

ONLY THE EYES: A NOVEL

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Master of Fine Arts

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by

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my parents, Joe and Rose, and step-parents, Mike and Gina, my wife, Adena, my son, Dov, and daughter, Mylene for giving me the love and necessities to complete this difficult project. I also want to thank my dear friends for listening to my plans, for creating with me, and for reading and editing my drafts. Thank you so much.

PREVIEW

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THESIS

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Abstract

Only the Eyes revolves around a series of murders that take place in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates, the government of which suppresses the media to maintain the nation's reputation as a safe, innovative tourist destination. After the murders are leaked to the international press and can no longer be ignored, the *Sheikhs* of the country. decide to procure an investigative consultant through manipulative means to help them capture the unknown suspect.

Former-Special-Agent Ramon Del Toro is now a true-crime writer, and he reluctantly takes on the difficult task of creating a psychological profile of the suspect, much to the chagrin of his young wife who is left alone with a newborn. When Del Toro arrives in the foreign country, he realizes that the U.A.E. is secretive and uncooperative despite requesting his help. To overcome this hurdle, Del Toro befriends a journalist who seems to know more about the recent crimes than the U.A.E. government has led on. As Del Toro quickly discovers, the vast divide between his first-world Western privilege and his host country's Islamic authoritarianism calls his expertise in criminal profiling into question. After all, he's not a real criminal profiler anymore; he's a writer. Nevertheless, he has now found himself the designated expert in a foreign world that knows nothing about the kind of criminal plaguing their country, while he knows almost nothing culture who's hosting him.

Beyond the surface plot of this crime-thriller, the figurative meaning of *Only the Eyes* expresses the seedy underbelly of a sophisticated urban hotspot that conceals its new world problems through shady dealings, hypocrisy, and suppression. The book's purpose is meant to challenge the audience's perception of a world it only experiences through smoke and mirrors. The task for the reader is to wade through the unorthodox literary devices of the novel to piece together who's story is being told and who's point of view is lost forever.

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PREVIEW

Preface

The Inception of a Crime: Influences on *Only the Eyes*

Being an expatriate is as rewarding as it is trying. It often leads to a special perspective of one's home country as well as the host nation, creating both an inexplicable pride and a vindictive forfeiture. That is, every benefit and drawback of your homeland makes you honor and defend the place in which you were raised, and every shortcoming and advantage of your fostering country tends to raise cynicism and judgement. Learning this life-lesson first-hand sparked the idea for the novel, *Only the Eyes*. The manuscript is an ambitious attempt to infuse depth and symbolism into a plausible tale of murders set in a very modern-yet-foreign world. On the surface, it is about a former-F.B.I.-agent-turned-writer who is bamboozled into helping an oil-rich theocracy catch an unknown suspect. The diabolical killer takes advantage of the country's Islamic culture by waylaying victims dressed as a traditional Muslim woman. The crime thriller premise is ageless, but the true purpose of the novel is to expose a place that most readers in the Western world see as a glitzy Utopia for the rich and privileged because that is what has been portrayed in the media. However, as the characters wrangle with their differences in culture, the hypocrisy of one country's sanctimoniousness flies in the face of the other's self-righteous, savior complex. In truth, the burgeoning nation has based their ascension towards modernity, capitalism, and globalization on much of America's twisted model, making both worlds responsible for each other's intertwined love-hate relationship. In the end, both are the product, reflection, and downfall of each other, which the book subtly – and not so subtly – tries to convey.

Art is always open to interpretation and is assumed to be the creator's vision incarnate, so the audience wonders if the rose they are experiencing is really a rose, a cigar just a cigar? Therefore, to seek clarity, let's delve into the work's inspiration some more. Where did the idea

snowball into a novel? In this case, the seed for the crime-thriller was planted one debaucherous night out on the town. During the hey-day of expatriates living and working abroad in a nouveau-riche country, the complexities of the humanity spirit were refracted through the country's immigrant diversity, and it was shocking and eye-opening. What was noticed exactly?

This all seems too good to be true, too convenient, and one day, someone bad, someone deviant and ill-willed can and WILL swoop in here and take advantage.

