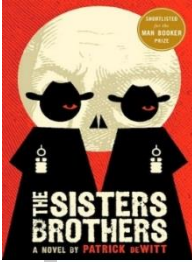




## Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons Teacher's Book Review



*The Sisters Brothers*, Patrick deWitt  
Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

Sometimes the future we imagine for ourselves is not the one we get, either due to our own choices or matters of fate. This story is about one man's quest to change the trajectory of his life. It takes place in the 1850s and begins with a journey. Two brothers, Eli and Charles Sisters are gunslingers on their way to California. They are paid killers hired by their boss, known only as The Commodore. Their job involves locating and murdering a gold prospector, for which they will be paid very well.

En route these two men encounter a varied cast of characters – men and women whose literary portraits, you will not soon forget. Their adventures are either darkly violent or widely comedic and you will find yourself either recoiling in horror or laughing out loud as you read this book. The humour is frequently black and there are times when you will be very moved by unexpected moments of tenderness.

The juxtaposition of the brothers – one unapologetically ruthless and the other craving redemption – is what sets this novel apart from the conventional Western novel. Can a life be rewound, the evil actions of a person eradicated and his moral compass reset? One of the brothers thinks so and he sets out to save his own soul and the soul of his brother, if he will let him.

It is not surprising to me that the movie rights to this novel have been purchased. The book is cinematic in its narrative style and like all good books the readers will find themselves creating very specific images in their minds about what these characters and the settings would look like. The strange feature of this book is that the author takes a minimalist approach to description, relying instead on dialogue and a few well chosen adjectives to create atmosphere and evoke mood throughout the story.

This book is certain to stimulate discussion among those who read it and whet the appetite for more books by the same author. It is that good.