

ASIA LITERARY AGENCY

Fall 2023

Highlights - Fiction

OWLISH

By Dorothy Tse

Translated from Chinese by Natascha Bruce

To be approx 70,000 words in English, delivery October 2021

Original publication with Aquarius, July 2020

Rights sold:

USA/Canada – Graywolf (for publication June 2023)

UK/Comm (ex Canada) – Fitzcarraldo (for publication February 2023)

Australia/NZ – Scribe

Italian – E/O Edizione

German – Büchergilde Gutenberg

Danish: Korridor

Copy:

Owlsh, by one of Hong Kong's most celebrated writers, tells the story of a middle-aged professor's doomed love affair with a doll called Alice, but really it tells the story of Hong Kong. Fairy-tale romance opens Professor Q's eyes to new, exciting sides of his city (as well as himself), but closes them to inconvenient truths – such as the growing student protest movement. When Alice finally takes on a life of her own, the fairy tale, as is so often the case, is revealed to be laced with menace. In a twisty, sinister narrative reminiscent of Helen Oyeyemi, threaded with the skilful oddness of Samanta Schweblin and Sabrina Orah Mark, Tse forces her readers to confront the perils of apathy, complacency and neoliberal subordination, asking us to look beyond her text and reconsider what, exactly, we are choosing not to notice.

A small selection of reviews/praise:

'[A] surreal fantasy and the reading experience is demanding ... you might ask yourself if it's worth the effort. On reaching the end you will surely conclude that it is...a very brave book.'

– David Mills, *The Times*

'It's tempting to call *Owlsh* a fantasy, or an anti-fairy tale. The book is not shy of drawing in references, including to Mephistopheles, Kant, the Brothers Grimm, Lewis Carroll, Kafka, Orwell and Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. However, Tse's acerbic, freewheeling spirit

is generically flirtatious, rather than genre-bound. She steals from the western canon with chutzpah and panache to create a subversive tale about perilous desire, high-rise bureaucracy and sophisticated corruption in a defenceless city under siege... *Owlish* wittily captures a recent crisis moment in Hong Kong, exploring a discombobulating state caught between civilization and its discontents.’
—Kit Fan, *Guardian*

‘*Owlish* ... has been translated into a playful and sinuous English by Natascha Bruce... the book, with its ellipses and obstructed messages, were depicting the reality-warping effects of an uncanny, constraining force—a force like state censorship.’
— Katy Waldman, *New Yorker*

‘In *Owlish*, nimbly translated by Natascha Bruce, there are several nods to Franz Kafka and Tse offers a powerful vision of government repression.... Tse combines the banal and the fantastic to terrific effect. Full of striking imagery, *Owlish* is a vertiginous tale of a people sleepwalking into catastrophe.’
— Lucy Popescu, *Financial Times*

‘Beguilingly eerie, richly textured, the pages of *Owlish* are drenched in strange beauty and menace. Like all the best fairy tales, it reveals the dark truths that we would rather not look at directly, and does so with a surreal and singular clarity.’
— Sophie Mackintosh, author of *Cursed Bread*

‘Dorothy Tse is a magnificent historian of unreal places. Her sage and serious characters are cast adrift in realities that are neither sage nor serious at all – and possibly impossible. Her parallel worlds and paradoxes brilliantly illuminate our own reality, with all its fictions masquerading as facts (and vice versa). Boundlessly creative, richly philosophical – I loved this book.’
— Joanna Kavenna, author of *Zed*

‘Tse joins the ranks of artists currently remaking the world, from Yoko Tawada to César Aira.’
— Joyelle McSweeney, author of *Toxicon* and *Arachne*

‘*Owlish* is so delightfully creepy, wonderful and strange.’
— Camilla Grudova, author of *Children of Paradise*

‘A bold, brilliantly absorbing read. This clever, mercurial portrait of an alternate Hong Kong lingers long after the last page.’
— Irenosen Okojie, author of *Nudibranch*

‘*Owlish* [is] a darkly sexual sociopolitical fable...Tse’s excellent novel becomes increasingly bizarre.’
— Hal Jensen, *TLS*

‘*Owlish* is the story of a city as much as it is the story of Q. Between his correspondence with a strange figure known only as Owlish and a ballerina figurine who has come to life, the professor is immersed and distracted enough not to notice the city and his university emptying out around him as the political situation deteriorates and falls into

chaos. Tse's style in *Owlish*, with its magical elements, suggests a more overtly political Italo Calvino, or Salman Rushdie with a lighter touch...the story is engrossing and the prose, translated by the always satisfying Natascha Bruce, a delight.'

— [Jessa Crispin, Telegraph](#)

Excerpt in *Granta*: <https://granta.com/owlish-dorothy-tse/>

Bio:



Dorothy Tse is one of Hong Kong's most celebrated fiction writers. Her awards include the Hong Kong Book Prize, Hong Kong Biennial Award for Chinese Literature, Taiwan's Uitas New Fiction Writers' Award, and the Hong Kong Award for Creative Writing in Chinese. Tse has published four short-story collections in Chinese, including *So Black* (2003, 2005) and *Ghost in the Umbrella* (2020), and has garnered attention in English since the 2014 publication of her collection *Snow and Shadow* (translated by Nicky Harman; longlisted for 2015 Best Translated Book Award). Describing *Snow and Shadow*, author Joyelle McSweeney observed, 'Tse joins the ranks of artists currently remaking the world, from Yoko Tawada to César Aira'. According to Three Percent: 'Reading *Snow and Shadow* is akin to being lost in a snowstorm: dizzying, terrifying, but nevertheless thrilling.'

