REWITING SCAPEGOAT TEXTS:

Mimetic Desire and the Dynamics of Rivalry
in Michael Ondaatje’s In the Skin of a Lion and The English Patient,
and Peter Carey’s Jack Maggs and True History of the Kelly Gang

Barbara Fidyk

BA (Hons) Newc.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

March 2009

School of Humanities and Social Science

Faculty of English
DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made to the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Associate Professor Nancy Wright who offered invaluable direction and support in the early years of writing this thesis. I acknowledge special recognition of Dr Dianne Osland, for reading and perceptively commenting upon a number of draft chapters, for encouraging me to continue and complete this work, and for her generosity in always making time to assist and advise. This thesis has been completed as a result of her clear directions, her ability to inspire, and her encouragement to continue. Dr Rosalind Smith has also been extraordinary in seeking clarification of ideas, in skilfully and generously guiding me throughout the process, and in her diligence during the final stages of the thesis.

I would like to especially thank my family and friends for the encouragement and support they have given me during the years I worked on the dissertation.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to

MY FAMILY
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ..................................................................................i

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..................................................................ii

DEDICATION ..................................................................................iii

CONTENTS ....................................................................................iv

ABSTRACT ......................................................................................v

ABBREVIATIONS ..........................................................................vii

INTRODUCTION .............................................................................1

CHAPTER ONE: In the Skin of a Lion ..............................................29

CHAPTER TWO: The English Patient ..............................................70

CHAPTER THREE: Jack Maggs .....................................................114

CHAPTER FOUR: True History of the Kelly Gang .......................157

CONCLUSION ...............................................................................199

WORKS CITED ...........................................................................204
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a new kind of literary history developed in four postmodern historical romances: Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient*, and Peter Carey’s *Jack Maggs* and *True History of the Kelly Gang*. By foregrounding their intertexts, these novels expose acts of violence and terror directed against scapegoats, particularly those constructed as criminals, who are perceived to threaten social stability. The novels of Ondaatje and Carey transform these criminals from social transgressors to heroes, from victimizers to victims. They first reconstruct and expose the social dynamics of specific historical contexts drawn from their precursor texts, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Herodotus’s Histories*, *Great Expectations* and *Lorna Doone*, and then create a form of communal history, which for the first time voices the suppressed narratives of the disenfranchised.

The theoretical framework used in the analysis of each text and its intertextual “double” is developed through analyses of desire and imitation in space as well as time. The thesis links René Girard’s theory of rivalry and violence in mimetic desire to Julia Kristeva’s and Susan Friedman’s theories of reading at the point of intersection between a text and its precursors, newly allowing the application of Girard to the complex intertextual dynamics of the sub-genre of metahistorical romance. This approach reconfigures this sub-genre as a form of simultaneous and paratactic history. It adapts Amy Elias’s and Brian McHale’s theories of spatial tropes as literary techniques which collapse, onto one plane, or juxtapose, different historical periods, characters and events, as a means to examine the “dark areas” of history.

In this process the thesis considers each modern text and its precursor to explore the role of Girard’s rivalrous doubles within and across texts in activating or interrupting cyclical violence. The historical scapegoats, given the opportunity to
recognize and tell their histories in the modern texts, generate a new form of communal history, which challenges earlier depictions and celebrations of violence and the persecution of scapegoats. These new histories recoil from violence and reconstruct scapegoats through attention to the complex intersection of political and legal policies, cultural values and practices informing their previous historical representation. They allow Girard’s cycles of violence to be broken, reimagining the scapegoat not in terms of singular identifications as anarchist, spy, convict and outlaw, but as multi-faceted, able to be renewed in multiple identifications as heroic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td><em>In the Skin of a Lion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilgamesh</td>
<td><em>The Epic of Gilgamesh</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td><em>The English Patient</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td><em>Herodotus: The Histories</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM</td>
<td><em>Jack Maggs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE</td>
<td><em>Great Expectations</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH</td>
<td><em>True History</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td><em>Lorna Doone</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JL</td>
<td><em>The Jerilderie Letter</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

All historical fiction, it could be argued, engages the past by returning to previous accounts of history and remaking the grounds on which they have been established. In the four novels examined in this thesis, however, the remaking of history is also a remaking of a specific literary past. In In the Skin of a Lion, The English Patient, Jack Maggs and True History of the Kelly Gang, literature’s engagement with the past is insistently alluded to through a range of references, focused on a central intertext. For In the Skin of a Lion that intertext is The Epic of Gilgamesh; for The English Patient it is Herodotus’s The Histories; for Jack Maggs it is Great Expectations and for the True History of the Kelly Gang it is Lorna Doone. This thesis examines the ways in which each explicit intertext, in combination with a host of others, bring the past into the historical present for particular political purposes. These four texts use spatial metaphors to reconfigure, rather than simply repeat, the patterns of violence represented in their intertexts, advocating new forms of communal history as a way of breaking old habits of rivalry, conflict and scapegoating.

Central to the revision of literary history examined in this thesis is the concept of mimetic desire. According to the cultural theorist, René Girard, all desire is mimetic and mimetic desire leads to rivalry and conflict. In theorizing mimetic desire, Girard argues: “Two desires converging on the same object are bound to clash. Thus, mimesis coupled with desire leads automatically to conflict” (Violence 146). The repeated acts of collective violence generated by that conflict create the central cultural figure of the scapegoat, whose function is to restore cultural order and stability. Girardian theory is used in this thesis to analyze the figure of the scapegoat in Ondaatje’s and Carey’s texts, where a juxtaposition of text and intertext newly
allow that scapegoat to be recognized not only as the victimizer but also as the victim. In this exchange, pre-existent power relations are exposed and reimagined revealing, as Chris Fleming argues, that those emerging as scapegoats tend to be “marginalized figures or outcasts often existing on the fringes of society” (51). Girardian analysis, focusing on the revelation that “violence belongs to all men” and “anybody can play the part of the surrogate victim” (*Violence* 257), uncovers a pattern in these four novels, which is enabled by genre: all four novels fall into Amy Elias’s category of metahistorical romance.

Elias holds that the term “*metahistorical romance* …encompasses both postmodernist and postcolonial fiction” (188). Both Ondaatje’s and Carey’s novels are discourses in postmodernism in that they both problematize history, are fundamentally contradictory, and political in intent. While all four novels are examples of poststructuralism, manifested in the diverse and destabilizing discourses located across the texts, Carey’s novels are also postcolonial in challenging the discourse of colonialism. Carey’s and Ondaatje’s texts articulate an alternative way of communicating the histories of marginalized people and the scapegoats who represent them.

For Elias the metahistorical romance “incorporates an understanding of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in terms of the historical sublime” (188). She defines the historical sublime as a traumatic history, a history that hurts, such as the violent subordination of colonized subjects, which is obscured by the ideology of imperialism. In Ondaatje’s novels the historical sublime is expressed in the oppressive working conditions of Toronto’s workers and the physical and emotional damage to war victims while Carey’s novel addresses the cruel consequences of transportation, and the victimization of the Irish working class in
colonial Australia. Elias’s emphasis on the historical sublime underpins the focus of my argument on violence to historical scapegoats. At the same time, I acknowledge and use the insights of two prominent experts in the field of metahistorical fiction, Brian McHale and Linda Hutcheon. For Elias, the form of metahistorical romance is characterized by its narratological terracing of historical events and people and its active relationship to the multiple, layered texts representing the past in order to “expose a new angle of historical vision” (104). Its excavations allow silent or repressed histories to be reconfigured. In these novels, it is the figure of the scapegoat that emerges as key to rewriting narratives of the past, as the medium through which the fissures and contradictions of grand narratives might be revealed. While Girard’s theorization of desire is based on the notion of imitation, which he refers to by invoking the Greek term “mimesis”, the rewritings undertaken by Ondaatje and Carey borrow from a long tradition of imitation as literary practice. The rhetorical term of imitatio involves a competitive ambivalence towards the object of emulation, and its recent analyses highlight the elements of rivalry and violence that characterize the relationship between text and precursor. These range from Thomas Greene’s understanding of imitation as a fraught practice of creative anachronism (37), to Richard Peterson’s more benign view of imitation as “the dynamic process of gathering in and transforming” (21). For G.W. Pigman, imitation is always both transformative and contradictory. He uses a model of eristic imitation to highlight the images of struggle, strife and competition through which a text may simultaneously criticize and emulate its precursor, where “admiration for a model [is] joined with envy and contentiousness” (4). Ondaatje’s and Carey’s novels, which depend on central intertexts, retain some of these elements of ambivalence, rivalry and violence which characterize imitation, but are closest to allegory, in its poststructuralist sense,
through their radical transformations of the historical texts upon which they rely. As Craig Owens argues, “allegory occurs whenever one text is doubled by another”; its two fundamental impulses are “a conviction of the remoteness of the past and a desire to redeem it for the present” (68).

Stephen Slemon’s poststructuralist understanding of allegorical writing reinterprets history as a concept in order to articulate “new codes of recognition”: where those acts of resistance that “history” has rendered silent or invisible can be newly recognized as a shaping force in a culture’s tradition. Primarily known as a postcolonial theorist, Slemon questions the common assumptions about allegorical models of reading and writing as either concerned with redeeming and recuperating the past or, conversely, as a “willful act of annihilating the past” (158). In contrast, for Slemon, allegorical writing dislocates the past in the sense that traditional discourses are challenged:

[. . .] in one area—the relation between allegory and history—post-colonial allegorical writing not only constitutes a challenge to prevailing theoretical assumptions about what kind of grounding is required for allegorical communication to take place, but also, [that] it is helping to change our received ideas of history. (158)

His writing differs from the work of Michel Foucault and Hayden White, in which history is represented as “a mode of discourse that is culturally motivated and ideologically conditioned.” Instead he argues for the articulation of “a code of recognition” (159) that brings history as language and discourse into focus. In this theory, traditional discourse intersects with invented discourse to create different modes of perception. Slemon recognizes that the reader’s vision is binary in interpreting an allegorical impulse against what Fredric Jameson calls a “mastercode.”
It can work in two ways, by legitimizing imperial history, or by transforming received concepts of history or tradition. In this sense history is a discourse open to review, to exploration and to reinterpretation, and is a means of subverting colonial myths.

Slemon argues that in the process of destabilizing and transforming our fixed ideas of history, it is fiction that determines the way we read history, history that is contingent upon fiction, not the other way around; that we read allegory with binary vision viewing the inherited concept of history and the interpretive fiction at the same time. According to Slemon, postcolonial narratives are concerned with neither redeeming nor annihilating history, but rather they inscribe it as a concept that is open to revision. Further, poststructuralist allegory also changes ideas of the concept of allegory itself, reading this new revised “mode of representation in all of its diversity, its plurality, its cultural and political difference” (166).

Poststructuralist allegory provides a context for reading Ondaatje’s and Carey’s engagement with the past that keeps in play a form of Slemon’s “double vision”. They neither redeem nor annihilate history but juxtapose contradictory possibilities of interpretation in productive tension. Rather than closing down interpretive avenues for assessing the past, they open up multiple new pathways. This is not to say that these texts are politically neutral. The central figures of these novels are disenfranchised—the “immigrants”, “the spy”, “the convict” and the Irish”—and negative associations with their histories are reimagined. These figures, selected by cultural markers of difference, are scapegoats who, rather than be seen as victims, as Fleming argues, “are invariably seen as victimizers” (51). By deploying allegorical doubling, these metahistorical romances question the identification of scapegoats in traditional discourse as such victimizers by exposing the point of view of the community from which the scapegoat is drawn.
To reveal these alternative histories, the thesis develops Julia Kristeva’s and Susan Friedman’s theory of spatialization together with René Girard’s theory of mimetic desire, to examine the construction of the historical scapegoat in these four novels. The reading of Ondaatje’s and Carey’s novels is based on Susan Friedman’s analysis of intertextuality, which in turn draws upon Julia Kristeva’s theory of spatialization. For Kristeva, spatialization constitutes the text as a place in which space and time functions as co-ordinates for textual activity at the level of word, sentence and story. The implication of this textual activity or intertextuality for historical fiction is that it provides a means to read the text “within (the text of) society and history” (37). If, as Simon Edwards claims, the element of violence is implicit in the genre of historical fiction as it “plays itself out in different national and cultural traditions, patterns of political and social development” (295), this thesis locates an alternative model of history at work in spatialized texts. The spatialized texts examined here use communal histories, the histories of people represented in alternative narratives, to demonstrate the potential to avert the violence generated in the subtexts by asserting ethical action. In the process of decoding previous ideologies embedded in myths, beliefs and “grand narratives”, communal history challenges the understanding of historical violence and revises literary and historical canons.

In Kristeva’s analysis, intertextuality can be visualized as a grid in which the writer/reader (horizontal axis) intersects with the text/context (vertical axis). These tropes of spatialization enable a reader to visualize the operation of a text. The horizontal axis of a text represents the transaction between the writer (writing subject) with the addressee (either a character or the reader) whereas the vertical axis connects the text with exterior, precursor texts (66). Kristeva uses the term “ideologeme” to refer to the intersection of a text with its precursors. Augmenting Kristeva’s theory,
Friedman suggests that the spatialization of intertextual narratives fosters an interactive process of reading in which the reader reconstructs intersections of the vertical and horizontal axes of a text. Deriving her argument from Kristeva’s concept of the “subject-in-process”, Friedman writes that “the vertical axis involves the space and time the writer and reader occupy as they inscribe and interpret […] the ‘subject-in-process’ constituted through the ‘signifying practice’ of the text and its dialogues with literary, social and historical intertexts” (Friedman 219). In narrative, Friedman posits, these and other spatial tropes identify plural subject positions for the reader to construct a story, so that within a narrative, “juxtapositions, oppositions, conflations, convergences, or mirroring of narrative coordinates [. . .] form a fluid ‘story’ of a dynamic text [. . .] ‘narrated’ by the reader” (218).

In Friedman’s analysis, the horizontal narrative is the sequence of events that contains generic conventions familiar to a reader, such as setting, character, action, problem, progression, and closure: “Every horizontal narrative has an embedded vertical dimension [. . .] that must be traced by the reader because it has no narrator of its own” (221). A reader must interpret the intertextuality of the vertical narrative; “both the literary and historical aspects of the vertical narrative,” Friedman explains, “involve reading the horizontal narrative’s dialogues with other texts” (221). These dialogues, “whether consciously or unconsciously produced by the writer [. . .] exist as ‘the mosaic of quotations’ that traverse the text” (221). Intertextual resonances, when consciously intended by the writer, “establish an indirect communication between the writer and reader, with the characters and events of the horizontal narrative as points of mediation” (221). Friedman refers to the vertical axis of narrative as a palimpsest, that is, “a tablet that has been written on many times, with prior layers imperfectly erased” (221).
Friedman proposes that the text’s vertical narrative can be read, “as a linguistic entity structured like a psyche, with a conscious and an unconscious that interact psychodynamically” (223). She analyzes three distinct interwoven strands of the vertical narrative: the literary, the historical, and the psychic. The literary strand of the vertical narrative includes the writer and reader’s awareness of genre conventions that exist “as a chronotope, a space-time, within which the specific text is read—for its invocations and revocations, its uses and rescriptions, its repetitions and play” (Friedman 221). All literary texts exist within one or more literary traditions or cultures; as I discuss subsequently, there are multiple texts and traditions with which the novels of Ondaatje and Carey intersect. Yet each novel emphasizes its relationship to a particular precursor. Hence, the horizontal narrative of these novels indirectly entwines a vertical aspect that engages readers with what has been written before.

The horizontal aspect of the vertical narrative can also refer to a specific historical event that the text reconstructs, such as Ned Kelly’s death in True History of the Kelly Gang and the transportation of convicts to Australia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Jack Maggs. Similarly, in In the Skin of a Lion Ondaatje rewrites the history of Toronto’s modernization using records from the Riversdale Library, while The English Patient rewrites events in the life of desert explorer Count Almásy, who was recorded as a spy in British Intelligence documents. The horizontal aspect of the vertical narrative may also “reproduce, subvert, and otherwise engage with the dominant and marginalized cultural scripts of the social order” (Friedman 222), such as narratives about class, gender, ethnicity, religion and race. The English Patient, for example, includes Western cultural scripts about nationalism, the Asian “other” and gendered alterity. As Friedman explains, these aspects of the vertical narrative allow a reader, as Kristeva recommends, to analyze
“the text in dialogue with ‘its historical and social coordinates’” (Friedman 223 qtd. Kristeva 36).

Friedman believes that conceptualizing narrative in spatial terms “emphasizes the psychodynamic, interactive, and situational nature of narrative processes; it also provides a fluid, relational approach that connects text and context, writer and reader” (225). Within Friedman’s analysis of spatialized narrative, Kristeva’s grid of the writer/reader (horizontal axis) and text/context (vertical axis) reconnects the text with its writer and the world and “potentially produces interpretations of the textual and political unconscious of a given text or series of texts” (226). The notion of the vertical axes embedded in the horizontal historical and literary intertextualities constitutes more than resonances attached to the text associatively. They initiate “dialogic narratives ‘told’ by the reader in collusion with a writer who inscribes them in the text consciously or unconsciously” (225). This concept of interactive horizontal and vertical narratives “allows for a relational reading of the two that produces a “story” not present in either axis by itself” (225). This is the model of narration used in the analyses of these novels. Reading the psychic aspect of the vertical narrative allows us as readers to construct stories of trauma in the untold history of the protagonists in these novels. Friedman concludes: “The richest insights produced by a spatialized reading strategy may well reside in the way it potentially produces interpretations of the textual unconscious of a given text or a series of texts” (226).

Friedman’s framework allows the construction of painful history that may be usefully studied through René Girard’s theory of mimetic desire to explore how these modern novels intersect with their precursors to articulate concepts about history and historical scapegoats. The mimetic desires of the characters in these narratives frame discourses that create rivalry, construct deviancy and identify scapegoats. Integrating
Girard’s theorization of how imitation can lead not only to a loss of differentiation but also to transformation provides a means to trace the dynamic relationship of a text and its precursors, exposing the changing identification of criminality. But where Girard’s theory of mimetic desire studies the representation of imitation among characters, my analysis traces the interconnectedness of triangular relationships among characters and across texts.

The “doubling” of text and precursor in Ondaatje’s and Carey’s novels foregrounds the role of culture in determining how and why a scapegoat is constructed. Reading the ideology of the text against the subtext exposes different cultural attitudes linked to the moment of each text’s cultural production and circulation. Friedman’s analysis of intertextuality provides a means, in the words of H. Porter Abbott, “to interpret [...] the complex embeddedness of a narrative’s meaning in the culture from which it comes” (94). Integrating Friedman’s theory of spatialization as a strategy for reading narrative with Girard’s theory allows texts from different historical times to be used to analyze the role of desire in the construction of ideology, criminality and scapegoating.

René Girard posits that people not only imitate the actions but also the desires of other people. He believes that “a rigorous conception of desire [is] imbricated in the textual interlacings of the great works” (To Double 39). In his analyses of texts ranging from Shakespeare’s Hamlet to Proust’s Recherche Le Temps Perdu, characters who imitate each other’s actions and desires become “doubles” who reveal the “reciprocity of mimetic relationships.” A triune or triangular structure conjoins “doubles”, that is, a desiring subject and a desired object, with a “model” or “mediator” whose own desires direct the subject towards the object. Imitation of another’s desires generates, according to Girard, “the dynamics of mimetic rivalry
[. . .] rooted in a disputed object” when “two hands will reach for the same object simultaneously: conflict cannot fail to result” (To Double 201). As rivalry intensifies, the attention of the desiring subject becomes fixed on the mediator rather than on the object of desire, whose importance to the relationship fades. The violence with which the mediator resists the subject paradoxically encourages imitation that initiates struggle and conflict between them. The subject desires the very being of the mediator. As this is impossible to gratify, the subject is forced into a position of inferiority or “emptiness” in contrast to the mediator’s perceived “fullness”. The apparent lack of desire or need in the mediator powerfully attracts the subject.

What Girard calls the “double-bind” of the mimetic triangle is the double injunction affecting the relationship of the subject and the mediator: “taken as a model, imitate me; and as a rival, do not imitate me” (Things Hidden 291). Imitation causes the rivals, that is, the subject and the mediator, to resemble each other, becoming enemy “brothers” as it were. Mimesis and reciprocity structure the relationship of the rivals whose personalities eventually become indistinguishable. They may engage in a process of counter-imitation to prove themselves different. Counter-imitation produces a binary or symmetrical structure, which is a sign of the internal mediation of their imitative desire. Nevertheless, the relationship of rivals, in Girard’s terminology, “is non-differentiated. In fact, at every instant, mimesis engenders new reciprocities by a constant redoubling of the same ruses, the same strategies, and the same mirror effects” (To Double 91). Imitative desire is the antithesis and complement of identity. There is nothing on one side of the rivalry that will not, sooner or later, turn up on the other side. Characters dissolve and personalities disintegrate, for the process is one of growing reciprocity and uniformity until the rivals become “indistinguishable”.
The “scapegoat” effect, according to Girard, occurs when one of the rivals, or indistinguishable enemies, is differentiated and becomes a scapegoat, a focus of violence. Fleming explains the process which leads up to scapegoating: “As antagonism generates doubling, this doubling itself gives rise to renewed threats of violence, violence which is able to draw in people putatively external to a dispute” (46). To mitigate against this contagious aspect of violence, Girard argues that the reintroduction of order at the social and cultural level involves a sacrificial crisis that “only an act of collective expulsion can bring this oscillation to a halt and cast violence outside the community” (Violence 151). For Girard “the operation of scapegoating is crystallized when “the community satisfies its rage against an arbitrary victim” (Things Hidden 27). According to Girard, the scapegoat as a victim unifies “the community in its opposition. The sacrifice is simply another act of violence, one that is added to a succession of others, but it is the final act of violence, its last word” (Things Hidden 24).

By tracing the complex intersection of characters’ relationships between a text and its precursors, my analysis considers how the modern novel differs from its precursor in representations of the scapegoat. Central to this representation is the approach to history in the novels considered in this thesis. Carey’s and Ondaatje’s texts are “metahistorical romances”, articulating their imitation and differentiation from their precursors in a manner that reconfigures their representation of the concept of history. Elias describes metahistorical romances that integrate historical and fictional people and events from different periods of time within one narrative as multidimensional and “narrotologically terraced” (117), by drawing upon the theory of Ihab Hassan, an early analyst of the postmodern, who specifically linked parataxis to postmodernist and poststructural modes of thought. Hassan differentiates
postmodernism from modernism on the ground that “modernism appears hieratic, hypotactical, and formalist, while postmodernism strikes us by contrast as playful, paratactical and reconstructionist” (91). By anachronistically integrating precursor texts, characters and historical persons from different historical periods, metahistorical fiction self-reflexively represents the complexity of historical narrative. Metahistorical romances portray an alternative representation of the scapegoat by engaging with the dominant and cultural scripts of the social order, by gesturing towards the recovery of untold history and by replacing one linear time line with multiple existing time lines.

In a discussion of postmodern strategies for “spatializing” time, Elias uses spatial tropes to explicate the complex narrative form of postmodern historical fiction. Following Michel Bakhtin’s analysis of spatial tropes in the novel in *Dialogic Imagination*, metahistorical romances, Elias argues, represent history spatially and thereby reveal “definitions of time and space” to be “culturally specific” (103). The spatialized narrative form of postmodern metahistorical romances critically evaluates the linear model of time characteristic of epistemological assumptions of Enlightenment historiography. In his critique of Elias’s work, “History Itself? Or, The Romance of Postmodernism”, Brian McHale argues that the “spatial turn” of postmodernism Elias proposes includes “paratactic history”. Simultaneous history, McHale theorizes, differs from paratactic history. In postmodern fiction, according to McHale, paratactic historical narratives force “temporal planes into textual proximity with each other without producing any synthesis among them, while simultaneous history […] precipitates different historical planes onto a single plane of reality” (155). By replacing one linear time line with multiple, coexisting time lines a postmodern metahistorical romance “creates a new fictional universe in which historical epochs, characters or events appear together, thus challenging the entire
notion of historical reconstruction” (Elias 139). Such “creative anachronism”, according to McHale, “draws upon a number of strategies for constructing/deconstructing space, among them juxtaposition, interpolation, superimposition, and misattribution” (Postmodernist Fiction 45). He describes the result as “a kind of double vision or split-screen effect, the present and the past simultaneously in focus” (93).

These postmodern historical romances raise larger questions about how narrative structures represent history. In his signature work, Metahistory, Hayden White looks to “the reconstitution of history as a form of intellectual activity which is at once poetic, scientific and philosophical in its concerns” (Preface, xii). He argues in “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact” that historians use narrative to understand and interpret phenomena, using complex structures in which “a world of experience is imagined to exist under at least two modes, one of which is encoded as ‘real’, the other of which is ‘revealed’ to have been illusory in the course of the narrative” (208). Extending the idea of real and illusory modes of narration, McHale writes that classic historical fiction camouflages the seam between the fictional world and historical reality by introducing “pure fiction” to obscure “dark areas” and by matching the inner structures of the fictional world with that of the real world. In contrast, postmodern metahistorical fiction foregrounds the seam, by making the transition as disturbing as possible. This is done “by violating the constraints on ‘classic’ historical fiction: by contradicting the public record of ‘official’ history; by flaunting anachronisms, and by integrating history and the fantastic” (Postmodernist 90). In the search for a new approach to Western history, Elias claims that metahistorical romances “reenergize the historical romance genre by inverting its dominant, melding
fantasy, anachronism, metafictionality, and other fabulatory techniques with the facts of history” (Introduction xv).

In “History Itself” McHale notes that Fredric Jameson’s “spatial turn” of postmodernism is crucial to Elias’s poetics of the metahistorical romance. As Jameson asserts in *The Political Unconscious*: “there is nothing that is not social and historical—indeed, that everything is ‘in the last analysis’ political” (20). Jameson proposes that the historical process of thinking and writing involves the return to “master narratives” and argues for the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts, and against historical amnesia. For Jameson, “the object of study is less the text itself than the interpretations through which to confront and appropriate it. Interpretation is here construed as an essentially allegorical act, which consists in rewriting a given text in terms of a particular master code” (9-10). Jameson, working out of a Marxist context, sees postmodernism as a “cultural dominant”, characterized by the developments of mass culture, in which discourses are constituted by modes of ideology. For the poststructuralist theorists, Hassan, McHale, Hutcheon and Elias, postmodernism problematizes history, for, as Hutcheon asserts, “postmodernism uses and abuses the conventions of discourse” (*Poetics* xii), demanding a concept of history that is concerned equally with dominant and oppositional strategies, for it incarnates the contradictions of their interaction” (*Poetics* 179).

Jameson theorises that allegorical images create “new modes of perception” where “different moments in historical or existential time are simply filled in different places; the attempt to combine them even locally does not slide up and down on a temporal scale [. . .] but jumps back and forth across a gameboard that we conceptualize in terms of distance” (*Postmodernism* 167-8). This view illustrates why McHale theorizes in “History Itself” that Jameson’s “spatial turn” melds with Elias’s
assertion that the strategies of parataxis and simultaneity merge “to release images from the repressed (the culturally repressed as well as the libidinal and mythic unconscious) into the world, to walk among real people, creating a mythical world where different kinds of reality and time interact with one another or exist simultaneously on the same plane, the same historical moment” (147-48). Importantly, anachronism resulting from simultaneous and paratactic history, according to Elias, implies that history is “weird, uncanny, and dimensionally complex” (141). Spatializing history is then potentially a basis for the formation of a positive if problematized subjectivity. The problematized subjectivity of the protagonists in the novels discussed in this thesis is illustrated in the extent to which each character understands his historical position in order to “read” or “tell” history by occupying subject-positions of reader and writer.

The stories the protagonists in these novels write or tell represent their longing for identity and history. Their stories imply that historical writing is not different in kind from other kinds of narration, whether it is fiction, myth or official records. In Ondaatje’s novels, Patrick Lewis, the protagonist of In the Skin of a Lion, “reads” his narrative by gathering “all of these fragments of a human order” (145) drawn from his memory and the lives of the immigrant working community. Patrick uses these fragments to form a personally and culturally meaningful sense of the past. Once he understands his relation to both history and society, he has access to language to “tell” his story in a literary form Linda Hutcheon calls “historiographic metafiction” referring to popular novels which are both “intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (Poetics 5). Patrick’s story points to the doubleness “represented in the narration and towards the act of narration itself” (Politics 76). Yet the reader is still required to fill in the blanks in the
fragmentary and chaotic structure of a text that produces a multiple array of metatexts just as the historian is forced to do, ensuring that as Berger’s epigraph notes, “no single story” can emerge to deny all others. Similarly, the English patient “reads” his story as a guilt-ridden participant in a narrative of war. His story is only completed at the villa when the exiles at the villa are constructed in multidimensional history, which the English patient calls “communal history, communal books.” In this communal history, the narratives of the victims of an imperial war are reconfigured, unbounded by the constraints of class, gender, race or time. The English patient can “tell” his story when he includes the human element in historical narration in his interaction with his companions by teaching them that their lives have stories. These stories, communally, construct a new kind of history.

In Carey’s texts, Jack Maggs suffers from a repressed lost memory and keeps on suffering as Tobias Oates steals his story in mesmeric sessions. He occupies the subject position of a reader once he starts writing to his “son”, Phipps, about the story of his childhood and the loss of his “wife” and aborted child. Written in invisible ink and mirror writing, it is an alternative way of writing history in representing the story that Empire does not reveal in its official records. This story is juxtaposed with Tobias Oates’s narrative of the courtroom, where, according to Douglas Hay, criminal law is manifested as “an ideological system” wherein aspects of “majesty, justice and mercy”, are demonstrated to the “mass of unpropertied Englishmen” (26). Maggs was sentenced to transportation. It is only when Mercy breaks him out of this unspoken grief that he can understand his own story. In True History of the Kelly Gang, Ned Kelly’s record of events in his fictional autobiography mirrors Kelly’s historical The Jerilderie Letter. His story is juxtaposed with the “parcels” of documents and Thomas Curnow’s rewriting of Kelly’s narrative. Kelly “reads” a story of unfair and unjust
government policies and corrupt police behaviour oppressing Irish settlers and writes portraying himself as the heroic leader of the proletariat. Official narratives construct Kelly as an outlaw and the leader of a rebellion and identify him as a scapegoat to quell the social unrest. In Carey’s version of Kelly’s autobiography he positions himself as a romantic hero who stood for social justice.

The potential of the protagonists to “read” and “tell” history provides a counter discourse to the traditional framework for historical representation. In metahistorical fiction, the intertextuality of spatialized narratives exposes the fault-lines and anachronism of paratactic and simultaneous history. To demystify conventional literary representations of the past as one linear timeline, McHale argues in *Postmodernist Fiction* that the text operates in the “dark areas” of history and thereby “revises the content of the historical record, reinterpreting the historical record, often demystifying or debunking the orthodox version of the past.” The alternative history either “supplements the historical record, claiming to restore what has been lost or suppressed; or it displaces official history altogether” (90). Elias concentrates on the events of history, referring to the ‘lost’, ‘repressed’ or ‘hidden history’ as the ‘historical sublime’, as that which can only be gestured towards. Following Hayden White’s assertion in *The Content of the Form* that the discipline of history “consisted in subordinating written history to the categories of the ‘beautiful’ and suppressing those of the ‘sublime’” (67), Elias argues, “the assertion of spatiality allows the metahistorical romance to recover the historical sublime often repressed in history’s linear model” (104). Spatiality is an attempt to gesture towards the historical sublime, that is, the silent and unknowable past. Because the sublime is “that which stands outside of proof, empirical reason, the rule of truth” (28), Elias contends it remains absent in historical novels, romances and myths. For Elias, narrative
structures in metahistorical fiction produce provocative reimaginings of the past. Historical romance and myth depend on a historical perspective that effectively obscures the “dark areas.” In contrast, Elias contends, the spatialized narratives of postmodern metahistorical romances reveal “a compulsion to make sense of a traumatic history, a history that hurts” (87).

In order to “make sense of a traumatic history”, metahistorical fiction engages in a process of repetition and deferral. In Elias’s analysis of postcolonial metahistorical romances, the repetition compulsion is the way metahistory constructs history as a process of deferral that requires a constantly defined border, which in turn offers a constantly defined location of the Other. Inherent in the repetition compulsion is the loss of self and a journey from the center to the margins, which is repeated endlessly because “the borders of knowable history it seeks are themselves constantly receding” (202). In Elias’s analysis, “This endlessly repeated movement towards the historical sublime/History repeatedly voices and inverts the relationship between subject and object, center and border, Self and Other: the Self searching for History finds nothing and loses itself, and is instead set on a never-ending spiralling quest towards the meaning of the social, the self and the other” (202).

In contrast to the novels that lead Elias to this conclusion, the metahistorical novels examined in this thesis provide opportunities for protagonists to recognize and narrate their understandings of history. Rather than finding nothing and losing the self, the subjects here locate a precarious form of subjectivity through their participation in communal history. In the novels of Ondaatje and Carey that I discuss, male protagonists’ journeys lead them towards occupying the subject-positions not only of readers, but also of a writers or storytellers who “tell the histories”. Women are instrumental in mediating the men’s access to the subject-position of writer or
storyteller, often occupying key roles as storytellers with privileged access to oral cultures. In triangular relationships, Alice, Hana, Mercy and Mary Hearn are stabilizing forces, ultimately anchored in sacrifice, that produce a braking effect on the cyclical violence generated by the rivals. Through their mediation these women create a communal history by facilitating the subjects to understand and tell their stories.

All four novels, as discourses of postmodernism, problematize history as “fundamentally contradictory” in which “the presence of the past” becomes “a critical reworking, never a nostalgic return” (*Poetics* 4). They are texts that engage the reader in constructing communal history from spatialized narrative, providing an alternative means of constructing identity. Ondaatje’s novels rewrite documented history to critique the ruthless appropriation of people in times of upheaval, such as during the modernization of a city or in times of war. The imperial ideology of the ancient narrative *Gilgamesh*, as an intertext of *In the Skin of a Lion* is analyzed not only to reveal the modern text’s “social and historical coordinates” (Kristeva 36), but also to describe the interactions of rivals in a recognition scene when they understand each other’s role in modernizing the city of Toronto. *The English Patient* differs structurally from *In the Skin of a Lion* in that the novel comprises two interwoven narratives, one of which is the fragmented account of the English patient whose narrative intersects with *The Histories*. The other describes the interactions of four war victims whose memories intersect with literary, biblical and art history intertexts. The juxtaposition of these two narratives is explored in relation to the construction of imperial history and communal history to examine the ideologies that generate particular versions of history and their effects on the marginalized.
Carey’s novels rework narratives of Empire to problematize formations of national identity and demonized figures in cultural history. An analysis of *Jack Maggs* examines the interpenetration of the cultural ideology of its precursor text, *Great Expectations*, into the modern text and the role of Victorian social policy in constructing criminality by linking policy, property and poverty to Jack Maggs’s identification as a social deviant. A similar connection of ideology and criminality is examined in *True History of the Kelly Gang*. An analysis of the paratactical implications of juxtaposing three chronological narratives, Ned Kelly’s autobiography, the autobiography in the sub-text, *Lorna Doone*, and Ned Kelly’s *The Jerilderie Letter*, explores the influence of the government power structure in colonial Australia on the social struggle of Irish settlers and the social banditry of Ned Kelly.

In the four novels, violent identifications of the protagonists in the subtexts are constructed in triangular relationships that are representative of the cultural ideology in which the narratives, or “persecution texts”, are conceived. The difference is that in the modern texts the linear history of the subtext is crosscut with spatialized multilayered history wherein one of the participants offers an alternative to violent confrontation, which breaks the cycle of revenge. This is marked by a point of agreement when an individual understands his role in relation to both history and society. The merging of identities of Patrick and Harris in *In the Skin of a Lion* informs their understanding of how a city functions socially and economically. The English patient’s journey closes on the way he can define his own life and that of others in terms of communal books. In *Jack Maggs*, Mercy’s understanding of how both she and Jack Maggs are identified as deviants in Victorian society informs a decision to continue their lives in Australia. *True History* is the exception because Ned Kelly positions himself as a romantic hero rather than as a hunted outlaw. He
refuses Mary Hearn’s conciliatory suggestion to leave his violent entrapment in Victoria and builds “monitors” in order to rescue his mother from Beechworth Prison. Unlike the other protagonists he does not understand his own historical position and is condemned to die as an outlaw.

In contrast to violent identifications in official history, the communal model of history offers a different perspective on the protagonists. In *In the Skin of a Lion*, through Alice’s mediation, Patrick is remembered as the historian of Toronto’s immigrant working class rather than as the representative of the city’s anarchists. Triangular relationships in the spatialized narrative of *The English Patient* construct the patient as a guardian of communal history transmitting discursive maps from the past to the present to guide humanity in times of need. In this construction he is an alternative to Benjamin’s “Angel of History,” which depicts ruin and destruction and is emblematic of a narrative of war in which the English patient is identified as a spy by British Intelligence. Jack Maggs, guided by Mercy, is removed from a cultural ideology where he would be destroyed as a criminal outcast and is remembered instead in communal history as the civic-minded and picturesque patriarch of the Maggs family in Australia. Ned Kelly, encouraged by Mary Hearn to write *The Jerilderie Letter*, is displaced from documented history as a murderer and outlaw and recreated as the hero of the proletariat in communal history. The letter, imitated and expanded in Ned Kelly’s autobiography, not only represents a communal account of events, but also constructs him as a romantic rebel who fought for justice.

In contrast to the subtext, where Girard’s mimetic desire produces rivalry, violence and deviant identifications, communal constructions of identity in the new texts show that violence is averted and communal history displaces imperial history when one of the participants rejects violence and produces an alternative solution.
Alice advocates social change through the use of language, leading Patrick to narrate the history of the workers. Mercy rejects England’s brutal penal code and criminalization of the poor, and withdraws Jack Maggs to Australia and his Australian sons. Jack Maggs’s agency in writing his account of the cause of his criminality demystifies the imperial identification of convicts and constructs an alternative history. Mary Hearn also recognizes narration in The Jerilderie Letter as an alternative means of fighting for justice. The English Patient is different in structure because in each triangular configuration in which the patient is a participant, rivalry is present but is always deflected. Characters are situated in spatialized narratives and as such are multifaceted. For example, Hana is reconstructed as Kim, who guides the lama to his sacred river. As such, Hana reshapes Almásy’s violent identification as a jackal and a spy in a guilt-ridden past to construct him as the English patient, a holy man. In the villa, the English patient epitomizes the idea that the stories of mankind unite the past with the present and serve as codes to guide humanity in the future.

Contrasting the imperial history embedded in the subtexts with spatialized narratives in the modern texts demonstrates that communal history draws on past and present narratives to break the cycle of violence and revenge that underpins “grand narratives”. Violent identifications of social transgressors in imperial narratives as spy, anarchist, convict and outlaw are reassessed in each of the chapters of the thesis to reveal heroes who have been the scapegoats of cultural ideologies. Each chapter examines the bounded interpretation of the subject in documented history contrasted to multiple subject positions in communal history, and traces the subject’s role as the storyteller of the communal history. Patrick, cast as an outlawed rebel and anarchist, is recognized by Harris as a prototype of Diogenes and Enkidu, scapegoats, who speak for people who have been oppressed. The English patient, known as a spy,
constructed in multiple personas as a guardian of Western narratives and art history. Jack Maggs, stigmatized as a convict, is able to relate the communal history of the poor classes by drawing on his own multifaceted experiences. Ned Kelly, famous as an outlawed bushranger, is reimagined in narratives and legends as the champion of the oppressed Irish farmers. In their recreations in the modern texts the subjects-in-process are empowered to tell the stories of the people, past and present.

Chapter One discusses how the intersection of Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion* with its ancient subtext, *Gilgamesh*, draws attention to the plural, often contradictory, subject positions. Through their identification with each other, the rivals, Patrick and Harris, gain knowledge of their related roles in social change. Their altered understanding of the social and economic suggests a communal model to rewrite history. In the analysis of “simultaneous history” in which the past and present coexist within the novel in historical layers, I explore the intersection of Patrick Lewis with Enkidu, and Rowland Harris with Gilgamesh, in relation to the role of natural man in rivalrous conflict with a figure representing political power and authority. The role of language and narration in merging those identities explains how the cycle of revenge and violence embedded in historical accounts can be disrupted when boundaries are dissolved.

A critique of the social history of Toronto as represented in the interaction of the historical figures of Rowland Harris, engineer, and Ambrose Small, capitalist, placed in conflict with Patrick’s fictive companions, Alice Gull, Cato and Hana, examines the human narrativization of history, working class conditions and the construction of scapegoats. The stories of Alice and Cato illustrate a history of failed social activism against working class oppression redeemed to some extent by the figure of Alice’s daughter, Hana and the access she provides to communal histories.
Communal history, here figured through the Macedonian community, dissolves boundaries, supplements experience and invests linear histories of oppression and suffering with historical significance. Patrick is then able to piece together the communal history of Toronto missing from the city’s historical records. The novel puts forward a case for change through narration rather than through violent confrontation.

