the quint volume three issue four

inside

Reviews

Gallery

EDITORIAL

Throughout this issue, *the quint* is articling. In spite of the lovely pun, we have not gone legal this time around, although there are days when I'm sure *quint* feels it probably should. But seriously, this call produced astute academic papers on the topics of government policy and a culture's evolutionary development, film noir and a Cold War Western, the conundrums of biblical fiction, and intrigue and murder in Korea as offerings. In honor of the quint's mandate to engage the mind and in celebration of the beginning of another academic year at University College of the North, the editors felt it right to offer them to you now. This issue showcases work by Dr. Harvey Briggs, an Ashinaabe scholar/teacher who is the Chair of Sociology at Algoma University in Ontario, Dr. David Williams, an award winning full professor from the University of Manitoba, Debbie Cutshaw, an adjunct lecturer at Western Nevada College, and our own Dr. John Butler from UCN. These academic offerings are accompanied by book reviews on Asian and Elizabethan issues by Gary A. Kozak and myself.

As always, this *quint* also takes care to satisfy eye: we are so fortunate to be able to show works by Gail Whitter, an outstanding artist and poet from Trail, B.C.

I won't keep you from this issue of *the quint* any longer. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did when we planned and put it together. We are looking forward being back in December with Christmas greetings and more from the North for you to discover.

Sue Matheson
Managing Editor

Discovering Evolution:

by Harvey Briggs, Algoma University, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Introduction

There are problems with the ways in which policy documents that deal with Native peoples are written and analyzed. One of the goals of my studies has been to work toward a method with which historical and textual analysis can be linked, and further to tie them to a literature that presents a scientific version of social organization. I propose linking a textual analysis (I also make use of narrative analysis) to an historical analysis and linking both of these to an evolutionary framework. My reason for this is to increase the breadth of understanding from which the policy analyst can approach a society. Historical analysis does not provide enough breadth, as it often is limited to the cyclical history of contact: incursion > problems > analysis > and then intervention. One needs a more comprehensive framework in order to understand the complexities of Aboriginal societies. We have that broad tradition of

understanding with respect to European and European-descended societies; it is part of the mainstream academic culture that any policy analyst is expected to know. Why should the policy analyst be allowed to approach Aboriginal societies without an understanding of their specific evolutionary development?

The initial problem I had to face in my work was the choice of an evolutionary framework from among the many sophisticated versions of evolutionary theory that exist. Since my particular preference was for a very broad-based version of evolution, I found myself drawn to the work of the anthropologists Julian Steward and Elman Service. Steward and Service were not the only choices, others such as Gerhard Lenski were more common in sociology. However, none possessed the broad empirical framework of Steward or the distinctly social classification of Service.

My reading of such texts as Larry Krotz's *Indian Country: Inside Another Canada*, and Richard Salisbury's *A Homeland for the Cree*, left me with the feeling that an evolutionary framework could raise issues unavailable to their historical framework. Let me give an example, Salisbury's discussion on "the politics of village bands." Salisbury points out that council meetings among the James Bay Cree that he studied were "irregular, most often being called on an emergency basis when a white official of

DINA[1] inquired what the band thought about a particular issue, and indicated that he was proposing to visit the band," and he then claims that this was a strategy of resistance (Salisbury, 1989:28). However, if linked to an evolutionary view of band level leadership one could have interpreted that practice differently, and not necessarily as a strategy of resistance. Band societies, like the Cree, tend to possess temporary leadership roles; when a problem arises, or a decision is to be made, an assembly is made and the issue is dealt with. Hence, irregular council meetings would seem be a traditional pattern of political leadership, the maintenance of which might well be a form of resistance, yet it certainly becomes a deeper and more complex form of resistance in that light. The problem lies in the assumptions of the capitalist-democratic model imposed upon the Cree by the federal government, and this is not addressed adequately by Salisbury.

Another problem that an evolutionary model is effective at countermanding is the practice of lumping together all Native societies (such as those within the Canadian border), as if they were a single cohesive group. In his text *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts,* James Frideres does this: "The political organization of Natives has also been hindered by the factionalism that has developed within different

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[1]Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

segments of Native society" (1988:205). "Native" is not a single cohesive group, any more than European is (given the context of a disagreement between England and Germany would we tend to refer to either of these societies as "factions?"). These "factions," as Frideres refers to them, are societies—in every sense of the word. The ethnocentrism of seeing less complex societies as somehow not meeting the criteria of the term society is displaced by a taxonomy that elaborates the specific societal organization of both complex and simple societies.

In pursuing a version of Native Studies that links an evolutionary past to the concerns of the present one links themselves to a long tradition that extends back to 1935 and the recognition of Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville Herskovits that "modified Indian cultures were a proper subject of investigation" (Steward, 1977:336). In the context of this work I am making the claim that policy writing and policy analysis must be linked to a rigorous evolutionary framework, especially where it attempts to deal with aboriginal peoples. Much like Eric Wolf's claim that anthropology needs to "discover history," policy writing and analysis must discover sociocultural evolution. My particular concern is with the unscientific understanding that forms the basis of policy documents dealing with Native peoples and the usage of the resulting policies as means of control. It is my contention that policy writers

creating policy that deals with Native peoples have traditionally created policy without a scientific understanding of the societies that the policies will affect. What I argue for here is a method of analyzing policy documents which is informed by comparative-evolutionary theory; in particular, I will elaborate a sociological/anthropological underpinning for such a process. Specifically I will argue for the use of Julian Steward's theory of "cultural ecology;" this will comprise the bulk of my work in this paper.

Julian Steward's Theory of Cultural Ecology

Julian Steward began his work on cultural ecology in the mid-1930's. A student of Alfred Kroeber and Robert Lowie at Berkeley from 1925-29, Steward was influenced by the approach that Kroeber advocated. Following the anthropological tradition of Berkeley, Steward was "as much an archaeologist as a cultural anthropologist" (Murphy, 1977:3). Considering this and his earlier schooling as an undergraduate at Cornell where Steward majored in Zoology and Geology, it is of little surprise that his latter work was of such diversity. Cultural ecology in its strongly empirical approach to societies mirrored this broad educational background and with its methodology avoided determinism of any sort. Marvin Harris commented on the

scientific strength of Steward's theory in his 1968 work *The Rise Of Anthropological Theory*: "Cultural ecology, precisely because it links emic phenomena with the etic conditions of >nature,= strengthens the association between social science and the >harder= disciplines" (Harris, 1968:222). Though Harris was later to call Steward's work a form of "cultural materialism" (Harris:1968), Steward clearly denied the ability of anthropology to generalize in his time in any important way about "determinism in social change" in his essay "Determinism in Primitive Society."

My point here is borrowed from Robert Murphy who states this in his introduction to *Evolution and Ecology,* a collection of Steward's essays published posthumously in 1977:

Steward did not consider the theory to be a form of economic determinism. He regarded it instead as a strategy and a method which did not prejudge a relationship but simply set it as a problem for inquiry. It was not the only subject to be investigated, but merely the first to be considered in any analysis. The reasons for the priority are clear. First, in all societies the quest for subsistence has an immediacy and urgency that set it apart from other human activities. Second, the relationship is peculiarly accessible to a causal analysis because there are strict limits to the patterns of work that can be used with a particular technology on particular resources. The relationship is not invariant and absolutely determined in a one-to-one way, but is circumscribed. There may be more than one way to skin a cat, but if your only tool is a bamboo sliver, there are not many. (1977:22-23)

Steward defined cultural ecology as "the study of the processes by which a society adapts to its environment"[2] (1977:43). It is broad-based, centering on the idea of adaptation from the perspective of specific adaptations (such as agriculture, or settlement patterns). In this sense Steward distanced himself from the unilinear evolutionary strategies of Emile Durkheim or Lewis Henry Morgan, which had fallen into such disrepute by the 1930's, and set out to conceive of evolution in multilinear terms. As Elvin Hatch points out, Steward's work was the beginning of a growing movement in anthropology that sought to place ecological, economic, and material factors at the forefront of research, and to link that research to a broader understanding of human culture. Steward, in particular, claimed that evolution itself was universal, but that particular processes of evolutionary change were not. Societies evolve, but each in their own ways. This directly controverts the work of Spencer, or Morgan, who felt that the process of evolution was singular, or at least virtually singular, and that all societies were merely signposts of different stages of a universal

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[2] It might be objected that Steward's language in this statement seems to cast societies as passive actors merely reacting to their environment. However, one must note that culture "increasingly creates its own environment," and that the environment is not deterministic with respect to the particular adaptation of a society. That does not completely clear up the problem here, as Morris Freilich points out in his article "The Natural Experiment, Ecology and Culture." Freilich accuses Steward's theory of casting cultural tradition in a passive role, and rendering the "predictive" ability of cultural ecology suspect. He proposes an altered model of change that introduces four concepts, two of which are ecological and two cultural: "generalized and specialized cultures, and permissive and deterministic ecologies" (1963:36).

evolutionary process.

Steward came to use the term "multilinear evolution" to describe what he meant by the many levels of societal complexity brought about by evolutionary change. Multilinear evolution is an empirically-based scheme that proceeds from a need to establish control through comparison, rather than to generalize to universals. "What is lost in universality will be gained in concreteness and specificity. Multilinear evolution, therefore, has no *a priori* scheme or laws. It recognizes that the cultural traditions of different areas may be wholly or partially distinctive, and it simply poses the question of whether any genuine or meaningful similarities between certain cultures exist and whether these lend themselves to formulation" (Steward, 1955:19).

Thus, the methodology of cultural ecology expresses, in like form, the categorical breadth of Steward's multilinear approach to evolutionary thought. Steward's methodology of cultural ecology consists of three fundamental procedures: "First, the interrelationship of exploitative or productive technology and environment must be analysed" (1955:40). In part this refers to the "material culture" of a society, specifically that which is involved in the various forms of subsistence. Tools, technology, and economic organization are examples: "Second, the behaviour patterns involved in the exploitation of a particular area by means of a particular technology must be analysed"

(1955:40). Do the subsistence practices lead to cooperation, fragmentation, or even competition? : "The third procedure is to ascertain the extent to which the behavior patterns entailed in exploiting the environment affect other aspects of culture" (1955:41). How are the kinship terminology, residence rules, or socio-political forms affected?

For sociology this third procedure may be the most important, and this is true of its import for policy making as well. Here lies the aspect most integral to understanding how a society will be affected by outside intrusion, and thus the most important tool for understanding the needs of a society. "The investigation of the ways that work patterns affect other aspects of culture, calls at once for meticulous analysis of interaction patterns and for a theory that sees social activity as underlying culture" (Murphy, 1977:25). However, perhaps the most important part of Steward's method is the proviso that to study the adaptive processes of any society to its environmental conditions we must take into account the society's level of social-structural integration. With regard to this Steward cautions: "Cultural types, therefore, must be conceived as constellations of core features which arise out of environmental adaptations and which represent similar levels of integration" (1955:42).

The difference between simple and complex societies is not only an aspect of

their societal complexity or level of technology, but is also a matter of the degree to which their particular adaptation is territorial. "Among . . .[Band] societies, residence, kinship, and subsistence patterns are more fundamental and less alterable or variable than clans, moieties, religious and secular associations, and other elaborations which are secondary embroideries on the basic social fabric" (1977:51). Band societies do not engender "suprafamilial" or "supracommunity" institutions, such as commerce or communication networks, that extend their culture and environment beyond the limits of their territory. Thus, the complex integrative means that allow such development are not present. The integrative means that are present tend to be territorial in nature, and adaptation tends to be ecologically influenced to a high degree. In more structurally complex societies—such as state-based societies—it is more difficult to observe ecological adaptations because they are less direct. "In proportion that societies have adequately solved subsistence problems, the effect of ecology becomes more difficult to ascertain. In complex societies certain components of the social superstructure rather than ecology seem to be determinants of further development" (Steward, 1938:262). One lesson of sociocultural evolution is that more complex forms of social structure engender cultural adaptations which allow humans to develop increasingly diverse patterns with respect to the exploitation of their

environment. The opposite applies as well, that less complex forms of social structure will face obstacles if forced to adapt less ecologically-based forms. It is this point which leads to my specific interest herein which is to provide an example of this in the realm of politico-economic organization. My example is based on my research among the Anishnaabe communities of North-Central Ontario—specifically the Mjikinanning and the Beausoleil Island communities who were party to the Coldwater Narrows "experiment."

The Coldwater-Narrows Reserve[3]

My research for this work has been conducted primarily among groups that were party to the Coldwater-Narrows Reserve land surrender agreement which was (allegedly) signed in 1836. Using depth interviews as my collection method for this phase of my data gathering, I have met with a cross-section of persons who are connected or directly involved in the education system; these persons range from leaders and other governmental positions, to educators and interested parents. Written and verbal consent has been given by all respondents for my use of this data. My

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[3] The data upon which this section of the paper is from a series of interviews with First Nation parents which primarily concerned cultural changes in their societies, and the impact of education. The research was granted ethics approval by York universities REB, and was given community support by the communities from which the interview respondents were selected.

primary purpose for this research has been to support my dissertation work which with respect to this data involves the role of education. However, in my discussions with some of my interviewees a connected issue has arisen, and it is this that is the subject of this paper. The impact of non-culturally reflective policies on the lives of the people in these two communities has arisen in eight of the twelve interviews and the answers have been remarkably consistent. Perhaps it was a telling sign that in the first interview I conducted the respondent said that the impact of the various government policies on these communities amounted to "gross interference." While not all of the interviews have echoed that claim, many have and the eight that have done so directly will be utilized in my discussion of the Coldwater-Narrows reserve.

The Coldwater-Narrows reserve was created in 1830, and was designed to provide land—as an agricultural base for the signatory groups. (http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/clm/cnfs_e.html).

As part of their commitment the three groups began development of the land "the First Nations constructed a road (which ultimately came to be Ontario Highway 12) over the old portage route between the two villages and cleared the land along the road for farming. Schools, houses, barns and mills were also built at the two villages. Between January 1831, and March 1837, the Chippewas paid approximately $48,000.00

of a total cost $108,000.00 toward the establishment and maintenance of the Coldwater-Narrows reserve." (http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/clm/cnfs_e.html). However in 1836 there was a document allegedly agreed to by the three groups and signed in Toronto (although in discussion with two leaders it was told to me that no such document was ever agreed to by any of the traditional leaders – the chiefs of the time – instead that they were forced to sign the deal or receive nothing for their land). As a consequence each group relocated to their present day locations: to Rama, Georgina Island, and Christian Island. (http://www.chimnissing.ca/xtras/ctc.html) At present the land transfer is the subject of a specific claim filed in 2002. (http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/clm/cnfs_e.html)

A number of problems exist with this example, I will not attempt to address all of them; instead I will focus on the issues relevant to this paper. In my interviews where this issue was addressed one respondent explained to me that "farming was not their way of life" (Respondent 1) and that this meant displacing the traditional hunting and gathering economy. Much of the traditional knowledge that was passed on to children was not connected to this new way of life and this had implications on how the young were educated, particularly with respect to customs and values (Respondent 1). This coupled with the introduction of residential schools had the effect of

"removing the cultural teachings from the young." (Respondent 1, echoed by eight other respondents) For the Anishnaabe the teaching of the young is a holistic practice, one connected to place and to traditional tasks; this, in part, was displaced by the "experiment" that was the Coldwater-Narrows reserve. (Respondent 1)

A further impact was the dislocation of these groups from territorial hunting grounds. These would largely be sold off to non-Native interests as a consequence of the 1836 agreement (http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/clm/cnfs_e.html). The remaining lands were not as extensive, nor were they as ecologically diverse as was necessary to maintain their traditional way of life. This, coupled with another agreement in 1923, the Williams Treaty, has had the effect of removing traditional hunting and fishing rights for these communities. In the ruling of May 12, 1994, the Supreme Court of Canada, in the case of R. v. Howard, 18 O.R. (3d) 384, held that the conditions of the Williams Treaty meant that these groups had ceded all hunting and fishing rights, and thus even on their own land they would hold the same legal rights to hunting and fishing access as any other citizen of Ontario. The conservative government of the time was very quick to follow this decision with correspondence indicating that they would increase enforcement to support this ruling. (Respondent 4) Effectively, this removed a large cultural heritage from these groups (the Mijikanning are, after all, "the

people of the fish weirs"), with it the attendant cultural teachings were also displaced.

Looking at these policy decisions through an evolutionary lens a different picture can be constructed. First the "experiment" at turning these groups of Anishnaabe into farmers had repercussions in their social structure. The traditional territorial usage also had social purposes, during summer months the larger groupings of Anishnaabe (due to the prevalence of game – such as fish stocks) would lead to the reassertion of ties between, and within groups (winter months would lead to groups splintering into smaller and smaller collectivities in order to maximize opportunities for scarce game and other resources). The summer months would also serve to allow for the planning and carrying out of ceremonies – an important part of the cultural transmission process, and also an important part of the transition from childhood to adult life. (Respondent 1) This was displaced by a farming economy in which the summer months meant that time needed to be invested in one's crop.

The loss of territory also had an impact on the viability of their economic base. With the loss of their land base (which at one point covered much of central Ontario) these groups were forced into reliance upon government support. Only recently have these groups begun to move away from reliance on that support (e.g., for the Mijikanning at Rama with the opening of the Casino and other related businesses).

The interim had seen the lives of these communities devastated, in communities where children had been the soul of the community's existence and the very epicentre of family life, problems with parenting skills caused incidences of neglect and abuse to reach high levels. Alcoholism, and later drug and chemical abuse ran at high levels, the cultural teachings of the elders went unheard. (Respondent 7) In recent years the struggle to revive the spiritual base of their culture is still hampered by policy/legal decisions such as the one mentioned earlier in this paper which wiped out traditional hunting and fishing rights. Many of the cultural teachings of the elders are taught in the context of those activities and the decision renders those activities illegal in some cases. (Respondent 6)

Conclusion

While this is a very limited look at the impact of non-culturally reflective policy it is a telling look. The loss of culture is something that each of the respondents have mentioned, and many directly link part of that lost cultural heritage to these specific policy decisions. At present the 1836 document is in dispute—the subject of a specific claim filed by the three groups. Culturally reflective policy-making requires an understanding of the longer patters of social organization that are often only available

through an evolutionary lens. When the subject is a society (or group of societies as in the case of Aboriginal peoples in Canada) that have been displaced and restructured through the process of colonization, then the need for that broader basis of understanding is even greater.