Said country had gained its independence from its colonizer, becoming a legitimate world power within the timespan of our lives (or at least our parent's), which is to say, it is still a baby in terms of its international standing and status. Unlike historically-rich countries whose annals bespeak of growth and establishment over normal trials and tribulations created through foreign wars and political upheavals which gives a nation its culture and character, such fledgling countries – should they be successful – are marveled at for their lack of such milestones. In this case, this country has skipped much of that societal development because of the wealth and money from the sole natural resource – black-gold. Sure, there was always a people here, but the inhabitants essentially went from being meek nomads in the desert to world-powerhouse players with a dearth of citizens to reap the benefits. In fact, the country at the center of *Only the Eyes* has been so exponentially successful, it boggles the mind how it managed to do so, and more importantly how will it maintain such prosperity. The article “Social Engineering and Emiratization explains:

The UAE today sees itself in that image and as a rising benevolent regional power, betting on science, technology, social peace, coexistence, prosperity, development and stability, all matched with the hard power capacity to defend itself and its interests. This self-image seems unsatisfactory to a number of Western observers and analysts, who begrudge the “loud” moves of Emirati diplomacy and intervention to bring stability in various parts of

the Middle East, though these observers often fail to identify an alternative. (Sarker and Rahman. 173)

In other words, the country's success story becomes one to be scrutinized and questioned as a sociological experiment. The country becomes subject to prying eyes, wondering how they skipped so many growing pains, and what will become of them? Like all nations, it puts its best foot forward publicly, and is often perceived through the propagandistic lens of its own design. Although *Only the Eyes* uses a fictitious crime to expose the many smoke-and-mirrors perpetrated by the country in question, the realistic crimes and actions of the story act as a symbolic death of the aforementioned hey-day. "...[All] is not well in this wealthiest of nations. So much so, that fully 50% of all the expats surveyed recently stated they were considering leaving for opportunities elsewhere" (Expatriate Group, 2015).

The hey-day came about before the bubble burst for expatriates looking to cash in on the country's need for, not just skilled and educated workers, but all workers in general. The country's population was so low, unskilled, and uneducated, they offered immigrants great opportunities to find something more than a similar job back home would provide. However, it was a short-lived time before the powers-that-be discovered the self-entitlement their welfare system was creating amongst their citizens. Observing some stereotypes, one blogger writes, "Most of UAE nationals both men and women (90%) work in governmental positions and are given higher salaries than their expatriate counter parts... Young Emiratis (teenagers) are usually very loud and maybe a little spoiled" (MantisShrimp, 2015).

During this period of ideal circumstances for expats, it was common for certain demographics to experience the kind of peace, safety, and prosperity perceived by the outside world. That is, it was easy for Westerners to come to this Middle Eastern country and land a good-

paying job with housing, end of service bonuses, medical, dental, and the general promise of a leisurely lifestyle. Beside the opportunity, it was a given that life in this country was virtually crime-free.

Incidentally, widespread knowledge of how this apparent utopia was shaped on the backs of poorer expatriates from neighboring nations was little known. In fact, the country itself goes through great lengths and pains to avoid any questions about its humanitarian policies and human rights record. This prosperity's longevity has always been questionable; therefore, the harmony and good-fortune alluded to in the book is disrupted by a series of crimes. Crimes that are generally considered Western problems. Thus, the fictitious crimes are used to highlight the eventual and inevitable end of the country's honeymoon stage. Therefore, the novel, *Only the Eyes*, takes a step away from the usual crime-thriller formula by implementing stylistic risks that will pursue this underlying theme of a tainted Utopia using the fictional crimes as a catalyst.

How does it do so? First of all, as much as every creative output stands on the shoulders of its predecessors, this book is no different than any other because it hopes to take flight from those influences to explore a different direction. For example, the tried and true template for crime thrillers are steeped in pulp fiction novels and film noir, and no novel of the genre could hope to escape their shadow. Therefore, to compare *Only the Eyes* to the pulp fiction film-noir it emulates, we can look to the movie *Pulp Fiction* by Quentin Tarantino. That is, the layout and development of characters throughout the book are non-sequitur and jumbled much like the vignettes in Tarantino's ground-breaking film, which reveals its plot out of sequential order (Tarantino). But that is not the end to its film noir ties. Furthermore, a film like *The Third Man*, directed by Carol Reed and written by Graham Greene, must also be acknowledge as a great influence on the beginning of *Only the Eyes* (Carol). They are unconsciously quite similar in that a writer becomes

a fish-out-of-water sleuth in a foreign country as he tries to navigate the nefarious situation he has unwittingly signed on for. In both cases, the setting is pivotal to the plot and interesting to the audience in their foreignness alone. One major difference, however, is that some of the people in *The Third Man* are portrayed as savvy, well-read intellectuals trying to get back on their feet by any means necessary after a World War; whereas, those portrayed in *Only the Eyes* aren't placed in such a flattering light (Carol).