In Chapter Two, *The English Patient* is analyzed as a text conceived as an expression of the English patient’s thoughts, ideas, and views; more compellingly, it is the product of a multitude of historically prior events, specifically the earlier text of *The Histories*, and contemporaneous events, particularly those centering on the Second World War, and the refuge in Tuscany. The juxtaposition of narratives is explored in relation to the construction of imperial history and communal history to explain the different ideologies that each history generates and their effect on the marginalized. An analysis of historical figures in imperial history in the context of the Greek War (480-479 BC) and the Second World War examines how rivalrous conflict in mimetic relationships creates conditions for constructing scapegoats. The role of simultaneous history is explored in relation to parallel relationships across texts, where Gyges, Candaules and the Queen merge with Almásy, Geoffrey Clifton and Katherine Clifton, to decode the ideology that animates their actions. The effects of this ideology in promoting violent outcomes are contrasted with the multiple points of view of communal history.

Communal history compared with documented history challenges the construction of a deviant identity determined by a dominant ideology. In models of communal history multiple identities, immersed in a spectrum of ideologies, question this interpretation by encouraging, through relational readings, unbounded
interpretations of the four so-called historical villains, the anarchist, spy, convict and outlaw. In this narrative two characters from *In the Skin of a Lion*, Hana and Caravaggio, are joined by two other companions, Kip, a Sikh sapper with the British Eighth army who condemns the “English” and their values with the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, and the “English patient”, a badly burned amnesiac. The problematized subjectivity of the English patient is explored in the context of both narratives in which he is a participant. In the context of war he is constructed, and constructs himself, as a spy, a demon lover and a social transgressor, while in the villa, he is constructed by others as a teacher, a prophet and a holy man. These identifications suggest that in imperial history there is, to use Simon Edwards terminology, “an untranslatable language of violence” (300) that is articulated in naming and criminalizing a transgressor, while a spatial account of the same character constructs a guardian of communal history.

In Chapter Three, I analyze how Carey’s text *Jack Maggs* also illustrates that the historical space or historical layer in which the subject in process exists is constructed by a source of power, an ideology. The role of cultural ideology in constructing a scapegoat is exposed in reading *Jack Maggs* against its precursor, *Great Expectations*: Tobias Oates is identified in simultaneous history as Charles Dickens, Jack Maggs as Abel Magwitch, and Phipps as Pip’s alter ego. Drawing attention to the plural subject positions illustrates how views on criminality change from one historical era to another. The violence inherent in a subtext grounded in imperial ideology pervades the new text.

The influence of imperial history in creating and punishing deviancy is exposed in Jack Maggs’s relationship with Tobias Oates and Henry Phipps and in his relationship with Ma Britten and Tom Britten. Both configurations reveal the role of
cultural attitudes in criminalizing the poor and generating violence. Repetition of class
and gender violence in Jack Maggs’s relationship with Mercy and Percy Buckle is
broken only in the final configuration when Mercy rebels against the social order.
Cyclical violence is deflected when Phipps, symbolizing Empire, and Mercy,
representing those identified as deviant, confront each other and Mercy asserts her
agency. A critique of mesmerism as “a scientific discourse” is compared to a parodic
simulation in a court of justice to reveal its role in cultural ideology, in cultural
discourses, and in the creation of Oates’s novel of Empire, *The Death of Jack Maggs*.
The role of stories written by Oates and Maggs are analyzed in relation to their
representations of history and their exposure of political judgments and values to
explain how different ideologies understand historical violence. Oates’s novel
supports imperial culture in sanctioning violence against the socially marginalized and
in identifying the “criminal mind” of Jack Maggs. Maggs’s writing is a communal
record, which draws the reader’s attention to the plural positions inscribed in the
subject position of Jack Maggs, a reading that identifies his life as heroic.

As well as reconstructing the Australian convict, Carey reconstructs an
Australian icon, Ned Kelly, to rethink, he reveals in the Interview with Andres Gaile,
the “denial and false consciousness” of Australian history (7). Carey states, “the so-
called violent outlaw” is “certainly a hero” and “an important person in the
Australian context.” He is “a decent person” who “behaved rather well”(6) in
attempting to help those doomed to poverty. Ned Kelly’s fictional autobiography, in
imitation of Kelly’s *The Jerilderie Letter* and enclosed in Carey’s novel, identifies
Ned Kelly as a hero who fought for justice. The spatialized narrative, read against the
ideology of the subtext, *Lorna Doone*, critiques the role romance plays in mystifying
Kelly’s understanding of his historical position in colonial Australia. An analysis of
literary intertexts embedded in Ned Kelly’s autobiography examines the role fabulation plays in linking him to Irish legends, to heroic historical figures and to John Ridd, the protagonist of *Lorna Doone*. By constructing himself as a hero and the hero of the proletariat Kelly becomes the scapegoat of the colonial administration.

The autobiographies of John Ridd and Ned Kelly illustrate triangular relationships underpinned by ideology; these link the desire for wealth and recognition to justice issues, class struggle and the construction of a scapegoat. With a focus on violence, these destructive configurations are compared to the relationship of Ned Kelly with Ellen Kelly and Mary Hearn to establish the part each plays in mediating for violent confrontation or for a peaceful solution. Their responses link the repetition or breaking of cyclical violence to imperial and communal histories. Reading the spatialized narratives of the new texts against their subtexts exposes important differences that radically separate their politics. The new texts confront rather than suppress the violence of the intertexts in the search for history’s meaning. They present a critique of history and historical representation, which encourages, in Friedman’s terminology, “a notion of the text as a multiplicitous and dynamic site of repression and return” (226). Cross-referencing the lives of historical criminals—anarchist, spy, convict and outlaw—with those of other historical characters breaks up the linear models that define them and narratologically and politically construct them. The spatial metaphors used in drawing upon historical characters in subtexts as imitative prototypes suggest, in Elias’s view, confluence between space, discourse, history and power. The metahistorical novels in this thesis challenge and revise literary history to reconstruct the lives of those deemed to be deviant by exposing the ideologies, which operate as a mechanism of scapegoating.
CHAPTER ONE: *In the Skin of a Lion.*

The title of Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion* announces its connection to an ancient precursor, *Gilgamesh* through its reference to “putting on the skin of another”. However, reading the vertically embedded script of the epic into the new text is not just a return to a dead text. It is a text that lives in Ondaatje’s work, set so tangentially that it exposes the possibilities of different types of history. *In the Skin of a Lion* replaces the focus on a single subject, Gilgamesh, with the representation of multiple subjects, Toronto’s workers. Their stories construct, as George Packer observes in his review, a “fragmented plot”. Here, the character Patrick Lewis is “the nexus of all the stories” (2), from which he creates, in collaboration with the reader and the self-conscious narrator, a communal history, differing from the official record of Toronto’s modernization. As Gordon Bölling points out, this “innovative treatment of history does not merely consist in shifting the focus from the center of Canadian society to the margin”, it also subscribes to Linda Hutcheon’s term, *historiographic metafiction* as a “postmodernistic literary prose text, which is self-consciously fictional and problematizes the conditions of historical knowledge” (217).

The concept of fragmentation in this analysis extends beyond the novel’s “fragmented plot,” to include a fragmentation of history. Elias describes this approach to the past as “a metaphorically ‘spatializing’ activity” (105). It is achieved in this novel by conflating subject positions, specifically Patrick’s character with the characters of the king and his companion in *Gilgamesh*, so that the consciousness of both the “master” and the “slave” is revealed. The insistence in *In the Skin of a Lion* on humanizing history, including the enemy, is a process that mitigates the impulse to use violent means against that enemy by introducing a mediator, located from within the oppressed community, who challenges the ethical premise of social violence. This
mediation shapes a different historical model by relating the previously invisible
history of Toronto’s working class in the modernization of the city.

As Linda Hutcheon notes in her discussion of Ondaatje’s *Running in the
Family*, “the economy of the fragmented text” implicates the reader “in the challenge
to the boundaries both between genres and between life and art” (Fotios Saris 189
quoting Hutcheon 304). The focus on the reader participating in the act of organizing
the past is no less crucial in *In the Skin of a Lion*, in which the fragmented
presentation of Patrick’s journey is assembled in arbitrary order into three books
within which keywords become the organizing principles. Book One traces Patrick’s
life from his early years into adulthood under the headings of “Little Seeds”, “The
Bridge” and “The Searcher”. In Books Two and Three, the structure becomes non-
linear and flaunts its haphazardness, moving backwards and forwards in time, under
the titles, “The Palace of Purification”, “Remorse”, “Caravaggio” and “Maritime
Theatre”. The reader is therefore directly involved in interacting with the text and
juxtaposing discourses and events along a horizontal axis as well as “constructing a
vertical collage”, in McHale’s terms, “across the seams between adjacent segments”
(*Postmodernist Fiction* 170). In doing so, as Hutcheon suggests, the reader is
implicated in organizing the past: “The past really did exist, but we can “know that
past today only through its texts (*Poetics* 128), an idea which bears similarities to
Roland Barthes’s definition of the intertext as “the impossibility of living outside the
infinite text (36).

While other critics suggest a variety of techniques including the use of light
and darkness to draw together the fragmented structure of the text, I explore the role
of Patrick, as receiver and recorder of history, and the role of precursor texts as
unifying devices to historicize the social conditions of workers and immigrants
politiciized by work. Patrick is the teller who functions as M. M. Bakhtin’s “chronotope”, the point where “the knots of narrative are tied and untied” (22). All of the novel’s fragments gravitate towards Patrick, who emerges as a focal point for piecing together these “fragments of human order” (SL 145) into a mural from which he draws a different type of history. The intertextual narratives woven into Patrick’s narrative intersect the past with the present in which characters live during the inter-war years in Toronto, Canada. The range of precursors from the ancient myth to twentieth-century newspaper articles generate within the novel what Elias describes as simultaneous history, one that joins “different historical periods on one plane of reality” (141). In this way, according to Elias, previously dissociated events, characters and ideologies “gain identity as fragments of history” (129).

Patrick Lewis, the protagonist of In the Skin of a Lion, is the “gatherer” of the stories of the people once he sets out on a quest to find an identity and a role in society. He finds and reads traces of that which cannot be represented, the historical sublime, in documents as diverse as love letters, photographs and newspaper articles. These provide not incontrovertible documentary evidence of historical events or a “seamless linear history” but instead are keys to unlock Patrick’s own memory, which produces the narrative that he tells to his stepdaughter, Hana. The multiple tales that merge with the stories in Patrick’s mural include textual allusions to the Sumerian epoch, to the biblical past in the narratives of Jonah and the Whale, Judith and Holofernes, Jerome and the Lions and the Gadarene Swine, to literary narratives, such as King Solomon’s Mines and Conrad’s letters, to philosophical references to Lucretius and Diogenes, and to folk tales such as that of the matriarch who bequeaths a skin of pelts to her silent daughter to speak out on behalf of the community. Collectively, these allusions construct ideas about social transformations in different
periods of time. The narratives, many of which are available to the reader but not to Patrick, illuminate Patrick’s struggle for identity. Other intertexts, particularly Cato’s letters, unlock Patrick’s childhood memories of other immigrants so that he can “read” the social struggles that ensued in the modernization of Toronto. This narrative strategy of invoking intertextual allusions to produce a voice from the constructed past suggests that history, in Martha Tuck Rozett’s words, is “an amalgam, a collage of fragments, each with its own viewpoint” (150).

An analysis of the complex representation of history underlying the novel’s intertextuality traces the role of narrative, of transformation, and the significance of wearing “a skin of a lion,” to reveal the persecution of particular representatives of communities resulting in the sacrificial crisis of scapegoating. Girard’s hypothesis of mimetic desire is used here to explore the issue of scapegoating to assess whether triangular relationships inevitably result in victimization, and to enquire whether it is possible in the mimetic process to transform a fixed idea of history. Girard’s theory of how imitation can lead not only to a loss of differentiation but also to transformation provides a means to explore the relationship between Gilgamesh and the new text to expose the violence of official history. Susan Spearey addresses the trope of transformation of characters in In the Skin of a Lion in her proposition that metamorphosis involving the “implication of wearing a succession of skins” promotes “a reassessment of the significance of shifting subject positions” (48-50). This analysis extends Spearey’s idea to examine the destabilization of identity not only in the new text, but also across the new text and the subtext, Gilgamesh, as an endeavour to rewrite the history of those disenfranchised by a dominant ideology. The implication of putting on the skins of others as manifestations of various personalities and subject positions is explored across three sites. It is used to assess the significance
to historical narration of Gilgamesh’s wearing the skin of a lion, Patrick’s imitation in symbolically wearing an animal pelt in Ondaatje’s novel, and the emergence of an alternative pelt which “turns” the imitation to articulate Slemon’s new “codes of recognition”.

To illustrate the new history that an alternative skin of a lion delineates, a detailed comparison between the subtext and new text, examines how paratactic history collapses the subject positions of Gilgamesh and Enkidu with Patrick and Rowland Harris. *Gilgamesh*, a story of the third millennium BC, is the story of a tragic hero recorded on multiple clay tablets. The epic begins in a state of unease when the citizens of Uruk plead to their goddess, Ishtar, for relief from their labour. She creates Enkidu, a wild man and Gilgamesh’s double, to bring about change. Enkidu becomes civilized in the likeness of Gilgamesh and joins Gilgamesh in his quest to leave behind an enduring name by journeying to the Cedar Forest to defeat the guardians of the forest, Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven. After the two warriors fight and defeat the guardians, Enkidu is the one singled out for vengeance by the gods and he finally dies. He is the scapegoat because the gods decree the king must live. The most significant episode in the Babylonian narrative illustrating shifting subject positions occurs when the king, overcome with grief at the death of Enkidu, kills lions, puts on their pelts becoming a wild man like his friend, and learns what it is to be human and to experience fear of death, grief and rage. He undertakes a perilous journey in search of immortality and Utnapishtim, a Noah-figure, who has been given eternal life. From Utnapishtim, Gilgamesh learns the secrets of the great Flood, the sufferings of the people, and the Covenant between the gods and man. Utnapishtim decrees that if Gilgamesh would live in the Faraway forever and conquer death he must watch leavened bread rise and fall for six days and six nights without
sleeping. On the sixth day he sinks into sleep and fails the quest. He discards his filthy pelt, bathes, puts on fresh clothes and returns from the wilds to Uruk where his journey is inscribed in tablets of stone.

Characters and events from the epic overlap and merge in Ondaaje’s novel, illustrating a model of simultaneous history. Patrick is usually identified with Gilgamesh, most notably by critics such as Julie Beddoes, Gordon Bölling, Carol Beran and Fotios Sarris: Patrick, like Gilgamesh, journeys on a search for identity, experiences the death of a beloved friend and fails in his quest when, having traversed the waters of death, falls asleep. However, I argue that a much more complex set of relations intertwines the two texts. Limiting the interrelations between In the Skin of a Lion and Gilgamesh to Patrick and Gilgamesh curtails the rich interchange of their connections. This analysis suggests that Patrick Lewis is drawn in the likeness of both Enkidu and Gilgamesh: Enkidu in the first phase of his journey, and Gilgamesh when he metaphorically wears the skin of a lion following Alice’s death. Complicating the relations still further, Rowland Harris, architect and builder, is also imaged as Gilgamesh.

Spatializing the two texts by juxtaposing past and present history initially merges the characters of Patrick and Enkidu. Both are born outside a developed cultural setting, both are transformed by two women, both encounter a civilization where the workers are oppressed by a dominant figure of power and both wish to change the old order. Patrick’s rival, Rowland Harris, Commissioner for Public Works, like Gilgamesh is a great builder of temples and cities; in particular, he is famous for planning and building the Prince Edward Bridge, the Venturi tunnels and a water treatment facility dubbed “The Palace of Purification.” Like Gilgamesh, Harris is intent upon immortalizing his name in monuments of stone and marble.
This symbolic pairing of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, builder of Uruk and unformed man, with Rowland Harris and Patrick Lewis, builder of Toronto and culturally uninitiated man, takes into account the significance of the lion skins in transforming and conflating subject positions. Initially, Patrick, as Rod Schumacher suggests, is like Enkidu, “a culturally uninscribed figure” who “carries within him some sort of instinctive ability to separate justice from injustice” (6). The difference in this interpretation is that just as Gilgamesh transforms into the likeness of Enkidu when he puts on the skin of a “wild man” intent on violent retribution for the loss of his companion, Patrick changes into the likeness of Gilgamesh, metaphorically wearing the skin of a beast to avenge the death of Alice. The struggle between the rivals, Patrick and Harris, ceases at the close of the novel when they symbolically exchange a skin representing violence for a pelt that represents access to language. In this gesture of change and dialogic exchange Patrick and his rival speak about social justice and the previously ignored history of the workers. In recognition of his adversary’s grief and failed quest, Harris connects him with Gilgamesh in quoting from the epic: “He lay down to sleep, until he was woken from out of a dream. He saw the lions around him glorifying in life; then he took his axe in his hand, he drew his sword from his belt, and he fell upon them like an arrow from the string” (SL 242). Enkidu is also recalled in the network of merged identities when Harris invokes the word “Diogene” upon hearing Alice’s social philosophy, “In a rich man’s house there is nowhere to spit except in his face” (SL 239). The memory of a Greek philosopher who made a protest against a corrupt society draws Enkidu, Alice and Patrick together in an allusion representing agents for social change.

The twinning of Harris and Gilgamesh as architects who built monuments for their cities regardless of the cost of lives is underlined in Ondaatje’s text through the
prophecy, following the incident of the nun who fell from the bridge, that the Prince Edward viaduct was Harris’s “first child and it had already become a murderer” (SL 31). Revealed later as that nun, Alice comes to represent all who died in the bridge’s construction, connecting Harris with Gilgamesh, and connecting also the workers who built the cities of Uruk and Toronto. In the fluid interchange of identities that merges characters across texts, both Gilgamesh and Harris are marked by the hubris of creating an enduring name. Polarized from Enkidu and Patrick who speak on behalf of the workers who build cities, Gilgamesh and Harris represent powerful single voices valorized at the expense of the many.

TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIPS.

An investigation of mimetic desire in the intersection of the narratives of Gilgamesh and In the Skin of a Lion provides a way to understand historical violence by reflecting on the past and making visible social problems in narratives that Jameson calls the “cultural monuments and masterworks that have survived […] to perpetuate only a single voice in this class dialogue, the voice of a hegemonic class” (Political 85). These social issues include the violence provoked in the confrontation of a dominant discourse with the dialectic of class struggle, the construction of a scapegoat and the oppression of the working class. Analyzing the triangular relationships in Gilgamesh and In the Skin of a Lion exposes the rivalry between doubles leading to violence and the sacrifice of a scapegoat, as well as explaining the significance of the lion’s pelt in activating or challenging violence in alternative historical models. An inquiry into the role of relationships in this analysis of triangular mediation becomes an inquiry into the value and morality of civilization.

My use of the Girardian hypothesis has its emphasis on the exploration of relationships between texts. In Gilgamesh I examine three triangular relationships to
examine the correspondence between relationships in the precursor text and the new text and the intervention of mediators to bring about historical change. As goddess of Uruk, Ishtar dominates each of the three configurations, her role being one of surveillance in keeping watch on Gilgamesh’s reign, guiding him in his search for immortality, and ensuring his return to Uruk to worship her with monuments of stone.

The first relationship of Ishtar, Gilgamesh and Enkidu reveals Ishtar’s intercession on behalf of Uruk’s citizens who lament that they are oppressed by Gilgamesh’s arrogance, and his demands to build walls and temples. She creates Enkidu as the double of Gilgamesh to bring about change. Enkidu identifies himself as the king’s rival in his challenge: “I have come to change the old order, for I am strongest here” (Sandars 66). As a result of their friendship, king and wild man merge in a twinned relationship and Enkidu becomes civilized as Gilgamesh becomes humanized. In the second mimetic triangle of Gilgamesh, Enkidu and Humbaba, Ishtar ensures that Gilgamesh lives while Enkidu is condemned to death as the scapegoat of the “gods” even though both men slew Humbaba. In the last configuration of Utnapishtim, Ishtar and Gilgamesh, Ishtar, in her various manifestations, reminds Gilgamesh that although he will not find the secret of immortality, life is good and he must return to Ishtar to fulfill his kingly role and to continue to build temples to honour her.

Ishtar’s role as the female archetype, who created Gilgamesh and Enkidu as doubles in the configuration she shared with them, is a dynamic repeated in In the Skin of a Lion in the impact of Clara Dickens and Alice Gull on Patrick’s reformation. The escalating violence culminating in Enkidu’s death, and Gilgamesh’s lament, “And when you have gone to earth I will let my hair grow long for your sake, I will wander through the wilderness in the skin of a lion” (Sandars 96), parallels Patrick’s response to grief after Alice dies. Gilgamesh’s journey to learn the secret of eternal
life and his meeting with the conciliators, Siduri and the ferryman, is analogous to Patrick’s vengeful journey into anarchy to torch the Muskoka Hotel, his meeting with Elizabeth in the Garden of the Blind, and his journey to the Palace of Purification with the “ferryman”, Caravaggio. Correspondences between the mimetic relationships across the precursor and the new text critically diverge at this point. Arriving at his journey’s end Gilgamesh fails the test to become immortal, discards his lion’s skin and returns to the “House of Ishtar” to engrave his narrative in a stone of lapis lazuli at the base of the city’s gates. While the stories and myths written about Gilgamesh still survive on clay tablets, the history of the people who built Uruk is unwritten, for Enkidu, their spokesman, died as a scapegoat of the “gods”. In the modern text Patrick, unlike Enkidu, lives to tell the communal story.

Challenging the Sumerian text is an alternative story revealed in an analysis of triangular relationships in In the Skin of a Lion, which constructs a people’s history as opposed to one representing the voice of a hegemonic class. The mimetic configurations follow certain patterns in mediation using the intertext to imitate a journey, grief at the loss of a friend and a resolution. The model is broken down in the final configuration when violence is constrained, under the influence of a conciliatory mediator, Alice, as opposed to a conflictual mediator, Ishtar, to transform a fixed idea of history. This shift illustrates John Berger’s epigraph: “Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one.”

Patrick’s journey, culminating in his meeting with Harris, tracks relationships which socialize and politicize him through his interaction with lovers and those he meets in work and prison. The mimetic relationships of Patrick to his father and to Caravaggio, his friend, are in contrast to three fraught triangular relationships linking Patrick to Clara Dickens and Ambrose Small, to Alice Gull and Cato and finally to
Alice Gull and Harris. The first relationship describes Patrick’s childhood with Hazen Lewis, when, like Enkidu, he longs for a voice, “something to leap with over the wall of this place” (SL 10), to his friendship in prison with the thief and bridge worker, Caravaggio. Caravaggio, an example of the Italian immigrant working class, is anonymous and alienated, “a tarrer of roads, a home-builder, a painter, a thief—yet he is invisible to all around him” (SL 199). He is distinguished in class and wealth from the poet, Ann Wilkinson, whom he meets after escaping from prison, since status and a family line ensure her art is valued. This intertextual encounter, according to Katherine Atcheson, “offers one of the many representations between the wealthy and the working classes” (108). He recognizes that “he would never leave his name where his skill has been” (SL 199) for workers do not write their own histories. In an inversion of the boatman who counseled Gilgamesh, Caravaggio models outlawry and a hatred of the rich as he guides Patrick across the Don River to sabotage the filtration plant. In the other three triangular relationships, Patrick is “civilized” by two women, commits to social activism, and meets his double, Rowland Harris.

The first triangular relationship of mimetic desire that eventually doubles Patrick to his father and connects him to Caravaggio, demonstrates how violent role models and violent means shape his future role as an anarchist and provide him with an understanding of how the environment and social differences determine the actions of people. During his childhood Patrick Lewis imitates his father without any fear of rivalry: “He imagines himself through the winter until he is a white midsummer shadow beside his father” (SL 14). His father fashioned what his son was to become, “self-sufficient, as invisible as possible” (SL 18). From him Patrick realized later “that he had learned important things [. . .], how much a piece of dynamite the size of a bullfrog could destroy” (SL 19). Hazen was an abashed man, non-verbal and taciturn
to the extent that he was “non-committal” despite his proficiency in square-dance calling. When Patrick was a child, Hazen outlined his son’s body with wires and powder fuses as if creating Patrick in his own image:

In the drive-shed Hazen Lewis outlined the boy’s body onto the plank walls with green chalk. Then he tacked wires back and forth across the outline as if realigning the veins in his son’s frame. Muscles of cordite and the spine a tributary of the black powder fuse. This is how the boy remembers his father, studying the outline which the father has just stepped away from as the lit fuse smoulders up and blows out a section of plank where the head had been. (SL 14-15)

Hazen is tangentially involved in Alice’s death since Alice accidentally died when a bomb, presumably made by Patrick, killed her. Patrick’s memories of his father’s death during the collapse of a feldspar mine are rekindled when Patrick, his own body strapped with dynamite to sabotage the filtration plant rubs “his cut fingers over the smoothness of Harris’ desk. Feldspar, he murmured” (SL 235). Hazen Lewis links his son to a friend, the thief David Caravaggio; Patrick uses his father’s language of square-dance calling to alert and save Caravaggio from murderers when they are both in prison. Caravaggio, who becomes a friend, remains strongly differentiated from Patrick although both men come to exist on the margins and scorn the rich. Caravaggio, although he despises the rich, desires their possessions, wealth, attitude and status. During a robbery, Caravaggio hangs in a library between Trollope, champion of the great middle-class, and H.G. Wells, who was impatient for social change. Here Caravaggio is positioned between the spoken and hidden desires that link him to Patrick’s social ideals. Unlike Patrick, who takes on the role of an anarchist to destroy institutions, like the Muskoka Hotel, that serve the rich,
Caravaggio revenges himself upon society’s men and women with savage enjoyment by imitating their behavior and stealing the yacht used to carry Patrick to sabotage the filtration plant. From his father, Patrick learns how to work dynamite, while from Caravaggio he absorbs hatred of the rich, attributes which lead to his violent confrontation with Harris.

The interrelationship of Patrick with Clara Dickens and Ambrose Small in the second configuration examines Patrick’s reaction to the world of the social elite, and also to a world of corruption where Ambrose Small reigns. Patrick’s relationship with Clara Dickens intersects with Enkidu’s relationship to Ishtar in *Gilgamesh*. Ishtar, who is often called the goddess of love and war, initially in *Gilgamesh* is a love priestess who is instrumental in civilizing the wild man. Clara performs a similar function for Patrick; to him, she is an object of desire. She reveals herself as Spearey suggests “through the manifestation of a series of masks and voices” (52), so that Patrick “keeps finding and losing parts of her” (*SL* 79). Like the harlot who transformed Enkidu from a wild to a civilized being, Clara teaches Patrick what it is to be sociable. As Rod Schumacher writes, Clara is “a belated yet necessary step in [Patrick’s] quest for subjectivity” (11). Patrick’s desire for her inspires his wish to be initiated into a new life. Ambrose Small, a historical character known as the jackal of Toronto’s business world between 1910 and 1919, is Patrick’s rival in his relationship with Clara. The vast social and economic divide between the two rivals, Patrick and Ambrose, is matched by a contrast in their personal attributes. Ambrose is a villain—a millionaire who employed coercion to bring people to their knees, and killed to appropriate wealth and power. Standing centre stage in society, he is also “gregarious, generous, charming” (*SL* 58), whereas Patrick, like Enkidu, is a reclusive man who, as a child, related with empathy not simply to people but also to nature, including fragile
creatures like the damsel fly. Patrick’s attraction to the moths and small insects that visited him at night when he was a child reflects his fascination for Clara who “looked like a damsel fly, the sequins and gauze up to her neck” (61).

Clara actively disseminates desire to Patrick and Ambrose, who are joined to her by a relationship that fosters not simply desire but also jealousy and violence between the rivals. The proximity of their desires and their rivalry is, according to Girard’s theory, a manifestation of “internal mediation” (*Deceit* 9), which subsequently becomes mimetic desire. When Clara narrates her life to Patrick in a manner that emphasizes “the eroticism of her history” (*SL* 69), jealousy is the result. Her stories of her attraction not only to Stump Jones, her former husband, but also to Ambrose (whom she refers to as “my beloved”) and his friend Briffa provoke Patrick’s resentment. As a result of this process of internal mediation, Patrick copies Ambrose. Patrick hates Ambrose not simply because the millionaire is “predatory,” but, more importantly, he admits to Alice, “because I wanted what he had” (*SL* 124). As a desiring subject in their relationship, Patrick turns his attention away from Clara, and focuses on Ambrose, who seems to have what Patrick lacks. In turn, Clara, who initially is “the rare lover” and “the perfect woman for Ambrose” (*SL* 60), increases in “value” for Ambrose because of Patrick’s desire. The men’s competition and rivalry reveal their imitation of each other’s desire. Envious of Clara’s friendship with Patrick, Ambrose coerces Clara to Bellrock, Patrick’s hometown, not only for the purpose of instigating a murderous confrontation because he “had to win or he lost everything” (*SL* 84), but also because he is “the immigrant rat” desiring and imitating Patrick’s connection to a birthplace. After they attempt to kill each other at Bellrock, they become in Girard’s terminology “brothers in murder and revenge” (*Theater* 274). Later, when Patrick torches the Muskoka Hotel, he imitates Ambrose Small’s methods
and becomes a criminal. Patrick’s actions illustrate a situation where “the antagonists behave more and more alike as they falsely perceive more and more differences between themselves” (*Theater* 274). Ambrose, who had lived at the centre of urban society, retreats into isolation where, in hiding, he becomes a border creature lacking a social self or ideals. His life devolves to that of “a heron” in a parody of the lives of Patrick and Enkidu as “natural men” before they were “civilized.” Patrick, on the other hand, becomes “civilized” and like Ambrose, his “brother,” is willing to murder. Patrick’s interaction with Clara and Ambrose shapes his antipathy towards the world of the rich, propels him towards anarchy, and prepares him for a confrontation with Harris.

An analysis of Patrick’s triangular relationship with Alice Gull and Clara Dickens demonstrates their influence in shaping his life and parallels Ishtar’s many roles in *Gilgamesh*. Alice Gull is Clara’s double. Each woman, as the mirror of the other, provokes different responses as a result of her internal mediation of the relationships in which she participates. Clara initiates conflict and destruction while Alice promotes control and compassion. Both Clara and Alice are actresses and lovers of Patrick. Alice is Clara’s disciple; a fact recognized by Patrick who believes, “Alice being touched by Clara has grown magically, fully formed” (*SL* 78). Patrick recognizes the women’s subtle differences, which he describes by comparing Alice to a pale lunar moth and Clara to a “damsel fly”. As they dance in the rain, Clara represents a primeval woman, growling “unnaming things,” whereas Alice, “subliminal in movement almost rising up into the air, shirt removed, so her body can meet the rain” (*SL* 76), represents natural woman. Yet their differences dissolve when the two women turn the focus away from each other towards Patrick.
Their internal mediation is visible when, like two magicians, Clara and Alice make a spirit painting of Patrick while he sleeps. The allusion to mothers in J.M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*, who rummage through their children’s minds while they are sleeping and draw a map of the mind “with astonishing splashes of colour here and there” (1) to uncover their emotions and experiences, is repeated in the image of Clara and Alice copying a blueprint of Patrick’s mind. His honesty and his anger stumble out from a head “leaking purple or yellow—auras of jealousy and desire” (*SL* 75). Clara and Alice form and reform Patrick. Patrick describes their behaviour towards him by referring to Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio’s painting *Judith and Holofernes* in which Judith passes the decapitated head of Holofernes to her handmaiden. Patrick adapts the painting’s title to “Patrick and the Two Women,” to express his impression of their behaviour as a game they play against him, removing, he bitterly recalled, “his cleverness, even his revenge” (*SL* 89).

The configuration of Patrick, Alice and Cato examines relationships and experiences that draw Patrick into the circle of social activism. In this relationship the effects of mimetic desire are bifurcated, liberating violence and revenge in the connection with Cato and containing violence in the interaction with Alice. Initially the characters of Patrick and Cato seem to be opposites, yet Alice and devotion to a cause bring them together. Cato’s letters, given Patrick by Alice to read, describe the privations and oppression of workers’ conditions and activate Patrick’s “passive sense of justice” (*SL* 122). Alice’s story of Cato’s selfless devotion to the workers, his murder and the acquittal of his killers brought Patrick ever closer to his model. By experiencing the conditions of the workers in the tunnels and the tanneries, Patrick connects with the immigrant community of workers and with Cato. The contagion of violence that surrounds Cato as a union man in life and death transfers to Patrick,
enabling him to become an anarchist. Initially aware of “a space between him and community. A gap of love” (SL 157), he realizes after Alice’s death, “Now there is a moat around her he will never cross again. He will not even cup his hands to drink its waters. As if, having traveled all the distance to enter the castle in order to learn its wisdom for the grand cause, he now turns and walks away” (SL 164). Not having fully realized that Alice’s grand cause involves change without violence, Patrick becomes an anarchist.

When Patrick, like Gilgamesh, experiences grief he becomes a “wild man” who puts on “the skin of a lion”. Patrick’s grief for Alice’s violent death develops into a desire for revenge, which progresses through several stages. Patrick survives the tragic dissolution of this triangular relationship, having absorbed not only Cato’s resentment against the rich and the bosses but also his desire for social justice, which enable Patrick to perform revenge with conviction. Patrick abandons Alice’s philosophy of non-violence and adopts instead the social activist methods of Cato, her former lover. Overwhelmed by his grief for Alice, Patrick is not able to realize Alice’s philosophy of change without violence until he can describe the events leading up to her death.

Before her death Alice tutors Patrick in occupying the subject-positions of reader and storyteller. On one hand, Alice urged Patrick to “name the enemy and destroy their power” (SL 124) by teaching him about principled men’s writings and ideas; she reads to Patrick one of Joseph Conrad’s letters celebrating men who sacrificed their lives for an idea and she alludes to the arguments about “natural justice” by the Roman philosopher and the poet Lucretius (c99-55 BCE), who, according to Gordon Campbell’s translation, writes of “the place of language in the development of civilization, piety and justice” (15). Lucretius’s proposition, “I have
taught you that the sky in all its zones is mortal…Let me now re-emphasize the extreme looseness of the structure of all objects” (SL 135), prompts her to believe that some lives should be changed, and chaos or social injustice can be redressed through speech. To encourage Patrick to be “the spokesman for the age,” she described a play that allegorized the concept of speaking out in the cause of social justice. One scene in the play depicts a powerful matriarch passing to one of her daughters her cloak, from which animal pelts dangled, so that the child could find a voice and speak on behalf of others (SL 157). She counsels Patrick against violence by stating that she would not “put someone in a position where they have to hurt another” (SL 125). Only when Patrick occupies the subject-position of storyteller, and he is finally able to voice his grief to Harris, which enables him to exchange the lion skin of a wild man for the skin of the matriarch, is he able to escape the cycle of violence created by mimetic desire.

However, following the death of Alice, Patrick takes up the “cause in her eye about wealth and power” (SL 165), not as she would have wished—by speaking out and telling others’ stories—but instead by seeking vengeance on the rich by torching the Muskoka Hotel. The will to revenge unleashed in Patrick is, however, counterbalanced in a process of conciliatory rather than conflictual mediation in the Garden of the Blind where the memory of Alice is recalled when Patrick meets Elizabeth. Both women intersect with Siduri, who in Gilgamesh is a manifestation of Ishtar as a compassionate feminine archetype. Like Siduri, Elizabeth lives on the shore of an island in a garden of herbs that suggest healing and sensual pleasures. Elizabeth and Alice are twinned mediators who soothe Patrick’s grief and deflect the intensity of his revenge. Images of the forest green eye that “echoes somewhere within him” (SL 170) links Elizabeth to Alice for Patrick. He associates Alice with moths that as a child he saw killed by the light. Elizabeth’s moth green eye triggers
recurring motifs of eyes associated with Alice. These are in the painful fragments of memory that are revealed later in the narrative when Patrick recalls in thoughts and in words Alice’s death: “One eye was flickering up and down, then the other, as if stuttering” (SL 240), eyes that “would close, would shut him out” (SL 240). Elizabeth, repeating Siduri’s wise counsel to Gilgamesh, advises Patrick not to resent his life. In the confrontation with Harris, the influence of Alice and Elizabeth deflects Patrick’s urge to revenge and averts his own and Harris’s death.

Here a crucial departure from the precursor text occurs, occasioned by feminine intervention. Gender relationships are reconfigured in In the Skin of a Lion, foregrounding the agency and influence of women. Alice connects Patrick through Cato to the Macedonian community, but also to the matriarch’s gift of the pelt of language, which enables him to talk to Harris about the immigrant workers who died in the city’s construction. Following their conversation, Patrick, like Gilgamesh, at the end of his quest experiences “a permanent darkness” and “a permanent silence” (SL 241) as a prelude to another transformation. On awakening, Gilgamesh accepts the inevitability of death, exchanges his pelt of skins for white kingly robes and returns to Uruk to worship his mediator, Ishtar, and construct more temples in her honour. The goddess’s role in returning Gilgamesh to Uruk unharmed and unchanged is fulfilled. By comparison, Patrick awakens metaphorically wearing his pelt of language to translate Alice’s doctrine of change into action by narrating the hidden history of Toronto’s workers when in the framed narrative he returns to Hana with the promise, “I’ll tell you the whole story” (SL 244). It is a story she “gathers” as “he picks up and brings together various corners of the story, attempting to carry it all in his arms” (Prologue SL). Reading the subtext against the modern text demonstrates not only how violence and scapegoating is generated in the precursor text, but also how the
subtle power of a peaceful mediator in the new text can deflect it. The second pelt in
*In the Skin of a Lion*, metaphorically created when Alice’s name and fate is recalled,
differs from Gigamesh’s pelt in that it signifies putting on the skins of others who are
mute and telling their stories.

The final configuration of Patrick, Harris and Alice analyzes the clash of two
ideologies, the dominant ideology of the social elite, represented by Harris, and the
communal experiences of the immigrant workers, represented by Patrick. Harris is a
tangible foe who can be held responsible for the suffering of the workers involved in
Toronto’s construction. Like Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Harris and Patrick are
differentiated by social status; otherwise they share many characteristics as solitary
and serious men. Their lack of differentiation is characteristic of characters in myth
who, as Girard explains, unleash chaotic forces that can be propitiated only when one
of the indistinguishable members is differentiated and becomes the object of violence
of all the rest. Both Harris and Patrick are locked into antagonistic ideologies and yet
both share a concern for Toronto. Harris’s viaduct and bridge would benefit its
citizens. His feats are nevertheless, like Gilgamesh’s, driven by a desire for self-
aggrandizement. Harris’s dream is to construct a city whose buildings are so
admirable that in fifty years people will come “and gape at the herringbone and
copper roofs” (*SL* 236). Patrick’s concern is for the people of the city, particularly the
community of immigrant workers whose wellbeing is sacrificed to benefit other
people. Intersecting with Gilgamesh, who at the end of his journey learns the truth of
existence—that life in all its bitterness is valuable—Patrick gains knowledge about
himself and the life of the other. Harris realizes that in order to fulfill his engineering
goals he has sold out to the millionaires and the aldermen. Through Harris, Patrick
realizes that he is not an outsider but as much the fabric of the city as “the bland
fools—the politicians and press and mayors and their advisers [who] become the spokesmen for the age” (SL 238).

When Patrick, standing in Harris’s office, mentions the name of Alice, she is identified as their mediator. As a peaceful mediatrix, Alice becomes not only a liberator of desire but also a mediator of containment. She is a scapegoat to the desires of Harris and Patrick. Both men are implicated in her death. Harris, as the engineer behind the construction of the Prince Edward Bridge and the Waterworks, is involved in the suppression of the union movement. Standing in Harris’s office, Patrick finally breaks through his silence to speak about his grief following Alice’s death. When he is able to articulate his sorrow, Patrick performs the role in a play that Alice had described to him—he becomes the storyteller to whom the matriarch’s cloak of pelts has been passed. Accepting “responsibility for the story” (SL 157), he identifies, not only with Alice, the mediator, but also with Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Just as his heroic double, Gilgamesh, in his grief fell asleep, Patrick, rather than killing Harris, falls asleep in the centre of the viaduct.

