

THE HOLOCAUST IN THEORY

Sue Vice

Josh Cohen, *Interrupting Auschwitz: Art, Religion, Philosophy*, London and New York, Continuum 2003; 256 pp, £60 hardback, £17.99 paperback.
Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (eds), *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 2003; 528pp, £60 hardback, £18.99 paperback.

Josh Cohen's *Interrupting Auschwitz* is an ambitious and far-ranging project by any standards. Cohen's theme of 'interruption' is in fact one of 'inconclusiveness', and it refers to the necessarily and radically unending nature of philosophical or poetic thought after Auschwitz. Cohen argues this theme by bringing together thinkers who have complicated Theodor Adorno's apparently straightforward 'new categorical imperative', that 'The premier demand on education is that Auschwitz not happen again'. Cohen devotes chapters to the struggles of post-Holocaust Jewish theologians with theodicy, and to the work of Adorno, Emmanuel Levinas and Edmond Jabès, all of whom raise the traditional Jewish themes of writing, redemption, and ethics, in a new and bleak context. The notion of interruption-as-endlessness common to the three philosophers was best summed up for me by a quotation Cohen gives from Marc-Alain Ouaknin's *The Burnt Book: Reading the Talmud*: 'the Messiah is made for not coming'. That is, messianic hope is a perpetual deferral of an unimaginable fulfilment; likewise, Adorno's 'categorical imperative' can be understood, in Cohen's phrase, as follows: 'the imperative allows for the judgement of its violation, but not of its achievement, which belongs of necessity to an unachieved and unachievable future'. In other words, it is impossible, except in a putative messianic age outside time and history, to say that the threat of 'another Auschwitz' has been averted (and unfortunately we already know that it has not been).

Although Cohen's argument is a stimulating one, and unites some of the central figures in post-Holocaust philosophy, its own presentation is often less 'interrupted' - in his sense of the word - or expansive than the reader might hope. Rather, Cohen is a master of the gnomic soundbite. In this he seems to follow the philosophical style of his exemplars, but in the manner of a ventriloquist. For example, in relation to Adorno, Cohen tells us that, 'In the artwork, truth speaks by revoking its own expression', and, 'Each [Paul Celan] poem attests anew to its failure to fulfil its own intention'. Of Levinas, Cohen notes, 'The memory of suffering is a memory that suffers', and 'The meaning of my suffering is thus the only meaning suffering can bear'. Jabès is summarised thus: 'testimony begins where the subject's power of telling ends', while Jewish experience 'gives voice to the impossibility of

its own “telling”’. Some of Cohen’s tags are helpful conclusions to sections or chapters; thus, of Jabès, Cohen notes: ‘Auschwitz, in short, forces art’s passage from self-gratifying aestheticism to the vulnerability of responsibility’, while the following is his encapsulation of Levinas: ‘Glory is never the redemption of my suffering for the Other; it is this very suffering in its ethical significance’. However, other statements of this kind seem to rely more on their apparent euphony than on clarity or sense.

As an extension of the philosophical soundbite, Cohen favours the surprising yet dialectical opposition. This is a thematic habit which mimics the argument of his book, since paradox does not lead to self-cancellation but to a productive inconclusiveness. For instance, we learn that Adorno approaches transcendence ‘by way of an unrelenting abstemiousness’; ‘Adorno’s project is not theology in another guise, but an ongoing struggle to think the absolute [elsewhere in Cohen’s book this term is capitalised] in the wake of theology’s impossibility’; ‘the possibility of redemption is bound ineluctably to the impossibility of its actualisation’; we are enjoined ‘at once to think the Absolute and to respect the “image ban” on it’; postmodernism ‘marshals in the service of its arguments the very methods of critical reason it finally wishes to abolish’; ‘Responsibility is not an experience of transcendence, then, but of its radical inaccessibility to experience’; and, most breathtakingly: ‘God’s negative attributes point not to a special mode of existence, but to a confounding of the very predication of existence (and so of non-existence)’. In all these instances, central terms such as redemption, the Absolute and responsibility are both endorsed and cancelled, although they do not then vanish. As Cohen might say, they are most fully present when they are most doubted. However, this paradox exists on the level of the signifier, and not - for me - of the signified. Cohen also adopts Jabès’s technique of the challenging question, and we are faced with such rhetorical conundrums as, ‘how can we determine [pure signification] as purely ethical or impurely aesthetic without falling into the very thematisation we sought to escape?’