That being said, it stands to reason that the premise of such a book could seem petty and pejorative in how it portrays an entire country and its diverse citizens, so considerable thought was put into how *Only the Eye* might be received. In fact, we may ask, as the characters indulge in stereotypes and generalizations, does the author and the entire manuscript peddle ill-will or malice towards the population that is surreptitiously being maligned between the pages? The answer to this question brings up the original inquiry, *What is this book about?* If every Western expat who ever lived and worked in this country verified that all the events in the book are not just possible but probable, is the work slanderous? Or, is it revealing? Perhaps, prescient and predictive?

The book stands by the latter as its additional purpose and meaning. While, its surface intention is obviously to function as an exciting "whodunit," it also intends to bare a nation's policies for what it has done, what it is doing, and what it may do. Also, we cannot forget the flawed protagonist shares the guilt for being such an unqualified finger-pointer. In this sense, *Only the Eyes* seeks to be unique and unorthodox in the crime-thriller genre. Pointedly, the setting and its inhabitants operate together as a whole character of its own. Just as the shadows of Vienna through which the characters run in *The Third Man* make this film singularly engrossing, so do the dusty alleys stalked by the killer make for an interesting trip. Hence, the setting of the wealthy Middle Eastern country is the soundboard by which all the other characters bounce their actions.

Their actions and responses to the setting would not take place anywhere else in the world, yet the crimes are similar enough to what we know that reader can relate. For example, the antagonist is only possible in a community created by the naiveté, inexperience, and rose-colored glasses of a budding nation. The murderous “Alleyman” is a symbol for what happens when a culturally chaste, Middle Eastern nation embraces the capitalism it once so vehemently abhorred. The antagonist becomes a prediction of the fall, or at least a hinderance or stumbling block, that all rich, industrialized nations will face one day. And when an antagonist like this does manifest itself as some version or another in real life, who will suffer first? Who will suffer most?

The answer to this question unfolds just as the murders in the book do. The first to suffer and the most victimized are those deemed a lower status by the powers-that-be. They are selected as victims in the book because their very lives represent victimization in real life. People from impoverished countries, people of a certain skin-color have been systematically preyed upon by the entire short history of the nation-in-question. Presently, Amnesty International states:

The government continued to commit serious human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, cruel and inhuman treatment of detainees, suppression of freedom of expression, and violation of the right to privacy. The right to health was partially fulfilled. The United Arab Emirates continued to deprive stateless individuals of the right to nationality, impacting their access to a range of services. Courts passed death sentences and executions were reported. (Amnesty International)

Therefore, it makes sense that the book uses immigrants to its country as the same fodder to raise and nurture its antagonist. Whereas similar “throw away” populations exist in Western countries as sex-workers, drug addicts, and poor, marginalized citizens, the book exemplifies how this country has replaced the “dregs of society” with poor, innocent, hardworking, brown people. To

explain: Since this Middle Eastern country doesn't have a population of "dregs" of which to speak, the general poor become synonymous for them. This is because the perceived Middle Eastern Utopia has created a place where there simply aren't as many outlaw citizens. However, instead of being able to honestly boast such a feat, it must reconcile with the fact that they have replaced that demographic with a whole other subset of desperate citizens – desperate citizens who would place themselves in danger to an opportunistic predator like one's portrayed by both the country as a character and the antagonist of the book.