The loss of differentiation between Patrick and Harris becomes complete during the recognition scene in which their boundaries are dissolved and their identities merge. Harris, the Gilgamesh figure, recognizes Patrick as Enkidu, the one who lives “in the woods” rejecting power while others “become the spokesmen for the age” (SL 238). Patrick, at the same time, intersects with the sleeping Gilgamesh when Harris realizes at daybreak that his would-be assassin is asleep and he likens him to the Sumerian hero. The concept of enemy disappears when discourse reveals the consciousness of one to the other. Harris represents modernity and Patrick represents the people exploited to contribute to Toronto’s progress. Their interaction illustrates, as Hayden White writes in “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact”, an account of
history that “signals the element of critical self-consciousness”, so that histories “are not only about events but also about the possible sets of relationships that those events can be demonstrated to figure” (204). Harris speaks about how he loved City Hall where his mother worked as a caretaker, and how he “worked up” to become an architect and dream about the fountains and gardens of that city. Patrick remembered how he had cradled the dying Alice in his arms until her eyes closed. As a result of their communication, Alice is recognized as the innocent scapegoat and Patrick, unlike Enkidu, lives to tell the story of the persecuted workers, and the deaths of Patrick and Harris as political scapegoats are averted.

The analysis of mimetic desire in *In the Skin of a Lion* reveals, as Ian Dennis suggests, that “not all triangular structures need to be seen as rivalrous and thus unstable” (7). According to Dennis, the “braking” effect is produced “by the subject’s recognition of the function of the mediator which usually appears in the form the world calls ‘embarrassment’, or in its stronger moods, ‘shame’ or ‘guilt’” (98). These attributes are recognized in Ondaatje’s metahistorical romance when the antagonists, Patrick and Harris recognize that Alice has averted the social crisis and died, in Girard’s terminology, as “a sacrificial lamb”. In this representation in Girard’s theory she is pure and innocent, a Christ figure, whose innocence becomes clear in retrospect. The mimetic desire inherent in dreams of creating “an enduring name”, of the sort that animate cultural myths such as *Gilgamesh* fail to acknowledge that the victim is a scapegoat. These narratives are, according to Fleming, “cultural forms that double as both recollections and misrecognitions of violence” (77). The analysis of mimetic desire in triangular relationships in *In The Skin of a Lion* deconstructs the ideology that the triangular condition is one of perpetual outlawry, as well as the history of violence that it generates. Under the influence of Alice, the mediator for
change, *In the Skin of a Lion* asserts the potential for stable reconciliation and the formation of a different history of the people, which can only be recognized when the scapegoat, representative of an oppressed community, is liberated of crime and recognized as an innocent victim.

**METAHISTORICAL FOCUS.**

This communal history, revealed in the intersection of *Gilgamesh* with Toronto’s documented history, and Patrick’s biographical experiences, keeps in play the “double vision”, which leads to a new recognition of scapegoating. The metahistorical narrative created represents the complexity of human experiences drawn from intertextual references and from the community, not only from social elites, but also from the poor and disenfranchised whose stories are usually omitted from “official history”. The layering of *Gilgamesh* within *In the Skin of a Lion* constructs, in Elias’s terms, “simultaneous history” in that “time present and time past not only intersect but also overlap, existing simultaneously on one plane of historical reality” (186). Elias’s description of spatialized historical narrative is similar to the “stylistic parallelism”, which Wendy Steiner finds in visual art and literature informed by Cubism (179). Acknowledging that art historians disagree about cubist painting, viewing it as a construct perhaps as questionable as its purported literary echo, Steiner writes:

> The cubist analogy involves both the matching of technical elements of painting with those in writing [...] and the comparison of ideologies, of aesthetic presuppositions. [...] The premise that the canvas presents one atemporal moment of vision by a perceiver standing in a fixed position is exploded by the multiple views of a single object simultaneously present on
the picture plane. [. . .]. Thus objects are broken up and reassembled according to a conceptual logic. (180-81)

For Steiner, cubism is definitionally self-reflexive, and calls attention “to focus and the figure-ground opposition by making intervening spaces comparable to objects” (181). Techniques of passage and collage in art, like writing termed “cubist”, saturate the works with ambiguities. Rochelle Simmons theorizes that the gaps and ellipses that fragment the narrative of *In the Skin of a Lion* recall the Cubists’ materialistic treatment of space, and emphasize the novel’s “mediated, rather than a mimetic, view of reality” (4). This analysis claims that Ondaatje’s work can be shown to integrate the mimetic impulse of Girard’s hypothesis with the fragmented plot of Ondaatje’s cubist novel to demonstrate the paradoxical status of reality. From this perspective, the novel conforms to Steiner’s view:

The value of cubist historiography is that it creates a special kind of plot. [. . .]
It is a kaleidoscopic play: a constant reevaluation of the relations between concepts and particulars, the creation of unity out of elements whose heterogeneity is not masked but preserved, a contemplation of meaning itself in the constantly changing contemporary structures that we form out of elements of the past. (196)

The mediated view of reality in Ondaatje’s work, I suggest, is the result of the fragmentation embedded in cubist historiography, so that Patrick as focalizer must struggle to read, interpret and construct fragments of others’ lives so that he can incorporate and tell their histories as part of his own. Doubling Patrick with Enkidu and Gilgamesh engages the reader in the construction of the story and entwines the mimetic impulse with the mediated view of reality.
By exploring the influence of Cubist style on Ondaatje’s narrative as a means of differentiating it from its precursor, we can understand the text’s fragmented literary form, composition and design to portray the plural representations of Toronto’s population, the elite as well as the workers. Similarly, Fotios Sarris persuasively argues that the interrelated imagery of light and darkness, used to portray social landscapes and discourses, constructs “the possibilities of different types of history and historiography, and the influence of such histories upon an individual’s relation to society” (184). This style Helen Gardner refers to as “tenebrism” (646), incorporated into the fragmented form of the novel links the Cubist style to the meaning of Patrick’s story. Patrick as a character and focalizer represents a “point of convergence” not only of text and intertext, history and fiction, but also of what Elias describes as “classed space in narrative”. She writes: “Literary studies [. . .] and the many studies defining postcolonial, racialized, or classed space in narrative are developments of a different course of inquiry, one that explores how literary texts narratologically or politically construct landscape or place” (115). Patrick is a character who traverses physical and social landscapes with an intention to cause change by means of social protest. Ultimately, in the confrontation with Harris, he abandons the idea of revolution by violent means and includes the narratives of both dissociated workers and social elites in a different history to elicit change.

The collapsing of different understandings of history in literature can be related to what the art critic David Cottington identifies as the “understanding of simultaneity” that was central to Cubism: “the juxtaposition or combination, in a single painting, of radically different and discontinuous perspective schemas or viewpoints.” (52). Cottington observes that painting does not imitate the visual world “but represented it through conventions and devices, such as perspective and
modeling, in ways analogous to language” (11). For Cottington, “modernity” was “a word painted in many different accents within the Cubist movement” (11). The allusion across artistic media invokes the idea of fragment.

According to David Craven, fragment is used to explain the historical import of Cubism. Craven recalls how the artist Diego Rivera defined Cubism: “It was a revolutionary movement, questioning everything that had previously been said and done in art. It held nothing sacred. [. . .] Cubism broke down forms as they had been seen for centuries, and was creating out of the fragments new forms, new objects, new patterns and—ultimately—new worlds” (31). Craven notes the camouflage quality of Cubist fragments in Thomas Crow’s observation: “Cubism is [. . .] a message [with critical intent] from the margins of society”. This idea of revolution or transformation is conveyed in John Berger’s idea that Cubism should be considered as “a strangely placed moment … in which the promises of the future were more substantial than the present” (5). He writes that the economic, technological and scientific developments that converged at the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe changed the meaning of both time and space. The Cubist moment ended with the First World War. According to Berger the terrible suffering that followed coincided with false, ideological propaganda that transformed people into puppets. Nicholas Temelcoff, the daredevil among the Prince Edward Bridge workers, creates “the moment of cubism” (SL 34) when he floats through space between bridge and river. In Berger’s interpretation the “moment” suggests that man was part of the world and indivisible from it when he “took over the territory in space and time where a god had presumed to exist” (6). Recalling the Flood Story, “the moment” offers a Covenant, a promise of a transformed world, when suffering, fears and desperation would end. Suspended in space and time, Nicholas represents the past, present and the future. For him, the
promise of a better future ended when, after the Great War, he was displaced from his burnt village in the Balkans to Canada, where, like so many other immigrants he was exploited as a source of labour. The future held for him the promise of establishing his own bakery in a new land. For Nicholas and his fellow exiles, the “moment of cubism” as represented in Patrick’s cultural history illustrates Berger’s concept of multiple perspectives on history.

Patrick’s role as dreamer, creator and teller, in constructing a story of the struggle between cultural worlds from narrative fragments is inextricably linked to language and narration. Language that connects him to history and society includes Alice’s social perceptions and the repetition of textual images from precursor text to new text in a vengeful journey in the skin of a lion. In the Puppet Theatre he witnesses the portrayal of the incoherent frustration of immigrant workers. In an exchange of conversations with Alice about social justice and political activists he learns of the freedom fighters, some tortured, who came to Canada from Bulgaria, Turkey and Serbia with expectations of a high level of justice. Patrick is seduced by Alice’s “grand cause” and desires language, connection, and a story that is not just an individual story but instead a communal story. Through conversations with Alice and her Macedonian friends, Patrick realizes that language is a powerful, political weapon. By drawing on Patrick’s own working experiences and those of other workers Alice tutors him to differentiate justice from injustice by reminding him of the slaughterhouses, “Do you know the smell? You can bet the rich don’t know it. It brutalizes…They get skin burns from the galvanizing processes. Arthritis, rheumatism. That’s the truth.” Her advice identifies the rich as those who “keep you in the tunnels and stockyards.” As Girard attests, “the desire to absorb the being of the mediator often takes the form of being initiated into a new life” (Things Hidden 54).
Clara and Alice transform Patrick’s life. Before his encounter with the two women, Patrick is an isolated individual who desires to align himself with others, to share a sense of community that he first sees as a child as he watches skaters on the lake. Only later in his life, when he reads the letters of Alice’s lover, Cato, does Patrick recognize who the skaters were; then he can begin his transition from a reader to a storyteller who identifies and traces the intersection of lives and histories.

Patrick’s transformation is interrupted by a repetition of Gilgamesh’s vengeful journey in the skin of a lion. After Alice dies, Patrick, in imitation of Gilgamesh, becomes a wild man. While Gilgamesh journeys where the darkness becomes thick around him and there is no light to the garden of the gods by the edge of the sea, Patrick swims in darkness to a steamer with a suitcase of dynamite. Reminded of Alice’s words, “You name the enemy and destroy their power. Start with their luxuries—their select clubs, their summer mansions” (SL 124-25), Patrick means to avenge himself against the rich by torching and bombing the Muskoka Hotel. In the image of Gilgamesh, dressed in the skins of animals and eating their flesh, Patrick boards the steamer, and in the likeness of an animal, crouches, while he “cuts the meat into strips with a sharp knife and eats it, licking the juice that dribbles down his arm” (SL 173). Following his release from prison, Patrick continues on his journey of self-destruction to meet his double in the centre of the Water Works, also called the Palace of Purification, to tell the most poignant of the narrative fragments gathered in his journey, the deaths of the tunnelers, and the death of Alice, representatives of the “unhistorical” people. These communal fragments construct a text that is fragmented and chaotic and, as Sarris writes, “only coalesces in a particular reader’s mind, in individual interpretations” (190). The role of language and narration redresses a grave imbalance by giving a voice, according to Barbara Turner, “to the armies of immigrants who built the city of Toronto and then vanished, wholesale, from
the pages of Canadian history” (21). Ondaaje says in interview with Turner, “I did an enormous amount of reading—about the Bloor Street Viaduct, for example. … And I can tell you exactly how many buckets of sand were used … but the people who goddam built the bridge were unspoken of” (21). Like the builders of Uruk these people are unhistorical until retrieved in Patrick’s narration of a communal history.

Moments of convergence are recognized in this narration when Patrick’s biography intersects with those of historical persons whose lives and achievements are part of Toronto’s “official history,” such as the “search” for Ambrose Small whose disappearance and private life are recorded in newspapers from 1919. About the same time, in 1918, a new engineering project was undertaken in Toronto, which in the narrative connects Patrick to construction workers. Patrick, like readers of the novel, can gain access to articles and illustrations held in the Riverdale Library in Toronto that record the engineering project and its construction materials; what is missing from this archive of historical records, Patrick understands, is information about the workers who laboured and sometimes died to build the bridge. The articles and illustrations in the Riverdale Library alert Patrick to the fact that “official stories and news stories were always soft as rhetoric” (SL 145).

The Palace of Purification in Ondaatje’s novel represents the R.C. Harris Water Works, a celebrated work of architectural heritage that signifies several types of history, public history, the history of technology and the history of civil engineering. Harris’s water filtration plant is designed to resemble a Byzantine temple by its allusions to the style and culture of another Empire—the eastern Roman Empire when the Roman power base shifted to Constantinople. Encrusted with mosaics and tiled with rose marble, the Palace of Purification is commonly identified as the “work” of R.C. Harris. It is not as easy to appreciate that the water filtration plant also
signifies a lost history—the history of workers whose deaths in its intake tunnels were not recorded in any official documents. There is neither a record of the number of people who died, nor a report of the impact of their fear, suffering, and trauma upon their families and communities.

For Patrick, fragments of human history slowly coalesce and become a justice issue. To Patrick the community of workers is worthy of record. Patrick can tell the story from the inside because in 1930 he laboured in the tunnels, digging with other workers under one of the largest lakes in North America. There he experiences at first hand the appalling exploitation of immigrant labourers, slipping in the wet clay, “unable to stand properly, pissing where they work, eating where someone else left shit” (SL 106). Patrick identifies their brutalized existence with the pit-horses who, braying madly, were lowered down the shafts thinking they were going to be buried alive.

The omniscient narrator describes the year 1930 when Patrick and his companions are working in the mud under lake Ontario, not in terms of time but instead in terms of a dance whose “choreography” involves the intricate organization of the lives of many people. The narrative set in 1930 juxtaposes Patrick’s story with Harris’s story. Commissioner Harris, above ground, slides “facts” out to journalists. He is quoted as saying, “The form of a city changes faster than the heart of a mortal” (SL 109), an assertion that dismisses the Depression and public outcry as only significant in that they slow down the completion of the work. The “facts” for Harris were the numerous companies employed to build the water palace, the speed of raw water through the filter bed, the journeys of chlorine and sulphur-dioxide to the filtration plants and the giant centrifugal pumps that were more valuable than life. As asserted by Spearey, in Harris’s view, “progress entails growth and continuity rather
than migration and metamorphosis” (57). Harris’s determination to impose his dream on Toronto underpins his will to control space. George Goss, Toronto’s first official photographer, provided a set of images that represent an underground world, a world of ash grey faces, labour and darkness in the long vista of the tunnel foregrounding men who died young from lung disease. When represented in newspapers, the photographs that depict a classed space and pitiful working conditions provoke the viewer to recoil at the violation of the workers’ bodies. The photographs represent the underside of the social space occupied by Harris and other social elites. The narrative, by exposing these two different planes of time occurring simultaneously, reveals how labourers become caught within spatial parameters representing the reality of economic forces that cause and disguise displacement, cultural alienation and exploitation.

Patrick, who is a figure of the reader within the narrative, identifies “moments of convergence” between historical and fictional people and events in the narrative’s present and the historical past. He constructs a historical narrative from fragments of experience and history as represented in the novel by different media—Alice’s dramatic performance as a puppet, Cato’s personal letters and the architecture of Union Station. As the following analysis will show, these mark intersections in time and space that not only enable Patrick to gather fragments and thereby interpret his life’s story but also enable the reader to recognize and interpret the significance of “classed spaces” to the novel’s representation of history.

While watching the puppet play, Patrick becomes a reader of history and his own story in Toronto. During the play he turns from a passive observer into one compelled to act and assume responsibility for social injustice, symbolized by stepping up onto the stage to lift the human puppet smashing a fist into the floor: “He
leaned forward, caught the hand still trying to smash down again like a machine locked in habit, a swimmer unable to stop. He swerved the palm away from the floor and brought it slowly down to her thigh. Then he looked up, through the halo of light into the sudden silence” (SL 118). The puppet play in the half-built waterworks is a vehicle for effecting change and recognition in Patrick of the marginalized world he shared with immigrant workers. The play depicts a community history that bears similarities to those, according to Elias, which are produced by a traumatized consciousness. Alice reveals her revolutionary zeal in her performance in the puppet play, which is a heroic protest. As an allegorical and non-realistic drama, the puppet play opposes the exploitation of immigrant labour. It represents the frustration of immigrants unable to speak the language demanded of them. The actors’ pleading gestures and exaggerated costumes and make up represent the subjection inflicted on the workers. The figures of authority in the play assault the human puppet with insults and repeated blows until the figure kneels, with a painted face, “damaged gaze” and “pleading gestures,” illustrating “the caricature of a culture” (SL 117). The play is an allegory of the relationship and interaction of two classed spaces and their divergent histories; the drama, staged in the half-built water works represents workers’ own understandings of their role in an “underground history”. It stands in contrast to Harris’s official “above ground” history, the bridge, reported by the press as his “work” and Harris himself as the city’s benefactor.

While the question of perspective in the narration of history is addressed in Alice’s play, Cato’s letters illustrate how memory has an active shaping force in the construction of history. The letters, written in the winter of 1921 about camp and strike conditions, are read by Alice five weeks later when Cato had been dead for a month. They are subsequently read by Patrick in 1930, and finally read by the reader
of the novel in “real time.” Patrick functions as a self-reflexive figure of the reader, as both reader and narrator mark a “moment of convergence” in time. Patrick in a sense connects with history by recuperating memories from his past when he identifies the Finnish workers in Cato’s letters with the skaters he saw as a child in Abashed, Ontario. He identifies the Finns in Cato’s letters with the men he knew in his childhood only as skaters on the lake holding burning rushes to provide light for their recreation. He recognizes his lack of connection with people. He “clung like moss to strangers, to the nooks and fissures of their situations. He has always been an alien, the third person in the picture. He is the one born in this country who knows nothing of the place” (SL 156-57). He realizes that although he had been born in this Canada, he did not know the country as the immigrant Finns knew it; only by reading Cato’s letters does Patrick learn about these and other workers’ involvement in unions. Patrick’s memory supplements the historical record represented by Cato’s letters in a reformulation of Canada’s history: that immigrant workers are part of that history.

Places as well as people are marked as having historical significance. In the narrative Toronto’s Union Station is a geographical place that marks the intersection of different periods of time. Union Station is described as the “nexus” of Patrick’s life. It is the place of his first arrival in Toronto as a young man who is seeking not only a new life as a member of a community but also a mission to fulfill. It is the place where subsequently he stands as Clara departs, and that recurs to him in dreams that reveal his emotional disintegration. The station is also the place to which he returns to civil life after imprisonment. When Patrick returns to Union Station in 1938, it marks a point of convergence in both space and time that the novel represents as typical of history. It is where his past, present and future converge:

This cathedral-like space was the nexus of his life. He had been twenty-one
when he arrived in this city. Here he watched Clara leave him, walking past that sign to the left of the ramp, which said HORIZON. *Look up*, Clara had said when she left him for Ambrose, *you know what that stone is?* He had been lost in the situation, not caring. *It’s Missouri Zumbro. Remember that. The floors are Tennessee marble.* He looked up. Sitting now on this bench Patrick suddenly had no idea what year it was. (209-10)

In 1938 in Union Station, he recalls Clara’s instructions, spoken many years before, to look at and remember the marble and the pillars; she drew his attention to it as the celebrated work of John Lyle that indicated the ideal of unity—both national and economic—signified by its architecture.

Like the temples of Gilgamesh and King Solomon, and Harris’s Palace of Purification, Union Station marks the intersection of classed spaces—those of workers (or, in the case of the temples, slaves) who constructed the magnificent buildings but who have been omitted from the official histories that record only the celebrated authorities who designed the buildings. Although Patrick knows nothing about these other works of architecture with which Union Station intersects, their convergence enables the reader to interpret his experience and role. It is in Union Station that Patrick mistakenly assumes that his mission is to engage in violent social protest because he identifies with caged dogs whose eyes saw nothing (like his own in prison). Prompted by his memories of Clara, as he stands in Union Station in 1938 and he sees the architectural details and ornament of the building as a symbol of class conflict, his attention turns towards the destruction of another building, the R.C. Harris Water Works or “The Palace of Purification”. This, he will subsequently realize, is not in fact his “mission” in life. Instead, his mission—what he can do for himself and other workers—is to understand and tell their history.
Different perspectives on this history are reported to the reader. While Patrick represents the perspectives of the workers, for example, Harris represents the perspectives of officials and social elites. This was a time when “the events in Spain, the government’s crackdown on unions, made the rich and powerful close ranks” (SL 220). It was a time of social unrest when dissident groups voiced their protests and the police and the army guarded the filtration plant. The military guarding the aqueducts in Toronto to prevent possible sabotage is placed in juxtaposition with Roman history in Harris’s mind when he remembers that the Goths could have captured Rome by destroying the aqueducts that led to the city. Patrick functions not only to supply a perspective or point of view on historical events but also as a point of convergence at the centre of “a spatial field”. When he is released from prison in 1938, he becomes for the reader the chronotope at the intersection of multiple histories of Toronto, which are usually dissociated as discrete classed spaces.

Among these multiple histories is the narrative that Patrick tells and which conveys that his understanding of history differs from that of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh believes that his duty is to return to his kingdom to engrave his story in stone and tell a tale of the days before the Flood, while the gods decree that kingship is his destiny, for he is peerless among men. Gilgamesh’s story is a historical account of a powerful and heroic king while Patrick is a man of the people. His understanding of history takes shape when he realizes he is the sum of “all these fragments of memory” (SL 148), and as such his quest is to tell the stories of the people. Patrick’s social history is enriched for the benefit of the reader by other intertexts among which is the allusion to Martha Ostenso’s *Wild Geese*. Caleb Gare as the potentially violent father who has a profound identification with the landscape connects with both Patrick and his father. Brian Johnson’s observation that Caleb “seems to be unconsciously searching for his
identity in the land” (32) parallels Patrick’s belief that he is “a searcher gazing into the
darkness of his own country” (SL 157). Disturbing memories of his father haunt him.
In the underground tunnel he recalls “the remembered nightmare where he embraces
the lost corpse” (SL 230), a return to a childhood memory of lying on his father’s
body under the ice as they rescue a cow half submerged in the river.

The inscription within the text of references to Hine’s photographs, the
Bayeux Tapestry and King Solomon’s Mines initiates stories “told” by the reader in
collusion with the writer. The historical, literary and artistic resonance evoked does
not exist within the mind of Patrick, nor in the space and time of Patrick’s narrative.
As Patrick, reading in the Riverdale Library in Toronto, researches the construction of
the bridge and sees photographs of Arthur Goss, one twentieth-century photographer,
the reader gains knowledge of another, George Hines, and, in addition, reads a
description of the Bayeux Tapestry. These ideologemes assist the reader to read
“down into” the text as well as reading across it. The “surface” text allows Patrick and
the reader to construct a story about Arthur Goss, a historical person who was
Toronto’s first official photographer. While perusing the photographs of Arthur Goss,
Patrick searches in vain for information about those who worked on the bridge.
Goss’s photographs of the construction site render the workers invisible and
diminished. These photographic images of darkness and shadow seem to occlude the
workers’ condition and role in history. As the narrative proceeds, however, the
addressees—the character Patrick Lewis and the reader—are undifferentiated. The
omniscient narrator fosters a relational reading for the reader by mentioning that
Patrick would never see the photographs of the American photographer, Lewis Hine,
a social reformer whose photographs document the conditions of American child
labourers in the early decades of the twentieth century.
Reference to the Bayeux Tapestry also establishes an indirect communication between the omniscient narrator and the reader. There are three events narrated, each event taking place at a different time and in a different place. In the horizontal narrative Patrick is noting the absence of the workers in Goss’s photographs. In the dialogue between narrator and reader, Hine’s photographs recall the worn faces of the workers. The reader has knowledge of the human history absent in Goss’s photographs and foregrounded in Hine’s works. The third “event”, reference to the intertext of the Bayeux Tapestry, accessible to the reader but not to Patrick, allows the reader to construct another story that at this point is outside Patrick’s knowledge. The spatialization suggests to the reader that Patrick will eventually gain from his reading of his experiences knowledge that enables him to tell a complex historical narrative like that of the Bayeux Tapestry. Within the Bayeux Tapestry the privileged and powerful are depicted at the centre and the lower classes are represented by images confined to a lower area. Like the Bayeux Tapestry, Patrick’s mosaic of stories of marginalized others that traverse the text engage with the dominant leaders of the social order. Just as the tapestry assembled two years after the events it represents—those occurring in the year 1066—the narrative that Patrick tells to Hana is composed of threads gathered from his own and others’ experiences of an earlier time. In addition, Patrick’s story, like the tapestry, is a narrative that represents a different history—those of the workers and victims and those of the elites and victors.

These ideologemes in In the Skin of a Lion are complex transactions between the narrative and its addressees that illustrate that the histories represented by works of visual art, such as photographs and the Bayeux Tapestry, “travel languorously like messages in a bottle” (SL 146). The understanding of history experienced by the author’s two addressees, the reader within the narrative (the character Patrick) and the
reader of the novel, is differentiated by the gaps in the knowledge and experiences of each. The specific historical event of Toronto’s modernization that the text reconstructs is evidenced in newspapers and photographs and records assembled in libraries and archives. The key departure in the novel is the engagement of this script with the cultural script revealed in Patrick’s mosaic of people and events. Patrick is bounded by his view of working class oppression until he meets his “double”, Harris, who is equally passionate about his dreams for Toronto and relates his own narrative. These are the gaps and ellipses that Patrick must interpret before he can tell his story.

Filling in one of these gaps occurs when Patrick climbs out of the mezzanine gallery of the pumping station, smiles into the darkness, and apparently identifies with the narrative *King Solomon’s Mines* (**SL 232**). The reference is both biblical and imperial in its allusions to the wise man of the Old Testament and to Rider Haggard’s adventure. Solomon, Gilgamesh and Harris were all famous builders who indulged their passions by transforming their cities with magnificent architecture, particularized in temples and palaces, to promote their authority and status. Solomon is recorded as having exacted labour from the Canaanites by levying “a tribute of bondservice”, which meant that they were forced to “build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gever” (1 Kings 15-21). The bondservice reduced many of the poorer people to a condition hard to distinguish from slavery. The lavish expenditure of Solomon was a prime cause for discontent, suggesting an interpretative corollary to the union riots of Toronto. The master/slave relationship is inferred in the imagery of a death chamber that reflects Harris’s mezzanine gallery, not only in its description as a great cathedral lined with marble and bronze, but also because it contains a colossal hoard of human skeletons. Like the protagonists in Haggard’s novel, Patrick approached the death chamber with
dynamite, believing this to be a living tomb. The intersection of Patrick’s intention to sabotage the water purification plant with the literary resonance of *King Solomon’s Mines* encourages unbounded spatialized interpretations, including the identification of Harris with Solomon and the deaths of slaves and workers to realize the ambitions of the elite. Spatializing the narrative at this point connects the reader with Patrick’s vengeful intent and marks a dialogue with relational readings from historical and literary texts. As a narrative of Empire, Haggard’s novel records the history of the dominant social order, which prevails over the absent cultural script and constitutes a “story” of its own. The insights produced demonstrate that in human history there is never a single narrative. There are always counter-stories or layered histories that contradict the objective records of achievement such as those kept in archives.

Patrick can only understand his own story and report it to Hana after he discovers the extent to which other people’s pasts are entwined with his own. He must, however, assemble this story that is fragmented by multiple perspectives and events, people and points of view seemingly dissociated in space and time. He does this by reading about and interpreting photographs of the workers on the bridge. He must recognize and interpolate missing details about workers’ deaths that followed a decision to use night crews to build the bridge. But this story is also told from multiple points of view, including that of an omniscient third person narrator who reveals “facts” to the reader before they are known by Patrick, such as Temelcoff’s rescue of an anonymous nun who will name herself Alice Gull when she abandons her cloistered life and joins the immigrant community of Toronto.

By identifying with his rival, Harris, in the filtration plant and breaking through his silence by speaking Alice’s name and thereby invoking her belief of change without violence, Patrick is able to assume the subject-position prescribed for him in the
matriarch’s gift of pelts—to be a story-teller. Like Gilgamesh, Harris desires to leave a lasting memorial. Like Gilgamesh, Patrick desires to search for a meaningful life and record the story. Both suffer grief at the death of a beloved friend and both hold themselves responsible for that death. As a result of their deaths, Enkidu and Alice are mediators for change without violence. As an alternative to killing Harris and himself and sabotaging Toronto’s water supply, Patrick reassumes his role as father and friend. As a spatialized narrative In the Skin of a Lion integrates the role of the uncivilized man with a privileged mimetic double to suggest that subjectivity and history, or the personal and the cultural, reflect and shape each other in the narration of the economic history of the city.

The two pelts become in the process iconic markers that elucidate insights into history. For Patrick, the pelt passed to him by the matriarch gives him access to narration and language, which enables him to tell the history of Toronto’s modernization inclusive of the story of the workers and the scapegoat, Alice, who tutored him in her philosophy of social change. He can only tell a cohesive story when he has gained knowledge and understanding of his mimetic model, just as Gilgamesh’s story achieves coherence when he has experienced wearing the skin of a lion. Like Gilgamesh, Harris becomes aware of the human narrativization of history in his encounter with his double, Patrick, in identifying the anarchist with Gilgamesh and Diogenes.

In imitation of Gilgamesh, Harris, in a similar quest to carve out a name for himself in history, parallels this violence in his indifference to the lives the workers who died in the tunnels and on the bridge. The contagion of revenge caused Alice to die in a bomb blast, and Patrick to retaliate in an attempt to destroy the water viaduct. The violence ceases when each man realizes there are alternative readings of history. That Harris, renowned architect of a modern city, is identified with Gilgamesh, the
architect of Uruk, is at once a homage, a challenge, a reconstruction, a gesture of disinterment, and a reflection on values that have remained unchanged since *Gilgamesh*.

Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* continues the narratives of Hana and Caravaggio, two Canadian immigrants, connects them to two other exiles in Italy, a sapper, Kip, and an Hungarian spy, Count Ladislaus Alásy, and constructs them as war victims. This novel has much in common with *In the Skin of a Lion*, in particular a focus on trauma as a product of war, and the construction of a scapegoat. However, by melding the fictive and the historical, *The English Patient* newly constructs a spatialized version of Western history that questions the West’s imperialism and nationalism and the desire to possess lands by means of war. Precursor texts, particularly Herodotus’s *The Histories*, add multiple resonances to events and characters by superimposing the past on the present. Many of these intertexts question the desire to create national and imperial histories. In imperial history British Intelligence constructs Count Ladislaus D’Almásy, a desert explorer, as a spy and a traitor. As an amnesiac burnt beyond recognition in a plane crash in the Libyan Desert, he is drawn into a relationship with three other exiles in an abandoned Tuscan villa whose identities become multi-faceted as they are translated by literary and biblical narratives. Their transformation into a circle of friends grown together in intimacy in a multi-national microcommunity challenges the concept and value of discrete national identities by again suggesting the possibilities of a communal history, one that subverts narratives of war and their histories of violence.

Almásy, reconstructed at the villa as the English patient, occupies the subject-position of the storyteller. His experiences with the desert explorers and his love affair with Catherine Clifton are revealed in fragments of memory whispered to Hana, the Canadian nurse who cares for him, and to Caravaggio, another war-traumatized exile. These memories from Almásy’s past are complemented with personal entries glued
into his Herodotus and supplemented by Caravaggio’s exposure of Almásy as a spy who helped German troops under Eppler cross the Libyan Desert. Hana, in her role as reader of the English patient’s narrative, is the mediator who, by her devotion and care for the burnt man, creates a new narrative that ennobles him, subverting the imperial narratives of violence that torment him. The blurring of the subject-positions of Hana and the English patient unite them as the teller and reader of the narratives.

Intertexts that penetrate the English patient’s narratives associate him with transgression, with wars of aggression, spying and violence, and as a master of metamorphosis. He is doubled with fallen man in biblical and Miltonic images of Lucifer and Adam, as the adulterous lover Vronsky in Anna Karenina, as King David in his forbidden love for Bathsheba and as Gyges who transgressed Greek law in Herodotus’s The Histories. In the wildness of drunken rhetoric, he links himself to Bottom as a shape-shifter, quoting from A Midsummer Night’s Dream, “Sometime a horse I’ll be, sometime a hound” (EP 115). Discourses from the literary, religious and artistic past interpenetrate the narratives of his exiled companions, Kip, Hana and Caravaggio, to create an alternative conception of the English patient as an idealistic man. These discourses are embedded in texts such as Kipling’s Kim, in which images of war dissolve into expressions of devotion and identification with the idea of human community; in the images and teachings of Isaiah who spoke messages of hope to an exiled community; and in Stendahl’s The Charterhouse of Parma, whose hero is a man of ideals and passion. The narratives developed in allusions to the English patient’s companions also contain elements of war and violence, yet relationships imaged in these communal maps from the past contain information that has the potential to guide humanity and deflect violence. Intertexts or “communal histories” (EP 260) embedded in the text offer a spatialized version of Western history,
remembering events and characters from a host of intertexts that also include Homer’s *Odysseus*, Virgil’s *The Aeneid*, Pliny’s *The Letters*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, and biblical and art history.

Common to all these texts is the theme of war or conflict and its impact on victims. Marlene Goldman argues that in depicting the damaged minds and bodies of four characters living in a bombed villa in war-torn Italy, Ondaatje’s novel intersects with the imagery of Walter Benjamin’s interpretation of Paul Klee’s painting *Angelus Novus* as the “angel of history,” which fixes its gaze on the past to survey landscapes of ruin. Benjamin envisages the angel in *Illuminations*:

His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he perceives one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (257-58)

While Goldman’s study stresses “the autonomy of the individual parts as opposed to the work as a whole”, underscored by a view that “the patient’s body functions as an allegorical fragment—a living emblem of catastrophe” (904-5), my analysis differs, firstly, in terms of autonomous fragments, and secondly, in the construction of the English patient. It argues instead that intertextuality creates simultaneous history, wherein the past coexists with the present on one plane in the novel creating an organic, holistic history inclusive of a model of communal history, while the English
patient is represented as the guardian of communal histories. According to Goldman, Ondaatje’s novel “parallels Benjamin’s understanding of allegory and the fallen and fragmented character of human history” (903). But whereas, for Benjamin, catastrophe breaks the bonds between past and present in asserting that the records of civilization and barbarism are identical, I argue that literature and Renaissance Art in The English Patient construct simultaneous history which provides continuity from past to present in spite of wars and conflict. These discourses create an alternative “angel of history.” To draw on this information requires readers and characters to read “down into the text”, that is, the vertical axis of narrative, as we also read across it. The “angel of history” in Ondaatje’s text is represented in the imagery of the burnt patient riding out of Italy with Kip, facing landscapes of ruin, united with the voice of Isaiah preaching messages of hope for his exiled people. In this reading, the discourses of art, literature and biblical history not only function as maps, which provide choices and alternatives to forestall disaster, but construct a communal history as well as a history of catastrophe. John Berger describes how works from the past disclose information that informs the present:

In front of a work from the past, by means of our aesthetic response as well as by imaginative intelligence, we become able to recognize the choices which reality allowed an artist four thousand, four hundred or forty years ago. This recognition need never be academic. We are given (as we are not in literature) the sensuous data through which the alternatives of his choice must have presented themselves to him. It is as though we can benefit from our responses to the form and content of his work, being interpreted by his mind, conditioned by his period, as well as our own mind. An extraordinary dialectic
working across time! An extraordinary aid to realizing how we have historically arrived at being ourselves. (40)

In theorizing about artists’ inspiration, Berger writes, “Inspiration is the mirror image of history; by means of it we can see our past, while turning our back on it” (32). This chapter suggests a modification of Benjamin’s focus on the fallen fragmented character of human history as one single catastrophe by analyzing the novel’s construction of communal history, its connection with the past, and its potential to guide humanity and deflect violence.

Ondaatje’s novel, spatially connected with Herodotus’s *The Histories*, provides choices and alternatives in how “we can see our past while turning our backs on it.” As a history of the Persian Wars, Herodotus’s text exemplifies Benjamin’s hypothesis, “There has never been a document of culture which was not at one and the same time a document of barbarism”. It portrays rulers who, according to Benjamin, “march over the prostrate bodies of their victims” (258). Ondaatje’s novel imitates this model of history, only to turn away from its precursor by an inquisition into the human drama and ruins rendered by wars of possession. A new historical landscape is imagined imitating and extending the pattern of *The Histories* in its inclusion of Herodotus’s supplementary narrative, the history of Gyges. Retaining key elements of how Gyges changed history, *The English Patient* augments an official narrative about Almásy’s identity as a cultural and moral transgressor in his role as a German collaborator in World War II with a seemingly “supplementary” account of his personal history kept within a volume of Herodotus. Whereas the history of imperial achievement and possessions, the main focus of *The Histories*, is interspersed with supplementary digressions, Ondaatje’s novel uses the personal narratives of Almásy, Caravaggio, Hana and Kip as the main argument. Their narratives allow readers to see
and turn their backs on “documents of barbarism” by providing a different document of culture.

The narratives of these four war survivors, supplemented by literary, biblical and art history ideologemes (that is, the points of intersection between the text and its precursor text), provide a reading of the novel that re-examines cultural conflicts. These intertexts, I argue, reveal the shaping function of desire in the construction of histories. They are incorporated into the structuring operation of this novel, illustrating Peter Brooks’s assertion in his essay “Narrative Desire” that narratives “lay bare the nature of narration as a form of human desire” (136). For Brooks, desire may take the form of ambition, which “totalizes the world as possession and progress” (133). Ondaatje’s novel unfolds, to use Brooks’s phrase, as “an anatomy of human desire” (134). The desire for possession and racial dominance, which underpins the Anglo-Christian bias of Western narrative history, is reflected in Ondaatje’s narrative of the Second World War and the annexation of the Libyan Desert. Juxtaposed with this history of imperial dominance is the desire for communal histories revealed in historical discourses of mediaeval art and literary works that link characters and events from the past with the war wounded characters in the villa. These discourses counteract intertextual narratives in which war and conflict are thematized.

The importance of these intertextual narratives lies in Almásy’s dual construction, either in fixing him as an imitative model of Herodotus and Gyges, therefore identifying him with war and Benjamin’s angel of ruin, or constructing him with multiple identities that connect him to the cultural past as a transmitter of knowledge. Critics argue for a plethora of representations of the English patient. Brigitta Johansson reads the English patient as a figure of contemporary suffering; Bill Fledderus connects him to Arthurian legend and the Fisher King; Tom Penner
sees the burnt man as the enigma whom the other patients must translate into their own narratives; Annick Hillger, in connecting Almásy to Odysseus, constructs him as a nomadic self, and Rufus Cook argues that the English patient has no defining substance of his own and no delimiting skin so that he accumulates more and more character roles and character identities. The appeal to the intertextual references in this chapter is to argue that the multiple constructions of the English patient can be shown to correspond to two different models of history.

The imperial history of progress is exemplified in The Histories. Doubling Almásy with Herodotus characterizes him as a desert traveler, explorer and storyteller/historian, but it also taints him with another title. According to A. R. Burns in his Introduction to The Histories, Herodotus was not only titled “The Father of History”, but was also called by some “a liar” (29) in his interpretation of imperial history. Caravaggio implies that the English patient is also a liar in concealing his name and role in the war. In Ondaatje’s novel, Almásy is intimately connected in The Histories with Gyges, a bodyguard to the king, who establishes royal power by usurping the throne and waging wars of aggression against the Persians. Clifton and his wife, Katherine, who both belong to privileged English families, parallel Candaules, the King, and his queen, in Herodotus’s story. The story of Almásy’s love affair with Katherine, set within an historical account of desert exploration in the years preceding the Second World War, enacts a version of how Gyges usurped the throne and married the queen. Contrasted with these narratives of imperial power and possession are the stories of the victims of war, Kip, Hana and Caravaggio, whose lives become enmeshed with the life of the English patient, entwining his knowledge of the cultural past with their experiences: Kip’s interaction with Florentine Renaissance Art, Hana’s engagement with literature, and Caravaggio’s link to his
artistic namesake and Renaissance art history. The protagonists in these great works of art and literature double with the English patient so that his identity becomes multidimensional. Centralized as creator of, and participant in, these narratives, the English patient, together with his companions, conflate with literary, biblical and art historical characters, to create a different historical story. This model of communal history replaces the model of imperial history and with it the identification of the English patient as a spy.

