

SLAUGHTER

It is tempting in studying history or living one's life to put some faith in one thing causing another. But often too much is going on for us to be that organized or clear. One murder may seem to prompt another: when Sollozzo tried to kill Vito Corleone, he knew what to expect in response. But suppose Vito had been hit by a car moments before the assassin could get to him. Think of the set piece story going off in untidy but lifelike ways. Remember how Gavrilo Princip shot the archduke and his wife late in the afternoon in 1914, when he thought the big plan had failed, when the driver of the royal car got lost and took an unlucky turn. Or was it lucky?

Murder wants to be a drastic, dramatic assertion of man's power—but it does not heal the humbling knowledge that everyone will die in some kind of confusion.

Tidiness can become a prison, and a merciless tit for tat. A