Such utterances may be instances of thought interrupting and questioning itself, but they are also rhetorical devices which rely as much on the formal elements of repetition or ‘doubling’, as Cohen puts it, alliteration and symmetry, as on substance. This is especially clear in instances which subordinate historical events to metaphors. We may be used to the almost liturgical discourse which arises when ‘Auschwitz’ is used as a synecdoche for the Holocaust as a whole, as Cohen’s semi-poetic language demonstrates in this instance: ‘Wound of the unsayable rather than name of the unhealable, Auschwitz maintains - indeed *is* - the impossibility of its own telling, an impossibility no name could render determinate’. Here, as elsewhere, the technique of this utterance amounts almost to that of free indirect discourse, typical of Modernist novels, in which the voices of narrator and character - here, respectively, Cohen and Jabès - are hard to distinguish. But such poeticism is harder to take when it appears in discussions of Israel. Take the

following paraphrase of Levinas: 'Sabra and Shatilla [*sic*] can occur only where ... Israel's sobriety is intoxicated by the State'. One yearns here for analysis of the infamous 1982 massacres, à la Noam Chomsky or even Norman Finkelstein - for some solid matter, that is to say, and not a show of linguistic cleverness. At this point, the reader might think of George Orwell's 1946 essay, 'Politics and the English Language'; in particular, of his resonant remark that in modern writing 'inflated style is itself a kind of euphemism', serving to mystify or obscure the very events it purports to represent.

Thus, it was not only the tiny font size of *Interrupting Auschwitz* that made the experience of reading Cohen's book sometimes arduous and frustrating. His discourse is relentlessly abstract and compressed, and the book as a whole is metacritical rather than based on close readings of the very art and poetry it avows. I would have liked to see an analysis, even a mention, of a text which had 'turned against itself', in Adorno's phrase, or learn in specific detail how religious thought 'migrates' to art, as Cohen puts it, in the post-war era. Examples which spring to my mind of 'interrupted' or inconclusive Holocaust art might include the 'countermonument' in Hamburg by Jochen and Esther Gerz which James Young describes in his *The Texture of Memory*, a column which is lowered into the ground as passers-by write on it; or the two-page, plotless fragment, startlingly entitled '****', in Ida Fink's short story collection *A Scrap of Time*.

Cohen tends to follow the literary examples of his philosophers, and I seized with high hopes on the readings he gives of Celan's poetry. In these brief instances Cohen does offer some striking insights. He interestingly analyses the grammatical and epistemological ambiguities of Celan's German, and throughout the book puts his linguistic skills to good use. He gives an extended and cogent reading of the fictional story of survivor Sarah Schwall in Jabès's *The Book of Questions*. But Celan's poetry is co-opted rather too conclusively to Cohen's project of philosophical inconclusiveness. For a comparative view I turned to John Felstiner's excellent critical biography of Celan, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*. It is hard to know whether Cohen has read Felstiner's book, as there is no bibliography in *Interrupting Auschwitz*. In *Paul Celan*, Celan's poems are analysed as literary texts, rather than put forward as hermetic philosophical haikus, and are placed within their historical context. These different approaches produce different readings. The difficult poem 'With a Changing Key', which Cohen also cites, was, we learn from Felstiner, composed in the immediate aftermath of the death of Celan's firstborn son François in 1953. This bereavement informed the central section of Celan's second book, *Mohn und Gedächtnis* (Poppy and Remembrance). Rather than being, in a melancholic vein, a general meditation on death's 'destruction of meaning' (in Adorno's phrase), it seems that 'With a Changing Key' is a poem of mourning. It is also, like all of Celan's poetry, so profoundly based in intertextual reference that the reader might decide such intertextuality - or the clash of discourses it produces, like the Song of Songs alongside Goethe's *Faust* in 'Todesfuge' - actually