The historical inference that Almásy is a spy is challenged further in an analysis of what *The Histories* represent to Herodotus, Almásy, and the Geographic Society, and the roles of each in constructing the Libyan Desert as a theatre of war. Herodotus’s researches were set down “to preserve the past by putting on record the astonishing achievements both of our own and of other peoples; and more particularly, to show how they came into conflict” (42). Included in this record are descriptions of explorations into the Libyan Desert for the purpose of warfare between the Persians and the Greeks. Almásy uses his 1890 edition of *The Histories* to map the Gilf Kebir Plateau, looking for the lost oasis called Zerzura. Into the book he inserts fragments, “maps, diary entries, writing in many languages, paragraphs cut out of other books” (*EP* 96), and a small fern. These fragments supplement the book’s original text, *The Histories*, with personal meanings. The glosses and additions construct Almásy as an idealist and a lover, as well as an explorer. His additions to Herodotus’s narrative also mark a difference: whereas Herodotus glorified the Persian wars, Almásy glued “pale brown cigarette papers [. . .] into sections of *The Histories* that recorded that wars were no use to him” (*EP* 172).

This was not the view of other explorers in the Geographical Society. According to Vernon Provencal, the reports of the Society in 1934 reveal “a practical,
militaristic interest in a scientific approach to exploration of the desert” (146). In reading the reports of desert explorers such as Bermann and Fenelon Jones, Provencal notes, “the eagerness of the academic to serve the imperialist interest of nations, which finance expeditions in order to exploit their discoveries, is somewhat alarming” (146). Visible in the establishment is a distancing from the “foreign” and a commitment to the nation to possess, exploit, name and map to justify wars and commodify people. Instances of disrespect for other lands and people are exemplified in Fenelon-Jones who tied up a small Arab girl in his bed “and wanted the small fossil trees he discovered to bear his name” (EP 139). In contrast, the English patient believes “the desert could not be claimed or owned” (EP 138). His nationless sentiments of wishing to erase his name from the desert distance him from national wars of possession. He intermingles with the desert tribes, respects the people as “beautiful human beings”, and recognizes their environment as “a place of faith” (EP 139). Almásy’s knowledge of the desert attracts the interest of British Intelligence, which employs Geoffrey Clifton as a spy to gather information for the impending war. The circumstances that arise from Almásy’s affair with Katherine Clifton lead Almasy to agree to lead Rommel’s troops across the desert as a means to rescue Katherine from the Cave of Swimmers. In this reading, Herodotus, together with the Geographical Society, as representatives of the British Empire, construct historical narratives of war. In contrast, Almásy’s narratives unfold to be stories of love, loss and suffering as the fruits of war.

Several of these stories contribute to the translation of Almásy, known as “the spy of Cairo,” into the English patient, the prophet and guardian of cultural heritage. These poignant stories, narrated by the English patient to Hana, are fused into what Bakhtin calls the “literary artistic chronotope” in which “spatial and temporal”
indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole” (15). The intersection of axes reconstructs the English patient’s identity into multiple fictive identities that split into two distinct phases. These occur in fragmented images that connect psychic and literary allusions he conveys to Hana. The Miltonian image of the fallen angel when he “fell burning into the desert” with his “head in flames” (EP 5) associates the English patient with both the fallen angel and fallen man as a result of his adultery with Katherine and his transgression against powerful authorities. It is the baptism of “fire and sand” which transforms him into the English patient.

Re-created as the English patient, the burnt man recounts stories to Hana that portray him as a poet, a lover and an idealist in images that separate him from nation-builders and spies, and explain his actions in Cairo. Such an image is that of an Arab poet and his lover, Zerzura, holding up muslin before her as she bathed in a caravan, recalling the memory of Katherine as the woman in Cairo stretching her body out of a window to receive the rain. The allusion connects Almásy with those who give places the names of lovers rather than names connected with nations. In other allusions, he intersects with King David, also a poet and lover, who is remorseful for his transgressions with Bathsheba, a women he loved after seeing her bathing. This psychic reference resonates with the guilt the English patient shares with King David in the deaths of their lovers’ husbands. In this second phase, influenced by Hana and the intertextual resonances of the text, the burnt English patient is construed as Patrick, Hana’s father, a political scapegoat; as a suffering and prophetic Renaissance man in the allusions to the paintings of Isaiah, or as the lama, a man “who has won salvation for himself and his beloved” (Kim 289). The connection of text and context, narrator and reader in illustrating the complexity and multiplicity of identities constructs a particular version of history that challenges a monolithic model.
The construction of a scapegoat in these rivalrous models is explored by analyzing the function of mimetic desire in the three stories that underpin Ondaatje’s novel: the story of Candaules and his queen, the story of the desert society as its imitative model of Homer’s text, and the narrative of the four victims of war gathered in the Villa San Girolamo. The triangular relationship of Candaules, his queen, and Gyges calls for what Greene calls “subreading” of an ancient text to examine the ways in which “archaeological” scrutiny pierces the surfaces “to reach the living particularity of the past they bear within them” (93). These interrelationships reflect on the second mimetic triangle of Clifton, Katherine and Almásy, from which emerges interplay between the reader and voices from the ancient past, a modern voice that mediates the ancient history. The last set of relationships of Hana, Kip and Caravaggio, revolving around the protean figure of the English patient, highlights their transformation and rebirth.

The first triangle chronicles the story of Candaules, the king, who thought his queen the most beautiful woman on earth and bragged about her to her to his bodyguard, Gyges. The king devised a plan so that Gyges could see his wife disrobing. The queen saw Gyges and gave him the choice of killing Candaules and seizing the throne, or being exposed and killed for seeing what he had no right to see. So the king was killed, power changed hands and Gyges, the barbarian, came to power by murdering the rightful Lydian ruler. He reigned as King of Lydia for twenty-eight years, paying no attention to the oracle’s prophecy that “the Heraclids would have their revenge on Gyges in the fifth generation” (HH 46).

The interaction of characters in this triangle reflects the discourses embedded in their culture. D. Lateiner, one of Provencal’s sources, explains, in The Historical
Method of Herodotus, how moral transgression in Herodotus relates to nomos (law, custom), a principle that covers a whole range of “boundaries and proper limits, physical, social and moral” (127). Provencal argues that Herodotus was aware of the universality of ethnic prejudice, which explains why the story of Candaules comes first in The Histories because “the paradigm of Croesus establishes the causal principles of divine jealousy (phthonos) and retribution (tisis) that underlie and structure the historical narrative” (52).

Ethnic prejudice and retribution, as well as the possession of persons and territory, haunt the modern text. The spiral of reprisals and death activated by jealousy and revenge invested in the ancient text recalls elements of revenge tragedy. In the second triangle in The English Patient, the greatness and power of Empire residing in Candaules are paralleled in Clifton, a member of the British elite, while Almásy conflates with Gyges as foreigner and lover. The imitation takes shape in the recitation of Candaules’s story by Katherine Clifton. In Almásy’s account, this was the beginning of the fateful romance that led to his treason, the death of Clifton and Katherine, and to the plane crash from which he emerged as “the English patient.” Transgression, jealousy and retribution in this triangle result in the death of Clifton as he attempts to murder Almásy and Katherine in a suicidal plane crash. The sanctity of tradition, law, and custom that constitutes the moral fabric in Herodotus is also embedded in the British social fabric. Crossing moral and cultural boundaries condemns Almásy to alienation and victimization. He, like Gyges, is “only a cog in an unusual love story” (EP 234) but, as a result of his action, he is under surveillance as a spy during war, which drives the “main” argument. Just as retribution awaits Gyges, Almásy also is a scapegoat to serve imperial interests. Condemned as victimizers, both Gyges and Almásy are also revealed as victims in these texts of persecution.
The idea transposed from Herodotus’s mimetic triangle to the configuration of the English patient and Geoffrey and Katherine Clifton is primarily to do with the desire for power enshrined within the frame of romantic love. Girard contends that the more the object is forbidden the more its value, as well as the mediator’s value, increases. This idea illustrates the internal mediation observable in both triads.

Girard’s conception of mimetic desire and the double bind of the mimetic triangle, wherein the imitation of desires produces a situation where “two hands will reach for the same object simultaneously” (*Double* 201), underscores “cul-de-sacs within the sweep of history—how people betray each other for the sake of nations, how people fall in love” (*EP* 119). As Provencal outlines, Candaules transgressed the law of *nomos* because as model and master he encouraged his subject, who was his bodyguard, to acquire knowledge of his wife, the object of his own desires. Candaules’ wife, provoked by the violation of her status, sought vengeance on her husband by giving Gyges the choice of execution as punishment for violating *nomos* or of murdering and dethroning her husband. The mediation of the model, Candaules, had the effect of increasing the desire of the subject, Gyges, for the prestige of the one who possesses the object, the king himself. Transfiguring his wife in the operation of mimetic desire caused Candaules to be murdered by Gyges, and provided the means for a foreigner and a rival to ascend the throne. The internal workings of the model illustrate that transgressions against *nomos* result in *tisis*, or retribution. Herodotus uses Candaules to point out “who it was in actual fact injured the Greeks” (*HH* 43) by illustrating how transgressions become interwoven into the thread of history.

Evident in the mimetic triangle is the fluidity with which characters can be created and changed. Applying the hypothesis of mimetic desire provides a means to examine a character, a relationship or a nation. The central triangular configuration in
The English Patient explores all three aspects. The interaction between the
Geographical Society, represented by Geoffrey Clinton, the oasis society of which
Almásy is a member, and Katherine Clifton, loved by both foreigner and Englishman,
exposes the rivalry, reciprocity and retribution of tragic action, which makes
characters more and more similar. What becomes visible is the emergence of mimetic
man, equalization of violence, and, in this model, an enactment of the scapegoat
phenomenon. By transgressing the laws of the English establishment and the
Geographical society, Katherine and Almásy become sacrificial figures as the
scapegoat mechanism is activated. Katherine is no longer “divinized” once Clifton is
aware of her love affair. Almásy was targeted because Clifton was a member of “the
great English web” of the British establishment, the Geographical Society that
sponsored desert exploration to map unknown lands for the purpose of claiming them
as one’s own. Almásy was a “disease in the system” (EP 237), because of his wife’s
infidelity and also because Almásy believed “the desert could not be claimed or
owned” (EP 138). Caravaggio’s revelation that “Geoffrey Clifton was with British
Intelligence. He was not just an innocent Englishman” (EP 252) locates Clifton as a
spy and a member of a war machine that kept an eye on the desert explorers because
the Libyan Desert would one day become a theatre of war. His identity as an aerial
photographer was camouflaged to serve his purpose of spying on Almásy. Clifton’s
response to his wife’s adultery and to his rival, also a desert explorer, was to crash his
plane in the desert in an attempt to kill all involved in the triangular relationship. His
self-destructive act constitutes a disturbing metaphor of individual and social relations
in a state of extreme degradation.

The self-destructive impulse also affects Katherine. Girard’s theory that “the
more acute stages of the mimetic process are more obviously compulsive and self-
destructive than the earlier ones” (*Hidden* 290) describes how Katherine’s initial act of self-empowerment against the possessive idolatry of her husband becomes an act of self-destruction and self-immolation in her affair with a lover who did not believe in possessing or being possessed. In a palimpsest of historical layering recalling love and its violent aftermath, Eve and Adam, and Dido and Aeneas, prefigure Katherine and Almásy. Almásy remembers the night when Katherine recites from *Paradise Lost*, describing the way “Adam tenderly taught a woman with gracious metaphors.” He recalls, “I see her still, always, with the eye of Adam” (*EP* 144). The allusion to Dido and her illicit affair with Aeneas is remembered as the lovers walk through the streets of Cairo like “Sinners in a holy city” (*EP* 154). Eve, Dido and Katherine are condemned as “sinners” and punished as scapegoats in transgressive love affairs.

Almásy, like Aeneas, loses his lover because of his involvement in nation building, and Katherine, like Dido, dies in the Libyan Desert. Almásy believes in the nationless heart of the desert but he is caught in the network of nations because he is having an affair with someone connected with British Intelligence. Almásy identifies Bagnold with Aeneas because Bagnold is a man who believes in creating and preserving nations. Bagnold joined British intelligence when the war broke out and being a “very English Englishman” (*EP* 255) compromises Almásy, his fellow explorer. Yet, in the circle of mimetic desire and rivalry, Almásy becomes less differentiated from his rivals, Bagnold and Clifton. Although he desires to identify with the desert tribes, “the nomads of faith who walked in the monotone of the desert and saw brightness and faith and colour” (*EP* 261), Almásy, in a sense, acts to possess and name a “territory” when he claims Katherine as his wife at El Taj. Ironically, in order to seek help for Katherine, as she lay injured in the Cave of Swimmers, the name he should have yelled to the English military was Clifton’s, which would have
“dropped like a calling card into their hands” (EP 251). By severing Katherine from identification with the rich and powerful in the English Empire, Almásy denies Katherine her life.

Katherine’s death and the hounding of Almásy as a spy repeat the practice of retribution for transgression against cultural law to maintain empire. While Steven Tótösy de Zepetnek profiles Lászió Ede Almásy, the Hungarian asistocrat, by consulting historical data to consider the allegation that Almásy was a Nazi spy, this analysis instead focuses on the sufferings of those caught within the conflict of nations as well as the shifting identification of others who can equally be termed “spies”. Leading Rommel into the desert in order to return to Katherine as he had promised and to bury her in the desert has less to do in Ondaatje’s narrative with whether Almásy is a spy or not than with the trauma of those caught within war. As spy and jealous lover, victim and victimizer, his identity merges with that of his “imperial” rival, Clifton, the spy for British Intelligence, so that labeling Almásy the villain is an act of political expediency. In this triune structure of internal interactions, nationhood is an excuse for activating a hunt for scapegoats to preserve national interests; because of the primacy of revenge violence spreads, as Girard puts it, “like the plague” (Double 139). Possession and violence emerge as two faces of a single coin in this version of history.

The last mimetic triangle is figured as a grid of mimetic relationships within a triangular structure, which positions the English patient at the apex interacting with his fellow exiles. Narratives from the mythic past recalled by the English patient merge with fragments of recuperated memory to wed the personal to the collective. Binaries disappear as characters merge, overlap, exchange roles and reform, disrupting linear history in the narrative’s present. Negotiating this zone, which in
Elias’s analysis is the sublime zone of unspoken painful history, creates “an awareness and acceptance of responsibility for individual action and cultural history” (192). Learning lessons from past discourses yields the potential to provide a communal map for recognizing and avoiding situations that provoke violence.

The construction of this communal map can be analyzed in two triangular relationships at the Villa San Girolamo connecting the English patient with Hana and Caravaggio, and with Hana and Kip. These interrelationships examine the role of cultural discourses in transforming damaged lives. The analogy of rebirth reveals itself in the interaction of the English patient with Hana and Caravaggio in the narration of stories and the retrieval of memories, which in time dissolve the triangular attitudes of jealousy and envy. Caravaggio imitates the desires of others. Caravaggio’s envy of the patient who has inspired Hana’s love and devotion follows what is for Girard a familiar pattern so that Caravaggio looks to the English patient as his model. For all his charm and innate generosity, Caravaggio is a chronic victim of envy. His character, established in In the Skin of a Lion, reveals an irresistible impulse to desire what others desire. As a thief in Toronto he stole from the homes of the rich to imitate their desires for fine objects. Several years later, he worked in Cairo during the early days of the war, doing what he did best, that is, imitating, “inventing double agents or phantoms, who would take on flesh” (EP 117). His deeply rooted and impotent hatred of the rich, whom he obsessively imitates, composes his social philosophy. Conflating the English patient with Empire, he berates Kip and Hana:

Why are you not smarter? It’s only the rich who can’t afford to be smart. They’re compromised. They got locked in years ago to privilege. They have to protect their belongings. No one is meaner than the rich. Trust me. But they have to follow the rules of their shitty civilized world. They declare war, they
have honour, and they can’t leave. But you two. We three. We’re free. (EP 122-23)

Caravaggio demarcates himself and his companions, Kip and Hana, by class and race from the dominant power, England, and also from the supposed English patient.

Although Hana is transfigured into the desired object because her “value” has increased in being loved by both Kip and the English patient, Caravaggio’s attraction to the English patient is that he wants to “know things”. His ambition to be like the one he loathes is a triangular desire. He admits his admiration: “We’re in a huge field when we talk to that guy.” “I think it is easier to fall in love with him than with you. Why is that? Because we want to know things, how the pieces fit. Talkers seduce, words direct us into corners. We want more than anything to grow and change” (EP 121).

His imitative modeling of Hana’s beloved step-father, Patrick, in calling Hana pet names recalls tender memories of her childhood in Toronto and breaks through the wall of grief and silence oppressing her. She speaks for the first time of grieving for Patrick, the deaths of her lover and their child, and the trauma of treating the wounded and dying in the war hospital at Pisa. She recalls her love for Patrick and Caravaggio, who taught her everything she knew about the world. The words that she writes in the blank page of a copy of *The Last of the Mohicans* recall Hawkeye’s care for Colonel Munro’s daughter Cora: “There is a man named Caravaggio, a friend of my father’s. I have always loved him. […] For some reason I am cared for by this friend of my father” (EP 61).

Caravaggio initially convinces himself that the reason he is intervening to persuade Hana to leave the Villa and the English patient is his early love for her as an “uncle” and his concern for her emotional survival. As Girard asserts, the jealous
person “always maintains that his desire preceded the intervention of the mediator” (Deceit 12). Caravaggio recognized that Hana adored the English patient, imaging him as “her despairing saint”. She takes sensual pleasure in caring for him. “She loves the hollow below the lowest rib, its cliff of skin” and she “unskins the plum with her teeth, withdraws the stone and passes the flesh of the fruit into his mouth” (EP 4). She becomes in a sense a product of the English patient translated by the books she reads to him, by his personal Herodotus and by his memory of “how one falls in love” (EP 229). Caravaggio loved the English patient’s reshaping of Hana. He “could hardly believe his pleasure at her translation” into “this wonderful stranger he could love more deeply because she was made up of nothing he had provided” (EP 222-23). In an attempt to expose the English patient as Almásy, the man identified as a spy by British Intelligence, Caravaggio uses morphine to interrogate his victim. This enables Caravaggio to hear another version of the story of a Nazi collaborator that has personal meaning for him: a tragic love story of a heroic attempt to return to his dead lover in the Cave of the Swimmers. Both men had been victims caught in the conflict of nations, both had been identified as spies, both had suffered severe physical and emotional mutilation and both experienced “a time of darkness.” To Caravaggio, the English patient is revealed as a victim and a scapegoat and “seems omnipotent not only as a troublemaker but as a peacemaker as well” (Double 202). Girard designates this phenomenon as “sacred”, the “miracle” that puts an end to the rivalry. In this profounder act of imitation within the context of shared narratives, Caravaggio turns away from confrontation and violence to an understanding and protection of his burnt rival.

Words, both oral and written, dispel otherness and bind Caravaggio and Hana to the English patient. Hana is the fair maiden Abishag who comforted King David in
his old age. She is Kim who guided the lama on his “search” for the sacred river and release from the Great Wheel. The English patient who loved her “plucked at the air with his bony finger and, when she had bent over, kissed her cheek” (EP 115). Such a gesture suggests a desire of expression rather than the desire of possession, which Caravaggio experiences when he is in a darkened room with Kip and Hana as they play lovers’ games. As Caravaggio reaches out for Hana, Kip’s arm encircles his neck and he is dragged to the floor. A memory from the past connects with the action as Hana chants to Kip, “I got you. I got you. I used Caravaggio—who really does have a bad wheeze! I knew he would be here. He was the trick” (EP 223). Hana’s affectionate and playful gesture paradoxically repeats Caravaggio’s torture, with lights shining on him and a girl above him, in a different context. Her word “Confess” conveys the double implication of wounding and a self-revelation of his intentions towards Hana. He leaves the room, his vanity shattered. Caravaggio recognized the contradictions within himself in his desire that Hana and Kip marry, in the belief that it would free Hana of the dying man. Caravaggio’s love initially is subordinated to jealousy and to the presence of the rival, the English patient.

These triangular desires dissolve when Caravaggio fills in the gaps and silences of the English patient’s narrative. According to Girard, in the double bind of the mimetic triangle where the mediator appears powerful and possesses every desirable quality, the subject is forced into a position of inferiority to the model—at least in his own view—and one of the rivals becomes the object of violence of all the rest. This occurs when Caravaggio, with the knowledge of Hana and Kip, subjects the English patient to morphine interrogation. Relating his questions to the official story of how Almásy had guided Eppler through the desert to Cairo by avoiding Allied troops, Caravaggio fills in the gaps unknown to British Intelligence and informs the
English patient about how the “establishment” had targeted him when the affair with Katherine Clifton was revealed. His enquiry, “What happened to Katherine Clifton?” reawakens the violence and pain concealed in the patient’s post-traumatic consciousness. The narration of Katherine’s death in “The Cave of Swimmers” repeats trauma and loss. To Caravaggio, these memories present a competing version of past events. The pain represented by surrealistic images of Almásy’s return to Katherine’s body helps Caravaggio to understand and interpret the past.

Caravaggio’s immersion into the English patient’s past life draws him towards a philosophy that dispels the contagion of violence and restores his own identity. The retrieval of memories provokes the English patient to reassert his passionate philosophy: “We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience. All I desired was to walk upon such an earth that had no maps” (EP 261). To Hana’s question, “Is he what you thought he was?” Caravaggio’s reply, “He’s fine. We can let him be,” (EP 265) proposes the end of envious desire and rivalry. When their triangular relationship becomes less rivalrous and therefore less unstable the subject’s desires shift to the mediation of desires by the subject’s community. Caravaggio’s response suggests an understanding that the burnt patient experiences, as he himself does, the traumatic consciousness as a realm of pain, terror and chaos. However, it can also be the realm of revelation. This is exemplified when he intervenes to save the English patient from Kip’s grief and anger: “He isn’t an Englishman. Of all people he is probably on your side” (EP 286), he tells Kip, and later gathers the sapper “in a great hug” as he left the villa saying, “I shall have to learn how to miss you” (EP 289). Caravaggio at these moments is in communion with his fellow exiles rather than in a state of rivalry. Caravaggio reveals to the reader the quality of Almásy’s inner life and the morality and capacity for
sacrifice of the man constructed in documented history as a spy. His capacity to draw out memories is an active communal faculty that promotes historical and cultural understanding. In doing so, Caravaggio learns from the history of others his own unique salvation.

An analysis of the English patient’s mediation with Hana and Kip develops an understanding of how the juxtaposition of characters with narratives drawn from literature and art reflects their historical situations and informs and restores their identities. Seated at the foot of the bed listening to the English patient, Kip is identified as the disciple and the “passionate” hero. Both the English patient and Kip share the element of “passion”. Girard expands upon the term “passion” by drawing on Stendhal’s novels to argue it is the opposite of vanity. “The passionate person draws the strength of his desire from within himself and not from others” (Deceit 19).

Ondaatje’s novel alludes to The Charterhouse of Parma, a book Hana reads as she awaits her lover. Connections are made between Kip, the patient, and Fabrizio del Dongo, not only in terms of exile, spy and racial other, but as two characters who connect with Italy’s artistic past. As doubles they share the attribute of “passion”. Hana reads, “If I ever get out of my difficulties,” he said to Clelia, “I shall pay a visit to the beautiful pictures at Parma, and then will you deign to remember the name: Fabrizio del Dongo” (EP 222). In being linked to Fabrizio del Dongo, Kip is revealed to be a young man of grace and idealism whose desire is to make a coherent life as a soldier. Devoid of a desire to possess, but passionate in his desire to give service to a country that he admires, Kip, like Fabrizio in Parma, integrates the trauma of his work in war-torn Italy with art history recorded in the frescoes of churches. In doing so he is drawn by desire to the English patient and Hana.
Kip’s interlude with the Queen of Sheba in a fresco of Piero della Francesca counteracts the horror of war with the desire and love inspired by the downcast eyes of the queen of sadness. The gesture of leaning forward “to rest on the skin of her frail neck”, to seek the understanding of “this woman who would one day know the sacredness of bridges” (EP 70), is repeated later when he maps Hana’s sadness and “nestles against her neck,” reminding her of “a quality of feather within him” (EP 270). This repeated allusion to Kip as an angel, a warrior saint, stern and visionary like the archangel Michael in a Piero della Francesca painting or Gabriel in the Nativity tableau in Naples, marks Kip as idealistic and self-sufficient. He was “a boy in love who will not eat the food she gathers, who does not want the drug or needle she could slide into his arm as Caravaggio does, or those ointments of desert invention the Englishman craves” (EP 126). Hana realizes “he never allowed himself to be beholden to her, or her to him” (EP 128). Kip and Hana are portrayed as devoid of the destructive triangular attributes of envy, rivalry and the need to possess.

The English patient as mediator possesses all the qualities that Kip admires because he is supposedly English. The sapper loved his mentor, Lord Suffolk, who drew him into his family like a prodigal son, and, as with the English patient, he “embraced him with conversation” (EP 189) and befriended him. Kip follows the codes of his English fathers “like a dutiful son” (EP 217). The English patient’s quotation from Isaiah recalls for Kip the great face of Isaiah, “the face like a spear, wise and unforgiving” (EP 77), painted on the Sistine Chapel. The English patient, to Kip, merged with the “Prophet of Faith,” in the Bible, a visionary whose specific vision features hopes for “new heavens and a new earth” promising “so shall your seed and your name remain” (Isa. 66.22).
Other Renaissance narrative paintings, as intertextual markers, illuminate the interaction between Kip and the English patient and expose the merging of their identities. In Caravaggio’s painting, *David and Goliath*, the artist supposedly depicted his youthful face as David and his adversary as himself in old age. In Ondaatje’s novel, the English patient identifies Kip as his David. Kip is his other self or double, as well as his slayer. Their differences disappear as their similarities become apparent. Both Kip and the patient are self-sufficient, both had experienced being “a king, a puppet-master” (*EP* 196), in specialized fields of work as desert explorer or military engineer. Both accepted a name that concealed their national identity. Most importantly both loved Hana. The capacity for silent communication, acceptance and compassion linking Kip, Hana and the English patient is illustrated in the tableau when a ladybird, circling Kip’s finger, crosses over onto Hana’s wrist and is passed to the English patient’s foot where it begins its long trek upwards, “a bright redness against what seems like volcanic flesh” (*EP* 207). In such an image we enter into a moment of communal harmony devoid of rivalry.

The harmony is shattered when news of the bombing of Hiroshima reverses Kip’s attitude towards the English and the English patient. Turning upon the English patient as a representative of a race who would never have dropped the bomb on a white nation, he threatens to kill him in vengeance. Kip’s sense of betrayal by a nation he had loved provokes profound grief and hatred. His brother’s analysis, which ironically is like that of the English patient, resurfaces: “Never turn your back on Europe. The deal makers. The contract makers. The map drawers” (*EP* 284). From this perspective Kip wonders what power could coerce Indian soldiers to risk their lives as heroes, “Was it just ships that gave you such power? Was it, as my brother said, because you had the histories and printing presses?” (*EP* 283). Kip’s rejection of
continuing the violence, a violence he believes was learnt from the English and represented in King Leopold of Belgium and Harry Truman of the USA, disrupts the cycle of vengeance and he flees Italy without killing the English patient. In his flight, Kip carries with him a memory of the English patient, represented as “the angel of history”. Goldman argues that the text conveys “the loss instigated by humanity’s most recent apocalyptic catastrophe by constructing a tableau that echoes Benjamin’s “angel of history” as Kip flees Italy” (907): “[Kip] feels he carries the body of the Englishman with him in this flight. It sits on the petrol tank facing him, the black body in an embrace with his, facing the past over his shoulder, facing the countryside they are flying from”, while “the voice of the English patient sang Isaiah into his ear” (EP 294).

In Goldman’s description, “the English patient assumes the angel’s position, while the villa and the fragile community it housed function as synecdoches for every fragile community destroyed by the ongoing catastrophe” (907). While Goldman’s perception of the English patient as the angel of history parallels Benjamin’s view, this analysis constructs a different interpretation. Isaiah’s prophecy, “And my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth. Nor out of the mouth of thy seed. Nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed” (EP 294), merges with the memory of the English patient’s narratives to construct an alternative angel of history that promises the continuity of culture. In this interpretation, the English patient transformed rather than destroyed the “palace of strangers on the Italian hill” (EP 294). The memory of the face of Isaiah on the chapel ceiling in Rome and the English patient’s voice singing out “Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and he will surely cover thee. He will surely turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country” (EP 294) creates simultaneous history, a relationship between
past and present wherein Kip escapes his exile in a foreign land yet remains connected to “the burned man and the meadows of civilization he tended” (*EP* 294).

This imagery portrays a communal “angel of History” represented in the English patient. Benjamin’s angel is an emblem, which illustrates mimetic desire and revenge embedded in the cultural ideology from which the mimetic rivals, Candaules and Gyges, and Almásy and Clifton, evolve. In comparison, the English patient and Kip are mediators who link the past and the present in discourses of art in particular. These discourses, if recognized, create paratactic history that has the potential to break the cycle of violence. Kip’s statement that “there was no order but for the great maps of art that showed judgment, piety and sacrifice” (*EP* 70) suggests that such discourses function as temporal indexes that, as Goldman suggests, “if read properly can guide humanity” (908). The English patient’s status in the villa reveals that he is also a repository of information of the past. His sharing of knowledge suggests that the transmission of ideas from one person to another, from one generation to the next, through images and narratives, counteracts narratives of aggressors and victims in imperial narratives. He believes in communal histories, communal maps. However, confronted with the horror of a nuclear bomb exploding in Hiroshima, when he had risked his life to save Englishmen from bomb explosions, Kip sits in judgment of Western civilization. His experiences in the villa and his contact with the communal histories transmitted through the English patient soften the violence of his reaction so that years later he and his companions in the villa recover the messages of that past in gentle memory. Intimacy, recalled in memories, creates micro examples of simultaneous history. Years later, immersed in family life in India, Kirpal Singh imagines Hana as she turns and lowers her hair in a moment of regret. In doing so her shoulder dislodges a glass, which merges in the present with his retrieval of a fork
dropped by his daughter. He does so with “a wrinkle at the edge of his eyes behind his spectacles” (EP 302). Past and present converge in the recollection of Kip swooping to catch a box of ammunition at the villa years before, and Caravaggio, remembering, as he stepped into a taxi at Toronto, that Kip had saved his life in doing so. All these memories connect, according to Rufus Cook, in “a chain of repetitions” (39) to suggest that the glass is retrieved before it shatters and violence is averted. This interpretation works against Goldman’s idea that an “image of ruin” is conveyed by “the falling glass that will presumably shatter” (921).

These personal accounts of memories revealed from the perspective of those “on the fringes of society” challenges the “persecution texts” of The Histories and the narrative of the Second World War, which expose “real violence, often collective”. The first mimetic triangle of Gyges, and Candaules and his queen constructs a version of history predicated on possession and violence and the scapegoating of a victim, Gyges. The second set of relationships of Clifton, Katherine and Almásy in the modern text repeats ancient history in sacrificing a victim, Almásy, to serve a historical vision of Empire. These historical models evoke Benjamin’s image of the “Angel of History” in which the transmission of cultural knowledge is disrupted by wars of possession. Challenging the histories of the powerful victors is the narrative created in the interaction of Kip, Hana and Caravaggio with the English patient, which creates another “Angel of History,” wherein personal and cultural memories are valued in the development of historical understanding. The relationships of the four exiles in this patterning evoke multiple historical resonances, which recognize “the sacredness of bridges” in a model of communal history that requires no scapegoat.
METAHISTORICAL FOCUS.

An analysis of the novel’s intertextuality provides a way of understanding how the interactions of the four companions contribute to the communal and historical approach that reassesses Almásy’s identification as a spy and renews traumatized lives. While Cook analyses how works of art and novels help the characters to “define their identities, their purposes, their relationships with others” (36) in a chain of “re-enactments or repetitions, meaningful because they echo some cognate incident from the past” (38), the past can also be understood as coexisting with the present on one plane in the novel as a result of intertextuality. Simultaneous history, created by “ideologemes”, Kristeva’s term to identify the points of intersection between the text and its precursor texts, transforms and provokes the textual unconscious. These ideologemes are seen to mark the intersection of narratives simultaneously representing different times on one historical plane. Using Elias’s notion of “simultaneous history”, the English patient is perceived in literary artistic terms as the sum of human experiences in being identified by his companions with historical persons from different times, represented as hero, spy, liar, holy man and wanderer.

In an allusion to Odysseus, the English patient gradually recovers his identity with fragments of memory in the recall of experiences told to Hana. Almásy’s identification with Odysseus disguises certain ideologies that differentiate the two characters. As a Penelope to Almásy’s Odysseus, Hana becomes, according to Annick Hillger, “an intertextual weaver” (31) so that in the introduction of new texts she interweaves Almásy’s personal philosophy into a political construction through its association with Odysseus. He remembers, “I fell burning into the desert. They found my body and made me a boat of sticks and dragged me across the desert. We were in the sand Sea. Nomads you see” (EP 5). Homer’s Odysseus is a warrior and a
wanderer. They are wanderers, one of the desert, and the other of the sea. As opposed to Odysseus, who was a hero in the Trojan Wars, the English patient was caught in a European war that he despised. Homer’s Odysseus is an account of how man and history can be constructed by language and narration. In answering King Alcinous’s request to give an account of his wanderings, Odysseus, the man of resources, defined himself and his genealogical origins: “I am Odysseus, Laertes’s son. The whole world talks of my stratagems, and my fame has reached the heavens. My home is under the clear skies of Ithaca” (The Odyssey 139). His name, his family, his home and his fame construct his identity. The assertion that “his motherland and his parents are what a man holds sweetest” (139) affirms, unlike the English patient, his connection to his roots.

Ondaatje’s novel disrupts the heroic core of this historical narrative to recover the English patient’s character as one who exists among the war wounded, outside boundaries of nationhood, and who relates neither to a name, origins nor homeland. Almásy contests the codes of imperialist endeavour and aggression on which Homer’s narrative is based. He describes how he erased himself and became immersed in the construction of a shifting communal map:

There were rivers of desert tribes, the most beautiful humans I’ve met in my life. We were German, English, Hungarian, African—all of us insignificant to them. Gradually we became nationless. I came to hate nations [. . .]. The desert could not be claimed or owned—it was a piece of cloth carried by winds, never held down by stones, and given a hundred shifting names long before Canterbury existed, long before battles and treaties quilted Europe and the East. [. . .] We disappeared into landscape. Fire and sand. We left the harbours of oasis. The places water came to and touched . . . Ain, Bir, Wadi,
**Foggara, Khottara, Shaduf.** I didn’t want my name against such beautiful names. Erase the family name! Erase nations! I was taught such things by the desert. (*EP* 138-39).

Almásy’s desire was to walk on an earth that had no maps. Opposed to perpetrating wars in order to own, map and name land and possess peoples, Almásy nevertheless had imbibed the maps of the world and knew the customs of the desert before he crashed into it. He absorbed the features of the desert in that he experienced it as a place where there were no boundaries, where “it is easy to lose a sense of demarcation” (*EP* 18), a place “where nothing was strapped down or permanent, everything drifted” (*EP* 22). He repeatedly emphasizes that “the desert could not be claimed or owned” (*EP* 138). He acknowledges that in the desert a man can “slip into a name as if within a discovered well” (*EP* 141). Identifying with the desert nomads who had experienced centuries of invasion during the onslattles of Cambyses in the fourteenth century and the Senussi raids of 1915, Almásy questions the certainty of an identity or an origin and conceives of a different concept of self, a nomadic one. Since he was not committed to a motherland or a nation, Almásy’s reason for collaborating with the Germans was entirely personal—solely a means to return to Katherine as he had promised. Memory unravels the fabrication that Almásy is a spy.

Intertextual allusions in the vertical narrative suggest that the English patient’s identity intersects with those of holy men, such as Kipling’s Lama and the prophet, Isaiah, who are spiritual leaders persecuted by a dominant power. For Hana her patient is “her despairing saint” with “hipbones of Christ” (*EP* 3). In this allusion, Almásy, doubled with Christ, represents suffering humanity, both being victims of persecution. He seems protected, like Kip, by warrior archangels, such as the man in the desert who treated his damaged body with ointments for “the figure resembled
most of all those drawings of archangels he had tried to copy as a schoolboy, never solving how one body could have space for the muscles of such wings” (EP 9). The shadow at the foot of his bed after Kip leaves is of a slight brown figure, “a man with plumes” (EP 298). The patient is identified as the prophet Isaiah in Kip’s recall of Renaissance paintings. The English patient quotes, from biblical references glued into his The Histories words that sustained the Jews through centuries of exile, isolation, oppression and temptation. Like Isaiah, he spoke to an exiled community and preserved hopes and aspirations in books, drawing on the strength, the direction, the anguish and the wisdom we can take from editing the past.

Versions of the past recalled in Renaissance art juxtapose David, King of Judah and Israel, with the English patient to situate them both in a violent, historical and political moment. In the imagery of David and Goliath, the past seems motivated to reassert and reinvent itself not only in the life of the English patient, but also in the life of Kip, as the characters switch roles and binaries break down, in the subtle play of associations. As a youth, David was both a man of action and a poet. He was known as a warrior in the part he played in the constant warfare of the period, and a courageous hero in slaying the Philistine, Goliath. These are the sterling qualities that are mirrored in Kip. By alluding to himself as David, the English patient suggests a vertical dimension that connects him to the biblical reference of King David stealing another man’s wife. David “walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon” (Sam.11.2). David lay with Bathsheba and she conceived. The death of Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, the Hittite, links with the death of Katherine’s husband, Clifton. The true sadness of Caravaggio’s painting, according to the English patient, was not just that David and the head of his adversary represented the youth and the
old age of the painter, but that it represented “youth judging age at the end of its
outstretched hand. The judging of one’s own mortality. I think when I see him at the
foot of my bed that Kip is my David” (EP 116). The English patient grieved for a
transgression that led to Katherine’s death, while David grieved for sinning against his
Lord.

Conceptualizing the narrative of David and Goliath in spatial terms with
Michelangelo Caravaggio’s historical situation provides a relational approach that
connects the English patient to Caravaggio and David and Goliath. Walter
Friedlaender writes of Caravaggio: “The identification of himself with Goliath, the
victim of a superior and innocent power, may easily have been in Caravaggio’s mind,
with all its psychological implications. David is painted with uncommon tenderness;
his soft, gentle face and sad expression are in sharp contrast to the medusa-like head
of Goliath with its open mouth and blood trickling down the throat” (201). A
relational reading strategy —the chronotope of the reader —produces various versions
of the doubling. As Friedman explains, “earlier versions of a text can be read
vertically as the textual unconscious of the horizontal narrative in the published text”
(224). A triptych of three narratives, that of David and Goliath, Michelangelo
Caravaggio, and the English patient, can be read as narratives of persecution, which
brings the reader closer to the idea of the victimization of Goliath, the English patient
and Kip by a dominant power. In his old age King David had established the most
powerful empire that Palestine ever produced by wars of aggression. King David’s
judgment of self in old age connects him with his victim, Goliath, and paratactically
with the English patient and Kip. There exists in this communal history knowledge of
the excesses and distortions of our cultural past from which we have the freedom to
recognize destructive elements. This includes the awareness, that, according to Girard,
“The victim is a scapegoat”, and the understanding that “scapegoat indicates both the innocence of the victims, the collective polarization in opposition to them, and the collective end result of that polarization” (Scapegoat 39).

To gain an insight into how the relationship of the English patient, Hana and Kip renews and transforms, the modern novel adopts a progenitor, Kipling’s novel Kim, to paratactically conflate them with Kim, the Lama and Colonel Creighton in imaginative versions of the past. Hana recasts images from the book she is reading to note the parallel between the English patient and Kip with the wise old lama and the young student, Kim, the difference being that the student is Indian and the teacher, English. Recalled by Hana, the reference is echoed and developed by the narrator in conflating Hana with Kim for “it was Hana in the night who stayed with the old man, who guided him over the mountains to the sacred river” (EP 111). To the reader, Hana’s identity is forged not solely as a casualty of war, but as the lama’s beloved and heroic chela. Merging Hana’s character with Kim draws attention to the manner in which Hana occupies center-stage in contrast to the women in Kipling’s novel, who, according to Edward Said, “are somehow debased or unsuitable for male attention—prostitutes, elderly widows, or importunate and lusty women” (165). In contrast to some portrayals of women in imperial narratives, the Hana of Ondaatje’s story is “[…] a woman of honour and smartness whose wild love leaves out luck, always taking risks” (EP 301). Conflated with Kim, Hana guides not only the English patient, but also Caravaggio and Kip to their “sacred rivers”, recognized as reconnecting with fractured identities.

