around female stars) to claim to offer up access to an authentic self or show the 'real woman' behind the public image (Holmes and Negra, 2011; Yelin, 2015). The promise of access to the 'real' self is often explicit. For example, the opening chapters of the memoirs by Katie Price, Jenna Jameson, Paris Hilton, Jade Goody, Tulisa

Contostavlos, Jennifer Hudson, and the co-authored memoir of Destiny's Child, all make a variation of the same promise to the reader: 'I wrote this book to set the record straight, so that you can get to know the real me'.

Memoir is an imperfect site for the study of agency owing to the known presence of intermediaries such as ghostwriters, management and publishers' interests, and the opportunity the form presents for one to put forward a highly partial, edited account of the celebrity author-subject (Yelin, 2015, Lee 2015). I would not wish to claim that because something is written in Jones' memoir we can directly attribute it to her without scrutiny. Nor do I ascribe to the position that necessarily denies the possibility of Jones' meaningful contribution simply because she is a celebrity. Jones' memoir acknowledges these vagaries of the inevitably partial account on offer: 'I am simply putting another version forward, one that happens to be the one I have in my mind. What follows is the me that I have made up, rather than the one made up by other people' (2015, p.ix). However, whilst its claims to offer up direct access to a celebrity's subjectivity are obviously compromised, it is precisely because of the opportunity memoir creates to present a carefully constructed self that it can helpfully tell us something of how a star wishes to be received, offering as it does the possibility of an intervention into a star image that is often constructed beyond the star's control. 'There is no better way,' states Jones, 'for me to take control of the stories of my life than to tell them myself in a book' (2015, p.ix). Thus, her memoir is explicitly framed as an intervention in how she would like to be received. It is this aspect of what we can infer about how she wishes to be received that I shall focus upon here. Scholars of Jones have drawn upon her biography in various ways, for example, to investigate the autobiographical parallels between Jones' life and music, such as Weidhase's (2015) reading of Jones' comeback album, *Hurricane*, or, like Anderson and Guzman, using biographical detail to explain later creative decisions as rooted in, or reacting against, early experiences (Anderson, 1993, p.494; Guzman, 2010, p.80). For me, however, Jones' memoir offers the opportunity to examine the structuring of a deliberate celebrity performance that reframes events in her career in an effort to claim

cultural value. This is instructive to a wider understanding of the tools available to famous women as they navigate the negative value judgements associated with female celebrity, and offers an alternative approach to both memoir and celebrity beyond questions of authenticity which have dominated their respective scholarly fields.

“I try to put on a little show for them”

To illustrate Jones’ *doing* of celebrity, I shall begin with a fantastically surreal scene that Jones narrates in the memoir of being photographed by paparazzi whilst out jogging with the famous artist, Andy Warhol. Celebrities often discuss the paparazzi in terms of violation and the capture of a selfhood supposedly all the truer for not having been intended to be shared.ⁱ Jones’ account, however, sits in stark contrast to this common theme:

I try to put on a little show for them. After all, we were once photographed jogging in Central Park, him in jeans and jacket, me in little “batty rider” shorts. That was a performance. I am aware of the fact that what is being photographed is the fantasy of fame, and for that moment, that is what I am representing. At that moment, I am the centre of fame. (Jones, p.186)

This quote is both an admission of courting celebrity, and a knowing claim to being in on the joke of celebrity culture’s performative nature. Jones depicts the media’s efforts to capture what Richard Dyer (1991) calls the ‘off screen’, that space supposedly offering a glimpse of a more real star, but she offers no such authenticity. Rather, her memoir demonstrates a self-reflexive awareness of celebrity as a ‘little show’ which she both courts and constructs in apparently candid moments supposedly ‘captured’ by paparazzi, however unlikely the company and attire. This moment of contrived celebrity she calls a ‘performance’ and a ‘fantasy’, and she describes it as ‘what [she is] representing’, rather than what or who she is. A key difference between this framing and the more common framing of a ‘true self revealed’ is a claim to agency in the construction of the star image: unlike the usual

discourses of paparazzi intrusion or violation, it is a show that she chooses to construct. Of course, the construction of herself as deliberately enacting a performance of *doing* celebrity itself constitutes a source of contradictory authenticity: openness about the machinery that fabricates the star provides the authenticity of an honest fake.