English translations of Tse's stories have appeared in BBC Radio 3, *Denver Quarterly*, the *Guardian*, *Wasafiri*, *Washington Square Review*, and *Words Without Borders*. Her work also features in the anthologies BooksActually's *Gold Standard* (Math Paper Press, 2016), *That We May Live: Speculative Chinese Fiction* (Two Lines, 2020; starred review from *Publishers Weekly*), and *Antipodean China: Reflections on Literary Exchange* (forthcoming from Giramondo).

She has been granted residencies at Art Omi, The Leeds Centre for New Chinese Writing, University of Iowa's International Writing Program, and Vermont Studio Center. Tse has appeared at international literary festivals in George Town, Hong Kong, Singapore, Leeds, Adelaide and Ubud.

Tse, who is fluent in English but who writes creatively in complex/traditional Chinese, currently lives in Hong Kong, where she teaches creative writing at Hong Kong Baptist University. With translator Natascha Bruce, Tse was a winner of the 2019 Words Without Borders Poems in Translation Prize.

WHALE – a novel
Translated from Korean by Chi-young Kim



SHORT-LISTED for the International Booker 2023

Rights sold:

USA/Canada – Archipelago (for publication January 2023)
UK/Comm (ex Canada) – Europa (for publication January 2023)

Chinese - Xiron
French – Actes Sud
German – Weissbook
Italian – E/O Edizione
Japanese – Shobunsa
Polish - Znak
Russian – Text
Thai – Nanmee
Turkish – Lotus

Originally published by Munhakdongne in 2004

Whale – like *Master and Margarita*, on shrooms, though Mr Cheon would prefer if I described it as inspired by Toni Morrison's *Beloved*... has sold over 160,000 copies (and counting) in South Korea, which is a significant sum for the country - lots of info below for you but important to absorb.

The book has also been published (as above) in French, Russian, Chinese and Thai before the Korean wave and before I began representing him and since then in Japanese and we now have a deals in German, Italian, Russian and Turkish alongside English. In France I have just agreed a deal for one of his more recent novels *It's a Man's World* with Actes Sud, who publish *Whale* and *Modern Family*.

Whale is masterpiece of modern fiction; literary, fantasmagorically Fellini-esque in scope and scale - a mix of farce, Nietzsche-esque fable and fantasy.

Copy:

Set in a remote village in South Korea, *Whale* follows the lives of three linked characters: Geumbok, an extremely ambitious woman who has been chasing an indescribable thrill ever since she first saw a whale crest in the ocean; her mute daughter, Chunhui, who communicates with elephants; and a one-eyed woman who controls honeybees with a whistle. Brimming with surprises and wicked humour, *Whale* is an adventure-satire of epic proportions by one of the most original voices in South Korea.

Whale, told in three parts, as a narrative that circles back on itself... (the novel magically closes just as it opens, unexpectedly mirroring itself) makes you want to read it all over again when you reach the end, and makes the entire conversation we are having now about non-binary seem as if it's something that sprung from his imagination... years ago.

Whale is a complex, very possibly award-winning story gilded with intelligent, original narrative, a strong sense of reality as social history and political criticism, magical realism, etc, and with an almost mythical atmosphere – intriguing and charming, even when violent and painful.

Bio:



Cheon Myeong-kwan is an outsider, with no formal education in a society where PhDs are dime a dozen and more snobbish than a what's-your-mother's-maiden-name drinks party in the home-counties.

So he observes, not in a creepy-peeping-Tom or spitefully jealous way, but in way that just takes it all in, and filters the good and bad, and lays it out. He has a wicked, yet soulful sense of humour, which adds levity and which is - actually - the magic touch.

Like the best artists, he is simply compelled to write, the music flows through him. At first, he tried screenplays, and failed legendarily. Then he turned his hand to novels, one of which (*Modern Family*) was turned into a film (*Boomerang Family*) and succeeded spectacularly. The page turns.

Interview with him [here](#).

AFTERSHOCK

By Zhang Ling

Translated by Shelly Bryant

Rights sold:

WEL to Amazon Crossing, publication February 2024

A catastrophic disaster in China triggers a mother's heart-breaking choice and a daughter's reconciliation with the past in a powerful novel by the highly praised author of *Gold Mountain Blues*, *A Single Swallow* and *Where Waters Meet*.

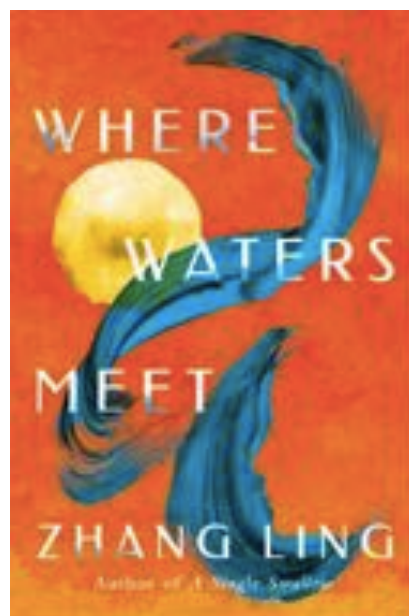
In the summer of 1976, an earthquake swallows up the city of Tangshan, China. Among the hundreds of thousands of people scrambling for survival is a mother who makes an agonizing decision that irrevocably changes her life and the lives of her children. In that devastating split second, her seven-year-old daughter, Xiaodeng, is separated from her brother and the mother she loves and trusts. All Xiaodeng remembers of the fateful morning is betrayal.

