

# Introduction

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**A**s editor of *Mosaic*, I read each essay several times, in its various versions, from the first submission through production to publication. And although I am a very busy person, it is striking that a certain passage or turn of phrase from a given essay will find its way into my overcrowded psyche and stay with me over the essay's tenure from submission to print. The "poetics of violence" is one such haunting refrain: you will find it in this issue in Sharon Smulders's "A Double Assault": The Victimization of Aboriginal Women and Children in *In Search of April Raintree*, an essay that you want to read with care. A not unrelated, conjunction, also haunting, that between "art and terror," is central to Leonard Wilcox's "Terrorism and Art: Don DeLillo's *Mao II* and Jean Baudrillard's *The Spirit of Terrorism*," another essay in this issue. I would say that these two essays, which set poetics in relation to violence and art in relation to terror, give the overall tenor of this issue, and in so doing, suggest something of the "interdisciplinary" task of "literature" today. Consider Walter Corbella's "Strategies of Resistance and the Problem of Ambiguity in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*" as another example: "This essay examines the strategies that Nafisi foregrounds as forms of resistance to social, political, and emotional oppression, mostly proceeding on the basis of a close reading of, and engagement with, Nafisi's text." Poetics and violence, where the poetic text, the memoir in this case, becomes a strategy of resistance, "the basis for a revolutionary practice that may significantly alter the status of Iranian women."

In Hye Ryoung Kil's "Conrad's 'Undying Hope' of the Polish Nation: Western Ideal and Eastern Reality," the violence explored, and related to Conrad's poetics, is that involved in the founding—and refounding—of a nation, in this instance, Poland, colonial Poland, in its conflict with imperial Russia. For Christine Kim in "Postcolonial Romance, Ghostly Love Stories, and *The Heart Does Not Bend*," fiction can "speak to diasporic identities and their ongoing negotiations of the politics of memory, mourning,

melancholia, and inheritance. *The Heart Does Not Bend* is a textual site haunted by the various forms of violence, symbolic and material, that have been inflicted against individuals and families whose inclusion in the nation-state has happened at the cost of a deliberate forgetting.” Asian literature is rich with such narratives of haunting, Andrew Hock-Soon Ng contends in “Malaysian Gothic: The Motif of Haunting in K.S. Maniam’s ‘Haunting the Tiger’ and Shirley Lim’s ‘Haunting.’” This essay reads two works of short fiction by Malaysian-born writers, approaching these from a Gothic perspective that enables an interrogation of notions of national and sexual identity. Similarly, Halia Koo, in “(Wo)men Travellers: Physical and Narrative Boundaries,” examines nineteenth-century narratives of disguised gender identity as explorations of patriarchal society. The question of “identity” is central again in “Self and Narrative in *Le Ravissement de Lol V. Stein*,” Tara Collington’s probing of identity fragmentation as reflected in the structure of a text.

The two essays that conclude this issue locate the “poetics of violence” in biological and evolutionary science. Tita Chico’s “Minute Particulars: Microscopy and Eighteenth-Century Narrative” suggests that the epistemological and aesthetic assumptions of eighteenth-century microscopy, with its concept of the “minute particular,” are evident in fictional narratives of the period, *Tristram Shandy* being a case in point. Carol Ann Wald’s “Reflexivity, Reproduction, and Evolution: From Neumann to Powers,” takes us to a novel in which human, machine, and textual reproduction have become entangled, and to a situation where, “as we find ourselves entangled in our own creations, reflexivity intensifies, and with it, the potential for increased cognitive complexity.”

Look for the next *Mosaic* issue, *After Derrida*, a very special issue commemorating the life and work of one of the twentieth-century’s foremost thinkers. The issue will be launched at the *Following Derrida: Legacies* conference to be held at the University of Manitoba from 4–7 October 2006.

At the blueline stage of the present issue, we learned of the death of Lawrence Ritchey, who for thirteen years served *Mosaic* with distinction as chair of its Editorial Board. To the Ritchey family, we offer our condolences. *Mosaic* will always be grateful to Lawrence.