On the one hand, Jones' performative jogging with Warhol suggests that celebrity status is something to be actively cultivated. This is what Olivier Driessens terms 'celebrity capital': 'accumulated media visibility' which can be converted 'into other resources such as economic or political capital' (2013, p.543). However, on the other hand, in Jones' elusive play and heightened emphasis upon the fabricated nature of celebrity, we can also see a distancing from, undermining of, and perhaps distaste for, celebrity. Consistently, we see Jones seeking to position herself in cultural fields beyond those of the celebrity or the pop star, attempting to claim the greater cultural value and creative agency afforded to, for example, the artist. This complicates the concept of celebrity capital when it, by contrast, becomes a label to be avoided lest it diminishes a star's access to cultural value. This problematisation of the concept of celebrity capital would accord more with P. David Marshall's account of celebrity in which it is surrounded by 'an air of inauthenticity [and a] vulgar sense of notoriety' (1997, p.5). Viewing this question through the lens of gender, as Christine Geraghty does, offers further consideration of why, despite being a form of tradable capital, female celebrities may wish to distance themselves from the cultural field of celebrity. Geraghty argues for the intrinsically gendered nature of the concept of celebrity, given that women are 'particularly likely to be seen as celebrities whose working life is of less interest than their personal life' (2007, p.99). Thus, whilst celebrity can be accumulated and traded for certain forms of capital, celebrity can just as easily be cast as a toxic constituent that damages (in particular female) stars' cultural value, through a delegitimising emphasis upon the vulgar notoriety of their private lives at the expense of attention upon their creative and cultural work.

Thus, in Jones' memoir we see an ambivalence towards celebrity status and a desire to re-centre her cultural work. Writing a memoir is necessarily an act of self-canonisation, extending, reinforcing, reframing and capitalising on one's existing celebrity status. Yet, at the same time, Jones clearly does not wish to be received as *merely* a celebrity or even as a pop star and seeks at points to distance herself from the phenomenon. Of course, in the hierarchy of cultural value accorded to different celebrity fields under the judgemental gaze of society, the pop star sits comparatively insulated from the charges of talentlessness, vacuity, or responsibility for the decline of civilisation that plague, for example, reality TV stars, or porn stars. Of the *Studio 54* milieu, Jones speaks disparagingly of those seeking to increase or maintain their celebrity status: 'minor celebrities fighting among minor celebrities to avoid losing their fame, demented role-playing, [...] doing whatever it took to get some attention' (p.159). Here, Jones appears to ascribe to the conservative view of celebrity as bemoaned by Daniel Boorstin fifty years ago, for a lack of 'greatness, worthy endeavours or talent' (1963, p.11). It is not just minor celebrities who receive this treatment; Jones' memoir appears to similarly be seeking to distance her from major global stars: 'I was refining my stage show so that it would be more exciting than and a long way from what Gloria or Donna or Sister Sledge would be doing. I was determined not to perform like other singers' (p.168) she also says 'I wasn't really a singer or a dancer – a Jagger or a Tina – so I took things in unusual directions' (p.267). Even with respected, global institutions of disco, rock and soul, Jones' distinctions about her place in relation to other celebrities or pop-stars are not merely acts of distancing, but of *elevation above*: when Jones claims to take her work in more unusual directions than other established pop stars, she suggests that she is not *merely* a pop star. Jones performs her superiority through the taste distinctions that she makes when she identifies amongst her peers, 'a lot of bad taste in the way the female singers were expected to perform' predominantly centring upon 'bad taste in fashion, [and] a tackiness in how pop singers looked' (p.168). Throughout these accounts we see the politics of taste as Jones distinguishes herself through the

distinctions that she makes, clearly situating herself in a hierarchy of cultural value in relation to those she judges as falling short (Bourdieu, 1984). Moreover, this competitive posturing could be seen to be an extension of Jones' self-reflexivity; celebrity feuds (especially between famous women) are so much a stock trope of the 'diva' narrative in contemporary popular culture, that such rivalry and self-aggrandisement fits a wider *modus operandi* of self-conscious performance of the celebrity script.