constitutes the poem's meaning. Felstiner lists the almost verbatim citations in *Mohn und Gedächtnis* from Parmenides, Hasidic sayings, and Rainer Maria Rilke, among other sources. This suggests that literariness, or art, exists in parallel with philosophy and is not superseded by it. While Felstiner focuses on what *can* be said of Celan's poem, Cohen emphasises what he calls its 'refusal to mean'. He celebrates the 'self-enclosed' nature of 'With a Changing Key' and reads its imagery of the key and of drifting snow as figures for 'the refusal of the unspoken to be drawn into language', as a 'rebuff' to the 'seeker after the secret', and sees death itself in the poem as 'destroy[ing] in advance meaning's fulfilment'. This is a view of art not as interrupted but as incomprehensible, an unwitting failure.

The account Cohen gives of Samuel Beckett's play *Endgame* is unexpected in a similar vein. Adorno, writing as philosopher rather than critic, described the play as 'unintelligible' and having 'no meaning'. Cohen goes on to say the following, and it is unclear whether this is his paraphrase of Adorno or his own perception: 'the tortuously repetitive exchanges, wearisome tales, lame jokes, along with the ritually purposeless sequences of movement all attest to the prising apart of language from subjective intention'. I don't think I am alone in finding, on the contrary, *Endgame*'s repetitions mesmerising and the jokes very funny - in particular these matchless lines of dialogue:

HAMM: You're a bit of all right, aren't you?

CLOV: A smithereen.

Beckett's play is neither an unintelligible nor a meaningless work of art, but one that offers, rather, *too much* meaning and all kinds of diffuse intelligibility. The absence of original close reading in *Interrupting Auschwitz* is particularly ironic given Cohen's reference to Adorno's remark that only a criticism which 'begins from immersion in the work's particulars rather than overarching conceptual categories is in a position to refuse these polarised terms' - those of philosophy and art. Cohen's is not the 'micrological' work Adorno called for in these terms.

Finally, what the French critic Gérard Genette terms the 'paratextual apparatus' of the text - its 'accompanying productions', such as title, afterword and endnotes - deserves mention in relation to *Interrupting Auschwitz*. For instance, there is a clear double meaning in Cohen's title. Its participle suggests that the horror of Auschwitz might itself be interrupted, arrested, or even mitigated. This notion is harder to accede to than that philosophy cannot conclude, and is itself interrupted by Cohen's separation of the personal and political - which he argues elsewhere are continuous - by including in his acknowledgements a note about the birth of his son, the 'most glorious of interruptions' to the writing of the present book. Here, the word lapses back bathetically and contradictorily into its everyday sense of a temporary pause in an otherwise continuous task. On the other hand,

one of the most provocative features of Cohen's book, and one which is not explicitly mentioned in the text itself, is the cover image: a photograph of white bandages partially burnt away to reveal the singed pages of a book which fits perfectly the shape of Cohen's book itself, as if it were its own pages that have been imperfectly repaired. The juxtaposition of bandages and burnt pages - on which the title appears, in blood-red type - suggests oblivion or disavowal versus the painful struggle to continue writing, which Cohen emphasises throughout. Several of the Talmudically based works he mentions use the trope of burning or ashes in their titles, including Levinas's 'Damages due to Fire' and Ouaknin's *The Burnt Book*; Derrida's *Cinders* also springs to mind. Each of these relies on an overdetermined reference to Nazi book-burning and the ashes of genocide. Cohen's cover neatly turns his book itself into an 'interrupted' object.