Conversely, the English patient, like the Lama in the search for his sacred river as a place of redemption, restores the shattered identities of his “disciples.” Both the English patient and the Lama are repositories of information about the past,
transmitting knowledge that can guide and transform. The Lama perceives his sacred river, and the English patient, the lost oasis of Zerzura, as places of enlightenment. For the English patient, the desert is a communal place, “of brightness and faith and colour” (EP 261). Just as the Lama and Kim are portrayed as each other’s guardians, the English patient’s role is that of a cultural guardian to companions who are psychically and physically wounded in a war not of their making. The shattered identities of Hana and Kip intersect with Kim, in his cry, “I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?” (Kim 282). The haunting from the past of a holy man who imparted his wisdom and compassion to his disciple comes alive in the present in their giving and sharing of small gifts, like the hearing aid, the condensed milk and the ladybird as tokens of communal care. The holy man’s words to Kim, “Child, I have lived on thy strength as an old tree lives on the lime of a new wall” (271-72) are repeated with a difference in alluding to the relationship between the English patient and Hana as that of Abishag to King David, figuring her as the young virgin who cherished the King when he “was old and stricken in years” (EP 94). The repetition brings the reader closer to an understanding of devotion through the transmission of intergenerational knowledge.

Kip’s role in forging communal history with his companions reveals his identification with, and rejection of England, and the role of Renaissance art in recovering his identity. Kip, doubling Almásy, is a touchstone to articulate the experience of Empire, since both become scapegoats of England. The English patient recognizes Kip’s loyalty and commitment to England in his remark, “If Kip was anyone, he was the officer Creighton” (EP 111). Paradoxically, as Kip is the English patient’s other self, he too merges with Creighton. The multiple pairing unsettles notions of identity and difference by challenging race as a descriptive category, and
unsettles the assumption of otherness. Creighton, according to Edward Said, is “a man whose power is worthy of respect” (183). Creighton’s norms, like Kips, are laws, principles of order and control, for Kip decides in joining an experimental bomb squad that “in a war you have to take control” (EP 187). These are qualities that distinguish them both in the service of British Intelligence. While Creighton used his skills as the spymaster to advise colonial leaders of the network of power in India, Kim employs his ability to save lives by defusing the bombs dropped in wars of Empire. Creighton’s purpose in studying the manners and customs was part of the Great Game and a form of political control.

However, in a reversal of Creighton’s vantage of controlled observation to understand India, Kip endeavors to understand England by knowing how it operates. He turns to Renaissance art to fathom the foundations of the culture. As Creighton finds India “exotic”, Kip looks upon England as idyllic, a world full of possibilities much like Caliban’s island, “full of noises, sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not” (Tmp. 3.2.135-36), transfigured into a “fragile, white island that with customs and manners and books and prefects and reason somehow converted the rest of the world” (EP 283). He is saturated with English customs, singing, “They’re changing guard at Buckingham Palace” as he concentrated on dismantling a bomb that nobody else had the skill or courage to touch. The song signifies Kim’s eventual severance from all things English and exposes Empire as fragile and expendable. In the likeness of Caliban, once used, he becomes the Other, “the slight brown man, shoeless, in a wet tunic” (EP 216). Kip’s identification with Creighton and England is fractured in the recognition scene following the news of the bombing of Hiroshima when he realizes that imperialist claims to the right of occupying India for the common good and converting its people should be taken for what they really were: a
monstrous lie perpetuated for the benefit of the dominant group. Kip rejects England, the English patient and his English name, and reassumes his name of Kirpal Singh.

Kip’s immersion in intertextual allusions that merge relations between the visual and the literary past show how the anecdotes represented are capable of recurrence in the courageous figure of the sapper. Kip’s experiences as he walks along the cyprus-lined path intersect with those of Pliny and Stendahl, for they “must have walked down a path like this [. . .] in this part of the world too” (EP 272-73). Pliny, an exile from Gaul, exhibited the same courage and selflessness as Kip when, in order to allay the fears of his comrades, he stayed in the Bay of Naples while Vesuvius erupted. According to Betty Radice’s translation of Pliny the Younger’s letter to Tacitus giving an account of his uncle’s death, Pliny the Elder lay down on a sheet on the ground, while “the flames and smell of sulphur which gave warning of the approaching fire drove the others to take flight and roused him to stand up” (433; bk. VI. xvi. 16-22). Pliny’s body “was found intact and uninjured [. . .] and looking more like sleep than death” (433). Kip’s refuge in the Church of San Giovanni a Carbonara in Naples reenacts Pliny’s death. Each lay down on a bed of cloth waiting for Naples to be engulfed in fire. Kip as it were enters into the intertexts of the past in the conflation of the roles of Pliny and a warrior saint. Kip’s narrative intersects with the imagery of Michael the archangel who grants a stay of execution to the sleeper. Awaiting a possible death after dismantling the fuse lines that would have destroyed Naples, the sapper becomes part of the tableau of “The Annunciation.” Enclosed within the tableau, “there seems to be no time. Each of them has selected the most comfortable of positions to forget time” (EP 280). Stretching out to sleep beneath the larger than life terracotta arm of the archangel, Kip notes a likeness between himself and the angel: “The angel too is a warrior” (EP 280). The raised arm of the angel
suggests “a stay of execution, a promise of some great future for this sleeper, childlike, foreign-born. The three of them almost at the point of decision. Agreement” (EP 281). The “agreement” suggests Kip’s emblematic role in condemning Western civilization’s dominance over nations in his angry impassioned speech following the bombing of a brown race. In his role of warrior saint, he violently renounces Western civilization when, “if he closes his eyes he sees the streets of Asia full of fire” (EP 284).

Kip, like Almásy, condemns the dominance secured by discursive maps conveyed in speeches and narratives of Western civilization. Blinded by rage, Kip recognizes the potential that springs from these maps of knowledge to sever the link between past and present. He is unable to differentiate at that moment between the narratives associated with discourses of possession and reification, which victimize him and his people, from narratives of communal histories and communal books which enfold him at the villa. However, Kim does not “kill the father” (EP 285). His eyes meet those of the English patient, who offers himself as a symbolic sacrifice in the quietly spoken words, “Do it.” The sapper throws the rifle on the bed and violence is averted. The cultural narratives Kip had been imbued with at the villa contest the narratives of possession, which had caused the dreadful carnage. A narrative of continuity sustains Kim and is preserved in India where he lives with his “two children and a laughing wife” (EP 299) to intermingle with his memory of Hana. In this interpretation Hana is the mediator, the link between the past and present, who interrupts the perpetuation of violence. In fleeing Italy, Kip becomes immersed in a “communal book” on hearing the voice of the English patient speaking Isaiah’s words of wisdom, and years later, is able to read his narrative as part of communal history when he recalls his companions at the villa in fond memory.
These memories close Kip’s narrative on a note of healing years later as he sits in his garden. His experiences in the hill town in Italy recall one of the subtexts, *The Last of the Mohicans*. The political relevance of this ideologeme includes interlocking narratives of race, class and sexuality, repressed in Fenimore Cooper’s novel, but “worked through” in the modern text to give access to the political dimensions. The impact of racial depravity in the bombing of Hiroshima, converges in spatialized history, with reference to *The Last of the Mohicans* to offer sobering insights into the multiplicity of problems when one race enforces superiority over another. The reenactment of doomed love of Kirpal Singh and Hana mirrors the tragedy of Cora and Uncas. The theft of land, sabotage of culture and genocide of the indigenous people of America overlay the dispossession of India and the barbaric bombing of Hiroshima. Racial forces, particularized in the separation of Kirpal and Hana, repeat historical trauma, with the difference that the possibilities of an alternative outcome are glimpsed in the kind of communal society that operated in the Italian Villa when possession was not an issue.

While possession was not significant to Kip, the desire for connection to England and its people was. This connection he found in his father figures, the English patient, and Lord Suffolk. Lord Suffolk, described by Kip as “the best of the English” (185), introduced the customs of England to the young Sikh, including Devon cream, his passion for *Lorna Doone*, and maps “drawn by desire” (*EP* 190). Just as the English patient is drawn by desire to the desert, Kip is drawn by desire to the painting of the Queen of Sheba portrayed in the Piero della Francesco frescoes. At Arezzo Kim is immersed in art and in medieval legends that connect his dislocated life in Italy with discourses from religious and art history. Two frescoes, *The Death of Adam* and *The Queen of Sheba* revolve around *Legenda della Vera Croce* (The
Legends of the True Cross). The legend in the first fresco claims the tree from which the cross was made was planted by Adam’s son at the burial of his father using a branch or a seed from the apple tree in the Garden of Eden. In Ondaatje’s text the fresco is “a twig from the Tree of Good and Evil inserted into the mouth of Adam” (EP 70). A branch from this tree was used to make a bridge in Solomon’s time. According to Jacobus de Voragine, the Queen of Sheba recognized the bridge as holding a relic of “the true cross” (269-70). Amid the trauma of war, this painting of the queen of Sheba becomes a transmitter of narratives that link the past to the present. In the image Kip sought human attributes—understanding and desire flowing from his present into the past and into the future mediated by Hana.

Kip’s symbolic gesture of reaching out a brown hand to the giant neck of the Queen of Sadness represents the concept of border crossing, referred to by Brigitta Johansson in her paper “Iconographic Metafiction.” For Johansson, this representational practice is “a multi-faceted stylistic approach” in which “the sensual and the spiritual exist alongside the factual and the political” (84). According to Hutcheon these hybrid forms illustrate the possibilities of contesting accepted conventions by “unmasking their power and limitations” (Politics 37). The inference drawn from Kip’s identification with the Queen of Sheba is that boundaries of race, gender and religion disappear. In this inference, the painting of the Queen of Sheba, personified in Hana, sustains Kip’s life, after the bombing of Hiroshima. Renaissance art, and the discourses of wisdom and compassion they reflect in depicting “the richness of lovers and tribes” (EP 261), transmit, if recognized, the potential for mankind to survive catastrophe.

One representative of Renaissance art is Michelangelo Caravaggio. His namesake, the spy, Caravaggio, living after the war in Florence “in a time of
darkness” (EP 61), corresponds to the artist in his revolutionary zeal, his sense of human tragedy and sorrow and his capacity for tenderness and affection. Caravaggio, the thief, is instrumental in retrieving past narratives to crystallize the present and thereby demonstrate the extent of psychic wounding at the villa. In simultaneous history, he is situated between the past and the present, drawing the threads of the recent past and the philosophy of the Renaissance past into a cohesive whole. All four exiles are physically and psychically scarred by war, yet Caravaggio is the only one to challenge the political dynamics of their situation in Italy. Multiple allusions to Michelangelo Caravaggio merge Toronto’s thief with Renaissance artist. Hana associates Caravaggio’s skill as a thief with “those artists who painted only at night, a single light on in their street” (EP 55), evoking the technique of “tenebrism,” a style employed by the artist Caravaggio so that light from a single source located outside the frame produces on the canvas patches of illumination and sharpened darks and lights. Caravaggio focuses on Hana, the English patient and Kip in turn, illuminating their characters. The English patient draws attention to the doubling in his remark, “David Caravaggio—an absurd name for you, of course…” (EP 116), immediately diverting attention to the painting of David and Goliath, which focuses on the artist himself because it is such a personal painting. Michelangelo da Caravaggio’s career encapsulates the ideology of the Renaissance and its impact on the life and welfare of the artist. The allusion thereby connects his life aesthetically and ethically to that of Caravaggio the thief.

In the narrative of Renaissance Caravaggio, the artist’s biographical data from the year 1573 parallels the life of Caravaggio, wartime spy. Both men are similar in temperament, satirical in approach and engaged in a struggle for existence. Both are contemptuous of the rich and powerful, and both observe the social reality of their
worlds. Themes of exploitation, imprisonment, disfigurement and exile underpin the lives of thief and artist. Significantly, they both contribute to the idea of renewing the lives of the oppressed by recognizing and humanizing history. The effect of situating Caravaggio of the Villa in the spatialized history of Michelangelo Caravaggio’s world where he interacts with the three companions is to reconstruct defined ego boundaries of the thief of Toronto and reveal multiple facets of his being, particularly concern and compassion for suffering others. Thief, like artist, was aware that powerful authorities oppressed others. The thief’s compassion, directed at his three companions, recognizes the sadness of Hana and Kim, as Hana sang *The Marseillaise* in “the voice of a tired traveler”, “one voice against all the mountains of power”, “singing with and echoing the heart of the sapper” (*EP* 269). The thief who wraps his arms around the suffering sapper doubles with the artist who enfolds the suffering and elevates them in his paintings as sacred people. The conflation of these two histories insists on the centrality of the human element in history. “The inclusion of this element,” as Fotios Sarris argues “can bring about a proper understanding of both the past and the present, a past that may bring with it a recognition of a need for change” (199). In this interpretation, Caravaggio’s contribution in foregrounding the human factors is part of the process of renewing and healing that prevents Kip from taking violent action against the English patient for Caravaggio becomes a mediator against violence.

The projection of desire to restore mankind by foregrounding the human element is examined within the context of The Villa San Geronimo in two different time periods. In this villa, known as the Villa Bruscoli in the year 1483, four Renaissance artists met with a desire to change the world. In recognizing his sick room as the place where “Pico and Lorenzo and Poliziano and the young
Michelangelo” used to meet (EP 57), Rufus Cook suggests that the English patient’s learning is so extensive “that he seems to transcend time, place and ethnic origins”(45), underscoring the idea of the English patient as a cultural historian. Time is collapsed in merging these artists with the four exiles in 1945 in the same villa. The English patient connects to the great master, Lorenzo. Kip, his protégée, is identified with Poloziano. Hana, called Pico when she was small, is twinned with Pico, beloved friend of Poliziano, whose free will and desire were affected by Savonarola’s reign of austerity. Caravaggio is associated with Michelangelo, who tries to catch the movement of things. The noble ideal of these Florentines was to promote a new view of man, whose destiny was guided by personal virtues and abilities, rather than a God-given philosophy, which was often motivated by religious and imperialistic conflicts. In the movement from the old world to the new, the individual is glorified and depicted as master of his own destiny. The transaction that links the Florentines with the four companions depends on fictions of continuity that not only support Renaissance rhetoric, but also are thematized in Ondaatje’s work as intertextual allusions. The ideal of restoration and continuity uses legends in literature and art to create fictions of permanence to counteract the barbarism of wars.

Kip and the English patient each structure a personal “angel of history” that challenges Benjamin’s angel of ruin by predicting the preservation of communal history and continuity. In identifying Hana with the Queen of Sheba, Kip translates her into one who repairs shattered cultural bridges, sustaining him amidst the savagery of war. The English patient, the advocate for communal histories, transforms his dying lover into another “angel of history”. Katherine resembles Klee’s angel in Almásy’s description when he is carrying her body from the Cave of Swimmers, “her arms out, fingers like starfish” while “her body was facing back over my shoulder”
Benjamin begins his famous description of Klee’s angel by focusing on the eyes. The eyes are staring as though fixedly contemplating something he is about to move away from. Katherine’s eye, in contrast, is “made anonymous, a naked map where nothing is depicted”. Her face is not turned towards a catastrophic past. She died in “a holy place,” in the desert “where there is the communal book of moonlight”, entering into the glory of the country and becoming part of it, part of “a communal history” for we die “containing a richness of lovers and tribes” (EP 261).

The communal history at the villa can be told in its completeness because Hana is the mediator who disconnects the English patient from the cycle of violence directed at Almásy, the spy, traitor, adulterer—identifications created by nationalistic desires. She is his beloved chela who guides him with devotion to his sacred river “that washes away all taint and speckle of sin” (Kim 10). For the English patient his “River of the Arrow” means that, as an amnesiac, he recovers his “knowledge” and identity with his memory in the search for redemption or “Freedom from the Wheel of Things” (Kim 284). On the level of allusion, the English patient’s gift is to guide and instruct his disciples with knowledge that echoes the Lama’s message in Kim, “I shall have safeguarded him throughout the years” (284). The English patient’s guilt-ridden identification of himself as “the spirit of the jackal [. . .], whose name was Wepwawet or Almásy” (EP 258) is dispelled when his “search” is ended and in memory he carries Katherine into the desert, where they become part of communal history. In this history he reconnects with his former identity to own nothing and “to walk upon such an earth with no maps” (EP 261). In her role as mediator, Hana counteracts the angel of ruin by turning aside from the specter of violence occasioned by imperial history to construct Almásy as a seer who describes a blueprint for communal history.
The “angels of history”, figured in war-torn friends gathered within a multi-national micro community, reveals a great deal about the intimate relationship of life, literature and art. Juxtaposed with the narrative of war shadowed by what Jameson calls Benjamin’s “identification of culture and barbarism” (Political 299) is the narrative of the four companions. This communal narrative of the English patient and his disciples exemplifies a mosaic composed of the individual narratives of each member of a micro community ennobling the cultural past in an exchange of intertextual “acceptance”, free from revenge and exploitation. In contrast to Goldman’s assertion that “the novel portrays apocalyptic catastrophe” that “threatens to erase all traces of the past” (904), I contend that these images of ruin are exorcised by a miracle of simultaneity that abolishes anachronisms in a generous recall of the past that works of art, literature and memory offer. While the “angel of ruin” envisages persecution texts, such as Herodotus’s The Histories and the account of the Royal Geographic Society, which describe circumstances favourable to collective violence against the scapegoat, the “angels of history” demystify these types of texts, by rewriting the English patient in communal and cultural history as an innocent victim.
CHAPTER THREE: Jack Maggs.

The key themes of Ondaatje’s novels—desire, identity, and victimization—are repeated in Peter Carey’s novel, Jack Maggs, with a difference. In this counter imitation of another text, Great Expectations, the author, Charles Dickens also becomes a rival in the process of scapegoating as discussed by Girard. Rivalry for authorship creates a new narrative in which the text represents a struggle for narrative authenticity: between Dickens and his fictive double, Tobias Oates, and Peter Carey and Jack Maggs, in designating the convict either as a deviant outcast, or as a scapegoat of the political and social policies of Victorian England.

Four narratives are located in Carey’s novel. The first serves as a palimpsest of the life, interests and cultural milieu of Dickens against the background of his novel, Great Expectations. The second, interpolated within Carey’s novel, is the story of the fictive author, Tobias Oates, and his novel, The Death of Maggs. Dickens and Oates share the same values in the depiction of the convict. Their voices represent the dominant discourses of Victorian ideology so that characters in their books talk the same language of property, and privilege middle-class values while ignoring the voices of the marginalized. The third narrative contained within Carey’s novel is that of Jack Maggs, revealed under the power of mesmerism and in the letter to his son, Phipps. This alternative narrative retrieves the lost history of London’s disenfranchised poor class burdened by penal laws that inevitably criminalize many in the population. The fourth narrative, that of Carey, contains all three of these conflicting histories and exemplifies “eristic imitation” (Pigman 4) in contradicting the cultural doctrines of its model, Great Expectations. It replaces Magwitch with Maggs, and Dickens with Oates as a means of reversing the scapegoat process, so that Oates is revealed as the victimizer and Maggs, the victim.
This analysis focuses on how the four combative narratives within *Jack Maggs*, serve to conceal and reveal the violent practices of scapegoating in a manner, as Anthony J. Hassal notes, that “never simply reflects, like Stendhal’s, but distorts” (128). The following discussion underlines how Dickens’s interests in the image of the double and mesmeric practices, filter into *Great Expectations*, and are copied by Oates in his practices to stereotype a marginalized person as a criminal “delinquent” for his novel, *The Death of Maggs*. The “distortion” or contradiction of this construction becomes visible in two ways; when Maggs becomes the central character in Carey’s novel and challenges Oates’s narrative by relating his history of childhood poverty, his trial and transportation, and when Maggs turns what Foucault calls “the technology of subjection” against his persecutor. Intertextual allusions examine how the text registers these competing factual and fictional discourses. Some enter into the dominant discourse and impact on the common discourse of moralization that criminalizes Jack Maggs. Others contest this identification by liberating Maggs from criminality, and constructing him as noble, even heroic. Critiquing the mimetic relationships in *Great Expectations* draws attention to the way these discourses generate conflicting desires that drive the language of oppression in constructing political scapegoats. Opposed to these violent constructions is the triangular relationship in which a mediator, Mercy Larkin, breaks the cycle of violence in recognizing Jack Maggs as a victim of England’s law, and his double, a soldier of the Empire, as the victimizer.

To illustrate how Carey’s novel emulates and then “turns” upon the model, a brief summary of *Jack Maggs* follows as a preface to the analysis of the four narratives. The metahistorical romance reproduces an account of the return of a convict from exile in Australia to London to find his gentleman son. Dickens’s
description of Magwitch entering Pip’s life with “stumbling footsteps” as a wretched man, “uncouth, noisy and greedy” like “a hungry old dog” (GE 331), contrasts with the depiction of Jack Maggs, arriving in London as “the man with a red waistcoat”, a commanding presence, and “the orbs of his eyes everywhere reflecting an unearthly flare and glare” (JM 1-2). The city Jack Maggs enters reverently recreates Dickens’s nineteenth-century London as a fairground where the gaslight blazed and streams “like great torches”, and “the entire Haymarket was like a grand ball” (JM 2) of dense, tight crowds, music and gin palaces. London is constructed, using Bakhtin’s terminology, as “a chronotope of threshold”, which he defines as “the breaking point of life, the moment of crisis” (21). This is the “moment” when the novel turns to the dark side of emulation to generate in Greene’s terminology “an anachronistic crisis” (42). This crisis occurs in the development of another history when Maggs replaces Pip as the central character in the heart of Empire and becomes an adversary to the author, Tobias Oates, and the novel he writes.

Juxtaposed narratives of criminality and victimization evolve when Maggs is engaged as a footman in the household of Percy Buckle, a former fishmonger turned gentleman. There he meets Mercy Larkin, “rescued” from prostitution by Buckle, and used by him for his pleasure and service. The writer recognizes the potential of exploring the criminal mind of a returned convict for a novel and uses mesmeric techniques to steal Jack Maggs’s memories. It is at this point that Maggs’s alternative and communal history begins to take shape, as the repressed memories of his poverty-ridden childhood and his trial and transportation are revealed and symbolized as the “Phantom”. This spectre, which represents the grief and brutality of Maggs’s life, is later exposed as Phipps, his “son”, and a soldier of Empire. Oates ignores Maggs’s communal account of traumatic history when writing his novel, and selects instead a
reenactment of the trial of Maggs as the first chapter in *The Death of Maggs*. It is a novel that reflects imperial history in foregrounding the moral agenda inherent in practices of Victorian law and the power of the criminal court. Like Dickens’s narrative, Oates’s account excludes the causes of criminality, emphasizes an obsession with “the criminal”, and exposes the influence of Victorian ideology in creating and punishing deviancy. Revealing the history of London’s poor corresponds to what J. Paul Hunter describes as a “new, more integrated history” that not only reacts against “political, military, and economic history” (14), but also may be a means to create a history of those Martin Weiner calls “the ‘unrespectable’, poor, and young” (51), and to liberate those scapegoated by ideology.

*Great Expectations*, the precursor text emulated and challenged in *Jack Maggs*, has been referred to in Jeremy Tambling’s paper, “Prison-Bound: Dickens and Foucault”, as “an analysis of ‘Newgate London’” (117). Tambling argues, “the prison is everywhere implicitly dominant in the book” (117). Dickens’s interest in criminality and the idea of the double is illustrated in Pip’s perception that he is linked to George Barnwell, a murderer in a play, and also to Orlick, who kills Mrs Joe. Magwitch, marked as the “real” criminal, identifies Pip with himself. This image of the double, “of the second self or the lost or found other” (119), according to Fred Kaplan, was central to Dickens’s fiction. Kaplan links the double concept to mesmeric theory. He writes: “The mesmeric theory Dickens believes in insists that the waves of mesmeric power across the fluid that pervades the cosmos makes possible [such] communication between two sympathetic individuals. It is a form of talking to oneself, to that part of you which is alive in the other” (122). In Kaplan’s view “sympathetic communication” exists when the doubles represent a “single psychological self divided” as two parts of a metaphor of wholeness. In Carey’s novel
the double image is imitated in the relationship of Oates and Maggs. They are
different and complementary, each using mesmeric techniques not only to explore the
“lost or found other”, but also to control the “other”.

The technique of mesmerism is referred to in the epilogue as
“somnambulism”, “a magnetic state” from which a patient could only be released by
the will of the operator. The excerpt, written by the Marquis de Puységur in 1820
provides the historical background of the early Victorian fascination with a practice
recognized in contemporary terms as mesmerism or hypnotism. It was one of the
“scientific” techniques studied by some Victorians to reveal a person’s innermost
thoughts and to detect criminal attributes. According to Kaplan, Dickens’s
involvement with mesmerism was directed at “the exploration of the problem of the
self within himself and others” (118). Mesmerism as a measure of control illustrates
strategies used in what Foucault’s terms “a disciplinary society” to subjugate people.
“Discipline”, according to Foucault in Discipline and Punishment, is a “technology”
concerned with “how to keep someone under surveillance, how to control his
conduct” (191). Kaplan argues that for Dickens mesmerism “was a source of imagery
for the depiction of character and the dramatization of the relationships between
people” (138). It was a theory and a rationale that suited his need as a writer.

Collapsing Dickens’s authorial needs with Oates’s desire to be a famous
author and gain material for his book, The Death of Maggs, suggests that Oates, who
also uses mesmerism to gain prestige as a writer, is Dickens’s double. Presented under
the guise of making Maggs “available to science” (JM 61) to heal his painful spasm,
mesmeric sessions give Oates the opportunities to possess and explore “the dark little
laneways” (JM 110) of his subject’s soul to identify him, using empiricist discourse,
as “a bolter from N.S.W.” (JM 107). As Oates explains to Percy Buckle, Maggs
represents a world “as rich as London itself” (*JM* 110), and he plans to be the cartographer of the “Criminal Mind” (*JM* 111). This provides Oates with the opportunity to engage in a fictive performance of disciplinary science, which Carey’s metahistorical novel repeats, confronts and challenges. Grafted into Oates’s discourse is the patriarchal intent of doing good, to be “the surgeon of his soul” (*JM* 66), when in fact he not only renews painful memories of Maggs’s earlier life, but implants into the victim’s mind the Phantom, the personification of pain. For Oates, mesmerism is a means to exercise social control of a convict suffering from repressed memory to steal his past and thereby enhance his own reputation as an author and a writer of history.

“The interest Dickens had in prisons,” Tambling writes, “was real and lasting” (118). His reported interest in Newgate and the court trials, together with his love of theatrical and mesmeric performances provide imitative material for Oates to parody a courtroom trial before his family. He imitates a judge, matching his learning as a mesmerizer with the eloquence befitting a statesman to impress his audience, and adds the flavour of paternalism to emulate a priest casting out demons. As a judge controls the spectacle of a court, Oates subjects Maggs to others as a spectacle and commands an audience that includes Mary Oates, Lizzie Warriner and Percy Buckle. They witness Maggs, under hypnotic interrogation, take off his shirt to reveal a back etched in pain, “a brooding sea of scars, of ripped and tortured skin” (*JM* 106). Playing the ringmaster and cracking a whip, Oates compels obedience from his victim and parodies the terror of criminal law by imitating the punishment of flogging. Oates recreates the structure of authority implicit in the law by acting as the judge and a soldier of Empire. Oates’s treatment of Maggs models a theatrical and brutal justice system, its punishments and scapegoat practices. Oates’s attitude to Maggs mirrors Dickens’s intentions towards Magwitch, that is, to exploit his criminality. Robert
Hughes elaborates further by writing that Magwitch “sums up the distaste verging on dread with which some middle-class Englishmen (Dickens included) viewed the transported convict ‘making good’ in exile”. In Dickens’s portrayal of the convict, Hughes locates “the victimary signs” of a scapegoat in writing that “Magwitch is a figure edged with terror, coarse, brutalized, possibly a cannibal” (585). Oates’s writing reflects Dickens’s attitude to Magwitch by stealing Maggs’s pitiful life experiences in his drawing room and later rewriting his version of Maggs’s trial and sentencing in The Death of Maggs. In this portrayal, the poverty of Maggs’s life and the severity of the penal code are concealed, and Maggs, like Magwitch before him in Great Expectations, bears the stigmata of the scapegoat. He is marked as a victimizer, who must be punished.

Chapter one in The Death of Maggs entails a way of thinking; a whole discourse about the cultural beliefs embedded in criminal law and the effects on the marginalized and persecuted victims of poverty. The images are as inherently oppressive as the hulks and Newgate scenes in Great Expectations. The opening scene in Oates’s chapter is bound up with questions of language and the control of language in focusing on Newgate Prison and the misery of the inmates awaiting trial. The novel depicts the great number of women inside Newgate as “petty thieves, murderers, all manner of wickedness crammed into that grim pile on Newgate Street” (333). One of these women, Sophina Smith, childhood “wife” of Jack Maggs, waits in chains to stand before “a benign-looking man” in lambskin who, without recourse to any other authority, has the singular power to interrogate, judge and condemn. Aiming to portray what Douglas Hay calls the “the lessons of Justice, Terror and Mercy” (63) of the law, Oates describes Sophina’s terror, which prevents her from speaking about Tom England’s swindle in setting her up to be caught, records Maggs’s testimony of
Sophina’s innocence, and notes the judge’s indifference to the real culprit, Tom England. Oates fails, however, to acknowledge or challenge the injustice of the proceedings, fails to record the complex nature of children forced into a life of crime and fails to question the sham notion of mercy in a court that sentences Sophina to death by hanging, and Maggs to transportation. They are both victims of Tom England and the Victorian court. Oates’s reconstruction of the trial of a criminal in a court of law imitates the dominant Victorian discourse of criminal types, of jurors and judges, of power, and thefts and offences that influenced Dickens. Social control is reflected in the ideology of a property-conscious oligarchy that draws on motifs of “wickedness” and “profligacy” to describe the poor classes and construct them as criminals. In imitation of *Great Expectations*, Oates’s narrative depicts institutionalized violence, but does not challenge it.

Maggs’s communal narrative, on the other hand, presents a different perspective on so-called justified penal violence and is created when the protagonist of the new text is given a voice. The convict’s history becomes visible in two ways: during Oates’s interrogation, and in the letter he writes to his adopted son, Phipps. The story of his life demystifies the cause of criminality by revealing what it means to be a member of the poor class in London, and in doing so challenges the power relations and discourses of Victorian ideology. Interwoven into Oates’s theft of Maggs’s memories are revelations of the pain associated with an abused childhood, the loss of an aborted child, the death by hanging of his loved “wife”, the loss of a homeland, the terror of being flogged and seeing others flogged, and the sense of worthlessness derived from class oppression. As a form of “Writing back to Empire” addressed to “Dear Henry Phipps”, Maggs’s letter foregrounds the “invisible story” of the poor classes and the causes of criminality. The depiction of social conditions that
exist among London’s poor addresses how criminality is fostered when children are trained to be thieves and prostitutes in the struggle against poverty. Written in invisible ink and in mirror writing, it clearly describes a hidden history, challenging imperial history. Children, such as nine-year old Tom Britten “worked the filthy slippery floors” at Smithfield, “darting like a rat, a cat, and here a breast bone, there an end of chop fat, there a kick up the keyhole for his trouble” (JM 115). At five years of age, Tom Maggs’s promise of having “lessons” from Silas, who was an educated man, materialized into being dressed in filthy rags, trained as a Climbing Boy and pushed inside a chimney where he was “jammed in like a cork in a grog bottle, some foot below the top, coughing and wailing and choking [. . .] with fear” (JM 121).

Both Tom Britten and Jack Maggs become the “criminals” despised in Oates’s novel. Here it is important to note that while Maggs’s letter emulates Dickens’s novels in drawing attention to the cruelty and suffering that poor children endured, Maggs’s communal history exposes the crucial link between social injustices affecting children and the pathway to criminality ignored in Dickens’s and Oates’s novels. Maggs’s letter humanizes history by exposing rather than camouflaging the violence and social injustice of the cultural ideology absent in Oates’s narrative. Following Girard’s theory that the metaphor of carving is rooted in sacrificial process (Theater 213), Oates’s Chapter one, representing Dickens’s novel, is carved and dismembered systematically and artistically to liberate the convict when criminal and scapegoating identifications flow freely between author and convict.

By revealing the communal history of the poor classes, which denies his construction as a victimizer, Jack Maggs takes up the challenge not to be cast as the scapegoat in Oates’s book destined to be sacrificed to death by fire, and escapes to Australia. Christer Larsson argues in, “Years Later” that Oates succeeds in The Death
of Maggs to appropriate the convict’s life. Larsson refers to a prolepsis; a representation of a future event, which foreshadows that Maggs “will not win his battle against the novelist, Tobias Oates” (4). Oates will be successful one day in finishing his book when he writes at the crossroads of Wallingford, the first line with which The Death of Maggs would finally begin: “As certain birds do declare themselves unto their intended, so the Murderer returned to court his beloved England, bold as cock robin in his bright red waistcoat” (JM282). Larsson suggests that Jack Maggs fails to prevent the novelist from turning him into a character in his book whereas I argue that the convict in Oates’s book is a much more problematical social construct, who obscures such simplistic objectification. In Oates’s book, he remains the sinner and the scapegoat of the criminal law. The metafictional emphasis throughout Carey’s narrative on how stories are constructed suggests that Dickensian Oates’s ideologically charged version of Maggs is unreliable and unstable. This analysis argues that Oates failed to turn the profoundly sympathetic and tragic figure described in the metanarrative of Jack Maggs into the criminal in The Death of Maggs. He is liberated from the latter construction in being recognized as a victim of penal law.

Carey’s narrative, Jack Maggs, subverts the narratives of his authorial rivals, Dickens and Oates, not only by foregrounding Maggs as the central character to voice his version of history, but also by overturning power relations, so that “the technology of subjection” is used by Maggs against Oates, the victim becomes the victimizer and they are both revealed as brothers in criminality. Jack Maggs is not a cringer. He commands respect and fear, attributes recognized by Oates when his theft of Maggs’s notes is revealed. Following the death of William Partridge, The Thieftaker, commissioned to find Maggs’s son, Oates becomes aware of his own danger as the
murderer’s accomplice and as the victim of the convict. Oates senses Maggs’s “force, his heat, his potential for further violence” (JM 313). Maggs’s qualities as a mesmeriser are both unconscious and extraordinary in that he has a full range of weapons of control: the power of his voice, presence, eyes and hands. Criminalized, Oates experiences what it is to be manacled, humiliated and bestialized as Maggs uses his voice to imitate the mesmerizer’s craft, commanding, “Stay”, “I forbid”, “you will not”. “It was the Criminal Mind which now controlled Tobias” (JM 370) as Maggs commanded Oates to consign the notes from eight magnetic sessions into the fire, stating, “My boy must not read this” (JM 371). He orders Oates to give Lizzie Warriner the abortion pills, not as an act of vengeance, but, as he explains to Oates, to protect her, for “This is the only path she has available” (JM 369). It is an act the author recognizes as a repetition of “the very path that brought you and Sophina so much pain and anguish” (JM 368). As Oates burns Lizzie’s bloodied linen and sees the image of their dead child unfolding in the fire, his revenge is born and “Jack Maggs began to take the form the world would later know” (JM 400), foreshadowing the convict’s death by fire. While Maggs is successful in challenging his criminal construction by burning the notes, he is unable to prevent the perpetuation of cultural violence based on Oates’s revenge and innate cultural belief that convicts are murderers and thieves. The famous author’s book was published three years after Maggs’s death in 1860, the same year as the publication of Great Expectations. The violence implicit in Victorian cultural ideology is unchecked in narratives of Empire. Carey’s metahistorical romance redresses the violence to innocent victims, challenges the cyclical violence by contradicting the persecution texts, and metaphorically puts out a hand, like Mercy Larkin, in a gesture of “stop”, refusing “to snuff out Jack Maggs’s life” (JM 396).
METAHISTORICAL FOCUS.

An investigation into the spatialized narrative created by allusions to the social history and discourses in the subtext draw the reader into the constructed past to reassess the convict identified by Dickens and Oates as an outcast. Juxtaposed with these fictional and factional discourses are those Carey uses to overturn ideological constructions. Together, they inscribe, as Hutcheon writes, “social and ideological contexts” that create a plot as “a totalizing representation that integrates multiple and scattered events into one unified story” (*Politics* 67-68). Powerful discourses generated by criminal policy permeate Dickens’s novel and Oates’s imitative narrative. According to Martin J. Weiner, an approach to criminal policy “begins by the pathway to discourse” where the “factual and fictional intersect” (215). He refers to “the hidden agenda in fiction and the fictive element in nonliterary discourse” and the juxtaposition of these two modes of discourse. Weiner theorizes that authors manufacture criminal subjectivity, represented in scientific and fictional discourses. He records that early attempts at law reform held people responsible for the consequences of their actions. As a result criminal law was shaped by a particular construction of human nature and its dangers in that crime was linked to “defective self-management” (48), a term Weiner uses to explain the moral agenda inscribed in law reform to strengthen powers of self-regulation. Hay believes the law reform was driven by a property-conscious oligarchy, which placed a supreme value on property. He writes:

Criminal law is as much concerned with authority as it is with property. For wealth does not exist outside a social context, theft is given definition only within a set of social relations, and the connections between property, power and authority are close and crucial. The criminal law was critically important
in maintaining bonds of obedience and deference, in legitimizing the status quo, in constantly recreating the structure of authority which arose from property and in turn protected its interests. (25)

As a result, reformers, administrators, judges, newspaper journalists and authors participated in a common discourse of moralization that deified property.

One such idea of the morally defective criminal is endlessly transformed and contested in the writings of Henry Mayhew, a journalist for the *Morning Chronicle*, and a so-called social investigator. His writings, among other discourses in official records and newspaper reports, reflect the ideology of the law. From Mayhew’s book, *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in 1851, articles were selected for publication in *The Morning Chronicle* retelling the experiences of the poor and their children. According to Gertrude Himmelfarb, Mayhew believed, unlike Dickens, that the “ragged schools” for poor children could not “reform children who were unreformable; they could only corrupt them still more, and corrupt everyone who came into contact with them” (376). The correspondences between “Mayhew’s Convict” and *Great Expectations* suggest Dickens had read Mayhew’s report; Mayhew’s convict, “D” is almost identical to Compeyson and Magwitch in their shared patterns of crimes and conviction. Compeyson’s business of “swindling, handwriting forging, stolen bank-note passing, and such like” (*GE* 348) closely follows story of “D” “uttering banknotes”(434) and stealing a handkerchief. According to F.B.Smith, Mayhew’s account, implying that the narrative of “D” was representative of a convict’s life, contained “private, unverifiable statements” (444). Casting doubt on Mayhew as a social investigator underscores the fictive and factual aspects of his journalism.
In Victorian society, where reformers, according to Gertrude Himmelfarb, linked “moral contagion” to the “ragged classes”, “substrata”, “residuum” and “outcasts” (375), as the poorest of the poor were called, figures such as “D”, Magwitch and Maggs came under the eye of the law for perceived “defective self-management” regardless of powerful external circumstances. As “D” tells the story, he fell into bad company, stole handkerchiefs and forged and passed bank notes. Rehearsing the history of “D”, Magwitch and Maggs become the “fall guys” for crimes instigated by others. Among propertied Englishmen where, according to Hay, “human life was weighed in the scales of wealth and status” (19), a breach in the social and moral order was healed with the rituals of justice: fear, death on the gallows, whippings and transportation.

The stereotype of the convict as an invention of this ideological system is challenged in Carey’s novel by superimposing the likeness of Dickens upon Oates, and thence upon Maggs. At Sophina’s trial, Maggs is described as a youth “dressed in a flash style, with a green kerchief around his neck and a bright red waistcoat covering his chest” (JM 335). This description of Maggs written by Oates merges with Maggs’s first impression of Oates as “sharp like a jockey. He wore a waistcoat like a busker or a book-maker bright green and shot through with lines of blue and yellow” (JM 32). Well–known for his bright waistcoats, Dickens merges with both Oates and Maggs in being convicted for “crimes of perjury and burglary” (JM 338). The slippage between overlapping identities in merging characters and classes, including “D”, Magwitch, Maggs, Oates and Dickens, destabilizes the notion of criminality, suggesting an absence of justice when the stereotype of the convict is reinforced in cultural discourses.
Views that differentiated the “poor classes” and “paupers” from the propertied classes were discussed in newspapers and journals. Reference to the *Morning Chronicle* in *Jack Maggs* (21) conflates Oates with Mayhew and Dickens, who “each day in the *Morning Chronicle* ‘made’ the city of London” (*JM* 223). Like the narrative of the Good and Bad Apprentice drawn from Hogarth’s etchings, and the play, *The History of George Barnwell* that infiltrate Dickens’s text, similar Victorian social discourses demonstrate the way Victorians constructed criminality. Carey’s novel undercuts these allusions in the sympathetic portrayal of the convict whose narrative identifies him as the victim of a penal system involving punishment that according to Anne Conlon “was simply cruel” (49), when men brutalized in exile “began to forget they had ever been men” (58).