Thirty years later, Xiaodeng is an acclaimed writer living in Canada with a caring husband and daughter. However, her newfound fame and success do little to cover the deep wounds that disrupt her life, time and again, and edge her toward a breaking point. Xiaodeng realizes the only path toward healing is to return to Tangshan, find her mother, and get closure.

Spanning three decades of the emotional and cultural aftershocks of disaster, Zhang Ling's intimate epic explores the damage of guilt, the healing pull of family, and the hope of one woman who, after so many years, still longs to be saved.

WHERE WATERS MEET

By Zhang Ling



Rights sold:

WEL to Amazon Crossing, publication May 2023

Winner of the Chinese Media Literature Award for Author of the Year, the Grand Prize of Overseas Chinese Literary Award, and Taiwan's Open Book Award, Zhang Ling is a literary darling in her native China. Her 2009 novella, *Aftershock*, was made into China's first IMAX movie and became the highest-grossing film in China at that time. In 2020, English-speaking readers finally received the gift of Zhang Ling's exceptional literary talent when her novel, *A Single Swallow*, was translated by Shelley Bryant and published by Amazon Crossing.

Critics called Zhang's English-language debut 'truly extraordinary', 'superb', 'thought-provoking', 'vivid and moving'.

Now, Zhang Ling returns with *Where Waters Meet*, a captivating, multi-generational saga that brings much-needed attention to the suffering women endure during wartime and their extraordinary resilience in extreme circumstances.

Zhang vividly portrays historical events in modern Chinese history that are not well known to the Western audience, including the recruitment of 'comfort women' during the Japanese occupation; the famine of early 1960s and the exodus to Hong Kong in the 1960s-70s.

Her first novel to be written in English, Zhang, who has lived in Canada for over 30 years, says, 'A different language brings in a new sense of rhythm, contextual associations, and musicality, which rejuvenate me as a writer. Writing in two languages gives us an extra eye to perceive ourselves as well as the world around us. This third eye helps us to discover not only the differences, but also the overlapping areas, between the two languages. When we start to explore these areas, we oftentimes find unexpected pathways to the depths of human minds

Copy:

'A daughter discovers the dramatic history that shaped her mother's secret life in this emotional and immersive novel by Zhang Ling, the bestselling author of *A Single Swallow*.

There was rarely a time when Phoenix Yuan-Whyller's mother, Rain, didn't live with her. Even when Phoenix got married Rain, who followed her from China to Toronto, came to share Phoenix's life. Now at the age of eighty-three, Rain's unexpected death ushers in a heart-rending separation.

Struggling with the loss, Phoenix comes across her mother's suitcase, a memory box Rain had brought from home. Inside, Phoenix finds two old photographs and a decorative bottle holding a crystallized powder. Her auntie Mei tells her these missing pieces of her mother's early life can only be explained when they meet, and so, clutching her mother's ashes, Phoenix boards a plane for China.

What at first seems like a daughter's quest to uncover a mother's secrets becomes a startling journey of self-discovery. Told across decades and continents, Zhang Ling's exquisite novel is a tale of extraordinary courage and survival. It illuminates the resilience of humanity, the

brutalities of life, the secrets we keep and those we share, and the driving forces it takes to survive.

Advance praise:

‘*Where Waters Meet* brings us back to the turbulent decades in China where people fought one war after another, suffered famine, and endured political persecutions. However, instead of focusing on misery, Zhang Ling introduces us to those who defy their fates. They are brave enough to try sneaking across the border, determined enough to adopt a foreign tongue, and kind enough to care for their families no matter what. A true masterpiece filled with idiosyncratic yet admirable characters, suspenseful mystery, historical complexity, and ironic humor.’

Jianan Qian, O. Henry Prize winner and staff writer at *The Millions*

‘A gripping, epic novel . . . a remarkable achievement’

Paul Brinkley-Rogers, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and veteran war correspondent; author of *Please Enjoy Your Happiness*

‘Few writers could bring a story about China and other nations together as seamlessly as Zhang Ling.’

Mo Yan

‘Reading *Where Waters Meet* is like peeling the onion: after layers of layers of sorrows, pains, regrets, what you find at the heart of the novel is poignant but also an epiphany. Tragedies make the purest out of bare life: endurance, persistence, compassion. Zhang Ling’s first novel written in English is not a typical Chinese romance; it is a miracle testifying to the strength of womanhood, and the narrative itself is a miracle too, a delicately arranged puzzle leading to the heart of love and darkness. A page-turner, Zhang’s novel shines with cinematic splendor and unfolds a haunting story about home and exile, trauma and sacrifice, despair and hope, and most importantly, mother and daughter.’

Mingwei Song, poet and Professor and Chair of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Wellesley College

‘A stunning, gorgeous novel. Zhang Ling’s *Where Waters Meet* is haunting and heart-breaking as it navigates mother-daughter relationships in the face of war and famine. I simply couldn’t put it down.’

Devi S. Laskar, author of *The Atlas of Reds and Blues* and *Circa*

‘I love this novel. It is an intriguing and moving story of a Chinese family who have survived terrible wartime sufferings. It reminds us of the resilience of the human spirit.’