Levi and Rothberg's anthology *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings* is more literally focused on Adorno's 'new categorical imperative' - that education must be charged with remembering Auschwitz to avoid its repetition - than Cohen's *Interrupting Auschwitz*. It is self-avowedly a textbook, and the editors recommend it be set alongside Lawrence Langer's collection of primary material, *Art from the Ashes*, for the perfect undergraduate course. While I would not set Langer's anthology for a course on Holocaust representation, as it necessarily only includes selections or short stories in its fiction section and has to rely too heavily on poetry, Levi and Rothberg's is an excellent resource on many levels, and for many levels of readership. The editors have put together material of very varying kinds, arranged thematically. For instance, there is a section on 'Questions of Religion, Ethics, and Justice', including work by Emil Fackenheim, Levinas, Jean-François Lyotard and Gillian Rose, and another on 'Race, Gender, and Genocide', featuring writers as diverse as Klaus Theweleit and Joan Ringelheim. In contrast to Cohen's free indirect discourse, these juxtapositions usually have a democratic, polyphonic effect. The extremes of what Wikipedia would call 'not neutral material' are mostly absent, so that Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life* is favoured over Norman Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry*. But throughout the anthology different voices are placed, dialogically, side by side. The extracts are accompanied by commentary but mostly without overt judgement. For instance, the rival claims of the historians Henry Friedlander and Yehuda Bauer over Holocaust uniqueness are not adjudicated, although the lack of consonance between their conclusions is noted.

On the other hand, the selection itself is obviously not entirely neutral. Its *parti-pris* is often confined to the footnotes. Here, for example, we find Slavoj Žižek's italicised insistence that the '*depoliticisation*' of the Holocaust into an exemplar of '*abyssal Evil*' is the result of a political plan by '*aggressive Zionists*'. This is qualified by a gentle editorial demurrer - Levi and Rothberg believe these claims to be 'exaggerated'. Likewise, the reader's attention is drawn to the opposing views of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno on the one hand, and Jürgen Habermas on the other, over a post-Holocaust estimate of

the Enlightenment. Levi and Rothberg acknowledge that the writers they have selected follow Horkheimer and Adorno - rather than Habermas - in arguing that the Holocaust is a terrible fulfilment, rather than an unwitting betrayal, of Enlightenment thought. And although an extract is rightly included from Christopher Browning's groundbreaking study *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, about individuals who took part in mass shootings, Levi and Rothberg very interestingly note that Browning does not give 'consideration [to] the status of masculinity in the psychological make-up of his "ordinary men"', thus begging the very question of 'ordinariness'. More on this would be fascinating to read.

Fittingly, the editors include their own work - such as Rothberg's fine monograph *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* - only in the related-reading sections, which are provocative and up-to-date. For example, in the section 'Psychoanalysis, Trauma, and Memory', the reader is referred to works by such writers as Ruth Leys and Mark Seltzer which are sceptical about the very notion of 'trauma' as a conceptual tool. The further reading sections also include material designed to enable 'dialogue between Holocaust studies and other realms of contemporary intellectual engagement', as the editors put it. This means that Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, about 'rememory' of the slave trade, is listed at the end of the section devoted to second-generation memory; Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* appears at the end of a section on 'Literature and Culture After Auschwitz'. Each section has a helpful preface, placing the contributions in context, while the introduction to the anthology as a whole usefully discusses the notion of theory itself and its relevance, as a 'worldly' and self-reflexive practice, to Holocaust studies.

A section devoted to writing by survivors including Primo Levi and Ruth Kluger is interestingly entitled 'Theory and Experience'; while the 'Nazi Culture, Fascism and Antisemitism' section features pre-war material, such as Kenneth Burke's 1939 review of the English translation of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Burke's analysis of Hitler's autobiography begins, 'Let us try also to discover what kind of "medicine" this medicine-man has concocted, so that we may know, with greater accuracy, exactly what to guard against if we are to forestall the concocting of similar medicine in America'. Such a caveat at such a time is chilling in its own right, and may uncannily remind the reader of Philip Roth's most recent novel *The Plot Against America*, in which Charles Lindbergh takes it upon himself to supply just that 'medicine'.

The Holocaust has a North American and European focus - in fact, the material is almost all of US, French and German origin. British writers, apart from Gillian Rose and Zygmunt Bauman, appear only in the related-reading sections. While there are clearly many reasons for this, not least the nationality of the editors, and a notion of the British as concerned with pragmatic, not theoretical inquiry, I would argue that there is in fact a distinctive British presence in Holocaust studies. This would include figures from historical and cultural disciplines such as Bryan Cheyette, Tim Cole,

Robert Eaglestone, and Dan Stone.