These criminal identifications are juxtaposed with literary allusions that combat the texts of victimizers. The intertextual allusion to Shakespeare’s *King Lear* in *Jack Maggs* calls into question issues of justice that replace the notion of criminality with concepts of nobility and suffering, suggesting that the convict, Maggs, bears not just a single identity as a criminal prescribed by cultural discourses, but refracts other identities. He has another scapegoat identity in being linked to the biblical narrative of Abel through his doubling across texts with Abel Magwitch. The name, “Abel” invokes the concept of being sacrificed by an enemy brother. This concept of scapegoating is recognized in the relationships of Magwitch and Compeyson, and Maggs and Tom Britten. Literary references in *Jack Maggs* to Richardson’s *Pamela*, Fielding’s *Shamela*, Scott’s *Ivanhoe* and Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent* draw attention to female oppression and gender codes that are exposed as perpetuating violence and criminality and are significant in constructing
Victorian scapegoats. This textual activity exposes and examines the nature of violence as it plays itself out in different cultural and national settings.

Distinct from the association of the convict, such as “D”, imagined as the pitiful and grotesque figure in convict or sensation literature, is the allusion in Carey’s novel to King Lear, which foregrounds Maggs’s authority and acts as a counter portrayal of the subordinated convict in Great Expectations and The Death of Maggs. This convict is transfigured into a man figured in pain, power and presence. Henry Hawthorne, actor from the Lyceum Theatre, associates Maggs with Lear on seeing the convict “cry out and curse so murderously” (JM 113) during mesmerism sessions. The spectacle of Maggs’s suffering reflects “scientific” practices, which assume the “criminal mind” could be defined and subjected to the rituals of justice. Like that tragic king, Jack Maggs suffers as a consequence of mock justice. King Lear’s condemnation is as true for Jack Maggs as it is for King Lear:

Through tatter’d clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr’d gowns hide all. [Plate sin] with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtles breaks:
Arm it in rags, a pigmy’s straw does pierce it. (Lr. 4.6.164-7)

Themes of “justice”, “the cruelty of children”, and “the dreadful emphasis on blindness” (191-92), identified by Frank Kermode as intertwining themes in Shakespeare’s play, are recurring motifs in Jack Maggs. Like Lear, Jack Maggs’s love of his child is identified with pain. Jack Maggs’s blindness in being unable to “see” that Phipps is the Phantom, the soldier of Empire, represents the suffering and unrepresentability of “the history that hurts”. Both king and convict suffer from the mutually destructive nature of filial love. They are political victims of those who desire to possess and control. Reading the text of Jack Maggs against King Lear
projects a political and ethical perspective onto questions of violence and individualism that mocks Enlightenment rhetoric about the Rights of Man. Victorian social history is portrayed as personal power and wealth predominating over justice. Maggs’s identification with Lear seriously undermines not only the concept of the criminal image and “the criminal mind” factored into Oates’s investigation, but also foregrounds once again the destructive power of acquisitions in contaminating relationships between parent and child and between Empire and its children. The relationships revert to “unnatural”, distorted figurations that kill and disfigure.

The reciprocal love that binds parent to child and citizen to homeland is in abundance in the character of Jack Maggs. He returns to England captivated by his nostalgia for London even though “all around him was uproar, din, the deafening rush, the smell of horse shit, soot, that old yellow smell of London Town” (JM 3). His capacity for love is revealed in his love for Sophina, their unborn, defiled child and the substitute son he creates in Phipps. The agony he feels when memories are rekindled of the floggings of others suggests empathy and pity for their sufferings. What was left out of documented history (and Dickens’s novel) becomes the obsession of the metahistorical romance, and this means the recuperation of the repressed voice of the Other, heard in Maggs’s recall of memories in mesmeric sessions. Empathy for others is a marked attribute of Jack Maggs. The imperialist version of history, represented by Oates, participates in the discursive inscribing of the cultural image and experiences of a convict, while Jack Maggs inhabits the figural dimension repressed in Western discourse.

The historical and psychic situation of women like Lizzie Warriner, ignored in traditional histories, is developed in Carey’s novel by the allusion to Castle Rackrent to initiate another story. Lizzie only begins to understand her own narrative when
she reads *Castle Rackrent*. Maria Edgeworth’s novel depicting an Irish landowning family in the eighteenth century reflects her own circumstances. As a “national” novel, the narrative mirrors the hierarchical ideology surrounding her, yet also exposes the dark underside of attitudes towards women and sexuality, which identify Lizzie as a sacrificial victim. According to Seamus Deane, Edgeworth is credited with being “the first writer to find effective means of representing in fiction the subjugation of the individual to social forces” (90). Lizzie realizes before her death the oppression behind the promise of benefits to mankind. She links every word she is reading in the novel back to her own situation and realizes that every small hope she had for the survival of her child has been taken from her. In other words the social code of the day, in dominating the actions of her lover and her sister, leads to her own and her child’s death, and a grief-stricken future for Oates. Oates’s relationship with his wife, his infant son, his lover, Lizzie Warriner and their unborn child is destroyed when cultural ideology produced by a society he upholds dominates his actions and entraps his loved ones. The intertext *Castle Rackrent*, read against *Jack Maggs*, exposes Lizzie’s violent death as the fruit of cultural attitudes that punish women for perceived sexual transgression. Paired with Oates Lizzie is unable to break free of a system that denies her liberty and status. Symbolizing the silence and secrecy that camouflages violence to women, she orders her sister to burn the blood-soaked linen that implicates Oates and society in her death, thus perpetuating the violence.

Mercy Larkin is the antithesis of Lizzie Warriner, in that she is able to read her own history and that of Jack Maggs, and activate for change against cultural practices that punish and degrade them both. The literary intertextualities of Richardson’s *Pamela*, and Scott’s *Ivanhoe* help her understand how powerful men
exploit women. Like Rebecca’s response to the Templar as she climbs to the open window, “I spit at thee, and I defy thee” (251), Mercy eventually acknowledges and resists Buckle’s domination in her response, “You’ve ruined me” (JM 364), and escapes his house by climbing out through the window onto the roof. Confronting Maggs with his responsibilities to his “babes who live in another country”, Mercy reminds him, “And while these little boys wait for you to come home, you prance round England trying to find someone who does not love you at all” (JM 389). By forcing Maggs to recognize that his tormentor, “the soldier of the King” who lashed him, represents England and its laws, she prepares him for the moment when the Phantom enters his life as his son, Phipps. Mercy symbolically defeats the violence of Empire by preventing Maggs from being murdered, effectively breaking the link between Maggs and Dickens’s convict and breaking the chain of violence that stigmatized the Australian convict.

The historical, literary and psychic dimensions of these intertexts generate other stories that allow a textual revision of the horizontal narrative to uncover what has been repressed or disguised in Victorian cultural discourses. The dual narratives of Oates and Maggs provide a composite text in which the effects of poverty, the criminal discourses of the elite, and the torment of the psyche repressed in Dickens and Oates’s texts are fully narrated in Maggs’s history. Destabilizing the imperial history subverts the colonial myth and scapegoating of the convict in the construction of a representative of England’s labouring poor as heroic in a history that locates the violence in social and political laws and challenges its production.

TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIPS.

A critique of mimetic desire in triangular relationships in the subtext, Great Expectations can serve to demystify the causes of violence and expose the role of
conflicting desires in constructing a political scapegoat. The working conditions of London’s poor, the victimization of Magwitch, the complicity of English law in his representation as a criminal, patriarchal power in repressing women and violating children, the language of oppression embedded in dominant discourses, and class interests that fuelled desire for property and status are examined to articulate new “codes of recognition” when the subtext is read against the new text in a model of simultaneous history. As Girard attests, “Only through the mediation of the scapegoat mechanism can violence become its own remedy” (Theater 195). Magwitch is set centre stage as the victim.

Four mimetic triangles cast Magwitch in a network of relationships in which criminality is a common trait to explore the role of cultural and social ideology in disseminating criminal contagion. The first configuration examines the role of poverty, property and policy in the criminal construction of Magwitch, Compeyson and Pip. The second mimetic triangle explores how social ideology constructs Miss Havisham and Estella as deviant women who refract the violence against them towards Pip. The third set of relationships analyses cultural discourses and their effect on Mrs Joe, Orlick and Pip in examining how the poor classes turn cultural violence against each other, while the last configuration of Jaggers, Molly and Pip considers the power invested in “scientific discourses” to detect criminality. Tambling contends that Great Expectations “certainly recognizes itself to be about the creation of identities, imposed from higher to lower, from oppressed to oppressor” (124). By extension, I suggest, the internal workings of the mimetic triangles uncover not only the formation of identities but also a process of multiple reforming and blurring of identities drawn from different zones of the social spectrum, refracting the illusory
qualities of power relationships. These relationships drawn from the precursor text anticipate the construction of an imperial model of history.

The triangular configuration of Magwitch, Compeyson and Pip in the precursor text, which is doubled in the relationship of Jack Maggs, Tom Britten and Phipps in Carey’s text, repeats the cultural discourses drawn from the story of “D”, a returned convict, and the discourse of the Good and Bad Apprentice derived from William Hogarth’s etchings. They reveal the cultural conditions that create what Girard terms “enemy brothers”. These include the acquisition of wealth, enactments of criminal justice, and the obsession with “gentleman” status. The taint of criminality in Pip is engendered by the contagion of his association with Magwitch and Compeyson, whose violence he witnesses on the marshes as a child. Including Pip in a triangular field of desire with Magwitch and Compeyson predicts that he too will be drawn into a situation of rivalry by mimicking their desire for wealth and position and their desire for revenge. In the resulting conflict differences are dissolved and identities merge. Their relationship as mimetic brothers promotes desire, characterized by envy and rivalry, attributes that eventually lead to the construction of Magwitch as a sacrificial victim.

Magwitch and Compeyson are differentiated by social status, in particular by powerful connections Compeyson derives from education and wealth. A member of London’s “poor”, Magwitch in contrast is orphaned at birth and only familiar with being “took up and took up” to be given head measurements, tracts and lectures about the devil and jail sentences. He is attracted to the person of Compeyson whom he describes as “a gentleman” who has been to “public boarding school and had learning” (GE 347). As the desiring subject, Magwitch scorns himself intensely and looks to his model as having in his possession everything that he, the subject, desires.
Recently released from prison on a vagrancy charge and starving, Magwitch notes Compeyson’s “watch and a chain and a ring and a breast-pin and a handsome suit of clothes” (GE 347). Blinded by the fantasy of riches and coveting the idea of copying his gentleman partner, Magwitch agrees to work for Compeyson, who is a con man and a forger. By binding himself to Compeyson, Magwitch’s desire and Compeyson’s criminality infiltrates the text and affects Pip, but also Miss Havisham, Estella, Jaggers and Molly. The circularity of desire sets in motion multiple triangular narratives and conflicts that suggest desires are endless and endlessly unsatisfied.

The first site of revenge generated by these conflicts lies in the complicity of English law in scapegoating a victim, Magwitch, a practice imitated in Jack Maggs in the trial of Maggs. The courtroom procedure is influenced by status even though Magwitch exposes Compeyson’s exploitation in the claim, “he made me his black slave” (GE 350). Both men are convicted of felony, yet Compeyson is recommended for mercy on account of good character and bad company and sentenced to seven years imprisonment, while Magwitch receives a sentence of fourteen years. The anomalous punishment seems based on differences of appearance, responses and connections. As a result Magwitch not only becomes Compeyson’s scapegoat but he is judged and persecuted by the oligarchy since he is a threat to the propertied class. Both, however, become convicts tied in a relationship in which revenge sets up conditions for violence and rivalry.

A second site of Magwitch’s revenge is his invention of a gentleman “son”. Magwitch seeks to avenge himself on a social system that treats him unfairly by creating a gentleman as an extension of his ego, a proud means of retaliation recognized in his passionate outburst to Pip: “Blast you every one, from the judge in his wig, to the colonist a stirring up the dust, I’ll show a better gentleman than the
whole kit on you put together!” (GE 332). To achieve his desire Magwitch becomes Pip’s benefactor but also his destroyer in that he creates a situation that Eiichi Hara describes as removing Pip from his role as “the Industrious Apprentice,” to become “the Idle Apprentice” in imitation of Hogarth’s series of engravings Industry and Idleness (149). These discourses are significant allusions in Great Expectations where they are implicated in the mimetic relationship of Magwitch and Compeyson, and Orlick and Pip, and are imitated in Jack Maggs to make political points in the relationships of Pip and Phipps and Maggs and Tom Britten.

In his role as “the idle apprentice,” a gentleman who had “been bred to no calling” and was “fit for nothing” (GE 342), Pip was always an object of suspicion to Wopsle and Pumblechook. Their recount of the play, The History of George Barnwell, coupled with dark warnings, takes on an emblematic significance in Pip’s imagination. He associates himself with Barnwell, an idle apprentice who goes wrong, robs and murders his uncle for the love of a wicked woman and is hanged. Magwitch’s plan to create a gentleman as a means of vengeance against the country that rejected him draws Pip closer to the “idle apprentice” model that gradually degenerates into criminality. The combined violence of Magwitch and Compeyson directed at Pip confuses the preexisting reference marks that distinguish him from them. He is the adopted son of a criminal, criminalized by cultural discourses, under the surveillance of Compeyson, and in conflict with the law in aiding and abetting a criminal.

The association of the enemy brothers, Magwitch and Compeyson, closes as it began on the marshes. Fiercely locked in each other’s arms, they struggle underwater and Compeyson drowns. Although all three participants are entrapped in a cycle of revenge, the collective violence of Victorian ideology is turned against only one,
Magwitch, who is identified as the scapegoat. He is invested with the responsibility for the crisis. He is convicted by trial as a thief, transported, and unlawfully returned to England. The resolution of the crisis requires that the scapegoat must die in order to stabilize the status quo. The inference drawn from a study of the mimetic desire in this relationship is that the social system, which propagates oppression and punishment of the poor underclass to advantage a powerful and wealthy oligarchy, generates revenge, and sacrifices scapegoats to maintain the status quo.

The criminal contagion now infecting Pip is intensified in a second triangular relationship with Miss Havisham and Estella in Satis House, which is repeated in Jack Maggs in the relationship of Oates with Mary Oates and Lizzie Warriner imprisoned in Lamb’s Conduit Street. The disturbed psychic locations of Satis House and Lamb’s Conduit Street reveal violence to women as a muted group and victims of social discourses. These women fail to recognize and respond to a stable, knowable, recognizable self because their emotional growth has been stultified by social restraints and the repressive legal systems of the age. As Tim Dolin points out, the representation of a woman as a legal subject “touches her representation in fiction, and touches the fiction of which she is a part” (2) for a woman’s property, according to Dolin, “is the supreme sign of her eligibility for marriage, and an integral part of her attractiveness. She is therefore already caught up in the market, and already conceived of as valuable property” (10). Miss Havisham’s “marketability”, and subordination to her brother in providing her with the only acceptable means of meeting a suitor, creates, as Linda Raphael writes, a “homo-social alliance” that finds its strength in norms, which “reflect women’s subordination in legal, social, and emotional affairs” (223). Pip’s involvement with Miss Havisham and Estella examines the role of these social ideologies in constructing the women as deviant,
destructive and revenge-driven. Their interaction produces revenge and tyranny in all three participants.

The horror and ugliness of Miss Havisham’s death, reflected in the imagery of Lizzie Warriner’s death, is a metaphor for the corruption of the spirit that infects not only the lives of Estella and Pip, but also others suffering under the iniquities of a gender-biased society. Pip, locked in mimetic desire with Miss Havisham, has ambitions to enjoy her patronage and thereby achieve improved social status that would lead to his marriage to Estella. Pip retaliates when he realizes that Miss Havisham has deliberately contrived to avenge herself on the social system and Compeyson’s mistreatment of her by making him the scapegoat. What Pip needs, in order to stir up his venegful spirit, is a mimetic model, a revenge theatre as it were, acted out in the scene in which Miss Havisham pleads for and is denied Estella’s love, because she has suppressed natural feelings in her ward. The spectacle of cruelty and suffering provides the impulse Pip does not find in himself. He lives in a state of what Girard defines as the “no-man’s land of sick revenge.” Girard explains this symptom as a strategy men use when they postpone revenge indefinitely without ever giving it up. It is a no man’s land where it becomes impossible to define anything. “All actions and motivations are their own opposites as well as themselves” (Theater 285).

The opportunity for revenge arises when Miss Havisham is engulfed in flames. Pip, at one and the same time her rescuer and her enemy, covers her with his greatcoat and shrouds her in the wedding cloth described as “a heap of rottenness” that shelters “ugly things” (GE 402). The language describing Pip and Miss Havisham suggests a replay of the revenge scene when two convicts struggle on the marshes for they were “on the ground struggling like desperate enemies” (GE 402). As Miss Havisham tries to free herself Pip records, “I still held her forcibly down with all my strength, like a
prisoner who might escape” (GE 402). In this scenario of violence, Pip twins with Magwitch and Miss Havisham with Compeyson. In the interplay of retaliation and reprisals all the characters in the tragic action become copies of each other. Violence to women, victims of dominant male discourses in Victorian England, refracts into a system of binary opposites where violence and revenge become pervasive and Pip becomes the victim.

The fractious interrelationship of the third configuration of Pip, Orlick and Mrs. Joe corresponds to the Jack Maggs, Ma and Tom Britten relationship exposing how violence is not only inflicted by the privileged upon the poor, but is also inflicted by the poor against each other in imitation of their oppressors. Orlick and Pip seem to oscillate between two opposite, incompatible poles. Orlick is distinctively a villain—a typical example of the bad apprentice. He slouches and grunts and is morose, violent and uncouth. Pip is good-natured, sensitive and hardworking—a good apprentice. Yet in time the specificity of each role is undermined as differences disappear and both antagonists are revealed as thinking and behaving like each other. As Julian Moyahan notes, “There is a peculiar parallel between the careers” of Orlick and Pip (107). Pip functions as a model for Orlick whom he imitates with a vengeance. In a sense Orlick becomes a caricature of Pip in the early stages of mimetic desire and apes Pip’s actions. Both characters were “beaten and bullied” by Mrs. Joe and both were resentful. The process of imitation and revenge culminates in an assault on Mrs. Joe.

Pip, “with his head full of George Barnwell” who killed his uncle, believed that he must have had a hand in the attack on Mrs. Joe, an idea reinforced by the fact that he had unintentionally provided the leg iron used in the assault. As Girard states, differences “dissolve in the face of violence, which makes everything return to the pure state of reciprocity. In rivalry, everyone occupies all the positions, one after
another and then simultaneously, and there are no longer any distinct positions” (Theater 299). Orlick, slipping into full identification with his model at the sluice house, accuses, “Wolf!… It was you as did for your shrew sister” (GE 426). Orlick attributes to Pip all the characteristics of his bestial self. He threatens to kill Pip “like any other beast” (GE 425). Like a beast of prey, Orlick had stalked Pip to Satis House and thence to London, acting as Compeyson’s spy. In turn Orlick perceives that Pip had hunted him away from the forge, away from Biddy, and away from his position at Satis House. When Pip is threatened with death, differences between him and Orlick disappear in the realization that he, like Orlick, can kill.

The final relationship of Pip, Jaggers and Molly bears a striking resemblance to the Oates, Maggs and Mercy relationship. Both focus attention on the function of so-called scientific discourses in detecting criminal attributes and on the role of these beliefs in investing the ruling classes with power to control the socially disadvantaged. Languages of science maintain an ideological supremacy over the underprivileged people whom science brands as deviant. These cultural discourses inform the internal triangular mediation of Molly, Jaggers and Pip, discourses that are exposed and paralleled in Carey’s text.

The discursive formation of human subjects as criminals is Jaggers’s particular skill and underlies his interaction with Molly, whom he hints is “a criminal type,” and Pip, whose “feelings” of criminality are deepened in Jagger’s presence. To pair Molly with Jaggers seems an unlikely partnership, yet by tracing the workings of mimetic desire, it is possible to see how Jaggers’s behaviour takes on the criminal overtones he attributes to Molly. Represented, according to Tambling, as “the unseen watcher in the central tower of the Panopticon” (125), Jaggers is positioned at the centre of the dominant discourse, which is the language of oppression. According to Tambling, at
the end of the eighteenth century, penal codes were drawn up which were addressed to the mind of the criminal, not defined as such, nor as an offender, but as a ‘delinquent’. A personality type is thus created: the change Foucault marks is one towards the creation of an entity: a mind to be characterized in certain ways (whereas earlier the body was directly marked), to produce the docile body, “one that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Tambling 130). The Panopticon itself was a design for a prison that would regulate the minds of prisoners by carefully classifying them and keeping them under constant surveillance.

As a representative of the law and its ideology, Jaggers as a criminal lawyer is well placed, having rooms in Little Britain close by Newgate Prison and the gallows, the place where people are publicly whipped, and near the poverty-stricken site of Smithfield. The prison is seen as an essential condition of Victorian society and as essentially oppressive, made clear in the references that hover around Jaggers’s dealings with convicts, transportation, hulks, and court cases. The display of head casts of felons in his rooms illustrates that Jaggers is familiar with the doctrine of phrenology he uses as a means to identify the criminal. He becomes a master of social control by naming characters and conferring identities upon them as either “beaters or cringers,” or, in Pip’s case, by warning, “Of course you’ll go wrong somehow” (GE 170). As Wemmick confides, Jaggers “keeps himself so high” (GE 263) that he symbolizes English law, controlling people’s destinies and subjugating them, mimicking a situation where “the benevolence of rich men to the poor, and all the ramifications of patronage, were upheld by the sanction of the gallows and the rhetoric of the death sentence” (Hay 63).

To draw Molly into a mimetic relationship with Jaggers is to consider him in the image of the operator and Molly as his necessary counterpart, through whom he
seeks to define himself as law-abiding and Molly as the marginalized criminal. Jaggers imprisons Molly in his home as a domestic servant so that he can set up a system of surveillance. He produces a “docile body” by taming “the wild beast,” who supposedly “had some gipsy blood in her” (GE 392), in imitation of the law. His dominance and sadism comes into play in the way he draws attention to Molly’s wrist, metaphorically shackling it with his hand to hint at her criminality in front of guests and thereby to display his power over her. By focusing on the strength of her hands, Jaggers repeats the terror of a court scene in which she was on trial for strangling another woman.

Using the full force of his mesmeric powers “he clapped his large hands on the housekeeper’s like a trap” (GE 214), and while Molly fixes her eyes on his, mesmeric communication flowed from oppressor to the oppressed. He uses what Foucault designates in Discipline and Punish as “the political technology of the body,” a technology of subjection by using a force that does not involve violence and yet “may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order” (26). Mirroring the ideology of political thought, in which, according to Foucault, the coercion of people into a labour force is possible only if the body is caught up in a system of subjection, Jaggers seeks to control Molly as a criminal and thereby flaunts her obedience and deference. Both, according to Hay, are important aspects of criminal law, which constantly recreate the structure of authority into an effective instrument of power. Surrounded as he is by the emblems of ‘delinquency’, criminality also filters into Jaggers’s life as he manipulates witnesses to prove his superiority and enhance his reputation. His cleverness in concealing his shady dealings is exposed, in spite of excessive vigilance, when Pip reveals his knowledge of Jaggers’s illegal
deals with “Provis”, Pip’s convict, who had unlawfully returned to England. Jaggers had covertly broken the law for economic gain.

Thus Jaggers’s identity is destabilized in a triangular structure in which differences are dissolved and the taint of “criminality” circulates freely between Jaggers, Molly and Pip. Destructive in his personal “Panopticon”, and stained by the criminality he searches for in others, Jaggers asserts no ethical action for change and serves the ruling classes for whom, as Hay writes, “the law was one of their chief ideological instruments […] to mould the consciousness by which the many submitted to the few” (26). Conversely, he implements a philosophy of mystical terror and moral contagion. Molly, allowed no agency to mediate in her relationship with Jaggers and Pip, offers no resistance, and the violence to her class and gender continues unchecked. All the triangular mimetic relationships in Great Expectations reveal profound hurt to the bodies and personhood of the poor and marginalized trapped in a social system where the circulation of mimetic desire culminates in an unbroken cycle of revenge and violence, and contributes to the construction of scapegoats to safeguard the power and privilege of others.

These configurations reveal that Victorian Law serves to create a cosmos of power for the wealthy, struggle for the poor classes, oppressive restraints for women, and stultifying environments for poor children. In Great Expectations Magwitch is the primary scapegoat, the Australian convict. His construction is demystified in configurations in which criminality flows from one participant to another, revealing that the ruling classes in Victorian culture are also tainted with criminality. Magwitch is not the only scapegoat. Victorian women, particularized in Miss Havisham, Estella, Mrs. Joe and Molly, are equally victims of an oppressive system. Dickens’s novel bears witness to the sufferings of the poor and alienated without taking into account
the cultural power structures implicated in creating the violence. With the benefit of
historical distance Carey’s novel confronts that pain by inventing a fictional person
who thinks and acts outside the paradigms set in place by an imperial society and
speaks out on behalf of the victims to challenge and break the power of the ideology.

Carey’s inclusion of a fundamentally different historical model, the communal
history of London’s poor, also highlights how mimetic desire, manifested in the social
policies and cultural attitudes of the social elite, impinges on the acquisition of wealth
in triangular relationships in *Jack Maggs*. These relationships correspond in many
ways with the configurations described in *Great Expectations*, exposing the
oppression of those disadvantaged by class and gender. Violence remains
unchallenged until one triangular participant “reads”, understands, and rebels against
a designated place in history and society determined by powerful others. Such an
individual asserts the choice to turn aside from a violent confrontation and assert the
agency to reshape a destiny and a history.

Mimetic desire in *Jack Maggs* can be analyzed in four triangular patterns to
investigate the role of Victorian ideology in activating revenge mechanisms that
culminate in the scapegoating of Maggs. The first mimetic triangle of Maggs doubled
with Oates in a relationship that includes Phipps reflects a desire for status and
property. The second configuration doubles Maggs with Ma Britten as well as Tom
Britten to parody the discourses of Empire in distinguishing the good citizens from the
criminals or outcasts. Maggs’s rivalry with Percy Buckle for Mercy Larkin’s
affections constitutes the mediations in a third pattern, to explore patriarchy in
Victorian constructions of gender and class, while Maggs’s interaction with Phipps
and Mercy generates a conflict between a representative of the Empire with a
representative of the poor classes.
The first configuration pairing Tobias Oates and Jack Maggs in a structure that includes Henry Phipps underscores how the desire for property is propagated in imperial ideology as a means to achieve respectability and class mobility. The new text absorbs and renews the fantasy of riches from its precursor. For Oates, the “property” is intellectual property to consolidate his position in society as a famous author and a man of means. He values the unwritten story of *The Death of Jack Maggs* at fifty pounds. This sum would secure his establishment at Lamb’s Conduit Street for Oates fears squalor and poverty. In “confronting the things he feared the most” (*JM* 158), he inspects the charred and blistered bodies of burnt children who are the victims of poverty, for he was a poor child too. He seeks fame, acceptance and recognition, and to this end dines with the elegantly dressed surgeons before whom he later realizes he behaved like a “common conjuror”. To prove he is not vulgar and not a buffoon he determines to steal and write Maggs’s story. He does so by subjugating Maggs in mesmeric sessions, mimicking the attitudes of the privileged elite towards the poorer classes by demonizing them with discourses.

The language Oates uses identifies the history of the speaker as the powerful oppressor, and the cultural frailty and vulnerability of the referent as the oppressed. Oates invents a story that Maggs is possessed by the demons Behemoth, Azazel, Dabareiel and Samsaweel, suggesting that “criminality” entails being possessed by devils and that Oates, the Christian, can be identified with Jesus in the parable of the Gadarene swine and can cast Jack’s phantom “like swine into the sea” (*JM* 248). Jack Maggs’s words are evidence he internalizes his demonization—“I’m a vermin, ain’t I?” “I am a cockroach, isn’t that so?” “Did not his Lordship wish to crush me with his heel?” (*JM* 155). His statements reveal the damage caused by discourses that propagate a moral agenda of defective self-management. Oates, who convinces
Maggs that he is possessed by demons, reinforces this damage. Oates’s performance resonates with aspects of disciplinary power, which operate via divine right and ceremony, making examples of those who transgress authority. Oates’s language and actions, rooted in political and cultural institutions, are perpetuated in his book, The Death of Maggs. Its publication gratifies Oates’s desire to be respected as the author of an acclaimed novel and to live in Lamb’s Conduit Street. The price paid was to scapegoat Jack Maggs and “murder” him in his narrative.

For Maggs, “property” means owning a son who represents the gentlemanly ideal in Victorian society. Revealing an attitude similar to Magwitch, who, according to Robert Hughes, aimed to “make” and “own” a real gentleman to “show the truth about gentility: It can be bought” (585), Maggs creates a son who would kill to remain in his property in Great Queen St. where he is “safe in his own dear house, breakfasting on salmon” made by his “splendid cook” (JM 325). As a representative of the privileged classes Phipps “did not like ugliness. Did not like it in any form, in any thing” (JM 327), and was indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, particularly to his benefactor, whose appearance recalled “old uncertainties of his troubled life” in an orphanage. Phipps’s fear of poverty made him vulnerable to Buckle’s taunt, “Your house is not your own. It is the property of Jack Maggs” (JM 328). Knowing his leisured life was over, he chose “a new benefactor”, and became a subaltern of the 57th Foot Regiment. As such, he was prepared at Buckle’s urging to shoot Maggs “in the heart”. Phipps is revealed as the tormentor who activates the English criminal code in his soldier’s uniform. Maggs recognizes at last “The Phantom had broken the locks and entered his life” (JM 395). Phipps identifies with oppressive criminal laws, the flogger, and on the level of allusion, with Oates, who recalls the physical and psychic trauma of Maggs’s punishment. Phipps enters the circle of revenge and
criminality in his intention to murder Maggs so that he can be heir to the house in Great Queen Street. Bereft of means to sustain his gentlemanly status, he becomes a criminal in his attempt to scapegoat Maggs, for not only is a criminal able to create a gentleman, but also a gentleman without means can become criminal. In this role Phipps is analogous to the members of the propertied classes who support criminal law and create scapegoats to protect and maintain their wealth and status.

The complexity of “enemy brothers” is realized in gestures of affection expressed by Phipps and Oates. Phipps protests against Buckle’s suggestion of murder, “But he has done nothing to me that I should harm him” (JM 361), and the text notes, “the convict did something which later, in recollection, would touch Tobias’s heart: that is, he put one strong arm around the writer’s narrow shoulders and held him tight” (JM 317), to save Oates from drowning. Girard explains: “These vanishing differences are nothing more than interruptions in reciprocity, and they always involve an element of the arbitrary, since they are rooted in the victimimage mechanisms and in mimetic rivalry; they dissolve in the face of violence, which makes everything return to a state of pure reciprocity” (Hidden 299). Oates and Phipps are frightened of poverty, of becoming a criminal like Maggs. To the end of gaining property, they reactivate cyclical violence in their attempts to create a scapegoat of Jack Maggs, exposing in triangular mediation that all three are criminals, murderers and thieves and the history Oates narrates is flawed.

The interaction of Ma and Tom Britten and Jack Maggs in a second triangular configuration absorbs and reshapes the discourses that link poverty and criminality in the Mrs. Joe relationships in Great Expectations. Their interaction exposes the violence of the poor against each other when all are victims of the system. Oates’s account of the lives of the poor, like Great Expectations, reflects dominant
discourses that link “wickedness”, and “malady” with diseases specific to poverty and connected to “crimes of perjury and burglary” (JM 338). They are terms used in the language of oppression to subjugate and control. Maggs’s description of his early life, however, undermines this language to reveal the causes of criminality and the concatenation of atrocities not only against adults but also against children. Ma Britten symbolizes England and English law, Tom, her son, represents the children of empire and the good apprentice, while Jack is the outsider and the bad apprentice who is predicted to become a criminal. Criminal contagion infiltrates their relationship. Ma Britten’s exploitation of her children, whom she coerces to act as thieves in order to satisfy her desires to acquire the property of the wealthy, reflects the actual geographical possession of land in the colonies by England.

Tom Britten, who seeks to fulfill his desires to be the good apprentice and bond ever closer to his mother, betrays his “brother,” enacting the jealousy and revenge of Cain’s crime against Abel. This leads to Sophina’s mutilation when her baby is aborted by Ma Britten, and finally, to her death by hanging as a thief and a criminal to cloak Tom’s criminal activities. Both Jack and Sophina, underprivileged children of the Empire, become scapegoats for Tom and Ma Britten. They expose the violence born of violence in the hidden history, as a perpetuation of the violence of the empire to its children. Violence converges on all three participants of this configuration. Maggs, sentenced to penal transportation to Australia, avenges Sophina’s death by killing Tom Britten, an incident recorded when Maggs returns to England and visits Ma Britten. To Maggs’s taunt that he will ‘look up’ Tom, Ma Britten replies, “You bastard… You know he’d dead… I know how it were arranged and all” (JM 5). The cyclical nature of revenge affected all three participants, Maggs, Tom and Ma Britten, who are identified as murderers and thieves.
Mary Britten as an abortionist symbolizes England in the way empire perpetrates an early death on its “children” in severing them from their homeland. In this representation as Mother England she reanimates a culture of violence to children in the imagery of Sophina’s abortion. The Phantom, who represents repressed pain, pervades Maggs’s memory in the mesmeric recall of the manner in which Ma Britten aborted his baby son, born of his childhood sweetheart, Sophina. Jack witnesses the fetus lying in the ditch, “Dear Lord, dear Lord. His sweet little cheek cut open” (JM 249). Ma Britten imitates what Hay describes as “one of the bloodiest criminal codes in Europe” (19) operating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by her contemptuous treatment of the unborn child and punishing the parents who are children. She ties Maggs to a ladder and flogs him, a punishment he later re-experiences in the penal colony. Ma Britten aborts the infant not to maintain a semblance of propriety, but instead, as Jack writes, to avoid losing “her little girl-thief to motherhood, or me to Sophina. She needed both as servants to her cause” (JM 292). Empire and Tobias Oates repeat the pain inflicted first by Ma Britten. Jack suffers severely under social codes that inscribe criminality and punish the helpless. Ma Britten is the debased representative of given social behaviours encoded in English Law, which transports a large body of those conceived to be “the disorderly and parasitic poor” (Hay 54) of the nation to another country to safeguard the property interests of the oligarchy, thereby denying the so-called “dangerous classes” their families and motherland. While these atrocities were grounded in the laws of the aristocrats and middle-classes that sought to secure and safeguard property, violence was inflicted not only on the poor classes by the privileged but also generated from within the communities of the poor to each other in a model of spiraling victimization.
Jack Maggs is entrapped within this spiral as a scapegoat for England’s unchallenged violent social and political policies.

The third triangular relationship of Buckle, Maggs and Mercy analyzes the interplay of social codes towards class and gender, reflected in the Jaggers and Molly relationship, to expose the tradition of the subtext. For Percy Buckle, property represents social elevation from a fishmonger to grocer, as well as possession not only of a house, furniture and books but also of a female, Mercy. In a social system in which, according to Weiner, vagabonds are considered to live “on the borderlands of criminality” and where “in the female sex, the counterpart of vagrants were prostitutes” (238), Mercy’s escape from street prostitution and the law requires her to be attached to a propertied male. In this configuration, Maggs is perceived by Buckle as diminishing his most prized possession, the respect others, including Mercy confer on him as the master of the house. Buckle admits to Phipps that Maggs is his enemy and his rival: “It is a matter of the heart, Sir” (JM 329). Revenge prompts his admission, “If I am to be humiliated in my own home, well then, that person will be punished” (JM 330).

The result of the internal mediation is ressentiment. According to Girard, “jealousy and envy imply a third presence…and a third person towards whom the jealousy and envy is directed”. He therefore concludes, “these two vices are triangular”. Mercy, as the coquette, is positioned as the mediator. Buckle enacts Girard’s observation that “jealousy always contains an element of fascination with the insolent rival” (Deceit 12). Initially Buckle identifies with Jack Maggs in the mesmeric encounter. He voices a different opinion from Oates. He empathizes, “Did you never imagine yourself in his position? I felt that damned thing” (JM 109). Unlike Oates, an author who says it is his business to imagine everything, Buckle experiences
the trauma of having a sister who suffers transportation. He asserts his conflict with the English penal code: “God help us all, that Mother England would do such a thing to one of her own” (JM 110). Buckle denies that these sentiments, as Oates suggests, mark him as a Christian. Buckle agrees to shelter Maggs from the law, revealing compassionate feelings that contrast with Oates’s self-interest. Buckle gives Maggs refuge because “He has not hurt me yet” (JM 108).

Buckle’s pity changes and crystallizes into hatred once Mercy is included in the relationship, for, as Girard observes, “the closer the mediator comes, the more bitter are the fruits of triangular desire” (Deceit 42). The “mild little grocer” becomes, in a conflation of identity with Jack Maggs, an “alien and agitated presence,” “a hissing, dark-shelled incubus” full of impotent rage crying out for the murder of his rival (JM 397). These descriptions illustrate the presence of three triangular emotions—envy, jealousy and hatred. Girard explains, internal mediation “triumph[s] in a universe where the differences between men are gradually erased” (Deceit 14).

Jack Maggs and Percy Buckle are polarized in their positions in physical appearance and temperament. Maggs is a tall man, big in the chest and broad in the shoulders. He commands by his voice and presence. Buckle is short in stature, described as “a wee wee chap, with his wee little legs and his wee little hands” (JM 326). Girard claims that desire is associated with vanity. Vanity causes Buckle to react against Maggs’s statement that he would not find valuable silver plate and Trafalgar Doulton in the Buckle’s household. Vanity exacerbates Buckle’s suffering when Mercy witnesses his humiliation at Maggs’s hands and is matched by Maggs’s mortification when Mercy is invited to see his mutilated back which he calls his “shame.” Buckle’s intense desires are imitated desires—to be respected as a gentleman because of his possessions and to have the physical presence and appeal of his butler.
Buckle dedicates his life to satisfying his desires. His practice of reading *Pamela* to Mercy each night suggests he imitates men of means, such as Mr. B. who expects to take casual sexual pleasure from lower-class girls he presumes are for sexual convenience. Buckle’s inclination to read the essays of William Hazlitt reflects his desire to be familiar with the conversations of “Men and Manners,” “Taste,” “Conversations with Lords” and “Merry England.” The passion of the Templar for Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*, another text Buckle reads to “his pretty one”, provides a model to copy when, in imitation of the Templar, he threatens a woman he cannot control with social death and the life of a prostitute. The hatred, which arises from his desires, carries a violence, which only waits its turn to be reciprocal.

Penetrating deeper into reciprocal mediation, Mercy also copies the desires of others, by imitating Pamela and Shamela. Layered onto Mercy’s original desire that “she, like Pamela might one day be mistress of the house wherein she had been called to serve” (*JM* 185) is the spectacle of another desire when she becomes attracted to Jack Maggs. Mercy fantasizes identification with Pamela Andrews, whose virtue is rewarded with marriage. By contrast, Mercy is powerless to negotiate with Buckle, her so-called protector who rescues her as a child from prostitution. Sharing the fate of many poor female children whose eyes indicated they were “stained brown from use” (*JM* 193), Mercy identifies with criminality as a female vagrant. By imitating a coquette to gain Jack Maggs’s attention, she becomes Henry Fielding’s parody of a pious servant, a “Shamela,” an anti-Pamela, in deliberately setting out to interest Maggs by applying “nurse-maid’s rouge” to her cheeks and biting her lips. As Girard contends, “Indifference plays a role in the genesis of these desires” (*Deceit* 105). In Carey’s novel, Maggs’s indifference to Mercy’s sexual desire ignites Buckle’s resentment and hatred. The consequence of Buckle’s and Maggs’s intense desires for
“property”—property in the form of a woman and a “son”—is the dissolution of differences as they each copy the attitudes of the dominant culture. Mercy and Maggs become enslaved to Buckle, who has the power to dismiss Mercy and to hand Maggs over to the police. A reciprocal slave/master situation illustrates the relationships of Buckle and Maggs and Buckle and Mercy. The inference drawn from this triangular mediation is that poverty and gender bias unite all three participants as imitators of the dominant culture in their violation of each other when property enters the exchange. Buckle, as the instigator of Maggs’s murder, targets Maggs as a scapegoat to reclaim Mercy as his property. Violence to, and entrapment of, women named “deviant” because they are poor remains unchecked and invisible in this mimetic structure.