Similarly, the protagonist "detective" is a jaded, tainted progeny of the kind of grown-up, fully-formed society the U.A.E. is trying to become. The detective comes in with the superficial swagger and confidence which the hosting country has come to expect from someone born in such a powerful, all-encompassing, first-world nation, but U.A.E. officials never expect their "hero" would be so flawed. Ramon Del Toro along with the other major American character, Alan Barret, consequently act as symbols of what is already possible when a utopia's shine starts to dull. Their judgment and commentaries on the ignorance and mistakes made by the citizens and powers-that-be in book's setting are indicative of their own ignorance and generalizations. Although their purpose seems to be a position of moral high-ground, their observations must be taken with a grain of salt, or in this case, a grain of sand. For once a taste is taken, the uncomfortable crunch of the foreign country's landscape can't be ignored for what it is, which is a place of simplicity, growth, and hope that's scared to lose faith. Whereas, Del Toro and Alan come from a place that has already lost it. Thus, how can they look down their noses at a country and its populace for not knowing how to deal with the ills of the world that they have become so familiar with? Who is more reprehensible? Those that don't know the evils that will befall them in their blind ambition,

or those that can recognize all the evils of the world because they have absolute familiarity with falling from grace?

In short, the book is as much about the disillusionment of modern societies, and all their pop-culture as it is about a killer controlled by hedonistic lust who revels in being sneaky, conniving, and deviant. Although the purpose of exposing a civilization for what it tries so hard to keep from the rest of the world may run in the background of this crime-thriller, it can't be ignored as key theme in the book. And though the story's veracity and authenticity might be questioned, like all crime-thrillers, it seeks to create a virtual world with genuine actions and tangible characters that can be imagined in real life, which begs another question.

Whatever would possess someone to pen a crime thriller? Only a fool, one would suppose. Even the renowned pulp fiction writer Raymond Chandler griped in his treatise on the genre as early as 1939 that, "The good detective story writer (there must after all be a few) compete not only with all the unburied dead but with all the hosts of the living as well" (Chandler, 3). Knowing the popularity of mainstream gumshoes in various media, an author would have to put one's money on the veracity of the novel's tropes and stock characters – on its plucky sleuths, its dastardly culprits, on the red-herring suspects, and on its overt display or its tease of violence – to keep people interested. After all, it is this violence that summons us to the edge of our own civility. It is our empathy which makes us question our own reality of safety. When we take up a piece of fiction, we put ourselves in the victim's place, and, as we empathize, we hope that the victim will never be us. One thing going for any writer taking on such a raked-over genre is that a new author doesn't have to pursue absolute verisimilitude in such a work, as the buckets full of fictional detectives have proven. Chandler concurs, "...the casual reader, who wants to like the story --- hence takes it at its face value. But the reader is not called upon to know the facts of life...The

author is the expert in the case” (Chandler, 7). Thus, the truthful adherence to political injustices and to criminal investigations is not necessary the fiction writer’s problem since that kind of writing is left to the genres of ‘true crime’ and ‘investigative journalism.’ As a long reputed hackneyed field, perhaps a subheading or some other asterisked distinction is advisable...if not necessary to break free from the canon. Daniel Mendelsohn reminds us of the importance of pursuing an asterisked distinction next to our name:

Who defines it? How do we know what’s “the greatest”? And, most elusively, what are canons *for*? Do they innocently enshrine “pure” artistic excellence, or is the agenda always somehow political?...Today, audiences as well as critics play a lively role in establishing which works get discussed, analyzed, noticed; the boil of resentment toward the literary gods — the Dionysuses who alone were once privileged to enshrine authors — has been lanced. (Mishra and Mendlesohn, 31)

As one can see, it certainly wouldn’t hurt an author to have a subgenre tucked in the ol’ hidden ankle holster or shoved up one’s sleeve. In the case of *Only the Eyes*, the novel strives to bend narrative conventions and seeks an untapped niche through its unusual foreign setting, its diasporic protagonist, and the literary inspirations it pays homage to.

As aforementioned, realism and relatability are elusive prey if a novel’s verisimilitude is a crime thriller’s chief concern; it is another thing entirely when we set out to create something unknown and unusual – in this case the strange customs and culture of Middle East for most Americans. Therefore, a balance of both is attempted in every aspect of *Only the Eyes*, right down to the very title, which, normally, is the last bit typed before submitting a manuscript for publication. For now, *Only The Eyes* is a working title that threatens to stick, for “...there is little help...for writers still stuck for a title. The good ones have all been taken. The bad ones were