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Value of Narrativity: Robert Alter's Apology for Biblical Fiction

by David Williams, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba
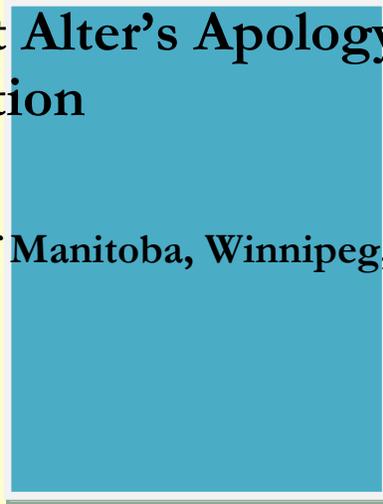
What are the faithful—both laity and scholars—to make of Robert Alter's claim in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* that the Bible deploys, and even invents, the techniques of fiction, or that, to understand its revelation, you must learn to read its narrative form?

Fiction and truth were often incompatible in my childhood, though bible stories, it seemed, could be told and retold on the highest authority. In the bible school where I was a student in the 1960s, the buzzword was plenary inspiration, the idea that the Bible had been dictated word for word to its human authors. *The Word of our God shall stand forever,* the college shouted in yard-high letters from the wall of a concrete bunker beside the Trans-Canada Highway, making spiritual capital out of structures left over from the Second World War. To my teachers, the philological methods of nineteenth-century German "Higher Criticism" were an affront to the truth of revelation, though

no one seemed to care that, by the second chapter of Genesis, the story had started all over again. over again. Putting their faith in the "truth" of the translation, my teachers may not even have realized that their God was named Jahweh in one chapter, and Elohim in the next. Nor was their faith shaken by stylistic analysis, which highlighted the abrupt intrusion of an imperative, deuteronomic style that could irrupt into the elegant parataxis of the so-called "priestly" style. It was beside the point to consider such matters if one believed that the five Books of Moses were the work of a single, divine hand. And yet should the Bible prove to be a patchwork of different, even contradictory documents, inscribed by hands called *J* (for Jahweh, the *J*-writer's name for God), or *P* (for Priestly)*,* or *E* (for Elohim) or *D* (for Deuteronomic) …? Well, it didn't take a Daniel to read the writing on the wall.

To people more inclined to history, however, the questions raised by the "Higher Criticism" served to resituate the biblical text in a variety of social contexts, amidst a web of Near Eastern laws and cult practices and kinship structures which it both reflected and opposed. Major archaeological discoveries, including a wealth of Ugaritic and Akkadian texts, and more recently the Dead Sea scrolls of the Essenes and the Gnostic writings of the Nag Hammadi library, have helped to clarify obscure allusions, to confirm the historicity of chronicle accounts, to offer insight into canon

formation, and, ultimately, to reconstruct something of the biblical era by means of comparative anthropology, sociology, theology, and religion. For many, the authority of fact would supersede the authority of revelation, the God of history historicized with a vengeance.

And yet most of this work is set aside by Professor Alter as mere "excavative scholarship … a necessary first step to the understanding of the Bible" (Alter 13-14), but a clear misreading in terms of its narrative procedures. Literary people are notorious for assigning the highest value to art, as if the beauty of a form could be more important than the religious end it was designed to serve. Because the method of "excavative scholarship" is to break up the Bible "into as many pieces as possible," the kind of knowledge it offers is decidedly functional. Alter concedes that such a method is designed "to link those pieces to their original life contexts, thus rescuing for history a body of texts that religious tradition had enshrined in timelessness, beyond precise historical considerations" (16). Aside from the question of extrinsic function, however, are there intrinsic values in form?

The historiographer Hayden White provides one kind of answer in his title, *The Content of the Form*. Form, as this title suggests, has a content (and a function) all its own. And the form of history that history shares with literature is narrative. To count as

history, most historians agree, their discourse must do more than to list dates and events in parallel columns (the method, say, of the eighth-century *Annals of Saint Gall*), or to chronicle events having a distinct beginning but no clear sense of an ending (the method of the tenth-century *History of France*). What historians demand of history is a "narrative fullness" (White 24) that accounts for causes and effects. And the only form that is able to answer this demand is plotted narrative. The *Annals* has no plot; human beings are not the real actors but mere observers of the fullness of God's time. Under the heading of "*Anno Domini,*" the annalist's years fill out each line in the left-hand column, while the right-hand column of events is often left blank. Evidently the only ordering principle is based on the year of "Our Lord." Should the will of God be the implicit cause, there is still no human subject, or no social centre, only the unseen Mover standing outside of time.

The chronicle form, by contrast, is more conscious of the social order in its concern for the legitimate succession of bishops, but it breaks off, as events themselves are wont to do, without "a proper discursive resolution" (19), or historical explanation. History, White argues, is thus characterized by its demand for closure. But, "Insofar as historical stories can be completed, can be given narrative closure, can be shown to have had a plot all along, they give to reality the odor of the ideal. This is why the plot

of a historical narrative is always an embarrassment and has to be presented as 'found' in the events rather than put there by narrative techniques" (21). Factual and fictional storytelling are more alike than we think, because they both have to invent a plot that reaches an intelligible form of closure. And fiction has this singular advantage over history, that it can foreground its artifice.

As the leading theorist of narrative historiography, White has tried to make historians accountable for "the content of [their] form," to think more precisely about the meaning of their medium. For "narrative," as he warns from the outset of his study, "is not merely a neutral discursive form that may or may not be used to represent real events in their aspect as developmental processes but rather entails ontological and epistemic choices with distinct ideological and even specifically political implications" (ix).

In a less theoretical, but more dramatic way, Robert Alter gives a practical demonstration in *the Art of Biblical Narrative* of how narrative need not be a neutral medium for either the representation of historical "fact" or theological "truth." His formalist approach to the Bible is relatively new, since theologians and students of religion have, if anything, been less inclined than historians to investigate the medium

in which their subject appears. As Alter says in his opening chapter, "A Literary Approach to the Bible," "the potent residue of the older belief in the bible as the revelation of ultimate truth is perceptible in the tendency of scholars to ask questions about the biblical view of man, the biblical notion of the soul, the biblical vision of eschatology, while for the most part neglecting phenomena like character, motive, and narrative design as unbefitting for the study of an essentially religious document" (Alter 17). And yet his formalist study of the narrative design of the Hebrew bible from Genesis to Chronicles, much like Hayden White's study of emplotment, is much more than "an aesthetic enterprise" (130), since it demonstrates how the biblical conception of truth is at base a function of narrative design.

What narrative has to offer, in Alter's words, is "a particular mode of knowledge" (156). In other words, *what* we know from narrative is intimately linked to the process of *how* we know a thing through narrative. Stories, if examined closely, can reveal the mental operations they ask us to perform in order to make sense of them. At the same time, we have to watch how they make sense of us, shaping our expectations and our perception in ways that remain implicit, as if beyond examination. As Alter suggests, "The biblical tale might usefully be regarded as a narrative experiment in the

possibilities of moral, spiritual, and historical knowledge, undertaken through a process of studied contrasts between the variously limited knowledge of the human characters and the divine omniscience quietly but firmly represented by the narrator" (157). Though Hayden White doesn't say so, historical knowledge likewise depends upon such a narrative form of omniscience; the historian steps outside of the time of the narrative, surveying the material facts with a god-like eye to arrive at judgment. In effect, says White, the "demand for closure in the historical story is a demand for moral meaning" (21).

Narrative history and biblical narrative thus share a claim to both moral and historical knowledge. But is the corollary true, that we should regard the Bible as an equivalent of history's lasting narrative experiment with knowledge? Alter would appear to suggest as much in emphasizing the bible's decisive shift "away from the stable closure of the mythological world and toward the indeterminacy, the shifting causal concatenations, the ambiguities of a fiction made to resemble the uncertainties of life in history" (27). What the biblical narratives show at this level of form is a shift in human consciousness away from a cyclicality based on nature (akin to Mircea Eliade's "myth of the eternal return") toward a linear process of history as becoming,

or even toward the form of an end-determined fiction. What the biblical narratives reveal at this level of form is a shift in human consciousness, or, to make a passing use of Foucault's terms, a shift in the social conditions of knowledge. The emergence of new narrative techniques signals the emergence of a new *episteme*.

"It is peculiar," Alter remarks, "and culturally significant, that among ancient peoples only Israel should have chosen to cast its sacred national traditions in prose" (25). In fact, the biblical narrative does not present itself as the national epic of Israel, but as "a deliberate avoidance of epic," as if the story of the God who intervenes in history could only be told in this revolutionary new form.[4] And yet our difficulty in seeing the newness of the form is two-fold: the tendency of commentators to classify its stories variously as legend, myth, and folklore; and later developments in the techniques of prose fiction which tend to obscure the originality of the biblical narratives.

If the biblical authors were among the pioneers of prose fiction in the Western tradition" (157), as Alter claims, some of their techniques might seem archaic today.

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[4] Here is further reason to doubt Benedict Anderson's claim in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Rise and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983, (rev. ed. London & New York: Verso, 1991), that the nation-state and nationalism were an eighteenth-century product of "print-capitalism" and its offspring, the modern novel and newspaper. See my counter-argument in *Imagined Nations: Reflections on Media in Canadian Fiction* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 5-73, for signs that we need to push back by two millennia the role of prose fiction (including the Hebrew bible) in nation-formation.

Verbatim repetitions of dialogue and contradictory versions of the same event look neither like good art nor good history. But the meaning of this new form, as Alter makes clear, is dependent to some extent on its artful use of the Hebrew language. His close reading of word choices in the original language goes a long way toward establishing the symmetries of form, the envelope structures, and the contrasting styles of dialogue that we associate with the shaping intentions of the author of a unitary art.

The story of Joseph sold by his brothers into Egypt, for example, turns on the verb in Hebrew for recognition: the brothers approach their father Jacob with the bloodied robe of many colours: "This we have found. Please recognize (*haker-na*), is it your son's tunic or not?" This verb for recognition, "stated by the brothers in the imperative, immediately recurs in the perfect tense, Jacob responding at once as the puppet of his sons' manipulation" (4). Meanwhile, in the next chapter (which has always seemed to commentators like an interruption in Joseph's story), the narrative shifts to a synopsis of the brother Judah's life, concluding with an account of his deception by Tamar, his widowed daughter-in-law whom he has unwittingly used as a prostitute. When he is told that Tamar has played the harlot with some man, he says, "Take her out and let her be burned." At the climax of the story, however, she says to

Judah, "Please recognize [*haker-na*], to whom do these belong, this seal and cord and staff?" Of course, they are Judah's own, the equivalent of an ancient American Express card (was he not paying attention when they said, "Don't leave home without it?"). And yet "This precise recurrence of the verb in identical form at the ends of Genesis 37 and 38 respectively is manifestly the result not of some automatic mechanism of interpolating traditional materials but of careful splicing of sources by a brilliant literary artist." As Alter reminds us, it was Judah who first convinced his brothers to deceive their father, and now he is deceived in turn by a family member. "The first use of the formula was for an act of deception; the second use is for an act of unmasking" as Tamar exposes her father-in-law's shameful abuse of her. Now with beautiful concision, the imperative verb "Please recognize" fastens the two stories together. In ways too detailed for mention here, this verb *haker-na* continues to resonate in the story of Joseph's sojourn down in Egypt, until his final revelation of himself to his astonished brothers. From an artistic point of view the story of Joseph, as Alter judiciously remarks, is one of the greatest stories ever told.

Similarly, the problem of duplicate versions, far from being careless editing, looks very different from an artistic point of view. Take, for example, the story of King

Saul and the shepherd boy David. In 1 Samuel 16, the prophet Samuel is sent by God to Bethlehem to anoint a son of Jesse as Saul's successor. The old prophet naturally mistakes the eldest boy as God's elect, and God has to re-direct him to anoint the youngest son, a mere stripling who is subsequently called to court to play his lyre for a melancholy, godforsaken king. In the next chapter, however, David seems never to have left the sheepfold; it is his brothers who are gone to fight in Saul's army against the Philistines. No one but David's family even knows who the boy is when he shows up to confront Goliath, least of all Saul. "Logically, of course, Saul would have had to meet David for the first time either as music therapist in his court or as giant-killer on the battlefield, but he could not have done both. Both stories are necessary, however," for what Alter calls "the writer's binocular vision of David" (147-8).

What precise epistemic choices appear in the "binocular" (or bifocal) version of the story? In the first instance, we are given a God's-eye view of the situation, while in the second version we are plunged into the suspense of limited human beings having to win their place by arbitrary action in the larger historical design. "Chapter 16 of I Samuel begins with a dialogue between Samuel and God, and the divine view from above controls everything that happens in this version of David's debut. God oversees,

God intervenes directly in the designation of His anointed" (148). God, in that sense, is the sole active agent, the unmoved Mover standing outside of time unfolding his plan in human history, much as he stands behind the medieval Annals. And yet we are still in a world of responsible human subjects, since one of the characters—the prophet Samuel—has to undergo a strenuous "exercise in seeing right" (149). In the second focalization, however, we are plunged into suspense with the characters, including an army of professional soldiers, at the sight of this shepherd lad confronting the mighty Goliath. Of course, we are also given an early indication that David's character is anything but one-sided; the story of his beginnings prepares us for both the fierce warrior-king and the sensitive singer and composer of psalms. Here in brief is the man who will seduce Bathsheba, impregnate her, and send her husband to die in the front lines of battle; but here too is the father whose grief at his son's death is so great that he cries out in accents that tear at the heart, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son! O Absalom my son!"

All of these subsequent developments in David's story are shaped from the outset by a technique which Alter likens to cinematic montage, a device which the pioneering Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein defined as "a *creation*" rather than "a

simple sum of one shot plus one shot" which is spliced together, since "in every such juxtaposition *the result is qualitatively* distinguishable from each component element viewed separately" (cited in Alter 140). So, too, in the art of the modern novel, a technique of juxtaposing images, scenes, and even multiple narrators leads to bifocal vision, to polyglot voices, and to cinematic montage in works by great modernists like James Joyce and William Faulkner, and even by lesser novelists like Siegfried Sassoon, whose writing is informed by a cinematic *mentalité.*[5]

This particular technique of bifocal vision, which is analogous to cinematic montage, is usefully likened by Alter to the Cubist attempt in painting to show an object from all sides at once—a human face, for example, both frontally and in profile. What, nevertheless, is seen in this epistemic choice, apart from its impatience with the inescapable linearity of language and its desire for the visual simultaneity of spatial form? Take the twice-told story of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, to which I alluded above, where the texts of the *P-* and the *J*-writer fail to agree even on the basic order of creation. Were man and woman created together, before the plants and animals, as appears in the first chapter, or was the woman a divine afterthought, a supplement to

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[5] See, for example, two chapters on cinematic memory as it appears in the work of Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, among others, in my *Media, Memory, and the First World War* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 103-57.

man made from an excess of materials? After a careful reading in the Priestly version of the verbal symmetries, the balanced pairings of terms which amount to binary oppositions, and the incremental repetitions of God's actions as the subject of each new verb, Alter shows how the Jahwist version in Genesis 2 works against the formal parallelism and stately progression of Chapter 1 to reveal man in the contingency of his dawning consciousness and moral agency. "*P* is interested in the large plan of creation; *J* is more interested in the complicated and difficult facts of human life in civilization. … Man culminates the scheme of creation in *P,* but man is the narrative center of *J's* story, which is quite another matter" (145). Indeed it is, as feminist readings of these two accounts, such as those of Phyllis Trible and Mieke Bal, have made increasingly clear.[6]

Alter only falls short here of noting how Milton would come to see the creation through the binocular vision of these two accounts, where God reveals more of himself to Adam in the story Adam tells to Raphael of a feminine side to the godhead,[7] a side which is not revealed in the Priestly account and which has even been hidden

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[6] For a discussion of Trible and Bal, see Mary Nyquist, "The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity in the Divorce Tracts and *Paradise Lost,"* in *Re-membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and the Traditions,* ed. Mary Nyquist & Margaret Ferguson (New York & London: Methuen, 1988), esp. 99-102.

[7] See the enormously stimulating discussion of this point in John Rumrich, "Milton's God and the Matter of Chaos," *PMLA* 110 (October 1995), 1035-46.

from Milton's archangels. In more general terms, however, Alter does recognize how "The Genesis author chose to combine these two versions of creation precisely because he understood that his subject was essentially contradictory, essentially resistant to consistent linear formulation" (145).

The epistemic problem of his dual view of creation becomes particularly clear in the process by which the "divine word … becomes historical fact" (91). For the divine word must limit its own omnipotence by submitting providential design to the free will of the creature.[8] "God as Einstein was to put it in his own argument against randomness, decidedly does not play dice with the universe, though from a moral or historical point of view that is exactly what He does in *J*'s story by creating man and woman with their dangerous freedom of choice while imposing upon them the responsibility of a solemn prohibition" (144). From a theological and philosophical point of view, divine determinism and human free will have always made something of a Gordian knot. John Calvin offered to cut that knot by his doctrine of "double predestination," whereby God's election of those to be saved *and* those to be damned was anterior to human will and so determinative even of human freedom.[9] Faced with

[8] On this point, see Dennis Danielson, *Milton's Good God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), esp. chapter 6.
[9] See Danielson, 68-71.

the choice of God's sovereignty or human freedom, Calvin chose a version of absolute theocracy in political terms, and effective determinism in psychological terms. But a thousand years before Calvin, the Pelagians would come to the opposite conclusion, that God must be powerless to affect our human will, and so people could only be responsible for their own salvation. What the frequently binocular vision of the biblical narrative evokes is a mode of thinking in which contradictory views, like the wave/particle theory of light, both have to be true. As Alter says, "The human figures in the large biblical landscape act as free agents out of the impulses of a memorable and often fiercely assertive individuality, but the actions they perform all ultimately fall into the symmetries and recurrences of God's comprehensive design" (112-3).

