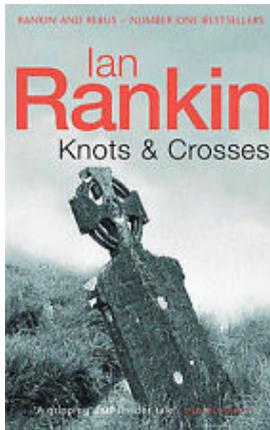


## *Murderous Texts: The Bible in Crime Fiction and Drama*

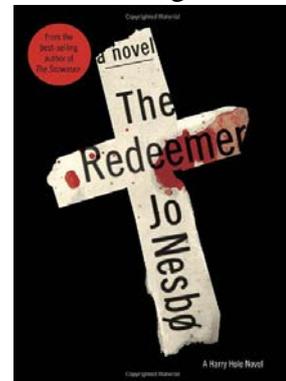
### Call for papers



Religious themes and motifs have, for many years, been grist to the mill for creators of crime fiction and drama. In particular, the Bible has enjoyed a certain notoriety within the crime genre, where a biblical story, text, or motif serves as a thematic focus within the plotline to explore contemporary concerns of criminality, violence, and the search for justice. In Stieg Larsson's novel *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005), and its film adaptations (2009, 2011), a list of biblical passages hold the clue to identifying a ritualistic serial killer. An episode of ITV's police drama *Vera* ('A Certain Samaritan', *Vera*, Series 2, 2012) retells the parable of the Good Samaritan, re-evaluating its significance within the context of a contemporary secular world. Norwegian crime writer Jo Nesbø cites a biblical passage (Isaiah 63.1) at the start of his 2005 novel, *The Redeemer*, using this as a starting point from which to explore the ethics of violence, retribution, and redemption, while in a scene from Ian Rankin's first novel, *Knots and Crosses* (1987), police inspector John Rebus sits reading the book of Job, pondering its themes of suffering and divine justice in light of his own personal and professional traumas.

This frequent and fascinating engagement with the Bible in fictional crime texts (including novels, film, television, and theatre) deserves further investigation. Exploring the explicit and implicit use of biblical texts and themes offers insights into the multiple layers of meaning that may be present within the crime text itself, including the complex intersections between violence and religion. Additionally, it also raises fascinating questions about the significance of the Bible as a religious *and* cultural text – its association with the culturally pervasive themes of violence, intolerance, guilt, and atonement, and its relevance as a symbol of the (often fraught) location that religion occupies within contemporary culture.

Despite this relative popularity of biblical themes and allusions in crime fiction and drama, there has been little sustained scholarly engagement with this subject to date. In our proposed volume, *Murderous Texts: The Bible in Crime Fiction and Drama*, we seek to redress this, bringing together interdisciplinary scholarship from the fields of biblical interpretation, literary criticism, and studies in film, television, and popular culture. We are therefore looking for contributors who are keen to explore the different ways cultural crime texts (including literature, film, television, and theatre) engage with biblical themes or traditions. Essays may consider explicit references to the Bible in these texts, or focus instead on their implicit biblical allusions, including explorations of biblical themes such as sin, redemption, and sacrifice. We are defining 'literature' broadly here to include both traditional novels and more contemporary literary forms, such as graphic novels and comic books.



Contributors should submit an abstract of an essay for this volume (c. 200-300 words) to the editors Caroline Blyth ([c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz)) and Alison Jack ([A.Jack@ed.ac.uk](mailto:A.Jack@ed.ac.uk)) by 30 April 2016. Final essays should be around 5000-6000 words in length and submitted to the editors by 31 December, 2016.