Jones' apparent desire to be seen to exist beyond the categories of celebrity or pop star can be understood as a traversing of cultural fields. For Bourdieu, cultural products and producers are located within hierarchical and relational cultural fields. This he constitutes as 'a space of positions and position-takings' in which one's social status is negotiated (1993, p.30). Cultural fields are thus made up of possible positions that accord with central cultural values that operate within it. By this account the star image of Grace Jones will be structured by a particular overlapping set of subfields that constitute the black, female, avant garde, pop star celebrity, each with an overlapping set of values which delineate the space of possible positions she can adopt. What is in evidence in her account is a constant negotiation of access to cultural value as she tests these proscriptions.

For example, Jones elevates her pop music by presenting herself as able to range over, and borrow capital from, diverse of fields, and thus create music that is also *more than* pop music, not merely pop music. What Jones calls a 'stylised border crossing blending of reggae, electronics, pop, and disco [to create] new forms of pop in the underground' (p.231), is always described in terms of the multiple fields it traverses.

The narration of Jones' life story demonstrates a constant alertness to the intersecting cultural fields that she traverses, relating key events, places and people specifically in terms of the various cultural fields they represent and the various capitals afforded and negotiated as a result. Paris, for example, is to Jones a 'complicated weave of art, frivolity, entertainment, business, sex, illusion' (p. 134).

Implicit is the suggestion that were her activities in Paris all business, or all entertainment, they would be of less value, with associated connotations of mercenary coldness or cheap vacuity respectively. As an assemblage that combines art, frivolity, sex and illusion, however, it becomes 'complicated', intriguing, erudite, knowing: *more than*. Jones depicts herself as creating and traversing complex, interlaced webs of cultural connections that are almost rhizomatic in quality, to borrow from Deleuze and Guattari's conception of structures of thought that may be entered 'by any point whatsoever' due to their entangled multiplicity as roots, nodes, stems and offshoots form inter-connected webs (1986, p.3). This model of enmeshed interconnection speaks valuably, not only to the interpenetration of cultural fields, but also to the intertextual, multiplatform construction of celebrity identity in which a memoir is just one story among many that compete in the tissue of shifting threads that comprise the overarching star image (Yelin, 2017).

Jones' self-elevation through the demonstration of an ability to traverse cultural fields is ultimately geared towards the positioning of her pop output as a form of performance art practice. Indeed, the memoir is billed as a 'manic coupling of life and art' in the reviews printed in its opening pages, framing the forthcoming action and guiding the reader as to the cultural fields in relation to which it should be understood (p.i). Jones, the memoir makes clear, considers herself, foremost, as an artist stating, 'I was as much a performance artist as a pop singer or actress' (p.258-9). Crucially, it is not that she is an artist as well as a pop star. Rather, through the ability to traverse multiple cultural fields she is able to construct an artistic creation of pop stardom. By *doing* pop stardom as a wider practice, informed by a wide knowledge of 'high' cultural fields, it becomes performance art:

It was as though Marlene Dietrich, Bertolt Brecht, and Piet Mondrian were as important an influence on pop as Elvis, as though music could be connected to art and theatre. It was like the invention of a new genre, related to the musical, the opera, to circus, to cinema, to documentary, to the art gallery (p.259).

Jones situates herself and her work as deserving a place amongst historic creative visionaries of art, theatre and cinema, claiming as she does so the cultural value associated with such 'highbrow' cultural forms. Moreover, she is cast as a cultural pioneer, creating new genres through her rhizomatic, recombinant approach to the traversability of cultural fields.