Another technical question about biblical narrative helps to establish the significance of its epistemic choices. Why should the biblical writers always prefer dialogue to narration, a preference so pronounced that even the interrogation of an oracle is reported as direct dialogue? In 2 Samuel, for example, "David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?' And God said to him, 'Go up.' And David said, 'To which one shall I go up?' and He said, 'To Hebron.'" As "excavative scholarship" has shown, the soothsayers of that epoch made predictions by casting lots

or else by divining from gems set into the priestly breastplate. So in this story, the dramatic use of dialogue is tantamount to having a Ouija board speak aloud on a movie set. What purpose could there be in this form of presentation? Why must God be represented as a voice forever in dialogue with a human being? Dramatic speech, of course, is the sign of immediate presence, while the casting of lots looks more like the trace of a metaphysical absence. And yet this overpowering presence of divine speech leaves precious little space for the creature's free will; the human subject should, properly speaking, be overwhelmed by omniscience unless some room were left for uncertainty.

The dramatic indeterminacy of dramatic presentation in biblical narrative is best illustrated in Alter's analysis of the story of the birth of Samuel. Hannah, the barren but more beloved of Elkanah's two wives, is described as having to bear the repeated taunting of her rival, while her husband can only be solicitous of her feelings. "Throughout the exposition, she remains a silent, suffering figure, addressed for evil and good by Peninah and Elkanah respectively; when she herself finally speaks, it will be first to God, a formal mark of her dignity and her destiny" (83). Going up to the temple, "she made a vow and said, 'Lord of Hosts, if You will truly look upon the

affliction of Your maidservant and remember me and not forget your maidservant and give your maidservant male seed, I shall give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head" (1 Sam. 1.11). Though such moments of inwardness are rare in the laconic stories of the bible, we are privileged to hear Hannah's thoughts in her private prayer to God. Eli, the high priest is not, however, so privileged. Watching her lips move, he assumes that the woman is drunk. "And Hannah answered and said, 'No, my lord, I am a miserable woman. Neither wine nor liquor have I drunk; I am pouring out my heart to the Lord. Do not take your maidservant for a woman of no account; it is only out of my great distress and vexation that I have been speaking all along." Taken aback, Eli can only reply, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the request you asked of Him." Significantly, however, he is never told what is her sorrow, or even what request she makes of God. In other words, it is given to us to know more than the priest in the house of the Lord, though we cannot know more than the grieving woman herself how her prayer will be answered. But this character who can speak directly to God at least knows more than God's priest; otherwise, she and we, together with the child born of her prayers, are left to struggle with the meaning of the divine word in the scene where it calls young Samuel's name out of the depths of the night.

As Alter sees it, "This oblique undermining of Eli's authority [through dialogue, through the choice of who sees and says what] is of course essentially relevant to the story of Samuel: the house of Eli will be cut off; his iniquitous sons will be replaced in the sanctuary by young Samuel himself; and it will be Samuel, not his master Eli, who will hear the voice of God distinctly addressing him in the sanctuary" (86). How dialogue figures in all of this is crucial to the worldview of the bible. Human beings are left to determine the will of God speaking as a quasi-human voice, and to choose their destinies by the way in which they interpret that voice. From the standpoint of medium theory, the reader is then placed in an analogous position, if in a fixed, written text; yet, far from reading stories that are predetermined by an omniscient will, the reader is left with human doubts and uncertainties, struggling with a childless woman and this slightly obtuse priest to determine where all this might lead. "Formally, this means that the writer must permit each character to manifest or reveal himself chiefly through dialogue but of course also significantly through action, without the imposition of an obtrusive apparatus of authorial interpretation and judgment" (87). Encountering the event at second hand, the reader is left to make out what s/he can from the epistemic distance of a God who appears to us in and as the (written) Word.

A chapter on "Characterization and the Art of Reticence" goes a long way toward demonstrating the theological meaning of this eclipse of omniscience in biblical narrative. And we begin to see why the monotheistic revolution required that the Hebrew writers should forsake the specificities and formulaic certainties of epic poetry to invent this new medium of prose fiction. Indeed, the biblical narrator is quite as reticent as the God who authorizes the narrative. Here, Alter invokes the scale of certainties by which we make sense of third-person narration to show how little we are told directly. From the top down, this scale of certainty includes 1) "the narrator's explicit statement of what the characters feel, intend, desire" (117); 2) the inward speech of the character, a zone of relative certainty; 3) external, direct speech, or dramatic presentation without authorial commentary; and 4) a straight report of actions, without attribution of motive or other interpretation. In Homer, the narrator either defines character by means of a fixed epithet ("godlike," "brilliant" Achilles, for example, or "longsuffering," "resourceful" Odysseus), or specifies motive through objective explanation. In many biblical stories, however, we are left in a zone of inference, having to decide for ourselves what characters mean by what they say or do. In the story of David, the text is almost aggressively "faithful to its principle of blocking access to the private David" (120).

Indeed, the story of David is worth another look, with Bathsheba's husband dead, and the child of their adultery sick with an incurable disease, just as "the king entreats God for the sake of the baby, fasting and sleeping on the ground. He refuses all sustenance for seven days, and when on the seventh day the child dies, his servants are afraid to tell him, assuming that, if his behavior was so extreme while the child was still alive, he will go to even more extravagant lengths when he learns of the child's death" (128). We share the whispered doubt of the servants, fearful to tell David the terrible news, bracing for his wild outburst. But no one can read David's mind or say what it means when he suddenly gets up, bathes, changes his clothes, and goes home for something to eat. "As readers, we are quite as surprised as the servants by David's actions, then his words [of explanation to them], for there is very little in the narrative before this point that could have prepared us for this sudden, yet utterly convincing revelation of the sorrowing David, so bleakly aware of his own inevitable mortality as he mourns his dead son" (129). Very simply, but with a profound human dignity, he answers the baffled servants, "When the child was still alive I fasted and wept, for I thought, 'Who knows, perhaps the Lord will take pity on me and the child will live.' But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I am going to him but he will not come back to me" (128).

This sort of narrative strategy is typical of how we come to know a thing in biblical narrative. First of all, we observe from the outside a character whose motives are not clear. Our expectations are upset by the character's actions that seem meant, like those of the deity, to confound us. But instead of resorting to "life contexts" or documentary theories of composition to explain the text, Alter maintains that we need to study its narrative procedures, to internalize its own conventions, in order to understand its conditions of signification. The first condition, it would seem, is its crucial refusal to say everything it knows. Neither the reader nor the character is given any special knowledge, aside from a glimpse of our common mortality: "I am going to him but he will not come back to me." In the death of his child, David, like us, is given back to the condition of history, not knowing where the story will end or where it will go without him. But it is his dignified acceptance of death which surprises and moves us. As Alter says, this "underlying biblical conception of character as often unpredictable, in some ways impenetrable, constantly emerging from and slipping back into a penumbra of ambiguity, in fact has greater affinity with dominant modern notions than do the habits of conceiving character typical of the Greek epic. The monotheistic revolution in consciousness profoundly altered the ways in which man as well as God was imagined, and the effects of that revolution probably still determine

certain aspects of our conceptual world more than we suspect" (129).

Here, we can anticipate at least one political consequence of the narrative revolution in consciousness. Because divine election in biblical narrative is fraught with surprises, the principle of political succession (primogeniture) is suddenly exposed as being artificial, not natural. In Alter's terms, "The firstborn very often seem to be losers in Genesis by the very condition of their birth … while an inscrutable, unpredictable principle of election other than the 'natural' one works itself out" (6). Jacob, the second-born son of Isaac, steals the birth-right as well as his father's blessing, from his elder brother Esau. Joseph, the eleventh of Jacob's twelve sons, is destined to have all his family bow down to him, though the house of David will spring from his brother's loins, from Judah, the fourth, not the firstborn son of Jacob. So, too, King David is elected by God ahead of the eldest son of Jesse. Such a "reversal of the iron law of primogeniture" has had consequences for social and political organization, even though European monarchs cling to the ancient law of primogeniture to uphold such claims as "divine right," as James I of England would have it. But in the English Revolution, the parliamentary party used the issue of biblical election in their polemics to undermine the fixed social hierarchy, and to lay the

ground for modern notions of meritocracy—the political principle, if not the practice, of selection of the fittest.

Closer to home, the psychological and familial consequences of this shift are dramatized in a Canadian novel by Margaret Laurence which retells the biblical story of the outcast wife of Abraham and his eldest born son, Ishmael. Hagar Shipley, the old woman who is undergoing a life review at the end of her days in *The Stone Angel* (1964), continues to be haunted by the death of her younger son, John, whom she had favored over Marvin, her eldest-born son. Though she is patiently cared for by Marvin, it is the younger son who, to her way of thinking, was a Currie like herself, not the elder one who must be a Shipley like his father. In other words, Hagar, like the God of Jacob and Joseph and David, has given her blessing to the younger child. And it takes her the rest of her life, until her dying hour, to acknowledge Marvin as her true son, the child who turns out to have been her spiritual Jacob, wrestling with an angel of stone for the blessing.[10] For a writer as steeped in the bible as Laurence was, we should not be surprised to find that the plot of her first prairie novel turning on the necessity of *unlearning* one of the basic principles of her Protestant heritage, with its quasi-Hebraic

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[10] See my "Jacob and the Demon: Hagar as Storyteller in *The Stone Angel*" in *Crossing the River: Essays in Honour of Margaret Laurence*. Ed. Kristjana Gunnars (Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1988), 97-8.

conception of story and of history.

Rudy Wiebe, with his Mennonite people's more profound identification still with the God of Israel and His narrative ways, has one of his characters in *The Blue Mountains of China* (1970) meet a potential husband at a desert well in Paraguay, in a story simply titled "The Well." A decade before Alter's formal and explicit reading of this "biblical type scene" or betrothal at a well, Wiebe would turn his intuitive reading of the biblical convention to artistic account when his heroine, who was considering escaping the confines of her colony, "no longer remembered, from one year to the next, how once at the end of the village with Joseph Hiebert she bent down and looked into (or was it out of) the Schoenbach well as if to see the end of the blue sky … And she would smile a little at her baby of that year, a quietness she knew as joy moving within her" (104).

The scene of betrothal at a well is in fact a recurring feature of biblical narrative, as Alter shows, from the era of the patriarchs down to Moses and to Ruth and Boaz, a paradigmatic structure whose differential features signify all the more by its variations on the convention. In the first instance of the type, "Isaac is conspicuous by his absence from the scene: this is in fact the only instance where a surrogate rather than

the man himself meets the girl at the well. That substitution nicely accords with the entire career of Isaac, for he is manifestly the most passive of the patriarchs," first appearing "as a bound victim for whose life a ram is substituted; later, as a father, he will prefer the son who can go out to the field and bring him back provender, and his one extended scene will be lying in bed, weak and blind, while others act on him" (53). Conversely, Rebekah is all action when she meets the servant, as she will later be in helping her favorite son Jacob to trick his brother Esau out of the birthright.

Similarly, the story of Jacob meeting Rachel at the well prefigures his whole story, helping to thicken the portrait of that most human of biblical characters, the father of all Israel. "Jacob questions the shepherds at the well about the name of the place and then about his uncle Laban … the dialogue here is a rapid exchange of brief questions and answers that seems almost colloquial by comparison: this again is an appropriate prelude to Jacob's quick-paced story of vigorously pursued actions, deceptions, and confrontations" (55). Of course, the story of the marriage itself is a pointed rebuke to a man who tricked his father and stole his brother's birthright, since his uncle Laban tricks him into marrying his eldest daughter years before he will gain his beloved Rachel. And yet, in the scene at the well, he cannot draw water before he

wrests a great stone from its top. This from a man who has pillowed his head on a stone the night he dreamed of a ladder to Heaven, and who will later wrestle an angel for a blessing before he dares to see his brother Esau. In the meantime, he "will obtain the woman he wants only through great labor, against his resistance and even then God will, in the relevant biblical idiom, 'shut up her womb' for years until she finally bears Joseph" (55). Less is more as we read the shape of a whole life in such small compass.

But the more important point about the biblical writers' use of type-scenes is that it leaves the reader free to make informed judgments without explicit commentary from the narrator. Here, to supplement Alter's analysis, a New Testament borrowing of a type-scene suggests that the Hebrew writers were less dogmatic in shaping the meaning of their story than the writers of the gospels or the epistles attributed to Paul. John's version in the fourth chapter of his gospel tells of a Samaritan woman coming to draw water at the well where Jesus sits. Both the narrator and the woman point out the symbolic significance of the place as Jacob's well. The polemical character of the story soon appears in Jesus' own words when he offers himself as the living water, better than anything she can hope to draw from Jacob's well. Readerly expectations

about marriage flicker for an instant when the woman says she is husbandless; but the Son of God is not seeking a wife. He waits to be recognized as "Messsias," and the woman obliges as soon as he tells her, "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband" (John 4.18). To judge from this one example, the later story is over-determined; John buttonholes the reader just as surely as Coleridge's Ancient Mariner buttonholes the Wedding Guest. By contrast, the worldview of the Hebrew writers is shaped by a reticence that is far more respectful of readerly freedom. Here, then, is the main burden of Alter's thesis about the Hebrew Bible's art: such narrative indeterminacy forces the reader to become a collaborator in the meaning of the story, to make the necessary connections among a whole series of strategic gaps and differences.

Even biblical characters, it seems, can make mistakes in reading these type scenes. Or, to be more precise, the reader may recognize the type of story that is building, though the character does not. Consider the story of Saul that begins on the road, in a servant's search for his lost asses. The young man who has no idea he is about to be made king decides to consult a seer, and, meeting some girls along the way who have come out to draw water, he walks right into a type-scene. But in a hurry, and

reading like a theologian, he asks if there is an oracle nearby. "There is," say the girls. "Straight ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come to town today, for today the people [are] offering a sacrifice on the ritual platform." And so "The hero swings away from the girls at the well to hurry after the man of God who will launch him on his destiny of disaster" (60). Perhaps his fate is prefigured for us in the ritual sacrifice of his people, since these are the same folk who have been badgering God for a king like that of their neighbours. More surely still, the decisive narrative break in Saul's story with the requirements of the type-scene prepares us for a break with other patterns as well. We learn as much, in other words, by "the deflection of the anticipated type-scene" (61) as we do from its more conventional appearance. For Saul's experience will not be the story of a happy marriage, or of human love or of any other consolation, but of a kingship which breaks with all previous governance of Israel. Even his reign will be broken in death, since his son is not going to succeed him. The man whose career will bring civil war to Israel thus defines himself in words he never understands. For the first words out of his mouth—"Is there a seer here?"—serve ironically to shape his career, though who could have foreseen his final scene with the witch of Endor? Thus, it is Saul's own blindness to the type-scene in which he appears that prefigures his ignorance of destiny, as well as his moral blindness.

While seers like Samuel do show up now and again in the drama of biblical narrative, the more significant fact is that they so rarely come to explain the divine will. Rather, they appear to take their cue from narrators who themselves decline to comment. *Figure it out for yourself*, the biblical writers imply in these narratives that encourage and even enable our further readings. The only "'editorial' comment" (170) we are likely to get is by way of omission, as in the type-scene of Saul at the well, though it can also come by way of dramatic counterpoint between contrasting scenes. What this ultimately suggests is that irony could well be the governing mode of biblical narrative and of God's ways.

So what kind of knowledge does irony permit? And knowledge of what? Here is perhaps the fundamental value of narrative indeterminacy in Alter's reading: "[A]n essential aim of the innovative technique of fiction worked out by the ancient Hebrew writers was to produce a certain indeterminacy of meaning … Meaning, perhaps for the first time in narrative literature, was conceived as a *process,* requiring continual revision—both in the ordinary sense and in the etymological sense of seeing again— continued suspension of judgment, weighing of multiple possibilities, brooding over gaps in the information provided" (12). In this nod at Wolfgang Iser's theory of

structural indeterminacy, Alter shows why his view of biblical narrative has more in common with reception theory than it has with the narratology of structuralists like Gérard Genette. It is not just that a structuralist narratology puts old wine in new bottles, as Alter implies by his distaste for its neologisms and abstract taxonomies; instead, the bottle is emptied of any content at all in a refusal to look at "what a sequence means," focusing rather, as Jonathan Culler has said, on "the nature of the system underlying the event" (Culler 31). What structuralists deny, in short, is the existence of the author, much less of a speaking subject; their concentration on discursive codes tends to speak us more than we speak them, putting structuralism on the side of a mechanistic Calvinism in the free-will/ determinism debate. Only here, it is language as an impersonal system, not eternal predestination, which determines everything; impersonal processes rather than a personal author in dialogue with human agents are the source. So the method is finally antithetical to biblical narrative in its celebration of providential design and readerly freedom.

Nor is Alter's reading more Pelagian than it is Calvinist in its endorsement of the freedom to be found in biblical narrative. Contrary to a poststructuralist like Jacques Derrida who makes "freeplay" the only solution in a general and pervasive "absence of

the transcendental signified" (Derrida 249), Alter finds an author revealed in the biblical narratives who can still delight in the play of language. "Genesis," as he reminds us, "is not *Pale Fire,* but all fiction, including the Bible, is in some sense a form of play. Play in the sense I have in mind enlarges rather than limits the range of meanings of the text" (46). But for him, that range of meanings in the text is produced by the encoded intent of the author, and must be realized by a reader who has to decode and even decipher that hidden intent. Since biblical narrative, as the pre-condition of its being, dramatizes its need to reconcile God's will with human freedom—or the providential plan with historical contingency—the reader, like the biblical characters, is always on trial in this type of narrative. Finally, it is the reader who is left to make meaning between the gaps of the text and in the uncertainties of history. For the divine author's meaning is not transcendent but immanent in the world, not explicit but implicit in the text, not coercive but solicitous of human understanding. By our engagement with the text and its processes of making meaning, we are assured that a larger design waits to be realized.