Xinran, author of *The Good Women of China* and *The Promise*

‘A masterfully composed novel that will leave you breathless until the end’ Authorlink

‘This emotional and heart-breaking novel is a tale of courage, survival and human resilience in the face of war and repression. Ling’s [moving] story of a mother-daughter relationship will appeal to readers of Amy Tan, Xinran and Jung Chang’ Booklist

A SINGLE SWALLOW
by Zhang Ling
translated from Chinese by Shelly Bryant



Rights sold:

WEL to Amazon Crossing, publication October 2020
Italian to Casa Editrice Nord

Original published as *Loayan* by People's Literature Publishing House, China 2017
Over 50,000 copies sold since publication February 2021
9,000 reviews on Amazon – and counting...

'I am in awe of Zhang Ling's literary talent. Truly extraordinary. In her stories, readers have the chance to explore and gain a great understanding of not only the Chinese mind-set but also their heart and soul.' Anchee Min, bestselling author of *Red Azalea*

Copy:

On the day of the historic 1945 Jewel Voice Broadcast – in which Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender to the Allied forces, bringing an end to the Second World War – three men, flush with jubilation, make a pact: to meet again in the Chinese village of their younger days, where they forged their friendship. It's where they had fought – and survived – a war that shook the world and changed their own lives in unimaginable ways. But it is not until seventy years later, when their pledge is finally fulfilled. The only person who's missing from this reunion is Ah Yan, also known as Swallow – the girl each man loved, each in his own, profound way.

American missionary Pastor Billy, brash gunner's mate Ian Ferguson, and local soldier, Liu Zhaohu – dispersed into the world after the war – unravel their personal stories, what took them to the front lines and what carried them away, and through their stories we see Ah Yan's life take shape, vividly and intrinsically woven into their memories, and their hearts. Ah Yan suffered unspeakable atrocities, yet found grace and strength and dignity to rise above, carry on and, ultimately, bring them back together, allowing them to make sense of their own lives, and be at peace with them.

Bio:

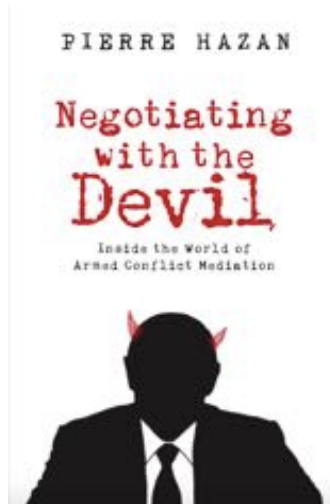


Zhang Ling is the award-winning author of nine novels and numerous collections of novellas and short stories. Born in China, she moved to Canada in 1986. In the mid 1990s, she began to write and publish fiction in Chinese while working in English as a clinical audiologist. Since then she has won the Chinese Media Literature Award for Author of the Year, the Grand Prize of Overseas China Literary Award and Taiwan's Open Book Award. Zhang Ling's first novel in translation was the best-selling *Gold Mountain Blues*, translated into multiple languages. Her novel, *Aftershock*, adapted into China's first IMAX movie, and to date China's highest grossing film ever made, will also be published by Amazon as part of a two-book deal agreed in February 2022 for Ling's next two novels, including *Where Waters Meet*, which she wrote in English and which has been awarded a generous prize from the Canadian Arts Council.

Highlights – Non-fiction

NEGOTIATING WITH THE DEVIL: INSIDE THE WORLD OF ARMED CONFLICT NEGOTIATION

By Pierre Hazan



Publication spring 2024

WEL – Hurst

French – Textuel

How far should mediators go when negotiating with criminal governments or terrorist organizations? And if there is no choice but to negotiate with the devil, what are the risks? In *Negotiating with the Devil*, peace negotiator Pierre Hazan explores that Faustian pact through the lens of specific situations, from the Russian-Ukrainian war to Syria, from the Balkans to the jihadists of the Sahel and other cases.

The book has been very well received by the media, (*Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Le Figaro*, *Médiapart*, *Le Temps*) and on the radio, television, the Internet.

Vladimir Putin has - quite unintentionally - contributed to its success, as Russia's aggression has made the question of peace and war a matter of almost personal concern not just for specialists (diplomats, humanitarians, mediators, security experts and students) but each and every one of us. No one knows how the conflict will evolve or whether Western Europe will be dragged into the war.

Three-quarters of the interviews Pierre has given on French publication have dealt with Putin: can we negotiate with him? What are our own red lines? Does mediation have a role to play and if so, what is that role?

The book is unfortunately all too timely, but addresses timeless issues of war and peace.

A selection of media:

Pierre Hazan analyzes with finesse what this quest for dialogue means in an increasingly chaotic world where the West is no longer hegemonic

Le Monde, Marc Semo, 6 October 2022

In a short essay that leads one to think against oneself, *Négociier avec le diable. La médiation dans les conflits armés* (Textuel editions), Pierre Hazan revisits the last thirty years in the theater of mass crimes from Bosnia to the Sahel, from Ukraine to Afghanistan.

Libération, Arnaud Vaulerin, 20 September 2022

Negotiating with the Devil, a book that lifts the veil on the dilemmas and pitfalls of mediation in armed conflicts. A little-known world, revealed by the Geneva-based author Pierre Hazan, advisor to the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, one of the main organizations active in this field.

Le Figaro, Andrés Allemand Smaller, 22 September 2022

Senior advisor to the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, Pierre Hazan has just published an enlightening and stimulating book on mediation in armed conflicts

Le Temps, Luis Lema, 18 November 2022

Journalist turned senior advisor to the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, Pierre Hazan has published *Negotiating with the Devil*, a fascinating essay on mediation in armed conflicts.