Jone's casting of her work in the artistic mould is often at the expense of others in the field of pop. She states, 'I was interested in presenting myself as a singer in a way that broke away from what had very quickly become a very narrow set of traditions. Most pop performance didn't take into account pop art, or Warhol's films, a European catwalk, or Japanese theatre' (p.258-9). Performing distance from her peers in the field of pop music she articulates pop music in terms of what it lacks, namely knowledge of 'higher' cultural forms. Instead readers are asked to view Jones' own work as comparatively 'more experimental and almost academic in its pursuit of musical perfection' (p. 157). Jones seeks to access and trade in the cultural and symbolic capital associated with 'higher' cultural forms. She therefore cannot be seen to be seeking a reappraisal or rehabilitation of her existing cultural field in terms of perceived cultural value. Rather, this could be argued to be something of a betrayal of other female pop stars as she seeks to escape the cultural field of female pop stardom, and its associated denigrations, in an act of individual self-elevation through reframing her work as art.

Jones' memoir depicts a career that is not without obstacles: namely, due to others' inability to recognise her transposition of pop into 'higher' cultural fields. She states of her record label:

they misunderstood me. They saw me as representing the world of fashion, still the celebrity model / singer, the haywire studio 54 chanteuse, not someone who was always experimenting with herself and taking responsibility for every detail of her work (p.302).

Crucially, the status of creative agent and, with it, that of being the author of her own star image is a highly masculinised position, often denied specifically to female

celebrities. The 'celebrity model / singer, the haywire studio 54 chanteuse' is a heavily gendered figure and the associated charges of lack of professionalism and integrity that Jones seeks to distance herself from are equally so. Thus, again she can be seen to be seeking to access the status of author and creative agent in framing herself as an artist, but at the same time denigrates her fellow women in pop to do so. It is significant, then, that Jones does point out the structural inequalities of music industry sexism, as she depicts the struggle to be taken seriously as a woman and an artist, reinforcing Geraghty's reading of celebrity as a gendered, and as such limiting, cultural category. She states:

I was not being a prima donna: I was just trying to concentrate on a technically difficult task while I was being talked to like a silly pop singer who'd gotten carried away with her own ego. I was female, and they decided that I was rock 'n' roll insane. Had I been a man they would have considered I was merely retaining control, or professionally fretting about the details. (p.310).

Reframing pop stardom as art practice is therefore a means of claiming agency as a woman. Pop stardom and celebrity do not afford women that. *Doing* pop stardom as an erudite, self-reflexive knowing performance about fame and celebrity can transform it into art, affording the traditionally masculinised status of creative agent and author of one's own image.

As with her gender, Jones' blackness is significant here. The figure of the of the artistic genius exists in the popular imagination, not only as male, but also as white (Berger, 1977; Pollock, 1988; Nochlin, 197; Dean-Ruzicka, 2013). Jones' visual work in album sleeves, stage shows and music videos makes a feature of the racialisation of her star image. In her 2008 video for *Corporate Cannibal* for example, Uri McMillan reads a 'sumptuous surface play' which in its 'oilspill-like unfolding of black skin' presents a 'liquefied blackness' through which 'black skin becomes an endlessly pliable surface, rather than a finite one, as we witness a body seemingly without depth, pure surface' (2018, pp. 10-11). In *Corporate Cannibal*, Jones