In another sense, the content of the form of biblical narrative explains the programmatic resistance of poststructuralist theory to commonplace ideas in western

culture of *speech* and *presence* and *consciousness,* much less of *referent, authority,* and *centre.* In a systematic way, Derrida and his followers set out a series of hierarchical oppositions to be overturned— speech by writing, presence by absence, authority by freeplay, centre by margin—in order to displace the system of western metaphysics. But the biblical narratives do not really privilege either side of the binary, even if their overwhelming preference for dialogue implies a necessary metaphysics of presence. Rather, we find in them a continuing dialectic of human speech-as-presence with an absent, if written omniscience, an absence, as we have seen, that enables readerly freedom and engenders a new dialectic of freedom and authority. On the one hand, this form of narrative requires us to feel the urgent presence of characters from three millennia ago; on the other hand, it asks us to view it here and now as writing, as something iterable and evocative of a wide range of meanings, while setting formal limits upon the play of that meaning.[11]

Those agnostics of meaning who see little behind language but more language in an infinite regress of the signifier would still have to undo the lasting effects of biblical

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[11] To that extent, I prefer to read Derrida's deconstruction, to which I am deeply indebted, in the context of media change, as I have tried to suggest here in reading the shift from a oral epic to the written culture of the Hebrew writers, or as I have done elsewhere in rewording the gauntlet Derrida throws down in "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing," in *Of Grammatology,* which I rewrite as "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Cinema" in *Media, Memory, and the First World War.* See also my discussion of Derrida and digital communications in *Imagined Nations* (2003), 71, 224.

narrative in Western culture to realize the Nietzschean project of demonstrating emptiness at the heart of human history, and the self-cancelling movement in human thought itself. For the bible has managed to produce a form of consciousness and a mode of knowledge which unite those oppositions being used to dethrone consciousness and to deny the possibility of knowledge.

As even this brief survey of Alter's work should suggest, an art form—the written bible—which asks so much of its readers is not likely to be free of ideological and political implications, not when its narrative procedures underlie the way we continue to think in our culture about the meaning of history and the value of freedom. And yet these values are not in themselves immutable; they depend upon a more explicit understanding, such as Professor Alter gives us, of how it is needful to gain a more informed sense of biblical narrative, so that this telling form which continues to hold us in its play of destiny and freedom, of presence and absence, will not be entirely emptied of its shaping content.

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"Decisions in Darkness: Noir Influence in *The Naked Spur* (1953)"

by Debbie Cutshaw, Reno, Nevada

"Yes I killed him. I killed him for the money and for a woman. I didn't get the money and I didn't get the woman. Pretty isn't it?"

Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) in *Double Indemnity* (1944).

Violence, moral ambiguity, murky characters and plenty of action are all characteristics of film noir. We tend to think of only gangster or detective films as noir, but critic Paul Schrader prefers to define film noir by tone rather than genre, also noting that it works out its conflicts visually rather than thematically (Grant 182). Additionally, it appears when film noir was changing in the late fifties, so were western films. Thomas Elsasser writes that Noir film characters' psychotic behaviors were

slowing down, and behavior was not as raucous. He notes that in Mann's westerns "the madness at the heart of James Stewart's characters only occasionally breaks through an otherwise calm and controlled surface, like a strong and subterranean current suddenly appearing above ground as an inhuman and yet somehow poetically apt thirst for vengeance and primitive biblical justice, where the will to survive is linked to certain old fashioned cultural and moral values of dignity, honor, and respect" (295).

The Naked Spur (1953) does not begin as a typical film noir movie. Its brilliant Technicolor opening shot of the Rocky Mountains is joined by a second close-up of an unknown cowboy's boot and somewhat iconic silver spur ready to move within saddle and horse.   However, western movies can be a natural vehicle for use of some film noir camera techniques, and also story motifs, plots, themes, or conflicts. "…it is the connotations which film noir repeatedly creates that are telling. The dark streets become emblems of alienation; a figure's unrelenting gaze becomes obsessive; the entire environment becomes hostile, chaotic, deterministic" (Silver 9). Anthony Mann, the director of *The Naked Spur*, uses these patterns, and his past film noir experience in this western, and does so without distancing or distracting the audience. Critic Terrence Rafferty notes that the protagonists played by Stewart in Mann's westerns are like "noir heroes, mighty ambiguous characters motivated either by ignoble emotions

like the desire for revenge or by the urge to distance themselves from an unsavory, violent past" (Eliot 251).   Still, *The Naked Spur* is not the first western to be analyzed or compared to film noir. The 1947 western, *Pursued,* has been called the greatest Noir western; a cited example in the movie being how coin tosses, used in deciding who gets shot, determine turning points for characters (Simmon 267). In addition, the obsession to kill an illegitimate child hangs over purser and pursued. Another Noir western, a 1951 B movie, *Crooked River,* depicts an outlaw washing dishes with his sister until a fellow disgruntled gang member throws lye in his face stating, "So long, I don't think you'll be seeing anymore" (272).

Most Noir films were produced in the 40s and 50s; critics saw its artistic rise as a response to World War II and its aftermath. A definition of *film noir* states that it is "a grouping of disparate films made according to intellectual taste and preferences originally French…film identified as *dark cinema* offer a bleak vision of contemporary life in American cities, which are presented as populated by the amoral, the alienated, the criminally minded, and the helpless" (Palmer 6). The *term* film noir was first used in print in 1946 by Nino Frank who provided the examples of *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), *Laura* (1944), and *Double Indemnity* (1944); all movies which place blame on women for a crime (8). The French critics, Borde and Chaumerton, used the word *noir*

to describe American films of pre World War II until 1958 (xii).

Examples of Noir films encapsulate the *chapter* titles in Palmer's book, "*Hollywood's Dark Cinema: Dark Love*: the noir crime melodrama"; "*Discovering the Darkness*: the Noir Detective Film"; "*Lost in the Dark*: The Noir Thriller"; and "*Trapped in the Dark*: The Noir Woman's Picture." Critics debate *Citizen Kane* (1940) and *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) as the beginning of Noir, and see its end as either *Touch of Evil* and *Party Girl*, both made in 1958 (Schwartz xi). Some neo-Noir films include *Harper* (1966) and *Chinatown* (1974), with *Body Heat* (1981) being criticized as a Noir rip off of Billy Wilder's classic, *Double Indemnity*.

On the other hand, Anthony Mann, Noir director, turns the environment of the Colorado Rocky Mountains into a glamorous chase with existential and Noir-like conflicts for both his immoral and marginally good characters to traverse. But, Mann does not completely adhere to the Noir code; he presents evil sympathetically and virtue does not entirely triumph in the end. He cannot entirely escape his Noir roots, and so brings us a bleak outward and internalized vision in that fond American creation, the Western.

Anthony Mann's first western, *Devil's Doorway* (1950), was applauded in its use of Noir for exhibiting a transition from his earlier crime genre movies. Robert Taylor is

miscast as a Medal of Honor Shoshone who returns from the Civil War to face problems of racial assimilation and cultural identity. After arriving in Wyoming, Lance Poole is lectured by his father that he's just another Indian. Regardless, Lance begins to make money, announcing: "No man, red or white, will ever be turned away from my door." When his father reminds him that no one likes a rich Indian, Lance is assisted in cultural and legal matters by his white female friend who happens to be a lawyer. Mann and his cinematographer, John Alton, use hard edged black and white images and unsettling angles to show the town's subsequent destructive quest against Lance, his culture, and his forbidden doomed romantic relationship (Simmon 272).

Of course, it is natural that *The Naked Spur* contains Noir elements. In the book, *Noir Anxiety,* the authors see film noir as "a visual manifestation of a process of identity formation" (211). They see film noir showing mechanisms responsible for building and consolidating identity: displacement, condensation, repression, matricide, and uncanny doubling. Interestingly, the authors view the same identity factors as being responsible for producing objective threats such as fate, the good/bad mother, the servant, and the dummy (ibid). Some characters in *The Naked Spur* do fit this formula: Jesse Tate, the prospector as the dummy; Lt. Roy Anderson as the servant, and Lina Patch as a good motherly type, but who also exhibits qualities of a

substandard femme fatale.

The Naked Spur is best described as an edgy or psychological western. And, as in a Noir film, there is indeed anxiety over ambiguous spaces in this film. The protagonist Kemp is homeless and somewhat directionless until he finds the correct trail again. Mann shows the past creeping up on Kemp, a good man, but recently cuckolded by his ex- fiancée who not only leaves him while he fights for the Union lient the Civil War, but sells his ranch, and departs with another man. To buy back his ranch, Kemp schemes to collect reward money for capturing Ben Vandergroat, and a bounty hunter chase begins. The audience is introduced to Kemp as "Marshall," a title he does not correct until challenged by Ben, the psychotic but pleasant outlaw. Kemp proceeds to distance everyone, even kindly, most likeable Jesse, the luckless prospector, who assists him for pay. Kemp's image is classic Noir: an obsessive, untrusting, misogynistic male on the road to becoming a victim of his own paranoia.

When Kemp and Jesse cannot successfully approach the outlaw Ben, who is hiding above them and throwing rocks and boulders down from an angled skyscraper-like mountain top, the marginal bad guy, Lt. Roy Anderson appears. Kemp and Roy look up the mountain straining to see—as one would crane one's neck to gaze at a tall city building in a Noir gangster film.   Additionally, the Army Lieutenant comes

complete with dishonorable discharge papers, and a back story of shady sex with an Indian chief's daughter. Being marginally bad, the Lieutenant easily climbs the rocks to the outlaw's hideaway to capture him. However, when jumped on by Lina, the outlaw's tomboyish femme fatale, Kemp quickly rescues Roy which momentarily stabilizes the environment.

Mann uses the mountains and other pleasing scenery to lull the viewer into believing that we will see a typical western: the good Marshall bringing the bad man to justice. Obviously, the Rocky Mountains and pine trees are not pure Noir settings of rainy, dirty, black and white urban cities. Instead, the mountains help to denote the powerlessness of a Noir chase or story line. The riding path is pine tree lined and twisted with open and blind turns. The environment is both beneficial and hostile; the audience is startled as much as the horses and characters when rocks and boulders roll down from the outlaw's mountain ledge hideaway. The anxiety continues when the audience, along with Roy and Jesse, simultaneously discover that Kemp is not a Marshall. Ben gains sympathy and credibility with the audience when he tells Jesse and Roy that Kemp is not a Marshall; instead, Kemp is chasing him only for the reward. When Ben produces a true copy of his wanted poster, group dynamics change. A sympathetic or likeable outlaw is not part of most western vittles.   Subsequently,

Kemp's two new acquaintances want a cut of the $5,000 reward. Kemp must agree;

thus, Ben's existential evil showing more strength than good.

Noir style involves an off balance arrangement of human figures in the film

frame. (Remember the hand held camera shots in *Touch of Evil*, or the funhouse mirror

shots in *Lady from Shanghai*?) Mann, a former stage manager, films the characters in

various unbalanced, unharmonious acts and settings. For instance, at the film's

beginning, the outlaw is throwing rocks, and pushing boulders to cause landslides to

keep Kemp and Jesse away. It is not discovered that he is performing this "un-bandit-

like" act until Roy stealthily approaches him. Then, we observe Ben's gun belt is

bullet-less, but Roy orders him to drop it anyway; another unbalanced, unmanly act

which Ben reluctantly performs. Additionally, when Ben is captured, Lina struggles

with Roy, and bites him, until he knocks her down. Prior to that, Ben and Roy wrestle

in the dirt, until Ben almost wins.

As everyone who has ridden a horse knows, the very act of horseback riding is

unbalanced. Therefore, the director also chooses crooked mountain paths, especially

treacherous when Kemp falls off his loosened saddle, previously sabotaged by Ben.

Mann had once stated that having evil or pain occur in beautiful country only

heightens the drama; a later example being a close up of Will Lockhart's face when his

hand is shot at point blank range in the 1955 western, *The Man From Laramie*. Kemp's

painful fall from his horse in the majestic Rockies fits this formula. In addition, rocks

and cliffs appear to indicate or hide bad men or occurrences, while pine trees border

scenes with the good men, Jesse and Kemp, while also allowing much freedom of

action (Cutshaw 13).

Later, Lina's role is questioned and remains unbalanced or precarious until the

end of the film. Her tomboy appearance is not threatening, but the audience must

continuously decide levels of her arrangement with Ben. Is she sexually active with

Ben? Will she trick Kemp, so Ben can escape? Is their relationship merely like

brother and sister? Does being the daughter of Ben's dead outlaw friend make her

inherently bad?

Mann further uses the only female character as a balancing act to help drive the

story and keep the males off guard, although her actions do vacillate from daughter to

nurse to love interest. She appears not to be immoral, although she rides with Ben

who demands frequent back massages: "Can you do me Lina?" Though, when she

denies being Ben's girl, Kemp begins to be interested in her. Lina further destabilizes

herself by doing the right thing by nursing Kemp. Later, the two interested males, Roy

and Kemp, do not challenge each other's mild interest in her until Ben later eggs them

on.

Her character mostly remains passive until Kemp's attraction to her as both friend and possible lover. Noir anxiety grows stronger as Kemp becomes weaker both physically and mentally. Thus, Lina forces herself to change and control his existential drive at the end. She first becomes the model of a good woman for Kemp, after he discovers that she has nursed him during a nightly, unconscious fever. Secondly, he commends her for standing by her man, Ben; in so doing implying a sexual relationship which she firmly denies. As noted in film noir, "Women are victims of fate or circumstances who frustrate male desire to act as obstacles in the hero's path to fulfillment" (Palmer 139). Lina is first a minor threat when viewed as a tomboy; later she becomes a desired sexual object to Howard Kemp when he sees her as a woman. After she nurses his gunshot wound, and learns about his ex-fiancée, she appears to care about him more; therefore the film approaches the road to romance, slowly easing out of noir-ness.

Human characteristics in Noir include secrecy, violence, anti-social behavior, and greed. These personality traits primarily give Ben the power, first evident by showing how an unarmed, rock throwing outlaw's capture requires the skill of three armed men. Ben maintains his power and his marginal likeability until the end of the film when he

murders the kindly and duped Jesse in cold blood. In contrast, Kemp becomes less powerful when he loses his secret identity, becomes less anti-social within the group, and is forced to share the uncollected reward. When injured, he truly needs Roy and Jesse's help to transport Ben, and gives up more power. Subsequently, time and impending bad weather force new decisions. All of the characters realize that more danger awaits them. They barely escape an Indian attack and a more hostile environment. The outlaw Ben appears to be most aware of the power shifts, and so keeps on manipulating characters; for instance, getting Jesse to help him escape by promising to show him a phony gold prospecting site.

Since this is a western, Mann cannot use a crummy noir hotel or a dirty city alley, so a climatic scene is set inside a wet, dark cave, taken for shelter by the travelers on a rainy noir night. Lina is instructed by Ben to distract Kemp so he can escape. She reluctantly does so by innocent and enjoyable banter, which ends in their mutual kiss. When the outlaw is quickly recaptured, a violent Kemp gives Ben a gun, and tries to force a shootout with the outlaw, who refuses to fight back. Roy also wants the outlaw dead, but declines action, possibly realizing that his life would also be in jeopardy with the violent Kemp, who now has more control. Kemp's decision in darkness is resolved by his letting Ben live, which causes a major change in the group. All are

more aware and distrusting of each other's motives. Afterwards, a later night scene urges Ben's second escape attempt, which is successful due to his cajoling Jesse to help him upon promise of gold. Notably, Ben's power surges occur in the dark, an obvious metaphor of evil. Significantly, there are no remaining night scenes after the outlaw's second successful escape attempt.

Jesse's cold blooded murder by Ben is the turning point of the film. Lina actively chooses to work against the outlaw. She rebels by not letting him use her as a decoy or noir- like obstacle for the pursuing Kemp and Roy. Ben physically hurts her to prevent her warning the others. The audience can no longer ignore Ben's past and present evil.

The film's action increases during the attempt to capture Ben after his second successful escape and his murder of Jesse. We see and hear Mann's choreography of a violent river moving through angled, craggy cliffs. The harsh sunlight and long camera shots make the people look smaller. Again, the outlaw hides on top of a mountain and awaits the hero's arrival. But, this time he has a rifle and a bird's eye view of the two followers, Kemp and Roy. However, the most violently edited angled shot occurs when Kemp uses his spur as a climbing tool to Ben's mountain top hideaway. To save himself from being shot, he throws his spur at Ben's face, and thus lets Roy easily

shoot the outlaw who then falls in the raging river.

Greed, a Noir ingredient, remains center stage when Roy dies while trying to recover the dead outlaw's body from the river, followed by Kemp's dragging in the body under the protests of Lina. But, when he sees himself becoming like the outlaw, a crying Kemp decides not to collect the reward money, and instead buries the dead man. Consequently, the final movie scene shows the young lovers riding to California together; apparently seen as an ambiguous journey by some critics. The audience could either perceive their journey as a happy ending, or as ambiguous. It is not certain that they rejoin the community (Tuska 97). But, if one accepts that the young couple does re-join the community, then the ending, of course, is *not* typical film Noir. I agree with the critic, Jim Kitses who does see Mann's heroes as joining the community after being literally beaten into line (ibid).

The Naked Spur is by no means a concise example of film noir. It would be 100% Noir if Howard Kemp, bounty hunter, had indeed killed Ben in cold blood inside the cave, and all of the males had fought over possession of the body (and Lina) while traveling to Kansas to collect the reward. To be Noir, there would also need to be narration, flashbacks, and a place name title (remember Sunset Blvd.), or numbers in the title, such as *Naked Spur of Kansas City, 1868*. However, what also keeps it from

being a true Noir film can be summed up by Mann: "A western is a wonderful thing to do because you take a group of actors who have acted on the stage or who have acted in rooms and now you take them out into the elements and the elements make them much greater as actors than if they were in a room. Because they have to shout above the winds, they have to suffer, they have to climb mountains…" (100).

Additionally, in the essay, "The Evolution of the Western," Andre Bazin claims that Mann's effortless looking style and frankness help show real life themes in his movies. (A frank style and real life themes are certainly Noir ingredients.) But, Bazin further notes that anyone who wants to know what a real western is should see *Devil's Doorway* (1950), *Bend of the River* (1952), *The Far Country* (1954)…and *The Naked Spur* (1953), the finest of all westerns (85).

Finally, the genre of film noir seems to be about losing your way, either literally or metaphorically, losing your grip on reality, losing your identity, or just believing that you are experiencing any one of these three things. In the Noir movie, *Out of the Past* (1947), Jane Greer asks Robert Mitchum: "Is there any way to win?" He replies: There's a way to lose more slowly." Howard Kemp does lose slowly, and he wins the girl in the end, but he also inadvertently causes the deaths of three men. Yet, the movie censors let him live. Why? Perhaps because the film is still a western and he is

basically a good guy, although parts of this movie can be loosely lassoed by its Noir

celluloid cousins.