Le Vif/L'Express, Gérald Papy, 22 September 2022

Private mediation in armed conflicts gained momentum in the 2000s, at a time when Western countries were embarking on the war against terrorism and forbidding themselves to negotiate with terrorists. This policy has failed, says Pierre Hazan, and today the war in Ukraine once again raises the question of war resolution, mediation and the inevitable tensions between justice and peace. Interview.

Médiapart, François Bougon, 23 October 2022

Former journalist, and now advisor to the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva, Pierre Hazan has written *Négociier avec le diable. Mediating in armed conflicts*. In this stimulating opus, the author examines mediation in times of war.

La Croix, Marie Boëton, 6 November 2022

Pierre Hazan publishes an enlightening book on his experience as a mediator in armed conflicts

Le Pèlerin, Frédéric Niel, 1 December 2022

A selection of endorsements:

‘An engrossing look at the moral dilemmas and the shifting political imperatives in conflict mediation . With his usual uncompromising honesty, and drawing on his rich personal experience as a mediator, Pierre Hazan eschews easy answers and bright lines in looking at when to talk with the most evil forces and when compromise and neutrality can become complicity’ – Reed Brody, author of *To Catch a Dictator*

'Like humanitarian actors, mediators find their space only insofar as the belligerents find their interest. Pierre Hazan plunges the reader into the fray of conflicts, in search of possible links bringing warring parties together. Far from a heroic account, based on long experience in the field, he exposes the harsh dilemmas and necessary compromises of a little known action' – Rony Brauman, former president of MSF

'Peace or Justice? Engagement or sanctions ? Neutrality or impartiality? Such critical dilemmas animate this fascinating book about conflict mediation in which Hazan draws from his significant field experiences to offer fresh answers' – Ruti Teitel, Director, Institute for Global Law, Justice and Policy, author of *Globalizing Transitional Justice*

'A gem. Pierre Hazan's elegant introduction to mediating in armed conflict catches both the art and the moral dilemmas of modern peace-making' – David Harland, Director, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Bio:



Pierre Hazan is a senior advisor with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, one of the main organizations in armed conflict mediation. He has advised international organizations, governments and armed groups on questions related to justice, amnesty, reparation, truth commission, forced disappearances, international humanitarian law, and human rights. From November 2021 to December 2022, Pierre Hazan was also a Commissioner of the French Independent Commission on Reparation and Reconciliation for sexual abuses committed by members of Catholic congregations. In March 2022, Pierre became a *Richard von Weizsäcker fellow* at the Robert-Bosch Foundation in Berlin. His latest book, *Negotiating with the Devil, Mediating in Armed Conflicts* published in France in September 2022 (Textuel) received an enthusiastic reception from the media.

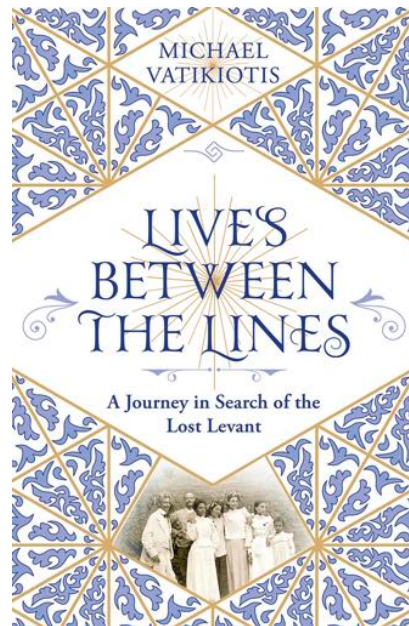
He has worked with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and collaborated with the United Nations in the Balkans. He was a member of the International Contact Group on the Basque Conflict, which co-organized in 2011 the Peace Conference that led to the end of political violence in the Basque country. He has worked in many conflict zones in Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, and in Europe.

Simultaneously, in 2015, Pierre Hazan created justiceinfo.net, a media of the [Fondation Hironnelle](#), dedicated to justice issues in societies in transition. He was also the curator of the War and Peace exhibition (October 2019-March 2020), which was held at [the Martin Bodmer Foundation](#) in partnership with the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. On behalf of the City of Geneva, Pierre Hazan was the coordinator in 2018 of the [Declaration of Geneva “Human Rights and Culture Heritage: Committed Cities Working Together”](#). In 2002, with Léo Kaneman and Yaël Reinharz, Pierre was a founding member of the [International Film Festival and Forums on Human Rights](#).

A Fellow at Harvard Law School (2005) and a senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington D.C. (2006), Pierre Hazan has taught at the [Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies](#) (Geneva), at the Geneva School of Art and Design where he led a SNF research project on the Politics of Memory in Divided Societies. Former diplomatic correspondent, specialized in peace-keeping operations and humanitarian action with *Libération* (Paris) and *Le Temps* (Geneva). He is also a member of the [Law and Peace Practice Group](#) of the Institute for Integrated Transition, based in Barcelona.

