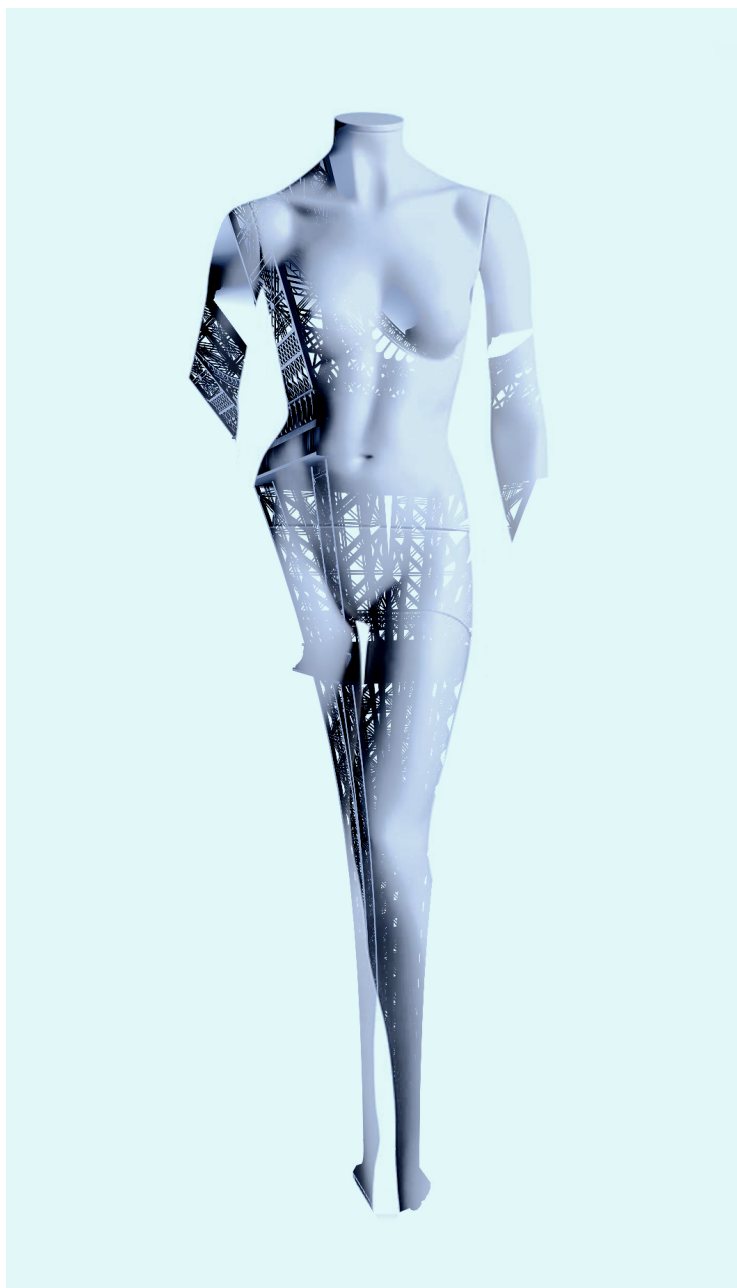


M K L Murphy's *The Isle of Minimus*

a rear view by James Knight





and they said God bless America the tears streaming down their cheeks like blood from Christ's wounds God bless America and God bless the American way and God bless the American Dream and God bless American Beauty and God bless American Pie and God bless American Psycho their eyes full of tears brimming with tears like wine like vinegar like blood from Christ's mouth drooling dripping spattering the pavements of the Champs Élysées where a dwarf with a ferocious sexual appetite sells seashells from the sea's floor purloined by his doppelgänger Jack or Jacques if you're living in an ersatz Paris who escaped from his box or escaped from a boxer on the night that God made the Statue of Liberty from the teeth of the faithless lining up along the Champs Élysées to receive their punishments and free gifts with every purchase over \$666 not to be used in conjunction with other promotions not to be abused in conjunction with udder commotions not to be fused in confusion and in any case notwithstanding the terrifying virility of the diminutive tyrant it has been proven beyond all reasonable doubt beyond all seasonable gout that the scene described by the author in his previous novel was pre-emptively plagiarised from the last film script of a famous writer whose identity was unfortunately not revealed to me a film script destined to be the final word in cultural terrorism or popular culture or science fiction or some such a film script destined to be picked up by Disney and made into a summer blockbuster or arthouse curiosity or some such directed by a man whose talent is dwarfed by his name and starring household names or new talents or some such a movie received with such rapturous critical acclaim that it will be impossible for anyone ever to make a film again unless they're not bothered by the mediocrity of their work when it is compared as inevitably it will be to the magnum opus playing in all cinemas across the world the bloody drama playing out in all cities across the world the Grand Guignol daydreams playing on your conscience ever since you saw the film or movie if you're American the tears of guilt streaming down your American cheeks if you're American or the blood streaming down your cheeks if you're not and God bless your cheeks if you're American and God bless America if it's American and God bless you and