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King Kojong and the Foreigners: A Tale of Broken Promises

by John Butler, University College of the North, The Pas, Manitoba

The Japanese Murder the Queen of Korea

The Japanese, Mackenzie wrote disgustedly, now "walked as conquerors" (49), and made constant further demands on the Koreans which finally drew protests from foreign diplomats and also found an echo in an unexpected quarter. The new Japanese minister-resident was Count Kaoru Inoue,[21] who, as Foreign Minister, had asked the Korean government to call off its assassination plans on Kim Ok-kyun. Mackenzie called him one of "the two best Japanese administrators sent to Korea" (50), the other being Marquis Ito.[22] Emperor Meiji, on the other hand, seems, initially at least, to have mistrusted Inoue; "he is aware of Councillor Inoue's deviousness," wrote Masayoshi

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[21] Count Kaoru Inoue (1836-1915) was an interesting character. At an early age he had been involved in anti-foreign activities, including an act of terrorism in Edo (1852), when he and the future Marquis Ito set fire to the British Legation! His attitude changed some years later when he was picked as part of a group of young men sent to England to study (1863), and he came to believe that foreign ideas were actually good for Japan. His first important post was as Foreign Minister (1885-87).

[22] Marquis Hirobumi Ito (1841-1909) was perhaps the best-known Japanese statesman of his times. He was the man who drafted the Japanese Constitution (1889), and had travelled several times to Europe, starting in 1863, when he went to study in England. By 1881 Ito practically ran the Japanese government as its first Prime Minister, an office he would hold four times. Ito supported the annexation of Korea by Japan, and was assassinated by a Korean patriot.

Ogi, a court chamberlain, in 1881, "and dislikes him" (Keene 354). Now Inoue ringingly condemned the influx of Japanese to Korea, accusing them of being unco-operative and exploitative. "If the Japanese continue in their arrogance and rudeness," Inoue asserted, "all respect and love to them will be lost and there will remain hatred and enmity towards them" (Mackenzie 50). Inoue also genuinely supported reform, and he arranged for Pak Yong-hyo to return from exile to take up the post of Prime Minister.

This enlightened move seemed a good one, but when Queen Min found out that part of Pak's programme was to limit the power of the monarchy further, she ordered his immediate arrest. Pak, tipped off just in time, left Korea once more. Unfortunately, so did Count Inoue, who in September 1895 was succeeded as minister-resident by Viscount Goro Miura, described by Mackenzie as "an old soldier, a Buddhist of the Zen school, and an extreme ascetic" (51). Keene cites a contemporary source as observing that Miura "spent so much time reading the sutras that he was known, not very originally, as 'the sutra-reading minister'" (514). It would be the pious, philosophical Miura, acting in conjunction with and at the urging of Fukashi Sugimura, the Secretary of the Japanese Legation, who would engineer one of the most cowardly and heinous acts perpetrated by the Japanese in Korea, the murder of Queen Min. "In his uncomplicated, soldierly manner," Keene writes euphemistically, "he apparently decided that the only remedy for the situation was to get rid of the queen, the major obstacle to good relations with Japan" (514).

The murder of Queen Min has been written about by numerous historians, and recently she has achieved cult-like status with a large-budget Korean film, *The Last*

Empress, giving a sympathetic portrait of her and emphasising her Korean patriotism. Unfortunately, the inaccuracies begin with the title, as it was only after Min's death, and indeed partly as a result of it, that Kojong declared Korea an empire as a protest against the Japanese and bestowed a posthumous title on his wife. As a tourist attraction, a full-scale re-enactment of Min's marriage to Kojong has been enacted, complete with authentic music and costumes, a truly spectacular sight which can be viewed on several Korean web-sites. Both Isabella Bird and Frederick Mackenzie, working from contemporary accounts and whatever they saw for themselves, have given detailed accounts of the murder. Bird, in particular, was very sympathetic to the Queen, and her account is more personalised than Mackenzie's.

Frederick Mackenzie's analysis of the reasons for Queen Min's murder is direct and to the point. According to him, the idea to kill her was probably the brainchild of Sugimura rather than of Miura himself, although this is disputable. Sugimura believed, or so he told Miura, that the Queen was interfering as she never had before; her family had found their way back to influential posts, she wanted to get rid of the Japanese-controlled Korean force known as the Kunrentai, and she wanted to neutralise, by murder if necessary, any members of Kojong's government who were pro-Japanese. Miura, worried about the possibility of anti-Japanese violence, was wondering how he could resolve the situation when a solution presented itself in the form of a slight, elderly Korean gentleman who wished to see him with an interesting suggestion. It was, of course, the ubiquitous Tae-won Kun, who, Mackenzie tells us, "proposed to break into the palace, seize the King and assume real power" (51). Miura immediately conferred with Sugimura and Ryunosuke Okamoto, whom Keene calls "an

extremist....who had been a friend of the progressive Kim Ok-kyun" (513); these men immediately resolved to help the Tae-won Kun gain his objective by using the hated Kunrentai, who would be, if necessary, backed up by Japanese troops. In the course of achieving these ends, they would kill the Queen. The Tae-won Kun, together with his son Prince Yi-hwa, now once again a candidate for his brother's throne, gladly agreed to "a series of pledges drawn up by Sugimura" (Mackenzie 52) in return for Japanese help. It would all be done, the Japanese told the Tae-won Kun, by the end of September, 1895. Kenzo Adachi, the editor of a Japanese newspaper in Seoul and an acquaintance of Sugimura's, was recruited to round up some volunteers, whom he found in the local Japanese community as well as some Koreans, but he did not tell them why they were needed. "We'll have to go on a fox hunt one of these days," Miura had told him, asking "How many young people do you have at your place?" (Keene 514). Mackenzie states that it was Okamoto, not Miura, who made this statement (53). The Japanese who took part in the murder were a mixed lot; Lee refers to many of them as "drifters," people who were in Seoul to take advantage of Japanese power to further their own interests, whatever these happened to be.

Serendipity seemed to favour the conspirators, because soon after the meeting a statement was issued by the Korean Minister of War to the effect that indeed the Kunrentai should prepare itself for disbandment. Miura and Sugimoto sprang immediately into action, drew up a plan, and fired off orders with great efficiency. The official Japanese report, cited by Mackenzie, stated that "Miura told [the Japanese who were to guard the Tae-won Kun] that on the success of the enterprise depended the eradication of the evils that had done so much mischief in the Kingdom for the last

twenty years," He then, the report continued, "instigated them to despatch the Queen when they entered the palace." He instructed the Japanese police force to get ready, although he did not tell them exactly what for, and that if any man was off duty he was "to put on civilian dress" (53) and avail himself of a sword. Meanwhile, Okamoto was to escort the Tae-won Kun in a palanquin to the Kyongdokkung Palace from his residence with an armed party, meeting up with the Kunrentai men on the way. The minutes of the Japanese inquiry into the murder stated that "Miura Goro issued instructions to Major Umayahara Muhon....ordering him to facilitate the Tae won-Kun's entry into the palace by directing the disposition of the *Kunrentai* troops" (Keene 521), Once into the palace they were to search out and kill Queen Min. Let Mackenzie's words describe what followed:

> What happened after the Regent and the Japanese
> reached the palace? The party advanced, with the
> Kunrentai troops to the front. Behind them were the
> police, the officers in charge, and twenty-six Japan-
> ese. An inner group of these, about half of them, had special orders to find
> the Queen and kill her. The gates of the palace were in the hands of
> Japanese soldiers, so the conspirators had free admission. Most of the
> regular troops paraded outside, according to orders. Some were inside the
> grounds, accompanied by the rabble, and others moved to the sides of the
> palace, surrounding it to prevent any from escaping. A body of men
> attacked and broke down the wall near to the royal apartments. (77)

As the soldiers tried to smash the wall down, some of the Royal Bodyguards saw what was happening and attempted to stop them, but when they had taken some casualties, they retreated. Now the Japanese, swords and pistols at the ready, charged into the courtyard in front of the royal apartments, stationing some soldiers there whilst others

broke down the flimsy screen-doors to the rooms. King Kojong came in, angrily confronted them, and was rudely seized by Japanese soldiers waving a divorce document in his face which they tried to force him to put his name to, but "despite every threat, he refused to sign" (55), so the Japanese, frustrated, unceremoniously pushed him aside. When the Crown Prince had tried to defend his father, he had, according to one account, been "thrown onto the floor and beaten with a sword" (Lee, n.p.n.). This experience left a scar on the unfortunate young man, who later became Emperor Sunjong, which would never heal.

Now the killing started in earnest. As King Kojong was resolutely standing his ground, the Minister of the Royal Household, Yi Kyong-jik, intervened, attempting to stop the men from entering the royal apartments, but the Japanese shot him dead. Then they killed three ladies-in-waiting, "all of them beautiful," as the official Japanese report gratuitously recorded (Keene 516), hoping that one of them might be the Queen, who, of course, they had never seen. Mackenzie says that before they killed them they "dragged them round and round by their hair, and beat them, demanding that they should tell where the Queen was" (55), but they died saying nothing. Other terrified court ladies were also pushed around, shrieking with fear because they couldn't understand what the Japanese, brandishing swords and revolvers, were saying to them. The Japanese then threatened a Russian electrical engineer, Alexander Sabatin, who was in the palace at the time, but he, too, stood firm and refused to say anything which would help them find or identify the Queen. "He was....put in danger of his life because he would not tell," the official Korean account stated (Keene 516).[23]

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[23] Sabatin's account, suppressed for many years, has only recently been published in full. He later fled Korea in order to escape retaliation. What Sabatin actually did for a living seems to vary with the writers; Keene says he was an electrical engineer, Han thinks he was an architect.

Sabatin did not see the Queen being killed; he would not have known if he had, since he had never met her. His account reads:

> Having been seized by soldiers myself, when I was standing in the courtyard I saw 10-12 court ladies being dragged by the hair before they were thrown out of a window. Not a single court lady let out a cry to break the complete silence. In the last moments to the 15 minutes I stood in the courtyard, 5 Japanese men snarled as they rushed into the chambers, only to be seen dragging out one court lady by her hair.(Han, n.p.n.)

In this account, it would appear that the "court lady" Sabatin says he saw being dragged out by the snarling Japanese was in all likelihood Queen Min. Sabatin's report is also an eloquent testimony to the bravery of the court ladies, for it contradicts what Mackenzie was told about them. Another foreign eye-witness was General William Dye, an American soldier whom King Kojong had asked to help train Korean troops; he was ordered to get out by the Japanese but refused, although Adachi was to claim later that the "normally arrogant" Dye complied with their orders (Keene 826, n. 36).

It was Okamoto, or so he claimed later, who found "a little woman hiding in a corner, grabbed her head, and asked her if she were the Queen." Instead of answering, the woman forcibly broke free from Okamoto and ran out of the room, shouting for her son, which of course gave the Japanese the answer they needed, and they viciously slashed at her with their swords, for she had called out the name of Crown Prince Yi Ch'ok, who was also trying to hide, but had been dragged out of his concealment so they could force him to identify his mother. "It is not clear," Donald Keene writes, "who actually killed Queen Min. Okamoto Ryunosuke was accused of the murder, but

other men proudly took credit" (516). One Yasukichi Terasaki, a chemist, probably recruited by Adachi, made the claim in the official Japanese report; his tone is almost psychopathic:

> ....when we looked under the bedding, there was someone
> dressed exactly the same as the other court ladies, but
> quite self-possessed, not making a fuss, looking like some-
> body important, and this told us it was XX [*sic*]. Grabbing
> her by the hair, we dragged her from her hiding place.
> Just what you'd expect, she wasn't in the least bit ruff-
> led....I swung my sword down on her head. Nakamura was
> holding her by the hair, so his hand got slightly cut. I let
> her have it from the head, so one blow was enough to fin-
> ish her. (Keene 517)

What happened next was more horrific still, even though accounts are confused as to exactly how it took place. Mackenzie reported that the Japanese now "threw a bed-wrap around the Queen, probably not yet dead, and carried her to a grove of trees in the deer park not far away." There the men, who "had brought kerosene with them," piled wood on the bed-wrap and poured kerosene over it, setting it alight (56). Mackenzie, who may have later read the Japanese report, does not mention that before they burned the Queen the Japanese had "stripped her naked and examined her private parts" (Keene 517), the ultimate demeaning insult to both the woman and the Queen. One of the Japanese participants, Eijo Isujuka,[24] later wrote a report, later suppressed by the Japanese government, in which he stated that he and others had "stabbed [the

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[24] Eijo Isujuka (1877-?) claimed that he worked for the Korean Ministry of the Interior, although it is not at all clear what he did there. He participated in the murder, but seems to have been overcome by remorse, or perhaps fear that he would, as a relative nonentity, become a scapegoat. His report speaks of "disgusting acts" performed by the Japanese on the Queen's body, and he found it "extremely difficult....to describe what happened to the Queen" (Quoted in Lee, "Japanese Raped the Last Queen of Korea," n.p.n.). What is clear is that he wanted someone (perhaps as well as himself) to be brought to justice.

Queen] several times and stripped her stark naked. We examined her genitals (we could laugh or cry in anger), and then poured oil on her body and set her on fire" (Lee, n.p.n.). The official Korean report, however, states succinctly that "it is not certain whether....[the Queen] was actually dead," and Keene writes that it "did not exaggerate the circumstances of the murder" (516). The assassins even stole articles of value from the Queen's body and possessions from her room.

When all was over, Miura ordered a military attaché, Major Niiro, to send off a terse telegramme to the Japanese Army Chief of Staff which stated simply: "Queen dead and King safe" (Kim 27). This horrible crime, according to a Korean diplomat at the time, "did more harm to Japan in the eyes of the Western world than anything else at the time" (Keene 517). With the Queen really dead this time and the King rendered powerless, a virtual prisoner in his palace, the Tae-won Kun once again crawled out from under Japanese protection to place himself in power. Mackenzie says that Okamoto and his men simply "assembled" outside the Tae-won Kun's residence and escorted his palanquin to Kyongbokkung where he waited outside as the murder took place. Keene, citing different accounts, has Okamoto and his men, "a party of Japanese civilians and policemen, some dressed in Korean uniforms," actually barging into the residence and waking up the Tae-won Kun, who, "fast asleep when the Japanese arrived," was "still in a daze," and "dawdled over preparations." He gathered his wits enough to ask the Japanese to swear that they would not harm King Kojong and the Crown Prince (514). In any case, half-asleep or not, the Tae-won Kun had been near at hand in his palanquin as the Japanese assassins and their Korean accomplices scaled the wall of the Kyongbokkung Palace and broke down the doors. "Almost before the

body was alight," the disgusted Mackenzie wrote, "the Regent was being borne in triumph to the palace" (56). Alexander Sabatin wrote that he himself saw the Tae-won Kun "all smiles" directly after the murder (Quoted in Lee, n.p.n.). If the Japanese had ever needed any help in destroying Queen Min's reputation, they now got it from the Tae-won Kun; he had a royal decree drawn up, which Mackenzie says was "forged" (56), and had it published. In it, the King "stated" that the Queen, who was, it claimed incredibly, alive and in hiding, "would again come forward," and that the King had been hitherto "helpless and full of fear of her party, and so could not dismiss or punish her." Now, King Kojong purportedly continued, he was no longer afraid: "We hereby depose her from the rank of Queen and reduce her to the lowest class" (57). It might have been the same document that they had tried to force him to sign before, with a few revisions.

Having heard horrible stories from, one assumes, General Dye and Alexander Sabatin, the Russian and American representatives went immediately to the Japanese Legation and demanded to see Viscount Miura. Meanwhile King Kojong, "trembling, broken, fearful of being poisoned," had shut himself up in the palace and would not come out. Food had to be brought in from the outside, which was done by foreign diplomats and missionaries, who were still permitted access to the King. Miura, very collected and serene, simply told the enraged diplomats disingenuously that the incident, whether or not it involved Japanese, which he didn't specify either way, was none of their business. "Koreans sometimes deliberately pose as Japanese," he added, "aware that otherwise they will be looked down upon. That's why they sometimes use Japanese swords. And that's why we must investigate, to discover how many were real

Japanese and how many were fakes" (Keene 518). Miura then politely wished them good day and said nothing else. One action he did take was to try and make sure that a telegramme based on Dye's eye-witness account sent by the *New York Herald* reporter Colonel John Cockerill to his paper never left the Seoul Telegraph Office, and for a few days he succeeded. When people did finally read about it (October 14) and Miura was questioned again, he remained insouciant and merely said he thought that the Tae-won Kun must have engineered and led the whole operation using Korean dissidents and Kunrentai soldiers afraid that they were about to be demobilised. This is what the Japanese Legation gave out in their official statement. Miura made sure he had sent in his own version of what had happened by October 9, but, as Keene points out, it was "vaguely phrased" and "a fabrication" (518).

Cockerill, Mackenzie states, now "wrote with the utmost frankness about what he had learned" (57), exposing Miura to the world for the lying assassin that he was. In Tokyo, Donald Keene tells us, Emperor Meiji "was much disturbed" when he read Miura's report; he thought that it seemed rather unclear, and remarked ominously that "Once Goro makes up his mind about something, he doesn't hesitate to carry it out" (518), indicating that he had some suspicions. On October 9 the concerned Emperor sent Reijiro Kawashima, a military attaché, to find out exactly what had happened from the Army General Staff, and on October 17 Miura was ordered to return to Japan, because Kawashima had grave doubts which confirmed the Emperor's own reservations. A few days later Prime Minister Ito dispatched Count Inoue to Seoul on a return visit, this time as ambassador extraordinary in charge of damage control, or, as Mackenzie wryly put it, Japan was carrying through "her usual plan of following

periods of great harshness by spells of mildness" (58). Inoue was, whataver his government's motives might have been, the right man at this time, a genuine statesman who "seems to have had the interests of Koreans at heart," and his wife Takeko had been a friend of the Queen's (Keene 512). Prime Minister Ito wanted Inoue to give the Emperor's condolences to King Kojong, and in general express the Japanese government's regret and sorrow over what had transpired. On October 13 the Japanese government decreed that no-one could travel to Korea without formal authorisation. A new Resident, Jutaro Komura,[25] was appointed, and the Emperor shortly afterwards formally deprived Viscount Miura of his noble rank. The Japanese who had been involved in the murder were shipped back to Japan, as Keene tells us, in three batches (520).