Pierre Hazan has written many books and publications, including [Amnesty: A blessing in disguise?](#) (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2020). He was the curator of the War and Peace exhibition at the Bodmer Foundation and co-directed the exhibition catalogue, (Gallimard, 2019). His books include *La paix contre la justice ?* (AVE/GRIP, 2010), *Judging War, Judging History: Behind Peace and Reconciliation* (Stanford University Press, 2010), *Justice in a Time of War* (Texas A&M, 2004). He was the guest editor of *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* (April 2017) on the special issue « [Beyond Borders: A New Regional Architecture of Transitional Justice?](#) ». He was the editor of *The Tenth Anniversary of the International Criminal Court, the Challenges of Complementarity* (Politorbis, Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012), and collaborated with U.N. special rapporteurs on the *Report on the writing and teaching of history*(A/68/296), the *Report on memorialization processes*(A/HRC/25/49) and the report on *Processes of Memorialization in the context of grave human rights and humanitarian law violations*(A/HCR/45/45, 2020). The fiction TV series on humanitarian action called “[Crisis Unit](#)” is based on an original idea of Jean-François Berger, Pierre Hazan, and Jean Leclerc.

**LIVES BETWEEN THE LINES:
A JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF THE LOST LEVANT**
By Michael Vatikiotis



WEL: Weidenfeld & Nicolson
Chinese: Horizon

The story begins with a parting of the sands - the construction of the Suez Canal that united the Mediterranean with the Arabian Sea. It opened the door of opportunity for people living insecurely on the fringes of a turbulent Europe.

The Middle East is understood today through the lens of unending conflict and violence. Lost in the litany of perpetual strife and struggle are the layers of culture and civilisation that accumulated over centuries, and which give the region its cosmopolitan identity. It was once a region known poetically as the Levant - a reference to the East, where the sun rose. Amid the bewildering mix of races, religions and rivalries, was above all an affinity with the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Today any mixing of this trinity of faiths is regarded as a recipe for hatred and prejudice. Yet it was not always this way. There was a time, in the last century, when Arabs and Jews rubbed shoulders in bazaars and teashops, worked and played together, intermarried and shared family histories.

Michael Vatikiotis's parents and grandparents were a product of this forgotten pluralist tradition, which spanned almost a century from the mid-1800s to the end of the Second World War in 1945. The Ottoman empire, in a last gasp of reformist energy before it collapsed in the 1920s, granted people of many creeds and origins generous spaces to nestle into and thrive. The European colonial order that followed was to reveal deep divisions. Vatikiotis's family eventually found themselves caught between clashing faiths and contested identity. Their story is of people set adrift, who built new lives and prospered in holy lands, only to be caught up in conflict and tossed on the waves of a violent history.

Lives between the Lines brilliantly recreates a world where the Middle East was a place to go to, not flee from, and the subsequent start of a prolonged nightmare of suffering from which the region has yet to recover.

Bio:

Michael Vatikiotis is a member of the Asia Society's International Council and has a decade of experience working as a private diplomat and conflict mediator for the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Prior to that he worked as a journalist in Asia for thirty years, living in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong. He is the author of three previous books on the politics of Southeast Asia including *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia* (W&N).

A selection of reviews:

Lives between the Lines is the moving and beautifully written story of a journey to explore [Vatikiotis's] identity by visiting the places - primarily Egypt and Israel - in which several generations of his Levantine ancestors made their homes. As well as being a highly personal family-memoir-cum-travelogue, it is a paean to tolerance between diverse faiths and different communities at a time when much of the Middle East is being consumed by bigotry, fanaticism and sectarian violence

- Justin Marozzi — *Financial Times*

Vatikiotis's pen portraits left me wanting more of this amazing cast of characters. For the family are bit-part players in what is in fact a potted history of the late Levant, living proofs in his view of the Ottoman Empire's enlightened approach to minority cultures . . .

Vatikiotis's final two chapters describe and acknowledge the ambiguities consequent on Britain's eventual imperial retreat and the region's expulsions of foreigners - British, Jewish, Greek, Italian alike. They are easily the finest and worth the cover price alone . . . fascinating.

- Richard Spencer — *The Times*

Vatikiotis is quietly opinionated, a quality which makes him an admirable guide for this evocation of an era - a journey of personal discovery, where, despite complexities, everything stands neatly in historical and topographical context.

- Andrew Lycett — *Spectator*

[A] human and fascinating insider view of Levantine families in the mid-twentieth century.

Times Literary Supplement

A brilliant evocation of an era when the Middle East was a haven of peace and prosperity for people fleeing Europe. *Lives between the Lines* interweaves a fascinating family history with a portrait of a lost world - which has many echoes and lessons for today.

- Gideon Rachman – *FT*

ZARIFA: A WOMAN'S BATTLE IN A MAN'S WORLD
Emmy award-winning documentary film IN HER HANDS
produced by Hillary & Chelsea Clinton based on Zarifa's life story
by Zarifa Ghafari, first female mayor Afghanistan,
written with Hannah Lucinda Smith – former Turkey correspondent for *The Times* and author
of *Erdogan Rising*



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Copy:

At the age of twenty-four Zarifa Ghafari became mayor of Maidan Shahr, a province of Kabul, Afghanistan; before that she had completed a MSc in Economics and launched and operated a women-focused radio station. During her tenure, violent threats were made to dissuade her from taking up her role, including six attempts on her life, and her father murdered in retribution. After overseeing 70,000 families during the fall of Kabul, she escaped from the Taliban in August 2021 to seek refuge in Germany.

The memoir describe Ghafari's ground-breaking work to end corruption, promote peace and lift up women in her role as mayor; how she overcame violence, assassination attempts and the constant oppression of her sex, and endured the murder of her father in November 2020 – a killing meant to dissuade her from continuing in her role; and how she fled her homeland

when the Taliban took control in August 2021. Here, she tells the stories of women still in Afghanistan under Taliban rule and share her vision for how grassroots activism can change their lives.