Best not. Like I said, just say what it is. Don't be clever. Think straight. Talk sense. Say what it is. Begin. Get off Facebook and Twitter. Turn off the music. Look at it. Think. Think about what it is. Say what it is. It's easy. Begin. Say it's an antinovelistic novel or novelistic antinovel. Say it's a satire on the film industry. Say it's a satire on the entertainment industry. Say it's a satire on the sex industry. Say it's a satire on all industries. Says it's a satire on the modern media. Say it's a satire on capitalism. Say it's a satire on satire. That might not be right. Says it's a book. Say it's a book with pages. Say it's a book with pages and words. Say it's a book with pages and words and no full stops (periods, if you're American) because the author had used them all up before sitting down to write his antinovelistic novel or novelistic antinovel. That's not quite right: there's a full stop at the end. But don't say that: it's a spoiler. And there's an implied full stop before the beginning, which is marked by a capital letter. Don't say that either: it's not interesting. You shouldn't try to be interesting, of course. But you should try not to be uninteresting, which isn't quite the same thing. Scratch that. Just try to be accurate. Get off Facebook and Twitter. Begin. Look at it again. Pick it up. Open it. Rub your nose against it. Sniff it. Think about it. Say what it is. Say it's a book. Say it's a bomb. Say it's a book that explodes if the reader doesn't handle it carefully. Say it's a book that implodes if the reader handles it too carefully or thoughtfully or reverentially. Say it's just a fucking book after all and what is the fuss about and Jesus I should just throw it in a puddle. Scratch that. Calm down. Look again. Don't sniff this time. Reach for metaphors. Say it's maniacal laughter in a dark room. Say it's a slug on a child's eyelid. Say it's a sex show in a hall of mirrors. Say it's a broken bass guitar. Say it's a false memory of 1990s hedonism. Say it's a false memory of 1960s hedonism. Say it's a toothpick. Say it's a mushroom cloud reflected in the eyes of everyone who has ever seen Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Scratch that. Best not. Just say what it is.



They all went south. South is sexy. South is Soviet. South is chic. South is the mouth of drought and doubt. South turns up. South turns down. South turns down your bed. South burns. South churns. They all went south. They travelled south. All of them. Every last one. Every man jack. Every fleshy cherub aiming his tiny rocket-launcher at the American Dream. Every bolshy grunge kid sitting in his parents' New York apartment fantasising about the Cold War. Every disappointed dreamer. Every hapless has-been. Every wannabe. Every dwarf acrobat riding a unicycle along a tightrope stretching from Caesar's Palace to the Eiffel Tower. Every tyrant in the fever of his erotomania. Every deadbeat and diplomat. South is Bournemouth. South is big mouth. South is Hellmouth. They all fell in. They all toppled in, tumbled in, fumbled and mumbled in. They all went in, the talkers and writers and professional masturbators, tapping on their typewriters their laptops their tablets their smartphones, tapping words made flesh or worms made flesh, making, procreating in the Paradise of Maggots. And outside the tent was half a man, the bottom half, the top half missing in action, presumed dead, the bottom half naked, lying down, bleeding, strangely calming to look at, fly-blown.



Agent 69 died of gunshot wounds outside a tiny replica of the Moulin Rouge situated in a Las Vegas hotel room popularly thought to have been rented by Anna Karina or Brigitte Bardot despite a wealth of evidence that suggested it was used exclusively by a fictional dwarfish tyrant named Lord Khazâd whose legendarily ravenous libido had been the subject of newspaper stories novels films (movies, if you're American) chat show discussions police reports and an album recorded by grunge band Terminal Drone in their recording studio in Seattle in 1999 which was usually considered the last year of the Twentieth Century despite the fact that mathematically it wasn't and was also the year in which Agent 69 made the first of a series of era-defining discoveries whose significance is amply documented in coroners' reports AGM minutes philosophical treatises and pornographic websites owned by a sinister group of media terrorists whose sole stated aim was the annihilation of reality itself which was arguably accomplished or at least foreshadowed by the death by gunshot wounds of Agent 69 outside a tiny replica of the Moulin Rouge in an imaginary Las Vegas hotel room.