In their introduction, Levi and Rothberg deal pithily with readers' suspicions of thoroughgoing French post-structuralist theory when 'applied' - and the rather medicinal verb may be apposite - to Holocaust history or literature. They quote Langer's caveat, that the 'language of criticism [may] skirt the ugly facts of history'. Levi and Rothberg point out that Langer himself enlists the insights of Maurice Blanchot and Jean-François Lyotard, since 'the ugly facts of history' may not be self-evident, but call for a reflective or theoretical response. Many writers whose work appears in *The Holocaust* are not card-carrying theorists (although such a rubric might include Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean Baudrillard, for whom overarching intellectual patterns may precede the instance of the Holocaust), but thinkers presenting particular arguments from the standpoint of their own disciplines. So the literary critic Michael André Bernstein argues against 'backshadowing' narratives which assume that the past was always inevitable, such as Aharon Appelfeld's fiction, in favour of more open, 'sideshadowing' novels, which give credence to the many possible outcomes of every moment, such as Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*. Joan Ringelheim, on the other hand, is an educationalist working at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and well-known for her work on gender. She argues that even if male and female victims were treated equally by the Nazis, they may well have responded in ways determined by their pre-war experience of gender difference. While such analyses are not 'theoretical' per se, the effect of placing such a wide range of interdisciplinary material together does amount to a theoretical approach. This is neither a monolithic theory nor an endorsement of particular kinds of theory, but a dialogue, or even a disputation.

Contrarily, though, especially given what I have said above of Cohen's stylistic habits, Levi and Rothberg's language seems at times almost deceptively plain and commonsensical. Can the debates raised by the Holocaust be effectively summarised for student consumption? A rather sketchy account is given by the editors of why Baudrillard thinks that 'television exterminates memory', while Horkheimer and Adorno's notion of 'mimesis' is oversimplified. This suggests that making complex theoretical notions instantly accessible is not always possible. But the question remains: What is the fitting way - neither excessively abstract nor simplifying, neither distant from events nor morbidly pious about them - to approach Adorno's 'new categorical imperative'? Is it always discipline-specific, so that historians would insist on investigation of the newly opened Russian archives, while a literary critic would advocate close attention to the textual detail of Holocaust writing? Indeed, one might want to amend the categorical imperative itself to a more modest and likely level, so that it reads, 'The premier demand on education is that Auschwitz not be forgotten'. In this version, representation and memory replace politics; but perhaps this is a more fitting and achievable goal. As Levi and Rothberg argue in their introduction, knowledge of the Holocaust can alter the practice of theory as much as the other way round.

AFRO-AMERICAN POSTMODERNISM: RESISTING THE LITERARY

Caren Irr

Madhu Dubey, *Signs and Cities: Black Literary Postmodernism*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2003; 293pp, £42 hardback, £15.50 paperback.

What is postmodern in the African-American literary tradition? How do efforts to represent race redirect descriptions of postmodernism? These consequential questions organise Madhu Dubey's ambitious and carefully constructed new study. Reading fiction by Octavia Butler, Samuel Delany, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Ishmael Reed, Sapphire, John Edgar Wideman and others, Dubey argues that their writings disturb both the modernist logic that associated the book with the utopian delirium of the city, and the realist logic that understood the writer as a spokesman for the race and a sponsor of racial uplift. Instead, Dubey's analysis of literary texts - in tandem with ideologies of the city and the media - demonstrates that black literary postmodernism has distinctive features; it is characterised by a concern with the segregated structure of urban space and the limited effects of writing in the context of electronic and image-oriented communications technologies.