Meanwhile Ito told Inoue that he was to inform the Korean government that the Miura and his confederates had committed "a violation of policies that hitherto had been followed by the Japanese government" (Keene 519) and the Emperor now personally expressed his regrets about the death of Queen Min to the outgoing Korean ambassador. Mackenzie cites Ito, whom he admired, as stating that "If [Japan] does not repudiate this usurpation on the part of the Tai Won Kun [*sic*], she must lose the respect of every civilized government on earth" (57). What the statement shows, unfortunately, is that Ito was either ignorant or in denial; to him it seemed perhaps unthinkable that Japanese diplomatic personnel, or indeed any other Japanese, could have actually carried out the murder or even helped plan it, unless they had somehow

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[25] Count Jutaro Komura (1855-1911) was a graduate of Harvard University (1877). A career diplomat, he was fluent in English (relatively rare for a Japanese diplomat at the time) and had served as Chargé d' affaires in Beijing. He would go on to Washington and St. Petersburg as Minister-Resident, and returned to China in 1901, after a short stint as Foreign Minister. He was ennobled in 1904, and also received the KCB from King Edward VII. In 1905 he was appointed a member of the Privy Council.

been suborned by the Tae-won Kun. The subsequent court-martial and investigation into the Queen Min murder would bear out Ito's denial, although he cannot be held directly responsible for the fact that there was, the official report ran, "no sufficient evidence to prove that any of the accused actually committed the crime originally meditated by them" (Keene 520). As King Kojong's American legal adviser, Clarence Greathouse,[26] who had given evidence at the court-martial, had been unable to make any headway, even though he had pressed the King's case as strongly as he could. What exact role the Japanese government had in ensuring that the court did not find Miura and his men guilty is not known. However, Miura himself, Okamoto and Sugimura were all acquitted, and, as Mackenzie wrote bitterly, "Miura became a popular hero, and his friends and defenders tried openly to justify the murder" (58).[27]

Count Inoue rose to the occasion as soon as he reached Seoul by issuing a decree ratified by Kojong rehabilitating Queen Min and even giving her a new, posthumous title, the "Guileless, revered" Queen. A new temple was built to enshrine her precious memory, known as the Temple of Virtuous Accomplishment, and "twenty-two officials of high rank were commissioned to write her biography (Mackenzie 58). King Kojong, a virtual prisoner in his palace, now decided to act, and Carl Waeber, the Russian minister, was at hand to help him. Waeber and his wife had been very friendly with the Queen, and had backed her up in her attempts to limit Japanese interference in Korean affairs. Even if Waeber's intentions were partly political, given the problems

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[26] Clarence Greathouse (1845-1899), a lawyer who had been United States Consul-General in Yokohama, was hired by King Kojong as a legal adviser in 1891, and subsequently occupied a permanent post in the Korean government as Vice-President of the Home Office. He was still in the royal service at his death.

[27] This was not the end of Miura's career. He ended up as a Privy Councillor, and died at eighty in 1926. He never admitted either complicity or guilt in the murder of Queen Min.

with Russo-Japanese relations, there was no doubt of his affection for the royal family. Mackenzie praises him as "a man of very fine type,,,,backed by a wife as gifted and benevolent as himself" (58). Kim Hong-nuik,[28] a rather shady and dubious Korean who represented himself as working for the Russian Legation, served as go-between for King Kojong, who, acting perhaps on Kim's suggestion and certainly with Waeber's knowledge, now planned a daring escape from the palace under the noses of the Japanese and the Tae-won Kun. Here is Mackenzie's account:

> A little before seven in the morning the King and Crown Prince left the palace secretly, in closed chairs, such as women use. Their escape was carefully planned. For more than a week before, the ladies of the palace had caused a number of chairs to go in and out by the several gates in order to familiarize the guards with the idea that they were paying many visits. So when, early in the morning, two women's chairs were carried out by the attendants, the guards took no special notice.(58-9)

The King and Crown Prince Yi Ch'ok now headed straight for the Russian Legation, where they arrived "very much agitated and trembling" (59) and were cordially received by Waeber. The Tae-won Kun and his Cabinet were dumbfounded when they were informed of Kojong's escape, not least because, as Mackenzie noted, "it is the custom in Korea for the King to work at night and sleep in the morning" (59), and

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[28] Kim Hong-nuik (1860-1898) had been working for the Russians as an interpreter since 1888. His loyalty paid off, and Kojong rewarded him by making him Governor of Seoul, Chief of Nobility, and Vice-Minister of Education. Kim even had his own telephone line to the palace and the Russian Legation after the King had emerged from protection. He promptly proceeded to reward all his friends and relations, becoming so hated that he was attacked by assassins (February 1898) and had to be rescued by British and Korean soldiers. After various ins and outs with the Russians and with Emperor Kojong, Kim turned against his sovereign and hatched a plot to poison Kojong's morning coffee. The Crown Prince had a cup and was very ill; some accounts say that he was rendered impotent thereafter. On October 10, 1898, Kim was executed by strangulation. See Eun-jung Han, "The Russian Interpreter," for more details.

they were not imaginative enough to think that he might act out of his designated role! When the news reached the streets, citizens of Seoul began to show their support for the King by assembling in large numbers at various places, sometimes bearing weapons; former court ministers hastily repaired to the Russian Legation to express loyalty, and foreign representatives began arriving to pay respects, including a shamefaced Komura, who was the last to show up. "For him," Mackenzie gleefully recorded, "this move meant utter defeat" (59). Mackenzie's rejoicing was sadly premature.

King Kojong summarily dismissed the Tae-won Kun's cabinet, sacked his Japanese advisers, and issued a royal proclamation ordering Korean soldiers to defend their King and execute traitors. If the soldiers didn't take the last part of the King's order seriously some of the citizens did, and mobs attacked former ministers, murdering several of them and ransacking their houses. Victims included the Prime Minister, Kim Hong-chip, who had been arrested by the police, but the latter had decided that protection of the Tae-won Kun's hated ministers was not in their mandate, and looked the other way as the mob beat him to death. Kojong, from the security of the Russian Legation, now demanded that the men who murdered his wife must be severely punished, and told Komura this in no uncertain terms. Komura was stupid enough to suggest that the King leave the protection of the Russian Legation and return to the palace, but he was brusquely sent away with scorn for his pains. Japanese military units were now ordered disbanded, and Japanese advisers in all walks of government found themselves dismissed from their posts. The Tae-won Kun, now finally and permanently in disgrace, retired to his palace, where he died in 1898, a sad,

broken old man. A photograph shows the King duly clad in mourning white for the death of a father who, for his own selfish political designs, had plotted to murder his own son's wife, had deviously worked against the King for decades, and who must surely shoulder some share of the blame for the doom of the Yi dynasty. In spite of all this, filial loyalty, at least in its visible form, prevailed to the end. As Confucius had said, "When your parents are alive, comply with the rites in serving them; when they die, comply with the rites in burying them; comply with the rites in sacrificing to them" (63).

In February 1897 King Kojong did, finally, return to the Changdokkung Palace, only to issue a   further decree changing his regnal name to Kwang-mu (Martial Brilliance)[29] and declaring Korea no longer a mere kingdom, but the "Great Han Empire," with himself as Emperor, now equal in power and status to the rulers of China and Japan (October 14, 1897). The name Han was derived from *Hanguk*, the word for Korea, and had nothing to do with the Chinese dynasty of the same name. So Jai-pil, or Dr. Jaisohn as he liked to be called now, returned from the United States and was appointed an adviser to the Privy Council (Mackenzie 62). Mackenzie, supporting this independent move, thought that Kojong might have been handed "a final chance to save himself and his country" (62), yet the terrible events leading up to the establishment of the Great Han Empire had simply made him, as Mackenzie sadly observed, on the one hand, "weak, uncertain and suspicious." On the other hand, Kojong wished almost at all costs to preserve what power he had. He feared that he

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[29] Kojong's actual given name was Yi Myong-dok. "Kojong" was his "temple name," which is used when a person is presented at the ancestral temple. Like the Japanese emperors, Korean rulers also had a regnal name (in Japan, for example, the emperor's name is Akihito, but his regnal name is Heisei).

would end up a powerless constitutional monarch, that politicians were trying to undermine his royal authority and that reforms were going altogether too fast. He became "very jealous of his own prerogatives," and finally took refuge in supporting reactionary groups (63). In the end, the Great Han Empire would last only until 1910, and Kojong, by then a depressed elderly ex-Emperor, would outlive it and the reign of his son Emperor Sunjong, whom Count Vay de Vaya had characterised as "apathetic and lethargic," a man who "shows little interest in anything outside his own sphere and scarcely any capacity for the reception of new ideas" (Neff n.p.n.). Given the traumatic experiences which Sunjong had gone through before he became Emperor, he might have been forgiven for this. The Japanese declared him mentally incompetent and secured his abdication; Sunjong died in 1924, Emperor Kojong in 1919.

But this was all in the future. For a while it seemed that Emperor Kojong had discovered a new source of energy, and, as Mackenzie wrote, "the young Koreans who were given power as Ministers and Advisers after the Monarch escaped from Japanese control were anxious to promote reform and education" (64). A British customs official, John McLeavy Brown, took over the Treasury, and immediately began to curb spending, including that of the Emperor himself, who was, at least in Brown's view, inclined to extravagance. Mackenzie relates how when the Emperor wanted to build a huge memorial palace to his wife's memory in addition to the Japanese-sponsored temple, Brown told him that he should first get a road built so that people would be able to come and see it. The Emperor saw the sense in that suggestion, but he didn't see the sub-text; after the road was built, "the palatial memorial waited" (65). Unfortunately, Brown's austerity measures soon became unpopular when Imperial

officials found that they couldn't hand over offices to their relatives or spend public funds on themselves, and Brown found himself fighting a rearguard action against them. Brown's situation became worse when Waeber finished his stint at the Russian Legation and was succeeded by Alexei de Speyer, who immediately set to work countering what he saw as too much British influence. De Speyer got one of his own people appointed to the Treasury, and this gentleman promptly "doubled the salaries of the Korean office-holders" even when Brown was still in office (Mackenzie 65). Kojong, however, did not remove Brown, and when some Korean officials, with de Speyer's tacit approval, took matters into their own hands and tried to get him thrown out, "the British Fleet appeared in Chemulpo Harbour" (65), having been alerted by the British Consul-General. The Russians backed down, although Brown did not have quite as free a hand as he had previously been given. Mackenzie believed that if the British or Americans had been more aggressive and given their support to reform, things would have been vastly more likely to have succeeded.[30] Dr. Jaisohn, in a short paper he wrote at Mackenzie's request in 1919, confirmed the sorry state of Korean officialdom as its members bickered, fought, and tried to impede political progress. "They informed the Emperor," a disappointed Dr. Jaisohn later wrote to Mackenzie, "that I was not a friend of his, but a friend of the Korean *people*, which at that time was considered treason." He found that his advice was going by the wayside, so, as he told Mackenzie, "I gave up the idea of helping the government officially and planned to give my services to the Korean people as a private individual" (67). It was the

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[30] The British Consul-General in Seoul was Sir John Newell Jordan (1852-1925), a skilled administrator and career diplomat, who remained in Korea until 1905, serving as Chargé d' affaires (1898) and finally as Minister Resident (1901-05). Most of his subsequent career was spent in China. Jordan was highly critical of Kim Hong-nuik, noting that the only regrets in Korea after the attempt on his life were that it hadn't succeeded (Neff, n.p.n.). Shortly after he left Seoul the British Legation was closed down, just as Japanese designs on Korea started getting once again into high gear.

Emperor's loss; Dr. Jaisohn now started Korea's first newspaper, which he published in both English and Korean, and founded a political society he called "The Independence Club," which held regular public meetings and had, so he told Mackenzie,"nearly 10,000 members after it had been in existence for three months" (68).

The Russians and the Japanese were not at all happy with this, and when some six thousand people demonstrated against the presence of Russian soldiers who had been hired, as the Japanese had once been, to train the Korean army, de Speyer actually "wrote a very threatening letter" saying that if the protests were not stopped the Russians would withdraw their officers (70). Dr. Jaisohn must have been delighted when the protesters refused to disband and told the Emperor that they wouldn't tolerate the situation as it stood. He must have felt even better when Kojong told the Russians to leave, even though they were offered compensation. But Dr. Jaisohn was rejoicing prematurely; soon the opposition groups retaliated by forming their own organisation, and they created, out of an old traditional secret society of the same name, the Pedlars' Guild, which managed to secure the ear of the Emperor, who, as we have seen, was never very happy with anything that looked like it might limit his power. He ordered that the Independence Club disband, but instead they "retorted by going *en bloc* to the police headquarters, and asking to be arrested" (Mackenzie 71). By mid-November 1898 several of them got their wish, but only for a few days, because their arrest simply provoked mass demonstrations. The government followed up by alternating tantalising promises of reform with stern repressive measures; Mackenzie tells us that on one occasion the police refused to attack people with their swords, but

that any troops under foreign command had no such qualms, thus fostering more resentment, particularly against Russians and Japanese. This led to "the most impressive of all ways of demonstrating the wrath of the nation," namely "many thousands of men, acting on an old national custom, went to the front of the palace and sat there in silence day and night for fourteen days" (72). Koreans have rarely been passive people.

The Pedlars' Guild organised its own counter-demonstration, some elements of which proceeded to assault members of the Independence Club whilst police stood idly by. Finally, Emperor Kojong stepped in and promised that he would speak to all the assembled people. Mackenzie described what happened:

> The Emperor, who stood on a specially-built platform,
> received the leaders of the Independents, and listened
> to their statement of their case. They asked that the
> monarch should keep some of his old promises to main-
> tain the national integrity and do justice. The Emperor,
> in reply, presented them with a formal document, in
> which he agreed to their main demands.

It appeared that the Independence Club had won, but they soon found out otherwise. Conservative elements, which included the pro-Russian Prime Minister Yi Yung-ik, the "one-time coolie" (Mackenzie 77) who had saved Queen Min, now brought up the magic word "republic," claiming that the real desire of the reform parties was to proclaim one, and indeed some Independents "indulged in wild talk," as Mackenzie put it, which put the Emperor in a state of panic again, and this time the troops were called out to forcibly disperse any meetings. Many people were arrested in earnest this time, but, Mackenzie observed, "the Emperor did not realise that he had, in the hour

that he consented to crush the reformers, pronounced the doom of his own Imperial house, and handed the land over to an alien people." Here Mackenzie simply confirms the views of his friend Dr. Jaisohn, who told him that "foreign influence was mainly responsible for the destruction of the Independence Club," thus allowing the Japanese to eventually move in. Jaisohn added, however, that in spite of that, or because of it, "the seed of democracy was sown in Korea" (75).

A few years later (1904) Mackenzie himself directly entered the story. "I was in Seoul," he recalls, "and had been invited to an interview with Yi Yung-ik." At the time of this meeting the Prime Minister did not know that his friends the Russians had already decided that it was no use trying to counter the Japanese, and had secretly determined, as Mackenzie stated that they "would not impede the development of Japan's industrial and commercial policy" in Korea. Mackenzie tried to make the former water-boy understand that Korea needed reform and independence. "Yi quickly retorted," Mackenzie wrote, "that Korea was safe, for her independence had been guaranteed by America and Europe." Mackenzie persisted:

> "Don't you understand," I urged, that treaties not backed by power are useless? If you wish the treaties to be respected, you must live up to them. You must reform or perish."
> "It does not matter what the other nations are doing," declared the Minister. "We have this day sent out a statement that we are neutral and asking for our neutrality to be respected."
> "Why should they protect you, if you don't protect yourself?" I asked.
> "We have the promise of America. She will be our friend whatever happens," the Minister insisted.
> From that position he would not budge. (77)

Just three days after this conversation, Japanese ships sank the two Russian warships based in Chemulpo harbour and their soldiers once again converged on the Imperial Palace. The Russo-Japanese War had started, and Korea was on its way to once more becoming, against the will of its people, a Japanese client-state. The Americans, true to form, did nothing.

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Paquette on Public Art: first civic statuary in The Pas, MB
by Anne Jevene

Sculpted by Mike Camp, a fourteen-foot tall, stainless steel inukshuk looms over a vacant lot in The Pas, Manitoba. Dominating the corner of Edwards Avenue and Second Street, it seems as if the small public park in which it lives has always been its home. Installed last winter, "it became immediately part of the environment," Keith Paquette, an initiator and supporter of the project, pointed out, "They walk by it as if it's always been there. That's the highest compliment."

"It was an interesting project," said Paquette, a conceptual artist, "It took us a while to see it standing. In the meantime, it weathered, out at the garage/compound where it was made. Originally, it was a battleship grey color stainless steel. Now it's got rusting--a multi-colored patina that almost mimics stone."

Originally planned as a centre piece for a park project that didn't happen, the inukshuk had been waiting for a home for six years.

"The idea was to have public art in The Pas," Paquette said, "The Arts Council started with the mural project--fine art murals. Then the idea grew from painting to sculpture. There were no sculptures at this point. There had been Henry Kelsey cairns, but there had never been a fine art sculpture. Because it was the first, it had to be something sensitive. Sculptor Mike Camp became interested in the project and took on the job of building the inukshuk.

"The idea of an inukshuk came to me," Paquette said, "It crosses the border between aboriginal and non-aboriginal. Adopted by the culture and used to mark journeys, it marks our history, and it's about the idea of the representation of humanity. It just looks like a human stick figure. There are no genders. And it will travel well into the future will always represent people. The notion of North is about people: the pioneers and original inhabitants; the relationship between people and the land."

Looking for a home for the inukshuk once it had been sculpted wasn't an easy task, because the sculpture became a decision that the town council had to be involved in. Opposition to the project kept the inukshuk in storage. Then the downtown revitalization project for The Pas 100th anniversary and Homecoming Celebrations began and this vacant lot park slated to become an open air performance space for the Homecoming Celebration became its first home. Among those involved in the inception of civic statuary in The Pas were past Mayor Herb Jacques, the Downtown Revitalization Committee, especially Carol Ham, Jim Lamontagne and Jim Scott, who was the economic development officer at the time. "The park idea was his [Jim Scott's] idea," Paquette said, "Brian Campbell and Mayor Al McLauchlan were also strong supporters."