An examination of the final configuration of Maggs, Mercy and Phipps analyzes the role of Mercy Larkin, in averting Maggs’s violent death as the sacrificial victim of imperial law. Stretching out her hand she ruptures the revenge process by receiving Phipps’s bullet meant to kill Maggs and reclaims her own and Jack Maggs’s lives. Her symbolic and ethical gesture challenges England’s criminal laws that punish and oppress. In asserting her agency and exposing Empire’s violence she overturns the master/slave situation, illustrating Girard’s belief that “violence, far from serving the interests of whoever exerts it, reveals the intensity of his desire; thus it is a sign of slavery” (Deceit 112). The united violence of Buckle and Phipps towards Maggs reveals the intensity of their desires; they are enslaved to a system that builds desire for property into the fabric of the law and ideology. Conflict is the predictable outcome of such a relationship. The full extent of Mercy’s action in escaping from London and returning to Australia breaks the cycle of violence that had created them as deviant outcasts. Buckle is denied the possession of Mercy, Phipps’s exploitation of Maggs ceases and with it Maggs’s fantasy about England, and Maggs
returns to family and prosperity in Australia. As mediator, Mercy prevents the “catharsis of sacrifice” (Theater 222) described by Girard, yet enacts a “ritualistic [. . .] representational closure rooted in the original scapegoat effect” in restoring a degree of harmony among the mimetic rivals, by removing the convict “other” from the source of discrimination, England.

Mercy prevents both the scapegoating of Jack Maggs and the scapegoating of Tobias Oates, whose book, according to the Carey’s novel, is now in the collection of the Mitchell Library. As the text records, Oates, the writer of *The Death of Jack Maggs*, never knew of the existence of Mercy nor of the incident when Mercy puts out her hand to receive the bullet meant to kill Jack Maggs. Yet Mercy becomes the guardian of Oates’s novel of empire, owning no fewer than seven copies in her library in Australia, which are ironically inscribed to Percy Buckle as “A Man of Letters, a Patron of the Arts.” Percy Buckle, formerly a fishmonger, and Mercy, once a female vagrant, become patrons of the culture that dispossessed them.

Physical and psychic damage to the children of Empire is realized in all participants. With a wedding finger blown away, Mercy creates a pair with Maggs whose finger was cut off while being flogged. No less damaged is Oates, whose beloved Lizzie and unborn child were sacrificed to harsh Victorian values and attitudes. Through her mediation, Mercy frees herself and Maggs from the roles assigned them by Victorian social codes as thief and female vagrant, but also redeems the author, Oates, from the stain of criminality since he too suffers from cultural practices that rebound onto him. Mercy, as the reader and keeper of Jack Maggs’s story, and the collector of Oates’s famous novel, is the caretaker of both the official story of a returned convict and the communal stories of London’s poor. These communal stories demystify the causes of criminality compounded in Jack Maggs’s
account of his and Sophina’s childhood, and in Mercy’s memory of a violated childhood. They illustrate not only collective violence against the marginalized concealed in stereotypical scapegoat practices, but also demonstrate that in the demystification the recognition of the victim as innocent breaks the chain of violence. In Carey’s novel, Oates, like Dickens, is celebrated as a famous author not only in England, but also in Australia. Reading the composite text of *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs* initiates another story, a confrontation in interpreting what constitutes criminality. Criminal attributes are displaced onto the persecutors and the real criminals remain in England.

The paratactical allusions between the characters in triangular relationships in the novels of Dickens and Carey illustrate reciprocity strikingly visible in criminality. Enclosed in the structure is a mimetic cycle that spreads like a plague from victim to victim. Only one character breaks the cycle and replaces the ritualistic sacrifice of the scapegoat with ethical action, altering her own and Jack Maggs’s criminal identification by an exercise of freedom. Mercy is the mediator who rebels against a cultural ideology that sets up a system of violence directed at specific social groups identified by class and gender. A violent ideology that names, punishes and creates scapegoats is unchallenged in the triangular analysis of *Great Expectations* and *The Death of Maggs*, while the mimetic triangles in *Jack Maggs* release these potential scapegoats by reshaping their lives in Australia, and turn scapegoat practices against Phipps who represents the Empire.

The grid of correspondences that a reader can navigate between *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs* breaks up the linear model that historically defines the convict, takes into account the historical, literary, and psychic resonances that are embedded and repressed in Dickens’s narrative and draws on relational readings to
construct Carey’s text. It becomes, as Friedman identifies by quoting Kristeva, “a dialogue among several writings” (Desire 65). The spatialized reading strategy produces interpretations of the political unconscious of Dickens’s novel by exposing in Oates’s mesmerism sessions cultural ideologies of power and possession inherent in Victorian law. By revealing social and cultural conditions of London’s poor, Maggs’s letter demystifies this ideology as the repressed Phantom. The Phantom is the unspoken part of Dickens’s narrative, which can only be articulated by Maggs during mesmeric sessions in fragments accompanied by anguished pleading not to retrieve memories too traumatic to bear. Maggs the convict stands as a solitary emblematic figure, unable to be imagined by Western discourse or contained within Western colonialist discourse. An orphan of the lower classes, used, abused and rejected by Ma Britten and Mother England, Jack Maggs represents the postmodern haunting of modern, imperialist discourse.

With an informed sensitivity to historical distance, Carey’s novel both scapegoats and emblematizes the great English author, Charles Dickens, who recorded the English culture of his own time, and employs the strategy of parody, without imposing the threat of disrespect, to update Dickens’s revelation of his culture’s dark abyss. Indeed Dickens’s insights into the sufferings of the poor and his concern for children acquire more momentum in the generations to follow. This momentum, which came to include the deconstruction of criminality and the alienation of people termed “convicts” in Carey’s gesture of countermovement in his novel, gathers strength more easily because Dickens had written. The shock of confronting Great Expectations with Jack Maggs assists us as Australians to situate ourselves more knowingly in time, and might help us discover the vulnerabilities of our own specific historicity.
CHAPTER FOUR: True History of the Kelly Gang.

In True History of the Kelly Gang, Carey’s metahistorical romance relocates the text in history to make its own status as a construct, a fabulation, more obvious by featuring a historical romance, Lorna Doone, as a subtext. Popularized in the nineteenth century, Lorna Doone portrays a romantic hero whose courageous deeds in massacring rebels win him the hand of Lorna Doone. Like True History, Blackmore’s novel features recorded historical events, a major difference being that the massacre, celebrated in the historical romance, is foregrounded as cultural politics in Carey’s novel to make an ethical point about the violent nature of Ned Kelly’s specific historical situation. It does this dramatically by “spatializing time” so that contrasting the bounded interpretation of historical violence in Lorna Doone with Kelly’s immersion with other heroes, times and events illuminates his colonial position in questioning power structures and violence. Blackmore’s novel obscures the “dark areas” of historical injustice, which Kelly is unable to decipher but which generate a dynamic text created by the reader to underscore the danger of Kelly’s vulnerability to romance. Carey’s modern text destabilizes the historical romance, wherein violence is camouflaged and unchecked, by constructing a counter historical novel that gives a voice to the rebel and scapegoat, Ned Kelly, who represents the Irish settlers, and a role to the peaceful mediator, Mary Hearn, who challenges the violence.

In her essay, “Lies and Silences”, Carolyn Bliss argues that through stories Kelly tries to make sense of himself and his life. Bliss develops the idea that Kelly situates these stories within masterplots that “deform his actions into predetermined plotlines where they are misshapen and misunderstood, as much by himself as by the readers he hopes to persuade” (295), producing a “truncated and wasted life” (297). While Bliss argues that the impact of stories is “lost on Ned” and “don’t translate
well”, my argument turns on the impact of these intertexts on the reader and what they have to say, not only about the construction of colonial culture, class struggle, violence and scapegoats but also about Ned Kelly as a legendary hero. Fabulation links Ned Kelly not only to John Ridd, but also to Irish culture in the stories of Cú Chulaind, the Banshee and St. Brigit and the Sons of Sieve, which remembers conflict and links Kelly to a past that recreates a cultural and colonial hero who refuses to be oppressed. Entwining Ali Baba with the story of “How Whitty Got His Acres” illustrates the political power play in the colony. Allusions to Romeo, Henry V and Dick Turpin identify Kelly with historical heroes shadowed by political power in narratives where violence is cyclical and reciprocal. As Linda Hutcheon reminds us in *The Poetics of Postmodernism*, “The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction […] offers a sense of a presence of the past but a past that can be known only from its texts, its traces—be they literary or historical” (125). A sense of the presence of the colonial past is revealed through these intertexts that underscore the rivalries, the politics, and the violent relationships bound to mimetic desire that create the demonization of Ned Kelly in the documented history of his era. In an examination of the mimetic relationships in Kelly’s autobiography a different history of Irish settlers unfolds, one that suggests the possibility of containing reciprocal violence.

Andreas Gaile writes that by identifying with *Lorna Doone* and Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, Kelly “creates for himself the context of heroism” (42). This is sustained in *True History’s* interplay with *Lorna Doone* as dialectic and thematic in politicizing Kelly’s identity. Romance infiltrates Carey’s novel and Ned Kelly’s life in four allusions to *Lorna Doone*, which read as vertical narratives, foster a relational reading to Ned Kelly’s autobiography. The first reference to *Lorna Doone* describes how
Kelly is seduced by what he perceives as the close parallels of John Ridd’s life to his own when, at the age of twenty, Joe Byrne gives him a copy of *Lorna Doone*:

So I were introduced to John Ridd the hero of the book called LORNA DOONE. I sat on a slippery debarked log at Kilawarra but my eyes was seeing things from centuries before I were witness to a mighty fight between John Ridd and another boy as soon as John won he discovered his father were murdered by the Doones.

John Ridd lost his da at the exact same age as I lost mine. [...] So even before I met with Lorna herself I liked this book as well as ice cream. (207)

In the two blessed years of peace that followed, Kelly read the book three times. The second allusion confirms Kelly’s close relationship with, and fascination for, *Lorna Doone*. His copy, assumedly carried close to his person along with Sgt. Kennedy’s note to his wife, is ruined years later while crossing the flooded Murray River to escape from the vengeful traps: “It were here my copy of LORNA DOONE were ruined” (*TH* 280). In this reference, the charm of romance genre is turned against Kelly so that like Kennedy’s sodden note, “nothing were writ on it no more” (*TH* 280), suggesting that Kelly’s heroic identification with Ridd is broken.

In a further reference to the absence of his book, “my LORNA DOONE was long ago ruined in the Murray” (*TH* 370), Kelly turns his attention to the newspapers that lined the shepherd’s hut while he hid from the police, and learnt about a ship used in the Civil War, an “iron-clad monster” called the *Monitor*. One fatal fantasy replaces another as he imagines, ”O that a man might smith himself into a warship of that pattern” (*TH* 371). In the last reference, Thomas Curnow intuits and exploits Ned Kelly’s identification with Ridd by using “romance” as a means to steal Ned’s history: “Let me remind you how LORNA DOONE sets out” (*TH* 385). He quotes from the
opening page of Blackmore’s text to ingratiate himself with the bushranger and betray him to the police. He links Kelly with Ridd as an ignorant yeoman who sought to clear his parish “from ill fame”, alluring him with the words, “I am an ignoramus but pretty well for a yeoman,” and quotes:

AND THEY WHAT LIGHT upon this book should bear in mind not only that I write to clear our parish from ill fame but also that I am nothing more than a plain unlettered man not read in foreign languages as a gentleman might be nor gifted with long words save what I have won from the Bible or master William Shakespeare whom in the face of common opinion I do value highly. (TH 385)

Curnow’s entrapment of Kelly in Glenrowan parallels Ridd’s encirclement of Doone Glen to enact a massacre. Curnow and Ridd trade roles. Kelly is revealed as the inversion of John Ridd, who represents an unchanging, established, propertied class while Ned Kelly represents the poor Irish community dislocated from Ireland and psychologically scarred by anti-Irish racism. Kelly fails to understand that romance, by effacing class struggle, produces injustice and mystifies the cause of rebellion.

A spatialized reading of True History with Lorna Doone provides a way of examining the causes of historical violence and the cultural attitudes that construct and sanction the violence underpinning each narrative. The changing nature of violence can be analyzed in a model of simultaneous history in which a historical romance narrative from Exmoor in the time period of the romantic revival merges with a historical period in colonial Australia to anachronistically join the fictional character of John Ridd with the historic outlaw, Ned Kelly. Kelly’s misreading of class, national, economic, religious and genealogical factors in his own and John
Ridd’s narrative unsettles the genre of historical romance to locate the element of violence as it plays itself out in the Exmoor and Glenrowan massacres. Ridd is rewarded in his pursuit of justice by hunting down the scapegoat, Carver Doone, and by being included in the society of the powerful elite. Kelly, in challenging the justice of the social order, is executed for his transgressions against it. In both narratives land and wealth provoked the rebellion that had its roots in the ideological and economic basis of a society in which those conceived as “others” were exploited. Kelly’s identification with Ridd as his heroic double reveals his flawed perception in misreading Lorna Doone and not recognizing Ridd as the adversary whose desires and prejudices unite him with the colonial squatters. Ridd is the thief who assists the governing class to lead a massacre against Catholic rebels to acquire land and wealth. Ridd’s point of view is the dominant voice in a text in which the working class is a hidden, silent, marginalized group. Lorna Doone held the key to reveal these social differences to Kelly and save him from being duped by Curnow. That he chose to be the “hero” of the story, rather than recognizing himself as the rebel leader and victim, reveals his vulnerability.

Reading the subtext with the modern text politicizes these issues of identity, especially class and religion in relation to cultural and historical contexts. Parataxis and simultaneity question the historical romance’s conceptual framework for historical representation by exposing political and social forces engaged in violent institutionalized injustice to shore up the positions of the oligarchy. Reading the relational text against the modern text reveals two models at work here, identification and resistance. The tension between these novels allows the reader to predict the threat to Ned Kelly, destabilize notions of outlawry and historical certitude, and
expose the cultural gap between Ridd and Kelly as that between the oppressor and the oppressed.

An analysis of the similarities and differences between John Ridd and Ned Kelly reveals how the emulation of the subtext is eventually “turned” in the modern text to expose injustice, class prejudice and violence. In their backgrounds, as Kelly recognized, both characters bear some similarities. Each antagonist becomes fatherless at the age of twelve and assumes responsibilities for his mother and siblings. Each is connected to a highwayman/bushranger who is instrumental in changing his life. Each was renowned as a violent and courageous fighter, and a leader of men. Each man is deeply influenced by his mother and idealizes his sweetheart. Each kills to save his life and that of others. Each relates to a religious group and identifies himself as a hero fighting for justice. Both John Ridd and Ned Kelly claim to write autobiographies to seek justice.

Their autobiographies highlight, however, the cultural differences in the perceptions of an English yeoman and an Irish settler in what constitutes justice. According to his autobiography, Ridd justifies leading a massacre against the Doones to avenge the murder of his father by the Catholic rebel nobleman, Carver Doone. For Ned Kelly, “justice” means avenging personal trauma and the poverty of the Irish settlers. But “justice”, according to Ian Dennis, “can obviously be a tool of vengeance, or in the form of an obsession” that activates “resentment generated by mimetic desire” (174). Ridd’s mimetic desire fuels his vengeance against the Doones so that “justice” also means the slaughter of rebels for the crown in order to gain wealth and recognition. Given the differences in the social settings of Ridd and Kelly, one a respected yeoman, and the other the son of an Irish convict, concepts of “justice”, “vengeance” and “desire” have different meanings and different outcomes for each
avenger. These outcomes, influenced by cultural markers, help to understand a process by which Ned Kelly is hanged as a scapegoat to ensure government control of the Irish settlers and John Ridd is awarded a knighthood.

The differences that emerge in Kelly’s narrative expose unjust property laws, cultural differences, class prejudice, and corruption among the police and colonial administrators. The Duffy Land Act of 1862 triggered the social injustice that underpinned the poverty of the settlers. This Act established a policy of free selection, which set two settlement types against each other. According to Patrick O’Farrell, in *The Irish in Australia*, the historical reality of “extreme rural poverty, anger and frustration which was the context of the Kelly Outbreak in north-eastern Victoria has internal dimensions attributable to Duffy” (137). Charles Gavin Duffy, a government minister, inaugurated the Duffy Land Act in 1862, creating “an illusory paradise of free selection” (137). The selectors encountered fire, drought and flood, but most of all they were defeated by their inability, through poverty, to select large enough, viable farming units. Wealthy squatters with larger units supported by a corrupt police force manipulated the law to their own advantage. As John McQuilton explains in *The Kelly Outbreak*, the ensuing struggles between the settlers and the squatters, grounded in class and property rights, exacerbated lawlessness of the type associated with social banditry. According to Hayden White in his essay “The Noble Savage Theme as Fetish”, the race fetish that the English imposed on the Irish transformed into “the fetishism of class” (195) in an Australian nineteenth-century context.

In contrast, John Ridd stole property from the Doones. As an Englishman and a yeoman of some standing he parallels the wealthy squatters in Carey’s novel. In the *Lorna Doone* narrative, great estates in the northcountry were confiscated in 1760, resulting in the establishment of Doone Glen by dispossessed noblemen. The Doones,
in opposition to the Crown, were Catholics and therefore regarded as rebels. John Ridd opposed the Doones, not only because a Doone had murdered his father, but also because he coveted Lorna Doone, and he was a Protestant, loyal to the King. Religious ideology gave impetus and justification to slaughter that concealed a desire for land, wealth and position, and conflict provided a means to achieve that ambition. His heroic stand against the Doones was grounded in revenge but also in being on the winning side. The slaughter of the Doones provided him with their wealth, with which he bought court privileges and position, and property for Ridd progeny.

The assault on the subtext and Ned’s identification with Ridd is directed towards the link between property and prosperity. Ridd’s Plover Barrow farm pictured with green grass, trees and orchards “full of contentment” contrasts with Ellen Kelly’s selection “where the grass were eaten to the roots” and “all them dead and ring-barked trees was the grave of honest hope” (TH 217-18). John Ridd has servants, wheat to harvest, sheep and all manner of livestock and vegetables. His affluence matches that of the judiciary and the squatters. As Kelly tells the story, McBean’s Kilfeera station and Whitty’s Myrrhee Station grazed “any number of healthy thoroughbreds some of them mares with foals” (TH 218). John Ridd and the squatters enjoy privileges denied the Kellys.

Comparing Ned Kelly’s genealogy and class with John Ridd’s displaces the illusory connections to discover stark cultural differences. Ridd records that his father was a churchwarden who sent his son to a worthy grammar-school, and “being of good substance [. . .] seized in his own right from many generations, of one, and that the best and largest, of the three farms into which our parish is divided” (LD 21). Kelly was the son of poor Irish currency, the convict, Red Kelly, who betrayed his compatriots in Ireland after he had organized a conspiracy to kill a wealthy farmer. He
was known as a traitor and a coward. Two histories converge and separate in narratives wherein each of the fatherless sons attempts to protect and provide food for his mother. Ridd poaches on Doone territory for loaches and as a result meets Lorna Doone, becomes aware of Doone wealth, and so begins his journey to fame and fortune. Kelly unlawfully slaughters a squatter’s heifer for which his father is blamed and imprisoned, and in a counter movement to Ridd’s good fortune, Kelly is drawn into his father’s sphere of violence, leading to his construction as an outlaw.

Food, housing, work and education, seemingly the rights of the privileged but not the poor, reveal the class violence that Ridd’s narrative conceals. Lack of these defines the social reality and the economic conditions of the Wangaratta area, and becomes synonymous with the rage that causes Kelly to rebel. As a hungry child with chilblained hands, Kelly found that the squatters in the area feasted handsomely. In the Shelton Pub dining room he “discovered a merry fire and a man in a 3pce.suit doing great damage to a plate of eggs and bacon” (TH 31). In Lorna Doone Tom Faggus, the highwayman, and a member of the Ridd family, sups on “a few oysters first, and then dried salmon, and then ham and eggs, done in small curled rashers, and then a few collops of venison toasted, and next to that a little cold roast- pig, and a wood-cock on toast to finish with” (LD 95). The representations of plenty in the families of Ridd and the wealthy squatters is critiqued in Kelly’s narrative in the image of a family that has “no meat but the adjectival possum” so that a boy is prompted to illegally kill a heifer in order that his family feast on beef (TH 20).

The prejudice underpinning class struggle, foregrounded in Kelly’s autobiography, reveals the destructive force of cultural bias. Severance from a homeland, transportation, a small and pitiable land holding, seven children, insufficient food and poor education distance the Kelly family and the Ridd family.
What is lost in many official records is recaptured in Carey’s novel to challenge prejudices that foster poverty and explain why Kelly becomes an outlaw and a scapegoat. The transference of religious, class and gender bias from England, as represented in Carey’s novel, leads to Kelly’s social banditry to protect his mother, family and friends from the violence perpetrated on them by a prejudiced governing body. Kelly was demonized in colonial Australia as being from a separate race whose degrading images, according to Perry Curtis, were published in English comic weeklies. Drawing on these middle-class English prejudices, colonial officials in southeastern Victoria assigned to themselves superior qualities and favourable land rights that they systematically denied to the Catholic Irish. The great religious divide between Protestantism and Catholicism reinforced their belief that the Irish were a race apart, that they were inferior and that they had the potential for violence like the nationalists in Ireland.

Degrading Caliban and simian images sustained bias and bigotry that transferred from English publications to colonial newspapers such as the Benalla Ensign and the Melbourne Argus. Ned Kelly was depicted as “a demonic kind of man” (TH 296) in a drawing in which his brows were joined across his nose and his lips twisted to persuade the people to hate and fear him. As Girard argues one of the “victimary signs” of persecution in mythology is a difference or “mark that identifies the selection of a victim for persecution” (The Scapegoat 31). Representations of persecution in myths translate in Carey’s narrative to the representation of an historical persecution in which signs of victimage are recognized in the central character, Ned Kelly. Representations of difference, as Fleming asserts, “function to canalize the hostilities of a crowd” (81). Collective violence, including imprisonment and physical brutality, were enforced to ensure Ned Kelly’s subordination.
Transgenerational violence marked him for discrimination because he was Irish and because his father Red Kelly was a convict in the brutal penal colony of Tasmania.

Ideological differences in *Lorna Doone* and *True History of the Kelly Gang* inform the treatment of an English yeoman, John Ridd, and a cultural outsider, Ned Kelly. Both men admitted in their autobiographies that they had killed in order to save their own lives or that of others, and both were leaders of a rebellion. One lived out his life with his “lifelong darling”, had “great stores of money” (*LD* 625), property, a title, a coat of arms and promise of progeny. Those in power rewarded Ridd’s violent deeds and theft while for Kelly colonial authorities sought to make an example of his rebellion. In Carey’s novel, Ned Kelly’s mother and her babe were imprisoned, Kelly was denied his love, Mary Hearn, and their unborn child, and his tormentors remained unpunished while he was hanged as an outlaw. Carey’s Ned Kelly failed to recognize that he was different from his imagined prototype, who usurped Doone wealth, disenfranchised a host of claimants, including “all the little farmers”, and paid the booty into the Exchequer to gain favour with Lord Chief Justice Jeffries, who called his murderous action “a very noble device” (*LD* 599). Ridd was aptly described by his cousin Ruth as knowing “which way the cat will jump” (*LD* 530) when deciding whether to take the side of the Protestant, Charles II, the Catholic, James II, or the “rebels”.

John Ridd’s self-serving attitude differs markedly from Ned Kelly’s. The dissimulation in Ridd’s narrative cloaking his ambitions to achieve wealth and recognition by violent means is challenged in Kelly’s narrative. Kelly directs his attention outward to protect his family, friends and neighbours, the poor Irish settlers. As their champion, he empathizes with their hardships, and, as O’Farrell argues, “yearned to sublimate the criminal into a defender of a noble cause” (138). The point
is well made that as a reward for heroic and courageous action in saving a life, Ned Kelly is given a sash, while John Ridd, accompanied by scores of yeoman, “his chosen band”, slaughters an enclave of robbers, plunders Doone wealth and is rewarded with a knighthood. Ridd’s assumed heroism conflates with that of colonial police who wiped out a colonial enclave of robbers, the Kelly gang at Glenrowan.

Protection of his mother gave impetus to Kelly’s decision to react against injustice and lead a rebellion. Kelly writes in response to Ellen Kelly’s exploitation by male partners in the management of her property, “When the worthless Frost & King closed around her like yellow dingoes on a chained up bitch I sought to protect her” (TH 261). Social reality gradually displaces Ned Kelly’s romantic vision when he sees his “queen” reduced by poverty and hard work to rock “the way old women do at a wake her big veined hands resting on her belly” (TH 249), her eyes sunk, her cheeks cleaving to her gums, her hair grey. His pity provokes vengeance against prejudiced authorities. Police corruption, according to Kelly’s narrative, underpins Ellen Kelly’s conviction. Condemnation of Ellen Kelly for attempted murder was a lie propagated by the Irish policeman, Constable Alexander Fitzpatrick, and readily believed by his superiors. Her “crime” detailed in Parcel 9 in Kelly’s epistle was to “clout” Constable Fitzpatrick over the head with a shovel following the information that he was engaged to one “tart”, had “got another pregnant”, and had promised to marry Kate Kelly. Ned Kelly shot him in the wrist after Fitzpatrick had drawn out a revolver. That Ellen Kelly could be convicted on the evidence of Fitzpatrick, who was a known perjurer, reveals prejudice not only against Irish settlers, but also against the Kelly family. Ellen Kelly’s unjust incarceration in prison is represented as one of the causes that inflamed Kelly’s rage and gave impetus to his decision to provoke a rebellion and
save her. But the decision itself is driven by romantic fantasy: the knight in shining armour rescuing the maid in distress.

The culmination of generational injustice and generational grief is articulated in two powerful sections in Carey’s novel, which express a postmodern metaphistorical consciousness towards traumatic colonial history and the quest to make moral sense of its ambiguities. In these illustrations the discourse of postmodernism, which Hutcheon describes as “a contradictory phenomenon, one that abuses, installs and then subverts the very concept it challenges” (*Poetics* 3), is integrated with the discourse of postcolonial theory in challenging colonial discourse and its effect on marginalized cultures. The first passage, in Kelly’s communal history, describes the experiences of the likes of Red Kelly and Ned Kelly, their oppression, and the causes for their revolt: “Men mangled upon the triangle of Van Dieman’s land men with sons in gaol men who witnessed their hard won land taken up by squatters men perjured against and falsely gaoled men weary of constant impounding on & on each day without relent” (*TH* 375). The second passage is the framed official version of history, outlining Kelly’s last stand at Glenrowan and death. The historian is Thomas Curnow, identified by the initials S.C., the shifting of T. to S. presumably to obscure his role in the execution. Curnow’s account, published in 1955, one year after his death, exemplifies how history works. As the government’s stooge, his narrative reflects passionate bias towards the Irish settlers and his desire to become famous for his part in the massacre. Kelly’s conversations with Byrne and Dan Kelly filter into the schoolteacher’s narrative, a poststructuralist strategy of introducing another discourse that serves to subvert Curnow’s story and reclaim Kelly’s history. Curnow’s recount of the outlaw’s arrogance is undermined by the suggestion of courage and loyalty underpinning Kelly’s naive promise to save his gang in the repetition of “I will, I
will”, and assuring them, “I am the ……Monitor, my boys” (TH 397). The first narrative reveals a postcolonial and postmodern discourse recalling Hutcheon’s idea of “the presence of the past” (Poetics 4), while the second narrative contests two historical accounts in a postmodernist discourse. Both narratives expose an apparently unchanging cycle of violence.

Carey’s novel challenges this perception of violence. Curnow’s framed narrative, beginning with the shootout at Glenrowan, the appearance of “the creature”, and the shooting of Ned Kelly, “a wild beast brought to bay”, closes with a detailed description of Kelly’s hanging. This is a narrative steeped in violence against one man, a scapegoat, who is regarded as a troublemaker in the colony. It corresponds with Ridd’s narrative of events leading to a massacre, unchallenged violence and scapegoating. Carey’s novel questions this violent designation by enclosing Kelly’s narrative within the frame describing his relationships with people. The violence between the doubles, Kelly and Curnow, takes on another dimension when a third person enters into the sets of relationships and offers solutions that have the potential to break the cycle of violence and deflect the scapegoat construction. An analysis of triangular desire across the texts of Lorna Doone and True History illustrates how two histories are constructed in Carey’s novel, the dominant history and the communal history. In the first, violence is continued and in the second it is checked allowing the reader in Slemon’s terms a binary vision to revise “those codes of recognition which we inherit from the colonial encounter, including those codes that make up our received notions of history” (164).

TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIPS.

The first triangular configuration in Blackmore’s text highlights the relationship of John Ridd with Carver Doone and Lorna Doone. The tissue of sinister
concealments that underpins social prejudices in this relationship is translated in
mimetic structures in Carey’s novel to disclose Ned Kelly’s struggle with
government, love, and a letter arranged paratactically against fortune, death, and time.
Kelly’s interaction with Thomas Curnow and Joe Byrne informs his contentious
relationship with government; his familial relationships linking him to Ellen Kelly and
Red Kelly reveal how love dominates actions that destroy his life, while his mediation
with Ellen Kelly and Mary Hearn produces violent confrontation, but also the writing
of the The Jerilderie Letter, a document that juxtaposes the people’s history with
imperial history. Tracing these triangular relationships across texts provides an
understanding of the cultural ideologies that inform the histories of Ridd and Kelly.

The mimetic desire of John Ridd and Carver Doone articulates concepts about
history and its corollary, ideology. John Ridd, a rival of Carver Doone, is separated
from his mimetic brother by class, wealth, religion and reputation. Carver Doone, a
Catholic nobleman and branded an outlaw, is set against John Ridd, a Protestant
farmer respected for his name and his honesty. Carver Doone’s murder of Ridd’s
father sets the stage for retaliation and rivalry in coveting the wealth and prestige of
Lorna Doone. John Ridd’s appropriation of a title for slaying two Protestant thieves
empowers him to turn against his rival, to kill and authorize the murder of a
community without remorse. The ideology justifying killing those with different
beliefs to safeguard a community camouflages the desire to plunder and appropriate
property. In acting out his vengeance in a night of slaughter Ridd mimics the
lawlessness of Carver Doone. His victims, surprised and unarmed, were executed
without trial. For this crime the King and Lord High Justice celebrated Ridd as a hero.
Emulation, transformation and disguise are located in Carey’s text when the violence
of the Doone massacre is glimpsed in the climax of the Glenrowan Outbreak and Curnow is recognized in the guise of Ridd.

Gender violence accompanies religious violence in the objectification and “othering” of women in historical romance fiction. An atrophied personality resulting from patriarchal control and subjugation for the purpose of exploiting Lorna Doone’s inheritance is obscured in the fiction of “the lifelong darling, of my more and more loved wife” (*LD* 627). Violence to the personhood of Lorna Doone is no less murderous than that perpetrated on the Doones. Ridd denies her a voice, sensibility or intellectual autonomy, emphasized in his killing of the Papist rebels, who are akin to her in religion and background, as if her opinion is a matter of indifference. In the triangular relationship in which she is a participant, Lorna Doone is a victim of the genre, her personhood destroyed by the desires of the avenging brothers, Ridd and Doone, who force her unwitting complicity in rebellion and murder. She is an ineffectual mediator. Violence continues unchallenged in the exploitation of characters and classes to gain possessions.

Reading Carey’s novel against Blackmore’s historical romance, the mimetic relationship of Ned Kelly with Thomas Curnow and Joe Byrne imitates and repairs the ideology of *Lorna Doone* by providing insights into how lies and dissimulation are strategies used to gain status and wealth from prestigious friends. Like Ridd, Curnow supports the winning side, the governing authorities. He is similar to Ridd in that he aims to be the hero of the siege at Glenrowan and he means to be recognized. Kelly’s meeting with Curnow evokes the colonial prejudice that haunted Kelly’s life, remembered when his mother has to beg the schoolteacher, Irving, to educate him. The appearance of schoolteacher Irving and Curnow bear strong similarities, for Irving “were a little cock with a big head and narrow shoulders his eyes alight with
finer feelings he did not wish to share with me” (TH 29) while Curnow’s head is “too large upon his narrow shoulders where it wobbled side to side as though all his mighty thoughts was a weight too great to carry” (TH 384). Kelly records that he greatly wanted to be an inkwell monitor but this duty was denied him until every child with an English name had a turn. The fictive autobiography later records the adult Kelly’s creation of another monitor to metaphorically revenge the discrimination leveled against poor Irish children at Avenel School:

Them scholars was all proddies they knew nothing about us save Ned Kelly couldn’t spell he had no boots Maggie Kelly had warts Annie Kelly’s dress were darned and fretted over like an old man’s sock. They knew our pater were in the logs and when we come to school each day they learned from Mr. Irving that all micks was a notch beneath the candle. (29)

Mr. Irving becomes Ned Kelly’s despised mimetic model since he denied Ned book knowledge. He hates Irving because he demeans and humiliates him. Feelings of repugnance and fascination are recreated in the meeting with the schoolteacher’s double. Curnow’s insinuation that Kelly knows nothing about books or writing repeats the bitter memory and once again he is seen as “an oaf in muddy boots tracking across some oriental rug” (TH 384).

As the narrative unfolds Ned Kelly and Thomas Curnow’s identities merge. Initially these mimetic doubles seem to be quite distinctive, incompatible opposites in appearance, in class, in education and in social status. Curnow’s intrusion into the little pub at Glenrowan suggests that he had a strategy in mind to meet and outsmart the outlaw whose reputation had gained him recognition and hero status among the people, attributes that Curnow covets for himself. Ned Kelly is everything that Curnow can’t be with his short crippled body. His enticement to gain the outlaw’s
trust taps into Kelly’s desire to be a scholar. He tempts Kelly with mention of the very books that Joe Byrne had given Kelly, *Lorna Doone, Shakespeare*, and the Bible, implying that he knew Byrne gave Kelly the book knowledge the English denied him.

As a result Joe Byrne is drawn into the circle of internal relationships. In his role as a participant he shares responsibility for the destructive forces unleashed on Ned Kelly. Byrnes’s reaction to Curnow as a liar and a ‘fizgig’ suggests that Byrnes knew that knowledge of his gift and Ned’s particular obsession with *Lorna Doone* were passed on by Aaron Sherritt, his erstwhile lifelong friend and Ned Kelly’s betrayer. Clearly, Sherritt revealed this information to Thomas Curnow and Curnow represents the government. Cunningly, Curnow intuits Kelly’s desire and his tendency to romanticize his life. He links Kelly to John Ridd by reciting words from the opening paragraph of *Lorna Doone*. Multiple interpretations underline his purpose in the recitation. It serves as a prelude for asking for Ned Kelly’s history, reveals Kelly’s fears concerning the “roughness” and the “parsing” of his writing, reawakens former submissiveness in handing over a paper to the “teacher,” and reactivates desire for his writing to be learned like that of the school teacher.

Joe Byrne’s intervention postpones Curnow’s offer to correct Kelly’s manuscript. A further opportunity occurs for Curnow to use literature known and respected by Kelly to further his scheme in being trusted, released and at liberty to warn the police. He reads an excerpt from *Henry V*, ostensibly to entertain the hostages but in fact to flatter, ensnare and outwit his adversary. As proof of his victory he plans to take Kelly’s manuscripts with him as a trophy. The ironic effect on listeners in the Glenrowan pub is their identification with the English army about to go into battle. Kelly, cast as Henry V and Dan Kelly and Joe Byrne as the “band of brothers”, are called upon to shed blood for their king. Kelly deftly inverts the
allusion that the Kelly Gang are brave English nobles, and in a final stroke defeats his
rival and alienates himself from all that Curnow represents by writing at the close of
his autobiography, “Them boys was noble of true Australian coin” (TH 389). It is a
validation of their identities as Irish/Australians, affirming the birth of an Australian
culture that is not an imitative model of English culture. The slaughter on Crispin
Crispian’s day in which the French lost 5000 men of noble birth is reenacted as Kelly,
Dan and Steve face a battery of gun fire from unarmoured assailants. The lesson of
the battle of Agincourt, repeated in the Siege of Glenrowan, is that armour stultified
its own purpose when it restricted mobility. The differences between the rivals, Kelly
and Curnow, vanish in the battle at Glenrowan

In a replay of the massacre of the Doones, police shoot the outlaws at the last
stand at Glenrowan. Curnow’s treachery results in the deaths of his rivals, Ned Kelly
and Joe Byrne, and in the theft of Ned Kelly’s history. Attributes of criminality,
ascribed to Ned Kelly by authorities, now apply to Curnow as well. He admits
stealing the manuscripts in the excerpt “The Siege at Glenrowan”, which he describes
as ripping out “the creature’s bloody heart” (TH 390), another vicious act which
psychologically “murders” Ned Kelly. Like his counterpart, John Ridd, he fights
rebels on behalf of the government, seeking recognition and glory, and, like John
Ridd, he becomes a hero in imperial history. In the analysis of this triangular
relationship, his violence against Irish settlers is exposed and he is revealed as a thief
and also a murderer. He plagiarized the manuscript and betrayed Kelly to the
government for execution

The vengeance that flows between the rivals destroys Curnow’s life after the
outlaw’s death. Kelly is celebrated over time as a writer and a hero while Curnow
needs police protection. Kelly’s manuscript survives the efforts of Curnow who edits
the work of the so-called “ignoramous.” Emphasized in Curnow’s notes is his hatred for the Kellys and the class they represent. His response to his wife’s concerns for the hostages reflects envy and class bias: “Don’t you see, everyone is for the Kellys? You were born here Jean. Have you no idea what class of person you are dealing with?” (TH 393) Unlike his rival, Curnow is denied the status of hero and lasting recognition. The last section of his narrative details his continued obsession with the souvenir he carried from Glenrowan, “which made private demands upon his sympathy” (TH 398). Curnow’s identity as a “villain” seems to be understood by him in time for, like John Ridd, he appears to be haunted by his role in the massacre.

Joe Byrne is both a rival of the schoolmaster and a mimetic brother to Ned Kelly. Byrne is initially different to Ned Kelly because he is a scholar, a quality Ned admires and tries to emulate. Byrne differs from Curnow because he belongs to the class of poor Irish settlers. Yet each character in this triangular structure is a thief and a murderer. Byrne’s role in the internal mediation is to counteract the effect of the schoolmaster’s treatment of Ned by introducing him to books, *Lorna Doone*, Shakespeare and the Bible, thus proving, in Ned’s eyes, that “Joe Byrne, the so-called CRIMINAL were a better schoolmaster than Mr. Irving who taught me how to make the ink without the pleasure of its use” (TH 207). The course Kelly takes of writing to achieve justice has the potential to avert the violence of the Jerilderie massacre. Mary Hearn prompts this strategy and Joe Byrne supports it by editing Kelly’s work.

Byrne’s relationship to Ned Kelly is that of disciple to master. Kelly writes, “he said I were his Capt. until death” (TH 348). Byrne admires Kelly’s courage, fame, and popularity as the “Great Champion” who defeats Wild Wright. Ned Kelly is the last of the folk-hero bushrangers and a hero to Joe Byrne for he represents colonial masculinity. Yet Byrne is different from his mimetic brother in that he does not
possess the same degree of rage. Activated by vengeance to repay Wild Wright for setting him up with a stolen chestnut mare, Kelly dreams, “I could feel my hands shattering as I crushed his jaw his brow his nose it were no pain but a kind of ecstasy” *(TH 197)*. Until Sherritt betrays Ned Kelly and mocks him before other men, Byrne is neither violent nor vengeful. Desire, in the form of mutual admiration and mateship, draws the friends closer together into an undifferentiated relationship.

Knowing the gravity of the consequences of staying with Kelly, Byrne agrees to be an accomplice in the robbery of Eurora bank and to build and wear a monitor. He recognizes that Kelly’s motivation for robbing banks and building monitors is to rescue his mother from Beechworth Prison, to save his friends from death, and to have his account of events read by people and politicians. Torn between his desire to escape to America and his admiration for his mate, and knowing Kelly to be “as good a man as I ever known” *(TH 328)*, Byrne chooses to stay. By doing so the disciple becomes a murderer as well as a thief.

Because mimesis engenders new reciprocities in a constant redoubling of the same ruses and strategies, the “mateship” factor of Joe Byrne with Aaron Sherritt and Ned Kelly sets up another configuration which results in death for each antagonist. Joe Byrne is both lover and slave of Aaron Sherritt because Sherritt, his childhood friend, supplies him with opium from the Chinaman. Byrne is caught in the infernal spiral of revenge when Sherritt betrays the whereabouts of the Kelly Gang to the police. As a consequence of Sherritt’s boast that he plans to shoot Byrne and desecrate his body, Joe Byrne, dressed as a centaur in ironclads, executes him. All participants in the triangular design become links in a chain of reprisals. Each claimed that murder was an act of self-defence. Each claimed his action was justified. Each becomes a scapegoat in the configuration. Lateral violence, resulting in violence to your own
kinsman, is not an uprising of angry settlers against their oppressors, but turned inward, becomes as an expression of mental anguish and rage against government authorities. This violence is confronted and recorded in Kelly’s autobiography to expose the incidents of fury and rage embedded in the colonial situation. Ned Kelly’s experience of government injustices and prejudices, compounded in poor selections, poverty and always living under the threat of government repossession of property, predicts his ill fortune leading to banditry.