Underneath this apparently literary-historical thesis, however, lies the main project of *Signs and Cities*: political critique. At this level, Dubey targets three sets of academic discourse. First, she intervenes in the 1980s-era discussion of postmodernism, criticising several of its major participants for insufficient attention to race, at the same time that she claims that images of deprived racial others provide the ground of materiality on which theories of postmodernism rely. In other words, according to Dubey, descriptions of postmodernism as a dominant cultural condition produce a 'romance of the residual' that freezes African-American culture in time and politically disables discourses of race (22). Drawing frequently, albeit critically, on David Harvey and Edward Soja's materialist geography, Dubey argues that one only avoids mystifying the suffering of primitive others by exposing the racial lines of uneven development within postmodern capitalism.

Second, Dubey takes on the technological determinism endemic in discussions of new media. She argues that a fixation on technology - whether the book or the screen - blocks a more urgently needed political analysis of literacy. She points out that even when debates about the nature of writing move towards literacy questions, they are limited by race blindness; they maintain an essentialist basis when they assume that the black masses operate solely within the terrain of orality. A better treatment of literacy, Dubey

asserts, results when one detaches descriptions of the aesthetics of any particular technology of communication from assumptions about its political effects or audience.

Finally, Dubey attacks one of the core assumptions of literary and cultural studies: the idea that literature in particular and culture more generally can reveal and challenge social dynamics. Rightly attributing this position to the underpinnings of the field of literary and cultural studies as a whole (and not just to the straw man of a supposedly celebratory Cultural Studies), Dubey charges that proponents of such a view routinely overestimate the political consequences of writing. She asserts in contrast that literature is better understood as an effect of political economy. A discourse of the real is needed, she argues, in order to understand the dynamics of social change and the place of literature within those dynamics.

In short, Dubey's approach combines a literary-historical question about African-American fiction with ideology critique of influential ideas in urban studies, new media studies, and the humanities more broadly. Underlying her approach is a series of philosophical commitments to ontology, literalism and the real (where the latter is understood as both capitalist development and an economy of signs), as well as a less overtly stated revival of what used to be called the reflection thesis (the idea that literature reflects social conditions rather than acting upon them). The results of this hybrid combination of neo-Marxism and neo-pragmatism are most apparent in her readings of some key themes in American social theory: post-Moynihan hypotheses about an urban 'underclass', cities as centers of hyper-consumption, and African-American 're-migration' to the South, for instance. For each of these ideas, Dubey assesses the ideological effects of each of these themes and provides a counter-narrative of developments for which social theory offers little explanation. Her commitment to the real leads her to demystify social categories and retell social history.

Dubey's readings of literary texts, however, rely more on the neo-pragmatist than the neo-Marxist side of her methodology. They are primarily thematic and tropological, focusing on recurring figures such as the disassembled manuscript, the framing of urban vision, and the reader as listener. While some aspects of an African-American literary tradition are discussed (such as an ambivalent relation to textuality), there is less attention to other ways that literary forms have changed over time, and have registered the uneven development of the text as a technology, as well as the long history of contradictions in racial ideologies. There is also less consideration than one might expect of topics that have been important for other studies of contemporary black writing, such as diction, plot structure, characterisation, or genre (outside of a very interesting Jamesonian meditation on science fiction in the final chapter). What this narrowing of the text to logical content suggests is that Dubey's version of political critique is more concerned with the contemporaneous social register than with any autonomous or semi-autonomous history of cultural forms. This synchronic

approach need not follow directly from her attack on the inflated sense of self-importance characteristic of literary studies, however. In fact, if one associates Marxist or neo-Marxist methods with the imperative to 'always historicise', it is perhaps surprising to discover that historicising here means expanding the field of contemporary references rather than an extension of the temporal field.

This methodological issue is not debilitating; on the contrary, it fits neatly with some of the strongest aspects of *Signs and Cities*. Dubey's thesis is rigorously worked through. She regularly pushes her arguments past conventional comfort zones, ensuring that they will take the extra step from representations of urban spaces to self-consciousness regarding writing and onwards to political critique. This movement towards critical reflections on textual ontology is crucial to the project, but it might also be illuminating to see what would happen if the ontology of the city, as well as of the text, appeared as the final horizon. That is, in addition to examining how discourses of the city and urban migrations have formed the conditions of possibility for literary representation, it might be interesting to investigate how texts of various sorts create urban spaces through institutional mediations (reading groups, religious study, new social codes of identification, cafe culture, and so on). Since the problem of community formation is repeatedly raised in *Signs and Cities*, one wonders what new methods for thinking about the reception and effects of literature Dubey's approach might produce.