rejected for a reason” (Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, 35). Thus far, the title stays for the many levels on which it hopes to operate. Firstly, the title is so simplistic and basic for a book, that it almost seems familiar. It’s as if another movie or film we’ve encountered before surely exists with this name. Rest assured, although it is close, no other immediate creative work comes up under this specific moniker. The reminiscence it induces is not accidental as much as it is instrumental in striking an initial chord. Upon being introduced to the title, whether seen or heard for the first time, the reader’s mind will ponder what ‘*only the eyes*’ refers to. Is it a sentence fragment? Is it a command? Is it a question? Is it a homophone for the many “I”s whose perspectives flit through the revolving passages? Is it a nudging hint towards the symbolism associated with eyes – the soul’s doorway by which we imbibe the make-up of our personalities or the exit by which our essence leaves? Be they the stamp of truth or the tell of our insincerity, be they the spigot of our emotions or the pools of color that identify us, eyes are essential in the novel. The title lets us know it before we essentially *know* it. For certain, it is a great start for a novel whose agenda is to invite an audience with a close familiarity while whisking them away to a bizarre, faraway setting.

Only the Eyes models itself both on the ‘Chinese boxes’ from Mario Vargas Llosa’s *Letters to a Young Novelist* and the revolving perspectives of Jennifer Egan’s novel, *Welcome to the Goon Squad*. Llosa’s ‘Chinese boxes’ are stories that function on their own accord within the framework of a larger story, “Thus, the stories are connected in a system and the whole of the system is enriched by the sum of its parts” (103). While technically the ‘Chinese box’ model is not fully explored in *Only the Eyes*, it does riff on the technique with its placement of newspaper articles, an autopsy report, transcripts, and sarcastic blogs within the novel. However, one authentic ‘Chinese box’ has an embryotic life of its own. Specifically, the myth of the U.A.E.s’ boogiemán is presented as an origin tale of *Umm Al Duwais*. The myth of this knife-handed, donkey-footed

djinn has been handed down through oral tradition for many generations as an old wives' tale commonly known throughout the Middle Eastern Gulf region. As far as research can produced, she has never been captured literarily, so it was a pleasure to be the first do so. This boogieman-type figure punishes those who would wander off alone or those who would engage with strange women of loose morals, "And so, the story goes. She is beautiful, she is scary, she eats sinful men alive" (Al Suwaidi). The recreation of this fairy tale and its placement amid the action of the book in a scene when some drunken Emirati boys harass who they think is a lone woman exercising and are instead attacked by the antagonist provides historical and sociological context about the culture's mythology and superstition.

Not only is the chapter entertaining in its imitation of Angela Carter's short story, "The Bloody Chamber" from her book of the same title, it also attempts to take the same tone, which is quite serious, risqué, and dark. Unlike some of the other stories in Carter's book that are humorous and sarcastic, "The Bloody Chamber," "The Company of Wolves," and "The Werewolf" share a sharper, gloomier tone.

"It went for her throat, as wolves do, but she made a great swipe at it with her father's knife and slashed off its right forepaw...The child crossed herself and cried out so loud the neighbors heard her and came rushing in. They knew the wart on the hand at once for a witch's nipple; they drove the old woman, in her shift as she was, out into the snow with sticks, beating her old carcass as far as the edge of the forest, and pelted her with stones until she fell down dead" (Carter 128).

In *Only the Eyes*, the chapter about *Umm Al Duwais*, with a stylized archaic language reminiscent of fairy tales, speaks to the superstitious customs and the culture's adherence to arcane beliefs in black magic that the Emiratis still hold on to even in the modern day, ironically flying in the face

of their strict religious beliefs. (Ask any local in this region of the world, and they all seem to have a viable fear in at least the possibility of real *djinn* sharing our mortal world.) This seeming hypocrisy reflects the books overall theme of the country's bait-and-switch policies.

Umm Al Duwais is a *djinn*, which is something between a ghost and a demon; therefore, this particular chapters also works as introduction to the *djinn* myth, shedding light on their role in Arabic society. This chapters attempts to capture the tone of Angela Carter's fairy tales and make commentary on the plight and poverty of such desolate places in the past. Other examples of the "...puzzles...nestled inside of each other" that didn't make it in to this version of the book were fictitious psychological reports, diagrams, and even a dream-sequence one-act play that might make it into the final version of the book (Llosa 101). While these 'Chinese boxes' illuminate some cultural details and provide entertainment and distraction from the larger plot of *Only the Eyes*, the totality of the chapters performs a task more akin to those of Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Her book is the most similar to the novel because of the shifting characters and changing P.O.V.s with the purpose of making readers work a little for their supper. At times in *Goon Squad*, we must figure out who is speaking in every progressing chapter and how this character is related to the other characters in the book; a similar resolve is utilized in *Only the Eyes*. However, it is to be noted that although Llosa and Egan are the source of the novel's overall format, there are many influences that populate its chapters on a stylistic level.