Kelly’s love for his parents, Ellen Kelly and Red Kelly, sets him up as a victim in fighting for their causes. His relationship with his mother and her lovers represents another dimension of the political and psychological prisons that construct his entrapment. Ellen Kelly is a violent mediator at the apex of a mimetic triangle in which Red Kelly and Ned Kelly are rivals. Red Kelly’s death activates a cluster of triangular relationships in which Ned Kelly becomes the rival of her lovers. She is instrumental in destroying her husband and is also responsible for mapping Kelly’s tragic destiny by apprenticing him to Harry Power, the bushranger. Ned Kelly’s obsessive love for his mother means that the men standing between him and his mother, namely his father, Bill Frost and George King, become his rivals. Each revenge situation in Ned Kelly’s life, according to his fictional autobiography, has as its basis love for his mother, his desire to protect her, and his need for her approval and love. He is unable to leave the colony, but must confront his enemies declaring, “I cannot abandon my mother Mary you know that” (352).

Red Kelly is a figure of contempt to his wife because fearful of being imprisoned again, he refuses to select a block of land following the Duffy Act of 1862 on the basis that the Quinns will attract the “traps” with their wild behaviour. The discovery of Red Kelly’s transvestism to enact, unknown to Ned, the ritual of
“Molly’s Child” increases Ned Kelly’s shame for his father’s perceived weakness. It is only much later that Ned learns that transvestism practiced by his father and other men is not a sign of gender but of politics. The accumulated slander climaxes in Sgt. O’Neill’s story of “This Certain Man and the history of cowards,” which depicts his father as a murderer of women and children and a betrayer of his accomplices. Naming his father “coward”, as Ellen Kelly and O’Neil both do, drives Ned to act, as he believes his father should act—as a provider for a hungry family. He unlawfully slays a heifer, and does so in such a brutal manner that his action parallels his father’s slaughter of an animal in the ritual of “Molly’s Child” in Ireland. It is a terrorist act explained later by Mary Hearn as an act of political rebellion. By his deed, Ned Kelly kills his father spiritually, physically and mentally, for his father accepts guilt for the heifer incident, is imprisoned, and dies after being released.

Red Kelly is represented as the first victim in a chain of reprisals that lead to Kelly’s execution. Kelly recalls with guilt and tenderness, “Father son of my heart are you dead from me are you dead from me my father?” (TH 37). The vengeance Red Kelly’s death evokes in his son is compounded in Ellen Kelly’s recitation of Irish myths and legends, which encourage Kelly’s propensity to fantasize and to respond with violence to oppression. One of these, the story of the warrior Cúchulainn, foreshadows Ned’s death in the resurrection of the legendary hero in ironclad armour. The relationship of Ellen Kelly towards her son as the desired object is a destructive one. Her deal in selling her son to be tutored in robbery by Harry Powell is a survival strategy for herself and her children. It left the way open for Bill Frost, “the natty Englishman”, to move in with the Kelly family, paving the way for conflicted relationships and destructive mimesis between Frost and Kelly. Ned realizes, “I were already travelling full tilt towards the man I would become” (TH 82) in spite of his
aversion to the bushranger who is both brutal and untrustworthy. Enslaved to Powell, he is bullied into compliance and a life of crime and tutored in colonial politics. Harry Power’s bolthole at Bullock Creek, described as an “eyeless,” airless, bulletproof hut, recalls his father’s cell. In a text in which entrapment is a repeated motif, Power’s bolthole typifies Ned’s entrapment by his mother in a life of crime, entrapment in prison and entrapment in his ironclad armour.

By seeking to define himself as different from his father, Ned Kelly acts in counter-imitation from his rival by emphasizing his courage. Knowing his mother “were always attracted by courage” (TH 104), Kelly’s actions result in a breakdown of differences that merge his identity with his father as a murderer. Each act of “courage” brings him closer to his rival, to the point where, like his father, he is powerless to help Ellen Kelly. He confronts the Chinaman who is threatening his mother and is consequently charged with highway robbery. According to his narrative he protects his mother from the threat of being shot by Fitzpatrick by shooting the policeman in the wrist. Both he and his mother are charged with attempted murder. In the police manhunt that follows policemen are killed at Stringybark Creek. The past interacts with the present so that Ned, like his father, is chained to trans-generational, reciprocal violence, and Kelly is not able to prove himself different from his rival and model.

Ned Kelly’s identity merges with that of his mother in the desire to live and work on a settlement that yields a decent living. Ned visualizes himself in the role of his father, working for and protecting his family. His banishment from that position and replacement by Ellen Kelly’s lovers precipitates violent confrontation with Bill Frost and George King. Possessions direct the tragic actions of both mother and son. Once his mother is imprisoned, those who “possess” her become Ned Kelly’s bitter
rivals. They include “the Governor the Premier & Superintendents Nicholson and Hare & below them all the great pyramid of serfs Fitzpatrick & Hall & Flood nearly 100 of them to be defeated” (*TH* 324). Ned Kelly’s attention is directed at defeating his rivals and saving his mother by reinventing an Irish warrior in the Monitor who can break down prison walls and rescue Ellen Kelly. Instead he becomes involved in a cycle of reprisals that bring him into conflict with colonial authorities and the police.

However, mimesis has two sides, one that disrupts the community and another one that holds it together. The interaction of Mary Hearn with Ned Kelly has the potential to avert conflict while his relationship with his mother encourages revenge. Mary Hearn has a sense of the political and refuses to be romanced by Irish myths that have as their basis a futile enactment of revenge. Recently arrived from Ireland she has witnessed the tragic consequences of vengeance against wealthy English landholders. She is able to interrupt the disruptive effects of conflictual mimesis by overturning the myth of “Molly’s Child” in which the mimetic cycle is represented. What her story reveals is that ritualistic violence corresponds to real violence and produces retaliation and fear. Steve Hart and Dan Kelly, masquerading as “sons of Sieve”, a group of Irish rebels who disguise themselves in dresses to terrorize their English enemies, attempt to punish local farmers and inflame local revenge. Her narrative deflects the violence of Hart and Kelly by reaching into the past to retrieve a memory of herself as a child witnessing the sadistic torment of a horse chosen to represent England because the white blaze on its forehead was in the shape of Ireland: “She heard grown men blame the horse for taking their common land they said the proof were having Ireland on his head and they demanded of the poor beast why they should not take Ireland back from him” (*TH* 316). In a spiral of reprisals, her father, like Ned’s father, names the perpetrators, who were executed.
Mary Hearn has experienced the circularity of revenge in Ireland and confronts it again in colonial Australia. She assumes the role of a political mediator by suggesting two options to avert Kelly’s fatal encounter with the authorities. Firstly, she encourages Ned Kelly to write down the story that he had related to her, a different story starting from “the time Fitzpatrick tried to marry Kate. That part” (TH 300), so that their daughter will “know the proper story of their da and who he is and what he suffered” (TH 301). She persuades Kelly to send his letter to Mr. Cameron MLA and to print his narrative for distribution among the people. Her idea is to counteract the newspaper depiction of Kelly as “the devil the Horror of the Ages” and give him the voice denied by the authorities to speak to the people. She says of the people, “You must ease their lives not bring them terror” (TH 316). This illustrates her ideal of fostering a community relationship in which Kelly’s identity links to that of others in a stable balance rather than exacerbating a situation in which he is the romantic hero letting deeds turn upon themselves in cycles of resentment and violence. Mary’s next option to avert Ned’s death is withdrawal from the conflict by planning bank robberies in which none were hurt and use the money to leave Australia and flee to America.

Ned’s overt plan, romanticized in imagining himself as Robin Hood or Rob Roy, is to use the money to buy the protection of the people. Covertly, his desire is to break his mother out of Beechworth Gaol. Byrne’s accusation, “I know him girlie he loves his ma like nothing else” (TH 327), suggests the main reason that prevents Mary’s gesture towards a non-violent solution from materializing. Kelly’s protective love for his mother counteracts Mary Hearn’s conciliatory solutions and initiates a revenge process when Ellen Kelly tied a message to a rock and threw it out of her prison. The scrap of paper bore the laboriously written words “NED KELLY.” Kelly
records, “thus did young girls write love letters to their men”, suggesting that he sees a parallel in the love of a man for his mother and his wife. The “demand made of a son by them 2 words was clear” (TH 324) and Ned’s sentiments direct the course of his action to “burst the prison walls asunder and take her back myself” (TH 324).

Positioned as enemy twins with Ned Kelly, Ellen Kelly and Mary Hearn are not matched as twins of revenge and reprisals. Mary’s conciliatory approach in encouraging Ned to write his story extends to the idea of relating his experiences with the police to captive audiences in bank raids where “no attempt at violence or roughness was made on any of the hostages” (TH 343) to encourage the sympathy of the people. However, since the Press was on the side of the governing authorities, The Jerilderie Letter is not printed using Ned Kelly’s words, proving to him that the colony is unfairly administered. His resolve to rescue his mother from Beechworth Gaol increases, causing Mary to predict, “She will not die in gaol but you will perish if you remain in the colony” (TH 351).

Mary Hearn’s interventions are directed at promoting communal harmony and resolving conflict. The possibilities of seeking a non-violent solution by writing and publishing the people’s story to counteract the government’s account are denied Ned Kelly because the newspapers reflect the attitudes of the authorities and suppress the publication. As the peaceful mediator in the triad, Mary Hearn breaks the cycle of violence by withdrawing herself and her daughter from the revengeful situation. Kelly, according to Carey in interview with Andreas Gaile, “is a man of flesh and blood, facing modern weapons, and thinking about how he can defend himself”(6), drawing not unreasonable inspiration from the idea of tanks, featured at that time in the Australian newspapers. He stays in the colony and dies as the government’s
scapegoat and the people’s hero. What lives on is The Jerilderie Letter revealing Kelly’s version of government violence to Irish settlers.

The modern novel undermines and differentiates itself from the historical romance by narrating the point of view of the people through the voice of Ned Kelly in opposition to the government’s story in which violence and revenge continue unchecked. Mary Hearn’s intervention as a conciliatory mediator confronts violence, and she withdraws with her daughter from the cyclical violence begun in Ireland. Ned Kelly dies but he asserts ethical action in writing The Jerilderie Letter to oppose injustice and to assist in creating, as Hayden White writes in The Content of the Form, “a change in consciousness that will finally make a unified humanity possible” (69). He speaks for oppressed workers in writing the people’s history.

METAHISTORICAL FOCUS.

Ned Kelly is a hero with a difference. His social struggle changed the repetition of violence. His desire to be a hero is revealed by reading down into the text to identify the society and the history of the historical heroes with whom he allies himself. This intertextual activity allows for multiple historical voices to exist simultaneously, producing interpretations and understandings of the textual unconscious underpinning Kelly’s social struggle. Ned Kelly as the subject can locate himself in time and space, building cultural alliances in Irish folk tales and thematic links to Arabian fables, “Doone” legends of the West Country during the reign of Charles II and James II, Shakespearian history and romance plays, shipping technology of 1861 when the “Monitor” was designed, and an eighteenth-century English highwayman. Located in these levels of history as Cúchulainn, Ali Baba, John Ridd, Henry V, Romeo, the Monitor and Dick Turpin, Ned Kelly’s voice fragments,
reshapes and asserts its difference. He is given a voice to challenge the inquisitors. In the narratives of his fabulatory heroes, cyclical violence continues unchecked.

Irish folk legends such as Cuchulainn, the Banshee and St. Bridget, told to Kelly as a child, captured Kelly and shaped him to a cultural past. The Irish brought with them their legends. The importance of the stories to the cultures that write them lies in the power they contain to be creative and redemptive but they can also be destructive if they contain the seeds of revenge. Ellen Kelly retold fables that had deep significance for her son. Cuchulainn, the chief hero of the second of three cycles of ancient Irish mythology, was a warrior and the foremost hero of Ulster. Single-handed he held back the advancing hosts of Connacht. According to Jeffrey Gantz’s translation of the legend, Cu Chulaind, the people of Ulster advised their three heroes to go to Cú Rui for judgment. He decreed, "Of all the warriors in Ulaid and Ériu …none is your equal for courage and skill and honour” (87). The cultural implications of reawakening mimetic desire and destructive mimesis through myth become problematic when a society is in a state of disorder. In the shepherd’s hut on the Bogong High Plains, Kelly, like Frankenstein, plans a recreation of this mythic monster, based on the idea of the ironclad warship, the Monitor. Protected by armour, he would then be an engine like the Great Cuchulainn to blast down the doors and smash the walls of Beechworth prison to free his mother. The technique of imitation used in this imagery establishes a strong relationship with the tradition of Irish myth to underscore the historicity of its sources. The imitation embodies and dramatizes a passage of mythic history that remembers conflict but also marks Ned as aware of a past that preserves, resuscitates, and recreates his place in colonial history as a hero.

Eclectic imitation transplants religious and magical narratives of Ireland into the colonial situation to restate a living culture, demonstrated in the story of the
Banshee and the legend of St Brigit. The Banshee, an Irish fairy, is the Death Messenger who appears as an ugly old crone dressed in red. When she reveals her long golden hair and begins to comb it as if to soothe herself, Ellen knows that the Banshee had come to take a life. Intuiting that the hag has come to claim Ned, Ellen Kelly swings an axe at the creature. At that moment many miles away, Ned hears a dreadful shriek and falls down onto the cold earth as if dead. At dawn Ned finds Tom Buckley dead in his miner’s cottage. Connecting the wail with the Banshee Ned gallops for home, fearing for his mother’s life. The imaginative energy that floods such a telling flows in directions that challenge Ellen Kelly’s “love” for her son and represents her as a malevolent force in his life. In a sense she is the Banshee. Prior to the appearance of the Banshee Ellen was brushing her own long hair. The settlement is in a state of desolation, Ellen is expecting Bill Frost’s child, Frost is frequently away and Ellen is exhausted with her life. Resuscitating the Banshee myth is a means for Ellen to express her need for her son’s help and for Ned to confirm his mother’s love. What Ellen Kelly needs from her son is a return from her investment in apprenticing him to a bushranger. Her insensitivity and cruelty expressed in saying “I paid the b----r 15 quid to take you on. You are his apprentice now” (TH 102) makes the son feel himself “a mighty fool he’d been bought and sold like carrion” (TH 103). Her trickery destroys Ned Kelly’s innocence and predetermines his tragic death. In an inverted image of the Banshee and its model, Ellen Kelly, Mary Hearn combs her long black hair to seduce Ned Kelly into writing down his narrative of the oppression of the poor settlers to combat the Banshee whose appetite for death and revenge is insatiable.

The sense of loss of a precious past makes itself felt when a legend passes from the reckoning of people who were “ripped from Ireland like teeth from the
mouth of their own history and every dear familiar thing had been abandoned on the docks of Cork or Galway or Dublin” (*TH* 99). While the hateful Banshee thrives like blackberry in the new climate the legend of St. Brigit dies since it becomes clear that St Brigit has lost her power in the new colony to bring the milk down from the cows’ horn to help the calving. The imitative strategy in recalling how Ellen Kelly, in imitation of her parents, makes straw crosses at lambing time and hangs red strips of cloth from trees constructs over time the slow wasting of a cultural narrative. The Irish settlers as a whole can be seen as suffering from a kind of privation that recall of a rural ritual can only underscore. The harshness of plains “baked as hard as hell” suits the Banshee but causes pastoral legends to fade. She came on board the cursed convict ships “and combed her hair all the way from Cork to Botany Bay” (*TH* 100), in anticipation of the misery caused by dislocation and hardship. The reanimation of the Banshee tale transfers the image of death and desolation onto the Australian landscape. It reaches across a cultural gap to reflect the essential components of the colonial experience of the Irish settlers, particularized in Ned Kelly.

The tale of Ali Baba, conflated with the story “How Whitty Got His Acres” resonates thematically to illustrate the political power structure in colonial Australia. Allusions to, and imitations of, narratives in Carey’s novel reveal a confrontation with the past that illustrates social conflict as brutal and unjust. Carey’s text returns to the collection of Eastern tales in *The Book of a Thousand and One Nights* when Ned asks Harry Power to tell him the story of “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.” Instead Harry tells “the story of how James Whitty got his acres” (*TH* 85). These diverse narratives wed the personal with the collective as well as personal with mythic and religious experience. Ned’s history becomes multi-dimensional wherein the three historical events, that is, Ned’s autobiography, the Ali Baba narrative and Whitty’s story of a
contemporary thief are understood to be simultaneous. Given his tendency to
romanticize and relate to the hero of each story, Ned sees himself as a reincarnation of
Ali Baba instead of the robber-chief. Yet Ali Baba plunders the cave while the robbers
are absent and carries away a bag of ashrafis. The identity of “thief” oscillates from
one character to the other, and dreadful punishment is meted out as a penalty for
transgressions against another’s possessions. Ali Baba finds his brother’s body
quartered and hung on either side of the cave after he is discovered by the robber band
trying to steal their treasure. The spell that opens the door of the cave, “Open, O
Simsim!” eludes him. Later, Ali Baba’s handmaiden, Morgiana, pours boiling oil into
forty barrels wherein the robbers are hidden and scalds them to death. The bandit
chief is slain by Morgiana when she plunges a dagger into him as she dances and Ali
Baba claims the ill-gotten wealth. Ali Baba is a successful thief. The story closes in
R.F. Burton’s translation of *The Book of a Thousand and One Nights*: “Thus Ali Baba
and his household lived all their lives in wealth and joyance in that city where erst he
had been a pauper, and by the blessing of that secret treasure he rose to high degrees
and dignities” (764). Harry Power chooses to transpose the ancient thief, Ali Baba,
into a contemporary setting and calls him James Whitty. Harry’s narrative calls the
given codes of the fable into question by means of anachronistic juxtaposition. Wealth
achieved by theft and violence is the issue revealed by the narrative. Harry Power
understands the political power structure of the colony and attempts to educate Ned
into an understanding of his position in a society where the thieves represent the
squatters, who compromise arable land and become wealthy like Ali Baba, at the
expense of the less fortunate, who struggle to make a living. By reworking the fable,
Harry attempts to dislocate the romantic sensibility that characterizes Carey’s Ned
Kelly.
James Whitty is another successful thief who leaves a trail of victims in his wake. Harry Power cloaks the story of Squatter Whitty, the wealthy farmer, in an Irish folktale rich in humour and religious imagery. In Harry’s narrative, Whitty does a deal with the devil so that each time he wants choice acreage, he is required to throw a marble into St. Mary’s Church in Beveridge. Whitty is so degenerate that each time he throws the marble he desecrates a religious icon but is rewarded with more land. Whitty finally outwits the devil with the help of his wife, who is a Tipperary woman, by calling on the devil to make honest men of lawyers. Since this is beyond the devil’s power, Whitty escapes hell and keeps his acres. The wily Harry Power shapes his story partly to repair his damaged image and show that a bag of marbles won by a bushranger as part of his booty has marvelous potential and is not to be sneered at. More importantly the narrative illustrates Harry Power’s understanding of the reality of the social circumstances in portraying how the squatters were picking the eyes out of the country and taking the soft, rich lands for their livestock. McBean, squatter and powerful magistrate, figures as the devil and a representative of the corrupt institutionalized justice system under attack in the narrative. McBean colludes with Whitty to rent or occupy the common ground. As a result a poor man can no longer find a place to feed his stock in the drought-ridden country. Horses that are left grazing by the government road are taken by Whitty’s drones and locked away in a pound. Poor farmers then had to give a bill of sale or borrow money to release them.

The message is a political one. Juxtaposing “How Whitty Got His Acres,” “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” and Ned’s history explains how anachronism becomes a source of aesthetic, ethical power in the narrative’s attempt to make sense of traumatic colonial history. “Unfairness” in the implementation of the land laws sets up conditions of resentment, social trauma and rebellion that trigger cyclical revenge. In
retaliation for impounding mares in foal reared by Tom Lloyd and Ned Kelly, Kelly breaks the lock at Oxley Station and takes back what he legally owns. When Dan Kelly is accused, arrested and tortured, Ned Kelly is stirred to vengeance in recognition that the hard circumstances of poor settlers in being squeezed out of a decent living is the fault of McBean, Whitty and their ilk in connivance with the politicians and the police. In a reversal of devil imagery, Kelly, “like a serpent inside his arteries” (TH 218) invades McBean’s Kilfeera Station “to teach his torturers that they could not steal our stock and threaten our families without suffering the consequences” (TH 218). He cuts the barbed wire fences and steals fifty thoroughbreds. Like Ali Baba and Robin Hood, Kelly steals from the rich, gives money to the needy to win their friendship and enjoys the pleasure of it. He and other dispossessed farmers gather at Bullock Creek to build a world where they would be left alone. The strategy of renewing the thematic content of “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” plays a constitutive role in Ned Kelly’s story to express how theft, vengeance and violence are elements common to protagonists in both narratives.

Reshaping the brutal present in dialectical imitation of an Irish folk tale, “How Whitty Got His Acres” illustrates how the strategy of imitation leads to and reinforces self-perception. Both strategies reveal complex imitation where history, time, fabulation and intertextuality are thematized to underscore the conflict and injustice inherent in the text’s construction of the colonial world.

Allusions to the romance narratives of Romeo and Dick Turpin also reflect Kelly’s imaginative association with the heroes of romance. It is ironic that in Ned’s narrative of economic and class struggle, his predilection for romance connects him with heroes who are well connected (such as Romeo) and notorious (such as Dick Turpin). Yet these sometimes briefly articulated cultural alliances provide contingent
hermeneutics whereby Ned transplants the reader into the arena of the political.

Romeo is the son of a wealthy Veronese family who has favourable connections with the Prince, but he is also the victim of the state and the Montague and Capulet warring families, each of whom want to ensure their powerful positions and wealth. Romeo is the scapegoat whose love for Juliet is doomed. Ned Kelly’s allusion that “I were Romeo himself riding through the gap above Glenrowan the night sky a deep royal blue and the outline of Bald Hills clear above it” (TH 299) towards his Juliet hiding in a hut in an area ringed with police rehearses the idea of “a pair of star-cross’d lovers” (Rom. Prologue). In imitation of Romeo, Ned is also the pitiful victim of state authorities whose intervention, in the form of an undelivered letter, will ensure a tragic end to his love for Mary Hearn.

In the anti-chronological path of Kelly’s life reference to another bushranger, Dick Turpin (1706-1739), alludes to traces of Ned Kelly’s life and death. Harry Power reminds Kelly, “You aint some barefoot Irish mutt no more you’re Harry Power’s offsider” and tells him to “watch the show” called “Dick Turpin” as he stood in the middle of the road “his sawn off carbine in his hand he were the very picture of a bushranger” (TH 79). Similar images of outlawry from the historical past shadow Kelly’s life. Turpin was an English robber who was convicted for cattle stealing. He went into partnership with Tom King, a well-known highwayman, and later became a horse dealer. Turpin’s documented history is romanced in Harrison Ainsworth’s novel Rockwood, which gives an account of the outlaw’s famous ride on his mare, Black Bess, from London to York. Unlike “Tom Haggus, the great highwayman, and his young blood mare, the strawberry” of the Lorna Doone romance (LD 88), Turpin did not repent, make a good marriage and live happily ever after. He was hanged on April 7, 1739. Both bushrangers are heroised, one is punished with death while the other is
reformed and lives a charmed life. The moral ambiguity of these stories of outlawry from the literary historical past, known to Ned Kelly through his reading of *Lorna Doone* and glamorized by Harry Power, contribute to his fascination with romance but obscure his understanding that he bears, in Fleming’s terminology, “the property of marginality” (51), which marks him as a scapegoat in colonial Australia.

Cultural, thematic and romantic spatialized narratives animate Ned Kelly’s life and direct his actions when he imitates the hero. In doing so he is caught up within the pathway of cyclical violence Benjamin’s “Angel of History” envisages. Mary Hearn draws wisdom from Ireland’s cultural past in recognizing how cyclical revenge is generated. She provides Kelly with the opportunity to follow her lead, that is, to choose several alternatives to violence, by communicating with government officials and the people, and withdrawing from violent confrontation. Kelly writes *The Jerilderie Letter*, but he fails to leave. Constructed as a hero with a hero’s courage and imagination, loyalty to family and mates, an innate sense of decency and the will to challenge injustice, Kelly bequeaths a legend to Australians. He confronts police who were intent on taking the lives of the Kelly boys and dies battling unfairness.

The issue of Kelly’s politicized identity and scapegoating is challenged in the inclusion of *The Jerilderie Letter* among other documented and fictive texts, suggesting that Carey’s text does not limit itself to one model to revise colonial history. Employing the metaphor of imitation, the structure of the model copies methods of historical documentation in the excerpts from the “Parcels” as well as excerpts from *The Jerilderie Letter* to suggest the possibilities of different types of history and historiography. With all its imagined authenticity Ned Kelly’s life story begins with an introductory narrative about his death described as an “Undated, unsigned, handwritten account in the collection of the Melbourne Public Library,” and
marked with an accession number from a library catalogue, a literary deception that reminds readers how easily fragments of anonymous documents can be compiled into a historical narrative. The illusion of reality is dispelled upon investigation that there is no such library by that name in Melbourne and no such document exists. This text is a struggle to combat the authenticity of the documented version of history as told through the perspective of authorities and newspapers.

The illusion of authenticity is sustained in the collection of “thirteen parcels of stained and dog-eared papers, every one of them in Ned Kelly’s distinctive hand.” The text’s success in concealing imitation calls into question the difficulty in identifying lies and misinformation in documents. The text asserts its own originality by subtly imitating Parcel headings and a description of contents. The implication is that by documenting and commenting on the sources, the veracity of each parcel can be easily checked. Regardless of the transparency of the feigned authenticity, Ned Kelly’s narrative tells us about things that officialdom did not know or wanted to conceal. By juxtaposing two traditionally separate literary genres, the documentary heading and Ned Kelly’s autobiography, history becomes on the one hand the documentary historical mode of representation and on the other a narrative of self-construction. The brief statement that resembles bibliographical information in library catalogues conceals the cultural and social milieu, and the attitudes, grounded in ideologies, that determine politicized issues of identity. People are objectified and violence camouflaged, in contrast to the autobiography where the people are humanized within that culture.

Ned Kelly’s narrative focuses on fighting for justice in a world of privileged gentlemen who understand that they are superior to the class he represents. In Commissioner Standish’s mansion in Toorak Street they co-opt Irish “underlings” to
fight their battles and make servants of Irish policemen at their dinners. Corruption, self-interest and commodification are endemic. John Fitzpatrick warns that Kelly’s temporary reprieve at the hands of the English officers will be followed by suppression and punishment when they can no longer use him. The existence of a purely hierarchical social order that differentiates classes by property relations is clear in Fitzpatrick’s warning that Ned is nothing but a pawn in a political power play: “They’ll declare your mother A Person Not Suitable then they’ll annul her lease. They don’t want your family in the district that’s what they said” (TH 166). Such revelations in Ned Kelly’s narrative construct a perspective that differs from the brief “documented” summaries. The paratactic juxtaposition of the two genres implies that Carey’s novel commits what Elias calls historicization, that is, it strangles or kills history by encircling it with narrative. This violent authorial strategy is necessary to the novel’s political and ethical perspective. It offers a severe indictment of a corrupt Victorian police force, state-sanctioned perjury, tyrannical government officers and brutal treatment of the most vulnerable and powerless members of society. Kelly’s narrative suggests an alternate perspective on a historical episode, questioning it and exposing its arbitrary nature. The result is that any clear distinction between the fictional and historical is dissolved.

Working with the original text of The Jerilderie Letter, Carey’s novel gathers in and transforms a web of interconnected images or conceptions, all bearing on the dynamic act of imitation, and is deftly titled, True History of the Kelly Gang. Devoid of the prefix “A” or “The”, the title suggests the possibilities of different types of history and historiography and that this novel is among many interpretations of documented and fictive histories of Ned Kelly. The authenticity of drawing on The Jerilderie Letter to represent Kelly’s perceptions of his historical situation is
conveyed in the way Carey’s text copies poignant phrases such as “the shamrock, the emblem of true wit and beauty” (JL 45), and “all of true blood bone and beauty” into the novel’s text. Exhortations such as “We proved there was no taint we was of true bone blood and beauty born” (TH 369) imitate The Jerilderie Letter as a way of recreating the historical past. The creative energy employed in extending the process of imitation to make a subtle new meaning emerging with the words “Them boys was noble of true Australian coin” (TH 389) suggests turning away from the official government record of outlawry and violence to readmit history as productive in affirming the birth of an Australian culture emerging from the violent colonial context.

Imitation in Carey’s novel is a form of repairing history to combat imitative historical records in which violence is unchecked. Using The Jerilderie Letter, Carey’s novel demonstrates the difference between imitation and literary theft in a competitive literary milieu in which Ned Kelly and Thomas Curnow are rivals. Curnow stole Ned’s manuscript and continued to “labour obsessively over the construction of the dead man’s sentences” (TH 398). The small grey pencil marks with which he defiled the original document represent the desecration of a life and a document in an act of deliberate and malicious theft. The theft, in Carey’s novel, is clearly exposed because the twelve page pamphlet in the collection of the Melbourne Library “contains elements in common” with Ned’s handwritten account, suggesting strongly that Curnow usurped the place of the manuscript’s author. As a literary thief, Curnow is a parody of the imitator who wants the reader to “trace” him in the novel to evoke the “echo” of Ned Kelly’s voice in The Jerilderie Letter. His voice bears vital significance on the expressed meaning of the text, which lies in the rage and revolt stirred in him by the brutality and injustice of the colonial system.
The combative orator, Ned Kelly, is heard again in Carey’s text, narrating the incident of the stolen mare and Constable Hare’s attempt to arrest him. This episode challenges the patchwork attempt of Thomas Curnow, the plagiarist, to narrate Ned Kelly’s history with authenticity. In Carey’s text the incident of Hare’s brutal arrest is repeated in faithful imitation of *The Jerilderie Letter* and “turned” to make a powerful point of the brooding rage that was generated by the unjust treatment and its aftermath. Kelly was robbed of his youth and sentenced to three years imprisonment for stealing on the evidence of Hall, well-known perjurer. Kelly writes that while the turnkeys were heaping him with threats and insults, his rage was born: “even a green log will burn when the heat is high enough. Many is the night I have sat by the roaring river the rain never ending them logs so green bubbling and splitting blazing in a rage no rain can staunch” (*TH* 186). Deftly the novel returns to the past, to *The Jerilderie Letter*, transformed to include the literary genesis of Ned’s revolt. The narratives created as a result of literary theft lack the emotional content recreated in Carey’s text.

The documented history of Kelly’s life conceals the full extent of the physical, social and psychological prisons that construct the story of his life. Allusions to generational trauma provoke ethical responses to Kelly’s situation. The presumed threat of the Irish in colonial Australia, represented by Ned Kelly and his gang, demonstrates the way mimetic contagion works and justifies stigmatizing and scapegoating. Those on the periphery are targeted to become scapegoats. According to Girard, “The process of collective violence [. . .] is always a version of what we call scapegoating” (*Theater* 204). Scapegoat rituals, he theorizes, are most likely to happen in time of crises. The settlement of Australia was such a time when land grabs initiated individual and collective aspects of mimetic desire that mutually reinforced each other. Those who condemned Ned Kelly project upon the scapegoat “the
violence that is in fact evenly distributed among all characters” (*Theater* 88). As Carey points out in the interview with Gaile, “for a so-called violent outlaw there’s very little violence in the story: I think his defence of his actions at Stringybark Creek is not only believable but, in the broader context, absolutely correct” (6). Given the physical, economic and racial violence inflicted on Ned Kelly and his family by colonial authority, violence weighs heavily upon Kelly’s accusers.

Ned Kelly’s narrative of self-construction is about “filling in the lies and silences” in Australian history. Thomas Curnow concludes the novel in his documentation of the Siege at Glenrowan. In his role as the government’s stooge and mouthpiece he constructs Kelly as “the devil himself”, stressing his contempt for the outlaw in language weighted with malevolence. “Ignorance “ is a repeated motif to denigrate his adversary. The coveted manuscript is “disgusting to his touch” (*TH* 390). The language of violence predicts the assault on Kelly’s history. Yet fragments of Curnow’s documents reveal the sentiments of the Irish settlers whom Kelly represented for “they seemed to flock from the gum trees” (*TH* 398) to the funeral of the Kellys. To the government Kelly was a scapegoat whose death ensured the continuity of social order in the community. To the Irish settlers and many contemporary Australians he was a hero who stood for social justice. Carey’s novel adds to the historiography in retrieving Kelly’s voice from how the outlaw represents himself in the Jerilderie Letter. Kenneth Baker, judging panel chairman who presented Peter Carey with his second Booker Prize in 2001, commented, “The judges chose Peter Carey’s *True History of the Kelly Gang* because it is a magnificent story of the early settler years in Australia expressed through the unforgettable voice of a vilified man who came to stand for more than he knew.”
The historical self behind the autobiography is humanized and stylized in the retrieval of Kelly’s voice represented in *The Jerilderie Letter*. It is mobilized, theatricalized and mythified by the performative character of the narrative—mobilized to reveal historical injustice and class struggle, theatricalized in the way Ned Kelly’s speaking voice lends a certain authority to the imagery of plunder, prejudice and institutional violence, and made mythic in the representation of the outlaw as a victim of persecution.
CONCLUSION

These contemporary novels construct new communal histories to reshape the lives of Patrick Lewis, the English patient, Jack Maggs and Ned Kelly in a more life-affirming manner than that glimpsed through the conservative judgments of their precursor texts. These new histories are life-affirming because they do not appear to alienate or scapegoat. Contrary to their construction in the bounded narratives of documented histories, the protagonists in spatialized time are portrayed in a sequence of allusions as multifaceted. Often they are constructed as heroes whose speaking voices lend a certain authority to the important narratives they convey about social justice and the cultural policies and practices that provoked their rebellions during moments of historical crises. In the doubling of two texts and the conflation of two histories a point of reconciliation is reached when, through the intervention of mediators, and the telling of a communal story, the chain of vengeance is cut, and the historical scapegoat is liberated.

The new texts demonstrate, in contrast to their precursor texts, that an alternative model of history challenges the violence that constructs historical scapegoats. Like their scapegoat doubles in the subtexts, Enkidu, Gyges, Magwitch and Carver Doone, the historical scapegoats, Patrick, the English patient, Maggs and Ned Kelly bear what Fleming describes as the “characteristic distortions” of the disenfranchised, when their narratives are recounted from the perspectives of their persecutors and they are portrayed as victimizers. Situated in triangular relationships with powerful rivals, the cyclical violence generated by the interaction of the rivals is ruptured when Alice, Hana, Mercy and Mary Hearn demonstrate that there are antidotes to violent confrontation and cyclical revenge. Their intervention directs the action of the protagonists to write and tell their own narratives and in doing so the
victim and victimizer constructions are perceived as fluid and interchangeable, producing, as Friedman writes “interpretations of the textual and political unconscious” (226).

In Ondaatje’s twinned texts, *Gilgamesh* and *In the Skin of a Lion*, Gilgamesh narrates the story of a journey to search for the secret of eternal life oblivious of his oppressed subjects, while, in contrast, Patrick Lewis and Rowland Harris privilege discourse in understanding the history of the workers over the option of murder and revenge. In the shadowed texts of *The Histories* and *The English Patient*, Herodotus chronicles the stories of leaders of empires and the wars they fought as imperial history, while the English patient, represented as an “angel of history”, looks beyond the past depicted in Herodotus’s narratives scarred with wars and sacrificial scapegoats, to a past strewn with literary and visual narratives that have the potential to redeem.

Mimetic desire is revealed in Carey’s novels in the doubling of *Great Expectations* with *Jack Maggs* when Magwitch, the marginalized convict in Dickens’s novel, is killed off and the fortune he made in Australia is returned to the imperial power while Jack Maggs is transformed into a formidable character, who reveals the brutalities of the convict system and lives to enrich Australia with his enterprise. Maggs reveals that a different history is possible and a different world opens when a convict is removed from laws that criminalize. Merging *Lorna Doone* and *True History* in spatialized history reveals that John Ridd, doubled with Ned Kelly, is in fact his “evil twin”, and represents his victimizer, Thomas Curnow. The revelation of a model of history that celebrates John Ridd’s self-serving deeds in pleasing the oligarchy by feats of “courage”, is overturned by a counter historical model in which
the so-called outlaw’s courage is directed towards achieving justice for others by challenging unfairness to the poor working class.

The “angels of history”, Alice, Hana, Mercy and Mary Hearn represent guides and mediators who facilitate the recording of other histories by helping the subjects read and understand their relations to both history and society. In these alternate histories the mediators prevent the proliferation of violence and reconfigure the representation of the historical scapegoats. In opposition to Benjamin’s “angel of ruin”, which represents history as an uninterrupted vista of ruin and cultural rupture, these angels of history are transformers of identities, transmitters of cultural knowledge and interventionists, who check violence to prevent the proliferation of envious desires. Their agency is manifest in the way they connect with literature, past and present to bring about change to subvert narratives of violence with ethical action. Works that advocate change through speech, not violence, influences Alice in her mediation with Patrick. Hana is “the weaver” of literary and visual narratives that liberate not only the English patient, but also her companions from victimization. Mercy demonstrates “reconciliation” to halt cyclical revenge by becoming the custodian of seven copies of Oates’s “text of Empire”, written by Maggs’s victimizer, Oates, and dedicated to Percy Buckle, a loyal citizen of Empire. Mary Hearn, in her role as conciliator, believes that revealing the hidden story of oppression to colonial authorities and newspapers might avert violent confrontation. Concealed for ninety years, Ned Kelly’s point of view is finally heard. These mediators are differentiated from their mimetic doubles, Ishtar, Candaules’s Queen, Lizzie Warriner and Ellen Kelly who symbolize “angels of ruin” because they have neither the agency nor the will to arrest cyclical violence.
The thesis suggests that the models and intertexts woven into these metahistorical novels are constitutive elements of the literary structure, elements whose dynamic presence is accounted for by calling into question the nature of historical understanding and historical violence. As a dialogue among several writings in spatialized narrative, the communal histories revealed in these metahistorical novels take a stance towards a past that concealed the stories of oppressed people within the imperial histories. Ondatje’s novels locate alternative perceptions of Canadian history by giving voice to the immigrants and the scapegoats who represent them in *In the Skin of a Lion* suggesting that, with renewed perception, modern cities such as Toronto can be understood not only as a source of aesthetic appreciation, but also a testimony to the remarkable achievement of workers who built them. As fodder for imperial wars, representatives of these workers and other colonial exiles constructed in *The English Patient* demonstrate a model of communal history that denies the existence of racial, class and gender barriers and the violence these barriers generate.

Carey’s novels pose a different challenge to violence and scapegoating by returning to the “bloodstains” on Australian history and contesting the stigmatization of the “outlaw” and the “convict.” *True History of the Kelly Gang* represents Kelly as the hero who brought cohesion to the “Irish” community by giving voice to common values that unite them in the rejection of oppression and it is in this soil that that the seedling concept of Australian identity takes root. *True History of the Kelly Gang*, voicing the scapegoat’s perspective, is a contemporary rendition of an anti-imperialist founding document that sets out some of the essential values of the nascent Australian
society. In contrast, *Jack Maggs* is a postcolonial counter-attack of an imperialist document in “writing back to” the English story of a convict stigmatized by poverty and unjust laws in Dickens’s England and recreating the convict as an Australian ancestral hero. Ondaatje’s and Carey’s texts reinterpret Canadian and Australian histories not only to liberate historical scapegoats, but also to reveal models of communal histories that illustrate ways of “breaking the chain of violence” by rejecting practices based on class, race or gender differences to stigmatize oppressed people.

Grateful acknowledgment to Dr Sue Ryan-Fazilleau, an examiner, whose comment on *True History* was integrated into the conclusion.
WORKS CITED


---. “Repetition, Repression, and Return: The Plotting of Great Expectations.”


Conlon, Anne. “‘Mine Is a Sad Yet True Story’: Convict Narratives 1818-1850.”


Fledderus, Bill. “The English Patient Reposed in His bed Like a [Fisher?] King:


McQuilton, John. *The Kelly Outbreak 1878-1880: the Geographical Dimension of*


Simmons, Rochelle. “In the Skin of a Lion as a Cubist Novel.” *University of Toronto

Slemon, Stephen. “Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History.”


Spearey, Susan. “Mapping and Masking: The Migrant experience in Michael

Ondaatje’s In the Skin of a Lion.” The Journal of Commonwealth Literature 29.2


Steiner, Wendy. The Colours of Rhetoric: Problems in the Relation Between Modern


Turner, Barbara. “In the Skin of Michael Ondaatje: Giving Voice to a Social


Weiner, Martin J. Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law and Policy in England,


White, Hayden. Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century


---. The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical


---. “The Historical text as Literary Artifact.” Tropics of Discourse: Essays in