At first, it seemed that the inukshuk would be installed in The Pas

on the bank of the Saskatchewan River to welcome travelers to the city and to bid them farewell. "Two years ago, the waterfront development was not sure what direction it would take," Paquette said, "Eventually it may end up there yet. All the historic highways in The Pas are at the waterfront, the two rivers, the highway, and the railroad. The Inukshuk is a Northern symbol. It would be there as you enter and leave the North.

Satisfied with the inukshuk's current home, Paquette feels that "as a first sculpture" the sculpture "works well."

"Now that hurdle has been jumped," he says, "It opens up the idea of sculpture. If someone wants to do a second one now it won't be such a hard sell."

Indeed it seems that there is a groundswell of support for the arts forming in The Pas. A new committee of The Pas Art Council is working on making an Arts complex for the city a reality. Such a building, Paquette said would house not only a performance space but also studio and workshop space for artists. "

"Who knows," he said, "In the years to come people will be inspired to do things we can't even imagine." With the momentum building for the arts, Paquette feels that The Pas is on the verge of something. "This city still has its pioneer spirit living in the twenty first century. People in The Pas haven't forgotten where it's from."

For Paquette it is important that future generations in The Pas are offered opportunities to develop their interest in the arts. "I travelled to the other side of the country…to BC," he said, "It never felt like home. If we bring all the stuff here then people don't have to travel. It's important that you can get it at home."

According to Paquette, there is support for the project from three levels of government. "Mayor Al McLauchlan is behind the project. He has said, 'do it.' He wants this happen," Paquette said. Federal help with infrastructure is one of the ways of making this project happen, so, currently, the Arts Council is investigating capital grants for a building. "Imagine an Arts Centre for The Pas perhaps down by the river," Paquette said.

Next summer, Paquette expects the back corner of the Edwards Avenue and Second Street Park to be closed off to create an open air performance space for the downtown area. He also is looking forward to all the walls covered with murals and sod to be put down to help revitalize the city's core for its 100th Year Celebration in 2012. "People will be coming back," Paquette said, "The theme has always been Northern, nature."

"The sculpture represents all the people, past, present, and future," Paquette said, "It was put up at the beginning of the winter, so this was its first summer. It was snowing the day it went up. It's really a stainless steel structure representing an inukshuk. As a representation of an inukshuk, it is about the idea of an inukshuk, and it's the only fine art representation of an inukshuk that I know about."
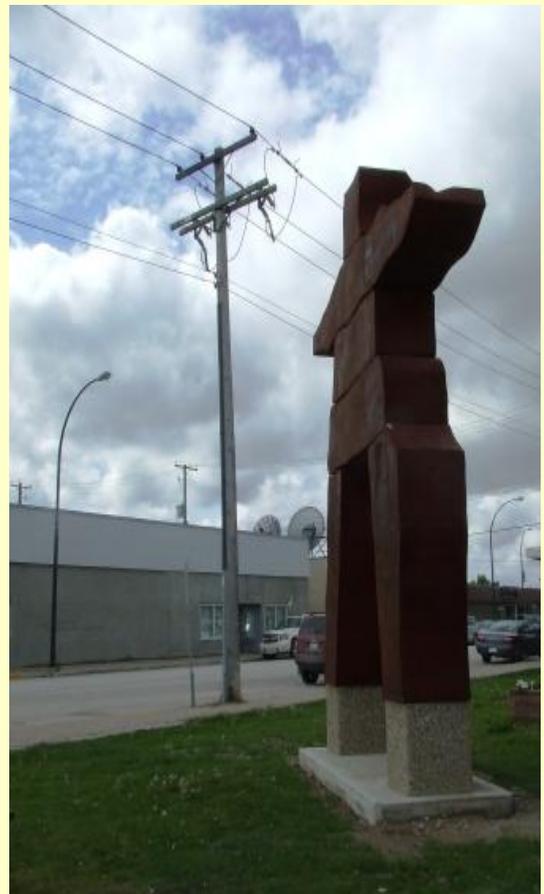
REVIEWS

Gary A. Kozak

Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*. Simon and Schuster, 2008.

Life in India's economic and social jungle

Aravind Adiga is an Indian author and journalist who was born in Madras (Chennai) in 1974. He grew up in Mangalore until his family emigrated to Australia, then he attended Columbia and Oxford universities. He has been a writer for the *Financial Times* and a correspondent for *Time*. He currently resides in Mumbai, India. A collection of short stories entitled *Between the Assassinations* was published in India the same year as *The White Tiger*, followed by the British issue in 2009.

Aravind Adiga's 2008 debut novel *The White Tiger*, which won the Man Booker Prize in 2008 and became one of the fastest-selling novels in the history of that prize, is a satire on life in contemporary India within the The narrator of the story is Balram Halwai, an impoverished rickshaw driver's son who will eventually achieve success in the growing and advancing state of India.

Balram is born into an impoverished family in Laxmangarh, a fictional village located in a marginalized area of the country. Due to this unfortunate fate, he is faced with serious issues regarding his desire for future prosperity. He is unable to finish school despite his astuteness and promise of a scholarship. He is forced to work in menial jobs in a place called Dhanbad. Regardless of these problems, his street skills enable him to learn driving and his prospects subsequently improve. He becomes an urban chauffer and further develops his street skills while expanding his knowledge of city life and national issues. In the city, he encounters massive corruption prevalent in the domain of economic growth. Unsurprisingly, his employer, Ashoka, is an active participant in it. Realizing his limited options, due to his lack of education and poor upbringing, Balram decides on a drastic course of action for implementing his goal of prosperity. He murders his employer, flees to Bangalore, bribes the authorities and achieves his goal as a manager of a taxi company. Success is accomplished through crime and graft.

Aravind Adiga tells his story through the first person narrative of the main

character Balram. It is done through a letter to the Chinese premier, Wen Jia-bao. His tone is cynical and deliberately ignorant. Balram appears to have a negative view of India while holding an exalting opinion of China. For example:

> ….it is said that you Chinese are great lovers of freedom and individual liberty. The British tried to make you their servants, but you never let them do it. I admire that, Mr. Premier….

His ignorance is further demonstrated by his reference of the Chinese premier as 'Mr. Jia-bao'. This is not the premier's surname. He further demonstrates ignorance by claiming that India has always been a victim and was always occupied by a foreign power. He contrasts this tone with one of admirable ambition. He explains how he eventually succeeded and prevailed by maintaining his goals and learning by observation despite his difficult odds. He is proud of what he accomplished and is interested in explaining it to a Communist leader assuming the leader doesn't understand the concept. He is also explaining the responsibility of having to watch his business all the time (an entrepreneur's curse).

Another feature of Adiga's novel is his satirization of topics like religion and politics, especially where they coalesce. He says:

> Now, there are some….who think that not many of these gods exist….It's true that all these gods seem to do awfully little work-much like our politicians-and yet keep winning reelection to their golden thrones in heaven, year after year. That's not to say that I don't respect them, Mr. Premier! Don't ever let that blasphemous idea into your yellow skull. My country is the kind where it pays to play it both ways: the Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time.

Sarcasm and irony are found throughout the novel and are prevalent when the narrator is describing the abysmal and treacherous atmosphere of the society. He describes how the corrupt police would bugger people in the village while others watch pornography. He even uses this sarcasm when telling of his mother's death. She is cremated and her remains become part of the water pollution. In addition, he uses animal nicknames for the other characters in the neighborhood.

Several themes are apparent in the novel. Adiga mentions poverty, personal independence, class tensions and inter-Asian rivalries. Even the basic customs such as dowries are addressed. His choice of telling the story by means of a letter from the main character to a foreign leader gives us a new perspective on the issues. Despite his reference to both countries being rising powers, it can be interpreted as a complaint about India. It can also be seen as his embarrassment being directed at a foreign leader, which could be an indirect method of addressing the problems to other Indians. This is perhaps a suggestion for motivation for making India more competitive with China. This is not just a novel for Indians but also one for foreign readers. It provides new insight into the extent many people in a progressive but still impoverished nation would go through in order to be a part of that progress.

Gary A. Kozak

Yoko Ogawa. *Hotel Iris* Translated by Stephen Snyder. New York: Picador, 1996.

What is the source of sadism?

Yoko Ogawa was born in Okayama, Japan in 1962. She graduated from Waseda University. She has been an author since 1988. She has published more than twenty books in both fiction and non-fiction. Her numerous literary awards include the Akutagawa Prize, the Yomiuri Prize and the Tanizaki Prize. She currently lives in Ashiya, Hyogo in Japan. Yoko Ogawa's 1996 novel, *Hotel Iris* is an introspective, graphic and bizarre tragedy set in Japanese coastal resort town. Through the use of a variety of literary techniques, she alters a potentially charming setting and re-shapes it into a troubled locale of adversity. She complicates this setting by introducing characters and situations that are unexplainable and incongruous. This causes a reader to be further absorbed in the plot in order to search for clarification.

The story concerns Mari, a seventeen year old girl working in her mother's hotel, who develops relationship with much older language translator. Her home life is dismal due to a controlling mother using her for her free employment and a hotel worker with a habit for stealing from her. The translator she develops the relationship with is an outwardly cordial man with a concealed violent temper and a hidden appetite for sadism. He is keeping a mystery concerning his dead wife who we eventually learn was lost due to a railway accident. His mysterious visiting nephew is added to provide some clarification to the plot.

Perhaps due to her difficult home life, Mari is drawn to the translator and his sadism. She endures lengthy bouts of humiliation and torture on his island but the relationship remains non-sexual. Oddly, she is attracted to his perverse behavior and always visits him willingly. She finally makes the decision to stop as the peak tourist season ends. The problematic relationship goes noticed and she is eventually rescued and the translator commits suicide. The reason for her voluntary suffering is never explained.

The novel is written as a first person narrative with Mari telling the story. She takes us through the situations and provides her inner thoughts. Ironically, this helps us to learn about her feelings but we never learn about her motives. She leaves the impression of capriciousness and servility with an unexplainable feeling of humiliation. Whatever provokes her into making her choices remains unknown. Perhaps this is Ogawa's method of abstract communication.

Although the translator has very serious and obvious quirks, Mari also demonstrates certain oddities of behavior. She is very simple-minded and tends to focus on small details of the people she is with, especially the translator. The following is an example:

> This was the first time I noticed the exquisite movement of his fingers. They were not particularly strong-almost delicate, in fact-spotted with moles and freckles; the fingernails were dark. But when they began to move,

they bewitched anything they touched, casting a spell that demanded submission.

Such examples of neurotic behavior are scattered throughout the novel and they are quite common. They are often used in connection with the torture scenes which Ogawa makes quite vivid. Mari is both traumatized by the translator's actions and craving for them. She even admires him for his delivery of it. An example is the following:

> He had undressed me with great skill, his movements no less elegant for all their violence. Indeed, the more he shamed me, the more refined he became-like a perfumer plucking the petals from a rose, a jeweler prying open an oyster for it pearl.

This admiration of being tortured by the translator, who doesn't even have a name, is perhaps the most common element of Mari's narration. She appears to always suffer at home with her mother and she is both fascinated and addicted to receiving it more excessively with the translator.

Ogawa's novel does have other features. It contains description, not only of the torture, but also the resort town and its inhabitants. All of the characters are interesting, especially the mother. Mari does have a kind of humor which is evident as she mentions her habit of lying. There is symbolism such as the constant mentioning of Room 202 and the frequent mention of the scarf that belonged to the translator's late wife. There is also the mystery of the dying fish on the beach. There is no obvious significance for placing it into the novel but it does add to the menacing tone while destroying the supposedly ecstatic atmosphere

of the resort town. This is possibly Ogawa's intention.

The novel has many unanswered questions. What is the source of the translator's sadism? What are Mari's intentions and does she have a guilt that drives her to this type of relationship? Why are the fish dying? Nothing is ever explained but this lack of explanation does give a long lasting impression to the reader. It induces intense thought about the problem of the relationship.

The most important question about the novel is its interpretation. The answer can be the demonstration of mental illness. The translator's perversion appears to be a sadistic personality disorder. He is compulsive with negativistic passive-aggressive features. He is cruel, demeaning and dominant but demonstrates these features in a discrete manner. Mari has a self-defeating personality disorder. She is masochistic, submissive and craves humiliation. By chance, these two neurotic characters are in the same location at the same time and they have both found a twisted type of comfort with each other. Fortunately, Mari eventually decides to end the relationship realizing that it has reached the limit.

This is a novel that is worth reading for self-awareness. It solicits interest in severe psychological problems. It could be of special interest to a student of psychiatry. The unanswered questions could drive a reader crazy but they do cause one to think more deeply. Ogawa's novel is both graphic and interesting and her literary techniques more than adequately demonstrate a serious problem.

Sue Matheson

Kirino, Natsuo. *Real World.* Vintage International, 2009. pp.208

Then finally…disgusted

A best-selling author in Japan, Natsuo Kirino was born in 1951 and graduated from the Law Department of Seikei University. Best known for her hard-boiled suspense novels that are often viewed as feminist noir, she won the Edogawa Rampo Prize in 1993 for *Kao ni furikakaru ame* (*A Face Wet with Rain*); the Japan Mystery Writers' Association Prize in 1998 for *Out*; the 121st Naoki Prize for *Yawaraka na hoho* (Soft Cheeks) in 1999. Her works also include *Dark, Real World, Mizuno Nemuri Hai no Yume, Kogen, Tenshi ni misuterareta yoru,* as well as short stories and essays. Her early works include romances and stories for manga. *A Night without Angels, A Tender Place*, and *Out* were made into feature films. *Out*, her first book translated into English, is a novel about murder in the Tokyo suburbs and marked her departure from the standard suspense genre.

Real World, the book published by Vintage International that I am reviewing today, is her third crime novel. Cleverly organized by character and tightly written, *Real World* should be a very satisfying read. Its premise is far-fetched but because this story is fiction rather than true crime, I had little trouble accepting its hypotheses. At the novel's outset, the reader is introduced to the compartmentalized consciousness of four

teenage girls (Toshi, Yuzon, Teruachi, and Kirarin) and Toshi's next-door neighbour's son, Worm, who brutally murders his mother. Taking Toshi's bicycle and cell phone, Worm flees from his comfortable but claustrophobic existence in a upper middle class Tokyo suburb and pedals about Japan looking for a place to hide. The girls aid and abet this fugitive. When it is revealed, however, that none of them has ever spoken with Worm and appear to be supporting his escape primarily because he too is a teenager, I began to lose interest in the characters. I'm afraid I have never subscribed to the truism that the young hate the old and vice versa just because the young are young and the old are…well, old. The terribly repressed Worm is more believable as a character, but given the nature of his mother's incessant nagging, I am surprised that ninety five percent of the North American mothers whom I know are not bludgeoned to death by the telephone by their sons with metal baseball bats. It would have been comforting to know what deficiency or past memory lurking in the Worm's frontal lobe really triggered the attack. It couldn't have been that she said the word, "no," to him too many times.

In spite of the fact that I found the characters of *Real World* pretty flat (and at times even types), I did not lose interest in the action of the plot itself--a tribute to the power and skill of Kirino's story telling. Following Worm on his bicycle and then Worm and Kirarin to the love hotel, the vacation home, and finally the backseat of a very ill-fated taxi, I was intrigued, scandalized, and finally disgusted. However unbelievable the murders, mayhem, and suicides that ensued because of the teenagers' unlikely antics in

Real World, I found myself continuing to turn the pages of this book--if only to find out what improbable thing was to happen next. And Kirino managed to outwit me at almost every turn. I did not expect the girls to tell the lies that they did or the novel to resolve as it did. All in all, *Real World* was an intriguing read although I found myself incredibly uninterested in and even unsympathetic towards the characters themselves.

Perhaps the problem that I encountered when reading *Real World* had a great deal to do with the fact that this book has been touted as a a coming-of-age story *and* as crime fiction. A *bildungsroman*, I'm afraid, it just isn't, because there is no discernable character development charted throughout its chapters culminating in a spiritual crisis and ending in the acquisition of wisdom and maturity (of any sort). Kirino's teenage girls simply refuse to change however horrible and soul-wrenching the experiences that they endure. Murder does not mature their thinking. Love is a matter of ego at worst, hooking up at best. Throughout, their focus remains obdurately limited and self-centered...interested in makeup, pop music, manga, getting their homework done, their boyfriends, and their girlfriends. As a result, it is often difficult to distinguish their voices from one another. At times even the boy sounds like the girls. Luckily their intensely self-centered stances remind the reader (continually) which girl (or boy) is speaking. I didn't have to return to the beginning of many chapters to remember who was speaking.

Tellingly, these characters' resistance to the realities of the adult world is perhaps the most salient of their characteristics, so by the end of the story it is impossible to believe that change is an option for any of them. Toshi's revelation at the end of her story about the importance of authenticity should generate relief that finally, at last, one of the teenagers has seen the light and grown up a bit, but I am afraid that her epiphany about her next visit to a karaoke bar--that she will doff her alter ego, Ninna Hori, and use her own name*, Miss Toshiko Yamanaka*, when singing-- tempted me to throw the book across the room. I think it would have made a good deal more sense to market *Real World* to its readers as a romance and a crime thriller--which is a niche where it would fit most comfortably.

This brings us to the question, is *Real World* feminist noir? I am very uncomfortable with that notion--in fact, I really don't think it can or should be labeled as such...at least in terms of crime fiction, if one is thinking of detective stories. First, one must consider what noir is in terms of crime thrillers. Originally, noir was generated in the hardboiled subgenre of detective fiction, which, generally male-centered, locates itself on societal margins--in the mean streets so to speak. The point of view, in general, be the story male or female-centered, is the detective's. The question which often emerges from reading such a tale is whether or not the detective, working under the aegis of law and order but outside the law's social mechanisms, isn't really a criminal after all. Often such characters make decisions or mete out justice which puts them above the law. *Real World* does have the trappings of a noir story as it is located on the mean streets and its subject is aberrance, but the tale does not focus on the activity of detection or the nature of the detective per se.