The community issue is crucial to the logic of Dubey's study. She reveals in the 'Afterword' and in chapter four that a reaction against Toni Morrison's influential accounts of southern folk life motivated the project. Suspicious of Morrison's description of southern black communities as rural, premodern, peasant and/or tribal, Dubey reads this folk aesthetic as the result of pessimism regarding urban politics and the transcendent promise of literacy. Choosing nostalgia for the community bonds formed by segregation over the broken promise of urban integration and equality, Morrison (on Dubey's account) ends up celebrating poverty and reproducing in the act of writing the class divisions she decries in the content of her fiction. This is an important argument about the political logic that underpins appeals to community, and its implications extend well beyond African-American studies.

For this reason, it is curious that Dubey's study uses a limited concept of race and culture for organisational purposes at the same time as she argues against limited versions of these concepts. She equates race with 'black', and takes black to mean non-immigrant African-Americans. Only in passing does Dubey allude to the multi-racial character of American cities. The effect of Latinos, Asian and South Asian migrants, and the sedimented layers of minority cultures from Africa, the Caribbean and non-WASP areas of Europe on post-1970s American racial ideology is not explored in *Signs and Cities*. The most explicit passage mentioning minorities in the US other than African-Americans appears in a discussion of southern cities; the complex racial dynamics in major urban centres where immigrants have historically

been concentrated (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Detroit), as well as literary representations of these dynamics, do not figure in her study. Since this book is not a comprehensive urban history and does not claim to present an explanation of all issues concerning race and the city, this is not a crippling omission. But, some of the fiction Dubey discusses does consider the impact of urban diversity on African-American views of race (Reed, Delany and Sapphire in particular), so the white/black binary she uses reads as if it has been imposed by her critical frame rather than by the subject matter itself. One wonders what investments on her part require the binary treatment of race. Dubey's admirable and correct insistence on identifying the structures that organise a supposed postmodern urban spatial fluidity may perhaps have led to a compensatory oversimplification in this instance.

In two other areas, it is also interesting to note the limits to innovation in political critique that appear, although it must be stressed that these limits are not unique to Dubey's project, but problems that most scholars face when working on the circulation of social concepts through literary texts. Nonetheless, it is clear that the vocabulary for class that appears in *Signs and Cities* is inadequate to the social logic being described. Dubey is rightly critical of the concept of the 'underclass' as it has been deployed in American public politics, and, as mentioned above, she objects to descriptions of rural southern labour as a peasant economy. But, in her own writing, she struggles to find terminology adequate to describe social groups outside the elite intellectual sphere. Concepts such as the masses, the poor, or the working class are judged inadequate, but little has arrived to replace them. This leads one to wonder, once we junk concepts of community as nostalgic along with these other political vocabularies, how else shall we name and distinguish populations along class lines? Are postmodern urban forms producing new collective subjects who self-identify in relation or reaction to literary intellectuals? How and where can contemporary political critique look for an adequate vocabulary of class and race? Developing answers to these questions is clearly a necessity if we are to reground literary and cultural study in relation to political economy, as Dubey urges.

These difficult questions remain unanswered here presumably in part because they are so difficult, and perhaps also because so many other important and challenging questions preoccupy *Signs and Cities*; one can only do so much. But the final chapter on Delany (clearly the hero of the study) suggests another explanation as well. Delany's *Stars in My Pocket* is positioned as a dialectical third way in Dubey's study, mediating between a postmodern urbanism that rests on the false universality of the commodity and Morrison's nostalgic appeals to the folk aesthetic. Speculating on the present by way of a near future, Delany provides a non-nostalgic and ultimately anti-literary text, Dubey argues; his fixation on the technological mediations involved in communication attends to the difficulties of cross-cultural communication and provides a politics of reading and a politics of difference that is both egalitarian and utopian. In short, this reading of