Ghafari was included by the BBC as one of the 100 most inspiring and influential women in the world in 2019, and has received the International Woman of Courage Award from the US State Department in 2020, the Oxi Day Foundation Award for Courage in 2021 and many other awards since then. She is now setting up a foundation for women in Afghanistan.
zarifa-ghafari.com Twitter: [@Zarifa_Ghafari](https://twitter.com/Zarifa_Ghafari)

**NARCOTOPIA:
HOW ASIA'S MOST VILIFIED TRIBE OUTFOXED THE DEA (AND THE CIA, TOO)**

by Patrick Winn, author of *Hello: Shadowlands*

WAL ex UK/Comm – PublicAffairs/Hachette USA

UK/Comm – Icon Books

Italy –

Japan –

Publication spring 2024

Narcotopia, the result of ten years of research, exposes the explosive ideological and power-thirsty clash between the CIA and DEA, at war over the fate of the Wa – a Burmese ethnic minority formerly known as head-hunters but who have gone on to found their own state (though it remains unrecognised by the UN) and boast the region's (and one of the world's) largest and best-equipped armies. Nestled in Southeast Asia's 'Golden Triangle' – bordering Burma, Thailand and China – Wa State also runs the largest narco cartel in the world.

Only now revealed in full, this is a story of bugged coffee tables and informants tossed into dark cells, and with the fallout from this conflict still rippling across the world.

Narcotopia is a wake-up call to those who believe the War on Drugs begins and ends with tales of El Chapo and Pablo Escobar. As Hollywood wrings dry every last narrative about Latin American kingpins, Asia's narcotics trade is overlooked, even as it surpasses the cash and power of Mexican cartels.

Winn, the author of *Hello, Shadowlands*, will take readers on a narrative odyssey into this 21st-century game of cops and robbers, and all those in-between, a tale essential to understanding the future of Southeast Asia, and the full reach of the American empire.

Bio:



Patrick Winn is an award-winning investigative journalist who covers rebellion and black markets in Southeast Asia. He enters the worlds of guerrillas and vigilantes to mine stories that might otherwise go ignored.

Winn has received the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award (also known as the ‘poor man’s Pulitzer’) and a National Press Club award. He’s also a three-time winner of Amnesty International’s Human Rights Press Awards, among other prizes.

His writing and short documentaries have appeared in or on *The New York Times*, NBC News, the BBC, the *Atlantic*, NPR and many other outlets. He is a co-creator of the Netflix documentary *Hope Frozen*.

Winn has served as a consultant for *Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown* on CNN. Working closely with the show’s director, he selected people, locations and food featured on the debut, multiple Emmy-winning episode in Myanmar.

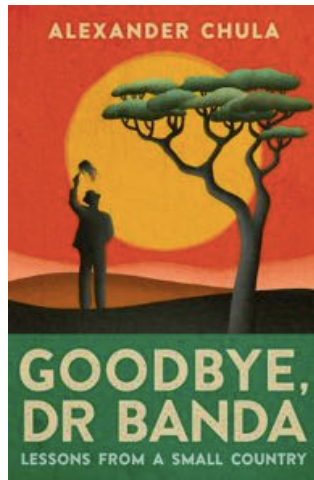
Winn is currently Public Radio International’s Asia correspondent. He appears on PRI’s *The World*, a BBC co-production. The show is broadcast on more than 300 NPR stations across America to reach roughly 3 million listeners each week.

Winn, was raised in Eden, a dwindling North Carolina factory town that once manufactured carpets and beer, and graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2003 with a journalism degree. His early reportage explored economic decay in the American south and crime within the US military.

Since 2008, Winn has lived in Bangkok and reported almost exclusively on Southeast Asia. He reads and speaks Thai.

<http://patrickwinnonline.com/>

GOODBYE, DOCTOR BANDA
by Alexander Chula



WEL to Birlinn/Polygon
Publication: May 2023

Pages: 236

When Alexander Chula, an Oxford-educated classicist-turned-doctor, sifted through the debris of a presidential library in the heart of the African bush, he made an astonishing discovery. Lying in a leather-bound chest studded with brass was a priceless copy of Julius Caesar's *Gallic War*, printed in 1584 and, on the flyleaf: Libris Hastings K. Banda. This unexpected talisman of Western culture belonged to the enigmatic president of Malawi, a man of many parts: peasant-scholar, kindly physician, murderous tyrant, and fallen philosopher-king.

Chula – in Malawi to teach Latin and Greek at the Kamuzu Academy ‘the Eton of Africa’ - discovers an ambivalent affinity with Banda, who had died eight years earlier. The man who led his country to independence in 1964, was a popular doctor in Edinburgh and elsewhere, proclaimed his love of Latin.

However, this book is not a biography of Banda, who brutally suppressed opposition during his thirty-year reign, nor is it a travel guide. Rather, it is an examination of two cultures – the one rooted in the classical past, the other in the soil of Malawi. They have more in common than is realised. The myths and legends of Rome and Greece, and the values and beliefs of Malawi's Chechwa people – together celebrate life.

Using memoir, travelogue and history, and with Banda leading the way, Chula uncovers an extraordinary meeting of worlds. Here tribal ritual collides with Greek theatre; masked dancers with roving classicists; poets and pop stars with missionary-explorers; hippies and kleptocrats with valiant, long-suffering peasants.

This is the ‘great dance’ of Malawi, with all of its tumult and strangeness, which – when examined alongside our own Western culture, past and present - we find ourselves reflected, and admonished.