deconstructs herself as a gendered, raced subject through an unbounded physical self that is both intangible yet embodied. This places Jones' playful evasiveness in dialogue with her race, demonstrating the self-reflexivity typical of her visual presentation that she then brings to her autobiographical self-representation. Building upon the work of Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus (2009) who argue that surface reading values what the objects of objects of our inquiries can say about themselves rather than our paranoid, critical excavations of them, and Christopher Pinney's (2003) privileging of 'surfacism' over the contrived, detached observation of the colonial gaze, McMillan sees in an emphasis on the surface of things a conception of blackness beyond terms shaped by colonised ways of thinking. This is instructive when considering the way in which Jones' memoir offers discussion of her blackness in aesthetic rather than political terms. When discussing the explicitly racist hiring policies of Paris fashion houses during her modelling years, she views her blackness in aesthetic terms: 'I was so black I would come out looking like a shadow next to the studio's white wall' (p.106). When discussing her love of blending 'high' cultural forms she states: 'it was also about stripping back prejudice [and rejecting] conventionally crowd-pleasing ways of projecting myself as a black singer and a female entertainer, because those ways had turned into clichés, which kept me pent up in a cage' (p.259). Racist stereotyping is a critical context of which Jones demonstrates that she is aware, but upon which she does not dwell. In Jones' *art-first* account of life, cliché is the greatest trap of all. Thus, Jones' boundary-breaking creative work explores the artistic potential of her blackness as concept, as aesthetic feature, and, moreover, as artistic medium. In so doing, Jones deploys 'race and gender as aesthetic strategies of value rather than locations of social difference' (Pham, 2015, pp.4-5) and constructs herself as a black, female reconfiguration of the artistic genius.

Famous pop artist Andy Warhol features heavily in Jones' memoir. At points this is in anecdotes that underscore Jones' own star power, like the aforementioned surreal paparazzi jogging scene, or being Warhol's date to Arnold Schwarzenegger's

wedding, and indeed these kinds of anecdotes about fellow celebrities are intrinsic to the appeal of celebrity memoir. Often Warhol is brought in as evidence that Jones' pop-stardom was indeed a knowing, self-reflexive performance: 'Andy would want me to look and act famous' (p.186). Indeed, Warhol was a part of constructing and amplifying that knowing performativity. Warhol would reportedly keep a Dictaphone running in his pocket to go back over for later artistic inspiration. Jones describes knowing Warhol was recording her thus: 'maybe I exaggerated a little knowing the tape was on, performed more – but then, everything I did was like a performance, so I was his ideal subject' (p.181). In such a scene, Jones is immediately transformed from merely being a pop-star hanging out at Studio 54, to being the ideal subject and muse for one of the most iconic artists of the 20th century. Through Andy's approval, Jones can present the commercial aspects of her time in the pop music industry as culturally validated: 'Andy would never make you feel guilty about selling yourself' (p.187). However, most pertinently to the interests of this paper, Warhol is repeatedly used to underscore stories that suggest the collapsibility of celebrity and performance art. For example, Warhol's studio, The Factory, is the site of production not only of artworks, but of celebrity: 'New York was the centre of the artistic universe, and the Factory was at the center of the center, and at the center of that was Andy Warhol. ... from where he created stars' (p.177). In service of the idea of celebrity as art practice Jones casts Warhol as starmaker, for herself and others. When Jones states of Warhol, 'He saw that this whole celebrity thing was where everything was happening. He was a voyeur, and he saw which direction the energy was heading. He saw the art in everything' (p.182), she adds evidence to her own argument that what she did as a pop-star, she did as an artist. If 'Andy was obsessed with celebrity' and his curiosity about it 'would infect the whole world' (p.182) then, through art, Jones' pop-stardom can be rehabilitated from the delegitimised vacuous state that Boorstin (1963), Marshall (1997) and Geraghty (2007) identify in the cultural construction of celebrity, and especially female celebrity.

Society has of course long since accepted this knowing performance of pop as art from white, male creatives and has been more willing to consider, for example, Warhol or David Bowie as constructing art about celebrity or pop stardom than for female figures like Jones, her contemporary, Madonna, whom she describes as similarly making 'exhibitionistic disco-pop with videos unashamedly borrowing from art history and underground pop culture' (p.147), or more recent female pop artists like Lady Gaga or M.I.A.. As white males with a surfeit of symbolic and cultural capital, Bowie and Warhol already have far less contested access to the role of artist, creative agent, or auteur, than Jones as a black woman (Berger, 1977; Pollock, 1988; Nochlin, 1971; Dean-Ruzicka, 2013). The comparative weight of her endeavour to be taken seriously is in evidence not least in the production of an entire memoir dedicated to the task of reframing her career as an artistic practice over which she had some control. It is hard to imagine Warhol or Bowie ever having to do the same.