In fact, many crime-thriller authors and others not known for dabbling in the genre were researched, including Marguerite Duras, Vladimir Nabokov, Joyce Carol Oats, and, surprisingly, even William Burroughs. The most pertinent, as one might guess, was Joyce Carol Oats. The style of her first-person novel, *Zombie*, easily seeped into the *Only the Eyes*. As the deranged killer in *Zombie* tells his story, its matter-of-fact, confessional tone comes off as childish, but, more

importantly, it renders the nonchalance that a killer of this ilk takes when they are caught and given the chance to unburden themselves with a confession. Like the fictional killer Quentin P. in *Zombie* (based on the real serial murderer Jeffery Dahmer), the suspect in *Only the Eyes* occupies certain chapters that read as if his preparation and committal of crimes were merely a grocery list or a set of instructions being rattled off, rote and emotionless, no tears, no regret, no fuss. Although *Zombie* is widely attributed to Jeffery Dahmer's influence, the fictitious journal through which we read the tale is very reminiscent of gruesome, verbatim confessions of an actual child murderer's journal (Oates 1995). His name is Westley Allan Dodd and his journals and thoughts are revealed in a book he wrote himself with a ghost writer, *When the Monster Gets Out of the Closet*:

“By Monday, I was frustrated. I was eager for ‘my first kill,’ but after two days had ‘come up empty.’ I didn’t really believe in Satan and had never considered joining a cult or anything like that, but I thought ‘it couldn’t hurt – who knows?’ I wrote up a ‘contract’ with Satan and told him he could have my soul if he’d help me find boys and get away with my crimes” (3).

Despite the difficulty of reading such violence, predecessors like *Story of the Eye* by Georges Bataille, *Justine* by Marquis De Sade, and Poppy Z. Brite's *Exquisite Corpse* use overt language of descriptive violence. This ferocious style by other writers was contemplated during the writing process, but in the end, it seemed completely counterproductive to the book's wider capabilities on social commentary. Furthermore, when *Only the Eyes* was critiqued in its early stages, it was suggested that some audience members would outright abandon the book entirely. Although as a consensus, the violence is better alluded to than magnified like the rape and seduction in *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov or the kidnapping and starvation of the victim in the *The Corn Maiden* by Joyce Carol Oates, some instances of descriptive violence did find their way into *Only the Eyes*. The

purpose is to lull and then frighten or to play with the emotions of the audience. Although over-the-top violence seemed to be the main goal in Poppy Z. Brite's *Exquisite Corpse*, complete isolation of certain audience members is no one's goal nor is it likely to happen with *Only the Eyes* (Brite 1997). So many other aspects of the story and their revolving chapters far outnumber and outweigh any damage that might be caused by the few graphic scenes of carnage. Nevertheless, the inescapable violence in reality is a theme in the book, as the protagonist points out to his hosts that it can't be ignored or wished away.

In keeping the audience on their toes, an homage is paid to Marguerite Duras's *L'Amante Anglaise* for its unorthodox delivery. It left a lasting impression on how *Only the Eyes* was to operate, for the entire book is written as the transcripts of tape-recorded conversations with a female murderer, her husband, and one of her friends:

---*You have confessed to the murder of your cousin, Marie-Therese Bousquet.*

---Yes.

---*You also admitted that you had no accomplice.*

---...

---*You did it all by yourself?*

---Yes.

---*You still say your husband knew nothing about what you'd done?*

---Nothing at all. I took the pieces away during the night while he slept. He never woke up. I don't know what you want (Duras 83).

So, great was this book, not for its plot or mystery, but for its development of the murderous character through the husband, the bartender, and the killer herself, that it greatly imparted its influence of format in one of the chapters that features an interrogation in the novel. Duras' experimental book, completely devoid of intrusive prose, proves that it is not necessary when portraying actual recorded transcripts. The conversations speak completely for themselves and no outside narration of any kind is wanted or needed.