A selection of the various and glowing advance quotes:

‘This is an impressively researched, beautifully written book. I loved the empathy Chula brings to Malawi’s myths, our past and present. The history of missionaries like Robert Laws and Chauncy Maples showed his thoroughness in research. This is a book to read and enjoy’
– Felix Mnthali

‘A rewarding, delightful and personal examination of Dr Banda’s struggle to reconcile his indigenous Chewa culture with the culture of the Greek and Latin classics. Radical, deep and surprising, with gentle but trenchant observations on African versus Western cultural dynamics, Chula writes with first-hand knowledge of Greek myths and Nyau traditions’
– John Lwanda

‘According to fashionable “decolonising” theory, European colonists hoisted an alien culture onto unwilling native peoples. Reflecting on his own particular experience in Malawi, Alexander Chula tells a less predictable, more fascinating, and far more plausible story of cultural give-and-take. His astute and thoughtful observations of an African microcosm contain important lessons for the larger discussion of the impact of Western colonialism. There is wisdom here, elegantly expressed’ – Nigel Biggar

‘A highly unusual personal memoir, but it is also a sympathetic and perceptive portrait of a country and its past. It is a quite superb book that will linger with the reader for a long time after it is read’ – Alexander McCall Smith

‘A riveting – and cautionary – tale of a clash of cultures, as seen through the eyes of a young classicist-turned-medical doctor, who discovers that Ancient Greek legend and the rituals of the Chewa people have much in common. Brilliantly observed and packed with insights, the result is an African classic’ – Michael Holman

‘Timely, erudite, and a fascinating insight into the complex diversity that is the real modern Africa.’ - Robert Twigger, best-selling author of *Red Nile* and *Angry White Pyjamas*.

‘Reading Alexander Chula’s travelogue, I kept imagining I was soaking in the prose of my travel-writing hero, Bruce Chatwin. Absolutely engaging from beginning to end, *Goodbye, Doctor Banda*, is very likely to position Chula as a leading literary voice in months and years to come. I recommend this work for the way it informs, its cultural insights, and for its keenly-observed detail.’ - Tahir Shah, author of *Time* magazine best-seller *The Caliph's House: A Year in Casablanca*

‘I have read this with great enjoyment. Learning about the tradition of classics in Malawi since Banda is fascinating, and the author's personal experiences as a teacher at Kamuzu Academy - and at Oxford prior to that - are vivid, memorable, and described with directness and elegance.’ - Writer, academic and broadcaster Professor Armand D'Angour, author of *Socrates in Love* and Classics Professor at Jesus College, Oxford

**UNDER RED SKIES:
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A CHINESE MILLENNIAL**
by Karoline Kan, ex NYTIMES in Beijing, ex China Dialogue,
ex Bloomberg, now a Chevening Scholar at Oxford

A BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week

WEL – Hachette Book Group USA
UK/Comm – Hurst
Italian – Bollati
Portuguese – Bertrand
Spanish – RBA



Copy:

Karoline Kan was born in 1989, the year of the Tianenmen Square massacre: her generation has always been caught between China's authoritarian politics and its hyper-modern technology and economic boom. In her quest to understand the shifting sands of global, connected China, Karoline turns to her family, who have survived Maoism and its legacy by breaking with tradition. Navigating a society beset by poverty and often violent political unrest, the Kans swapped rural villages for crowded city streets in search of a better way of life.

Now a journalist, Kan recounts gripping tales of her grandmother, who struggled to help her family through the Great Famine; of her mother, who defied the One-Child Policy by giving birth to Karoline; and of her cousin, a factory worker scraping by on less than a dollar an hour. An ambitious millennial pursuing her career and personal life in a time of dizzyingly rapid social change, Kan discovers her own story's roots in the China of previous generations.

Of course, Karoline's story is one of millions of others – but through the story of her life we can see and understand what's happening in China now, and how this will lead us into the future.

A selection of the various and glowing advance quotes:

‘Vivid and humane, Karoline Kan’s memoir of coming of age in China is richly revealing and contemporary, shaped both by the pain of history and the hope of the future – at turns bold and vulnerable, like China itself’ – Evan Osnos

‘At first glance, *Under Red Skies* is a simple coming-of-age story...but contained within is a sharply observed critique of all that is dysfunctional in Chinese society. You can learn more about China through this compulsively readable memoir than from weightier tomes’ – Barbara Demick

‘I couldn’t put this book down... [Karoline Kan] compellingly narrates the fervent story of China’s shift from farm to city while she lives it, breathes it, and feels it so that the reader does so, too’ – Rob Schmidt

‘Inspiring and heartfelt...this book should be read by people from all corners of the world’ – Xinran

‘Revealing and introspective... Kan fills a void in contemporary literature on [China]’ – Eric Fish

Bio:



Karoline Kan, currently a Chevening scholar at Oxford, began her career in journalism working for Radio France International in Beijing. Since then, she has worked for *The New York Times*, China Dialogue and Bloomberg, writing about Chinese people’s lives in a society shaped by a changing culture, economy and politics, and the affect of climate change on society as a whole. Karoline has also contributed to *Foreign Policy*, CNN, the *Financial Times*, *Roads and Kingdoms* and Index on Censorship.

In 2019 and 2020 she received 'The Honorable Mention' by The Society of Publishers in Asia Awards (SOPA) for her reporting on arts and culture; in 2022 her investigative reporting on Chinese state-owned companies' carbon emissions was shortlisted in SOPAwards for Excellence in Reporting on the Environment. She is also the winner of the 2019 Young China Watcher of the Year Award.

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