Conclusion

Memoir is, by its very nature, an intervention into the discourses that surround a star. Recognising this explicitly, Jones' introduction describes the autobiographical occasion prompting the book to be written thus: 'there is no better way for me to take control of the stories of my life than to tell them myself in a book' (p.ix). Within the memoir's pages a space is created where the meaning of a life's work can be controlled or reframed. The way Jones' memoir seeks to reframe her career in the limelight is a self-aware, deliberately constructed oeuvre of performance art, a reframing that opens up access to the masculinised status of creative agent and artist so often denied to female celebrities. In so doing Jones elevates herself above the generalised mass of disparaged female celebrity, asking to be considered amongst white, male contemporaries whose celebrity goes unchallenged as artistic statement, and whose artistic statements use the concept of celebrity as source material. It is not

without problems that Jones' acts of self-elevation are fundamentally individual, not collective. Jones is not looking for a reappraisal of a feminised and therefore unjustly maligned genre, only for herself to be elevated beyond it. In this example, I have put forward the concept of *doing* celebrity, showing that it is by demonstrating her knowingness about the inherent performativity of celebrity that Jones is able to claim agency beyond that traditionally afforded the female pop star or celebrity. Through *doing* celebrity like the celebrated white, male pop artists, Jones' pop becomes art and she herself is asserted as a creative agent and artist, traversing but not limited to the cultural field of pop.

This reframing of celebrity as a self-reflexive, deliberate performance is by no means unique to Jones. For example, contemporary alt-pop stars M.I.A. and Lady Gaga can also be seen to position themselves as undertaking a self-reflexive art performance about being a popstar, rather than merely being a popstar. For example, Lady Gaga has album titles such as 'Artpop', which she calls 'a reverse of Warhol' and accompanies with a track by track guide to themes and ideas in the style of a director's commentary. Seeking to set herself apart from the derogatory mass of generalised celebrity, she tweeted, 'Some of us are "artists" in this group called "celebrity"' (@ladygaga, *Twitter.com*, 18th September 2013). Such a tweet is thus both an intervention in the discourse about celebrity and a claim to a higher degree of integrity, artistic purpose and, with it, authenticity, than her peers. British-Sri Lankan popstar M.I.A. is presented foremost as an artist when the foreword to her memoir states: 'Everything was treated as art. The website, the record covers, the fonts, and the clothing' (2012, p.11). This account of M.I.A. constructs the mechanics of pop-stardom as creative opportunities for the construction of a wider artistic project.

This exercise in pop-stardom as performance art presents these women as having a critical stance that understands, takes into account and surpasses traditional pop-stardom through self-reflexivity. It is a self-reflexive, postmodern

exercise in *doing* pop-stardom, at the same time as being a bid for success in the music industry. Far from articulating something unique to Grace Jones' star image, therefore, I hope that this concept of *doing* celebrity will offer a way of considering how some celebrities negotiate hierarchies of cultural value that denigrate the cultural field of celebrity by elevating themselves beyond the category through claims of self-aware performance art practice and all its high cultural associations, and hope that other scholars will demonstrate the potential for this theorisation of *doing* celebrity across other cultural forms and fields.

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ⁱ By contrast to Jones, Pamela Anderson's fictionalised memoir typifies the view of paparazzi intrusion as violation, for example, when the protagonist laments of a photographer, '[He has] pictures of me walking the dog, on the set, having lunch with friends, on dates, kissing, holding my mother's hand. He even has pictures of me sleeping. It's like he's stealing my life. Not the part that we all give to the world, but the part I keep for me' (2005, p.50).