I suppose it could be argued that

Kirino investigating the psychology of a criminal like Worm and later Kirarin does place her reader into the role of a detective-- but this plot device has been used by crime writers since Agatha Christie--a Golden Age, not a noir author. Moreover, the crime in this story has been solved in its first pages. The reader is aware who the murderer is and later who the murderers are. The criminal's motivation is not an issue throughout Real World. Indeed it could be that this author is inviting the reader to investigate the workings of criminal minds--but again, because the characters lack depth, more information is needed to do so. And most of the time, the teenagers themselves don't understand why they are doing the nasty things that they do. They simply do them. Psychologically, their profiles as killers aren't very complete or helpful.

It is possible to read *Real World* as an investigation of the mind of fugitives. But again, this avenue quickly becomes boring. The teenagers run away because they do not want to be punished--a predictable and not particularly aberrant response. Historical precedents aren't terribly helpful here either-- perhaps because my references are American. It is temporarily tempting to consider Kirarin and Worm as a Japanese version of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow for a short period of time-- but Kirarin, unlike Parker, is simply selfish and silly--not sociopathic; Worm, unlike Clyde, is a wannabe sociopath without Barrow's good looks, charisma, and viciousness.

I think that one could argue that in *Real World* Kirino is working with the idea that the teenage mind itself is inherently deranged (and thus like a sociopath's) because of the rapid growth it is experiencing (a popular study introduced that idea a few years ago to explain why adolescents are irrational and irritable). At times, I must admit that teenagers do appear to be without empathy--and throughout *Real World*, Kirino's teenagers certainly lack and never really develop the ability to feel what others may be experiencing. I am not sure if I can accept that teenagers really are like that although I am sure I probably also appeared to be like that to adults when I was a teen. I, however, do know that I was able to empathize with others and any deficiency in my synapses at that age was corrected by life experiences quite quickly.

So, although it is beautifully bound in a shocking close up of a young geisha's face and billed as "psychologically intricate and astute," and promises its reader that it offers "a searing, eye-opening portrait of teenage life in Japan unlike any we have seen before," I'm afraid that *Real World* only partially delivers its goods. This story is indeed about teenage life in Japan unlike any seen before, but whether Kirino's depiction of the teenagers' psyches is "astute" or as *The Philadelphia Inquirer* puts it "transfixing" and "psychologically complex" is a matter for debate. Perhaps something has been lost in the translation here--although Philip Gabriel did a superb job as *Real World's* translator and Kirino's spare prose is streamlined and athletic. Suffice it to say that I think that this is a book that should be bought and read for the questions that it raises rather than the solutions which its promoters purport it to supply. I suspect that *Real World* is a much more fulsome read in Japanese--and may be better understood and appreciated by a Japanese audience.

Sue Matheson

Who murdered Amy Robsart?

Chris Skidmore is a British historian and Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) for Kingswood, England. A graduate of Oxford University, Skidmore is best known for his books, *Edward VI: The Lost King of England* (2007) and *Death and The Virgin: Elizabeth, Dudley and the Mysterious Death of Amy Robsart* (2010). Touted by Philippa Gregory as a breakthrough in the mystery of who murdered the wife of Robert Dudley, that scandalously intimate friend of Elizabeth I, *Death and The Virgin* caught my eye at the airport bookstore this summer. In fact, I couldn't resist picking it up. New documents had come to light. The *Sunday Times* claimed that Skimore's research is "impeccable," and Antonia Fraser (one of my favorite biographers) noted that *Death and The Virgin* "considers a completely new possibility which changed my mind." At last, we'll find out if the butler did it, I thought, and, if it wasn't the butler, then at any rate, we'll know what happened and the death that scandalized Tudor England would be laid to rest. The mystery solved, Amy Robsart could finally rest in peace. All in all, *Death and The Virgin* looked to be a great read.

For those who aren't familiar with the details of this most infamous of murders, on Sunday 8 September 1560, Amy Robsart, aged 27 years, the beautiful wife of Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's favourite courtier, was found dead at Cumnor Place in Berkshire. Her body was discovered at the foot of a staircase only eight steps high, her neck broken, her headdress intact upon her head, no other mark upon her body. The subsequent announcement (made almost a year later) that Amy's was a death by misadventure was and still is considered a farce. Thus my interest in the case--obviously something was terribly wrong here and needed correction…and Skidmore promised to be just the man to do it. However, four hundred and thirty pages later, I remained just as unenlightened as when I began and even more puzzled by the information or more likely the misinformation with which I was presented.

In short, I ended *Death and The Virgin* with many more questions than I had begun. Skidmore's presentation and use of the coroner's report of Amy's death, recently discovered in the archives of the British Museum, was little help. The report offered hitherto unknown information: two dents (dyntes) or gashes, one a quarter of an inch deep, the other two inches deep, were found on Amy's skull but did not specify their exact whereabouts. It also confirmed that was already public knowledge: there was no other evidence of bruising or cuts on her face and her body (unlikely when one considers a tumble down a flight of stone steps) and that her neck had been broken. As before, there simply wasn't enough forensic evidence in the report to close Amy's case. There was no mention of Amy's reputed breast cancer which (if it had existed) could have leached the calcium from her spine and been

responsible for a spinal fracture from merely stepping down a staircase. There was no description of how the body had been lying when it was found. What seemed to bother the report writer and coroner's jury most about the circumstances of her death was the fact that her hood had not been disturbed during the fall. She was found with it in place, still covering her head.

The question remains: who killed Amy Robsart. It seems evident that Elizabeth I (who appeared to be madly in love with Dudley and grooming him to be suitable as a consort) did not. Robert Dudley certainly was not so stupid to have ruined his chances at court by murdering his wife. In fact, he spent two years after the accession of Gloriana to the throne of England moving his wife from one manor house to another after it appeared that she had been poisoned. William Cecil, Elizabeth's Secretary of State, has been considered a possibility, but it is hard to believe that Cecil (considered a supremely intelligent and trustworthy man by all) would have been involved in such a heinous murder. There were a number of competitors with Dudley for Elizabeth's hand in marriage who could have been responsible for Amy's death as it effectively blackballed Dudley and ended any possibility of the Queen considering him suitable as her Consort. The earl of Arundel, for example, was insanely jealous of Elizabeth's intimate relationship with her Master of the Horse and squandered most of his fortune entertaining the Queen in the effort to convince her of his suitability. The earls of Sussex and Northumberland also qualify as candidates. So many people hated Dudley (who was not a personable individual), however, it is entirely possible that Spain or France may have been involved in his downfall. It seems that it was to no one's advantage except Dudley's if he married the Queen. Cecil, in despair, even threatened to return to private life rather than serve the Throne if Dudley had become Elizabeth's husband.

The list of suspects that Skidmore presents grows rather than narrows. *Death and The Virgin* did not close the case on Amy Robsart as I expected that it would but it proved to be a fascinating and useful experience nonetheless. I've passed this book on to friends because Skidmore is very successful in revealing how personal the political lives of Robert Dudley, Elizabeth Tudor, and others really were. I hadn't realized before how closely related members of the British aristocracy were during this period and how closely connected their family loyalties and jealousies were with policies and matters of the state. If nothing else, *Death and The Virgin* has made me appreciate Oliver Cromwell in a way I never would have thought possible before. The Roundheads may have had nothing of the glamour and dash of the Cavaliers, but in light of the goings-on in Elizabeth's court that now seems to have been a very good thing indeed. Thank goodness Cromwell came along and cleaned up the affairs of the country when he did.

Skidmore's ability to personalize the political also deepened my understanding and appreciation of how difficult and terrifying the day-to-day life of the Virgin Queen must have been. Marriage, the Queen's responsibility and acknowledged duty to her country, was clearly an anathema to Elizabeth, a woman whose mother had lost her head because of it and whose stepsister's life had been ruined by

marrying Philip of Spain. Of all the unhappy and unfulfilled personalities that one encounters in *Death and The Virgin*, Mary Tudor is the most compelling. Unlike Elizabeth, who consciously flirted with social and political disaster while ensuring her independence, Mary chose the conservative path socially prescribed for her as Queen. Her attempts to do the "right" thing, heartbreakingly wrong-headed, left her despised by her people and abandoned by her husband. Skidmore's compassionate account of her death is one of the saddest I have ever read.

Published by Phoenix, *Death and the Virgin; Elizabeth, Dudley and the Mysterious Death of Amy Robsart* is available in a handsome paperback edition which includes copies and transcriptions of the original documents used during Skidmore's investigations. I don't know if I agree with *History Today*'s verdict that this text "should be required reading for everyone who gets their history from television," but if you are interested in the Elizabethan court world, or if you have always wondered what did happen to Amy Robsart, then this is definitely a book to consider purchasing. I know you won't be disappointed. When I get my copy back, I intend to read it one more time--just in case I missed an important detail the first time around. Perhaps there is a clue lying in one of those letters at the back of the book that hasn't been noticed and will unlock the mystery and the identity of Amy's killer.

gallery *quint*

Gail
Whittier

Mixed Media, Paint and Collage

Abstrax
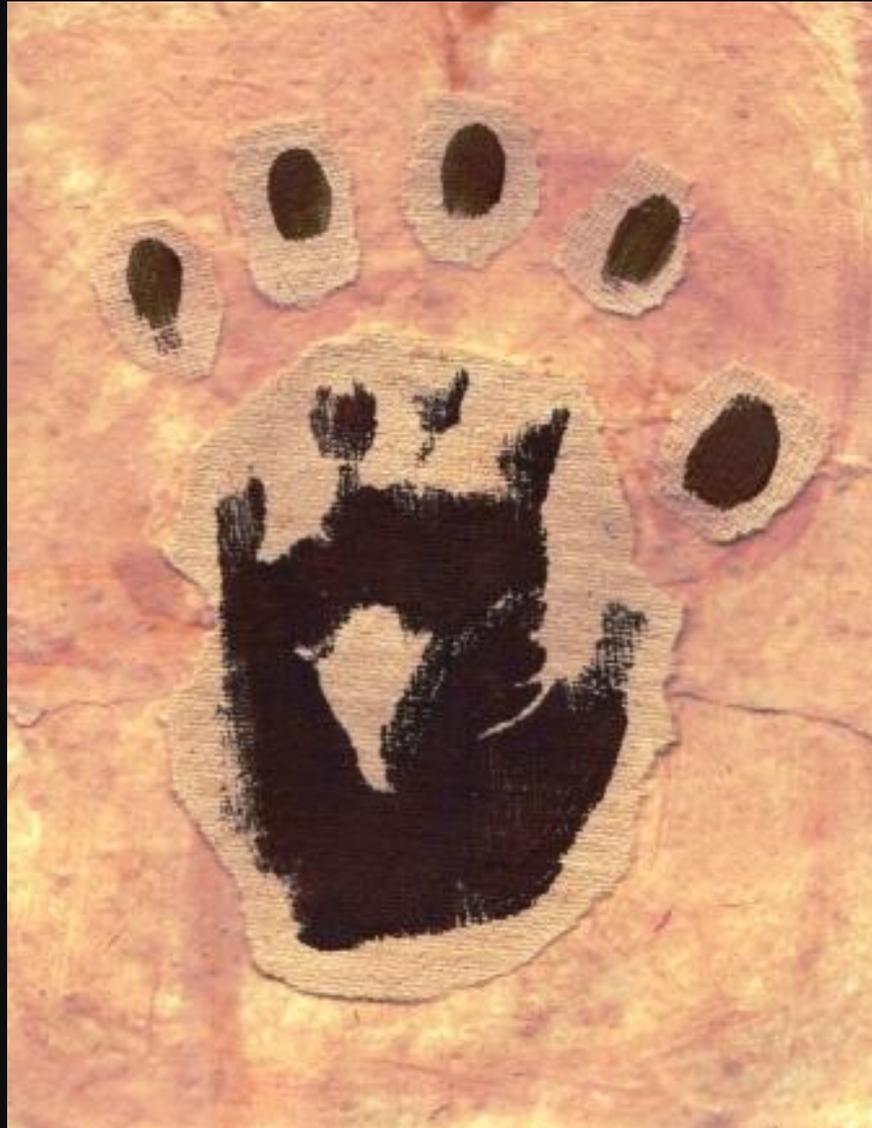
an introduction

bird in hand

crow collage

face scuplture

mixed media - raven 3
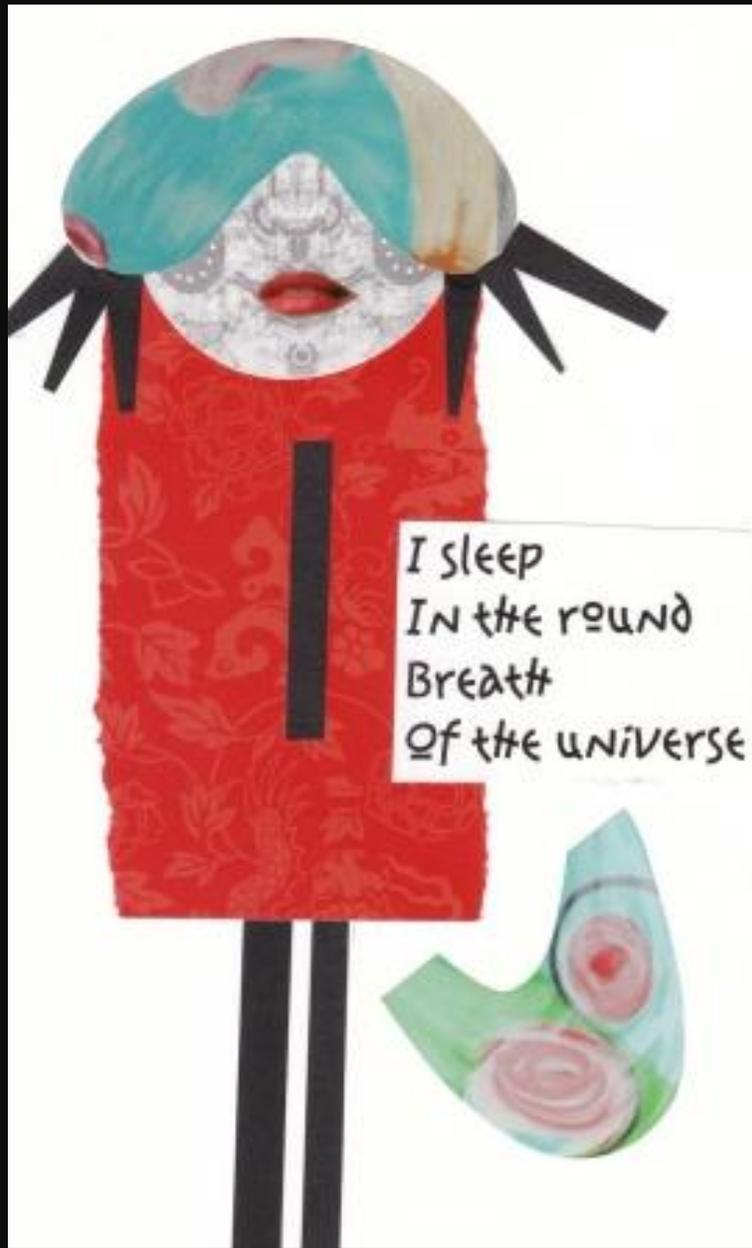
I sleep
In the round
Breath
Of the universe

moon eyes 1

IMAGINING OURSELVES
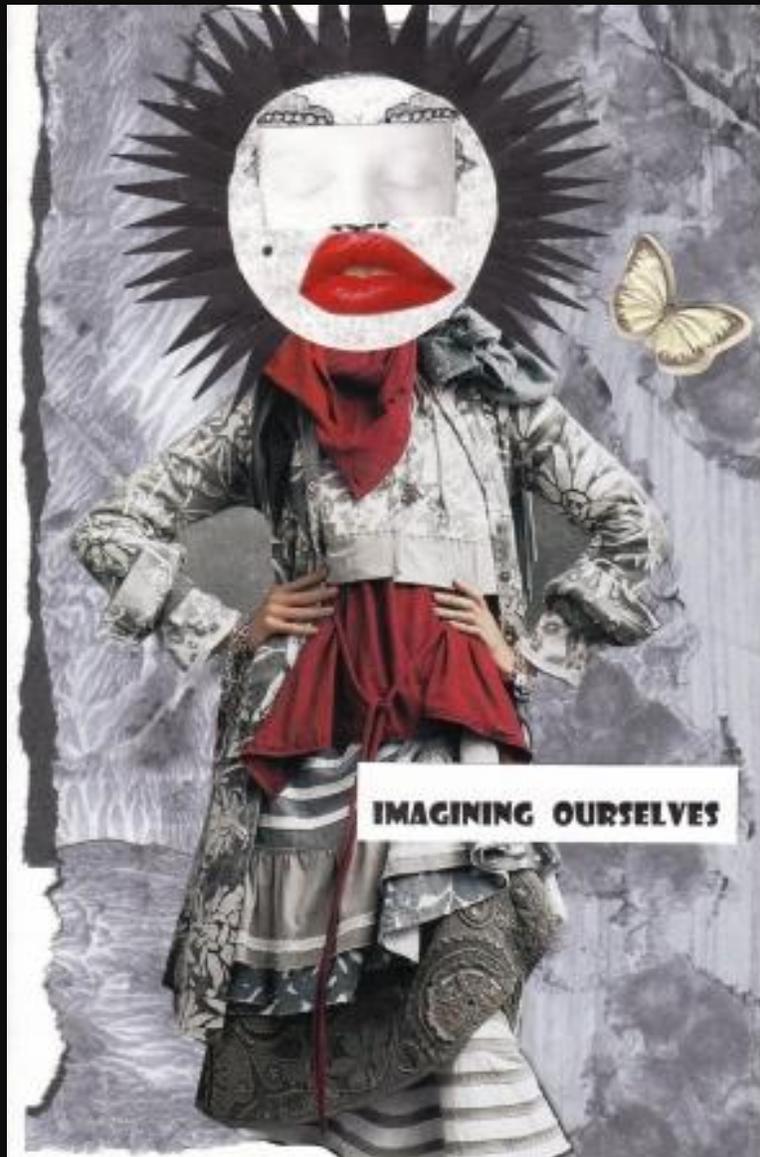
moon eyes 2

self collage

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The *quint's* thirteenth issue is issuing a call for theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest—as well as creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books. The deadline for this call is 20th November 2011—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

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