Delany suggests that for Dubey, literary versions of the present are best grasped via triangulation through the future. On her account, an oblique view emphasising mediation through failed social languages is the closest one comes to mapping contemporary culture. While theoretically provocative, this resistance to direct apprehension of the contemporary seems intellectually at odds with her insistence that we attend to contemporary social conditions, and perhaps politically disabling as well in a study that initially argues so forcefully for a discourse of the real and the need to map urban spaces authoritatively. Although the risks involved in affirmatively naming the present are many (especially on a topic such as race, where all the starting points for discussion are essentially historical scars), it is surely necessary nonetheless to attempt an adequate description of the present, even if one has only extremely limited resources for doing so. Surely one of the important contributions of literature to social questions is precisely its struggle to describe and name the present as such.

In the 'Afterword', Dubey makes a brief attempt at this sort of naming, by presenting an account of Colson Whitehead's *The Intuitionist* as an extension of urban modernity into a possible future. She places Whitehead in the company of other contemporary writers who together provide an urban alternative to a nostalgic cultural politics of race. She locates the power of this postmodern urban aesthetic in its insistence on the need for revising literary narratives and the city itself. This gesture towards naming a position and a tendency is vital, and Dubey's critical insight into black literary postmodernism as a coherent phenomenon is affirmed by some subsequent literary production. Whitehead's next novel, *John Henry Days* (2002), goes on to disassemble appeals to the southern folk traditions clustered around the legend of John Henry; from a somewhat different angle, Edward P. Jones's Pulitzer Prize winner *The Known World* (2004) tackles the problem of how intra-race conflicts within southern slavery shape contemporary urban life. That these issues might, however, not be bounded by the race of the writer, but rather a feature of intelligent representations of race in the US more generally, is suggested by Richard Powers's self-conscious meditation on the simultaneous breakdown of orality and the integrationist ideal in *The Time of Our Singing* (2003). These and many other contemporary texts become legible in interesting new ways thanks to the insightful analysis presented in *Signs and Cities*.

In short, Madhu Dubey's work throughout this study is impressive, rigorous, and generative, and the volume will certainly prove to be an important contribution to several fields (urban studies, race theory, and African-American literary and cultural studies most directly). It should also serve as a challenging reminder of the need to think past negative critique and toward a re-invented language for contemporary cultural and political life. As Dubey repeatedly points out, the consequences of a merely nostalgic attachment to the past are severe - for the increasingly alienated intellectual and, more importantly, for the disenfranchised populations who have for far too long been misnamed and badly served by American social policy.

SURREALISM AND MASS-OBSERVATION: THE MISSING LINK

Ben Highmore

Kevin Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings*, London, Picador, 2004; 448pp, £30 hardback.

On the night of 30 November and into the morning of 1 December 1936, Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace burnt to the ground. Flames as high as 150 feet consumed what was once the extravagant setting of the 1851 Great Exhibition. The blaze, which could be seen from every hill in London and from as far away as Brighton, drew crowds of spectators. 'From afar off', wrote *The Times*, 'the great red glow in the sky seemed like an exaggerated sunset wreathed in huge billowing clouds. Thousands of people hurried to the scene from miles around by car, on foot and by bicycle'. It was as if a vast industrial behemoth was dying: 'masses of glass dropped continually, and section by section the huge skeleton of ironwork visibly bent and twisted and fell with heavy crashes and in immense showers of sparks'. While *The Times* recognised the symbolic status of the Crystal Palace, it was unsure what exactly it was symbolic of: 'there it stood, becoming steadily more historical and symbolic as the years passed, and as living memories faded of its original purpose and pristine splendour'. In the years since 1851, Paxton's building had been substantially enlarged and moved from its original site in Hyde Park to be relocated in the suburbs at Sydenham Hill. While the original building had been a cathedral praising 'industry and empire', by the 1930s its attractions more commonly consisted of dog shows, circuses, firework displays and dance bands.

Cycling back from an evening spent with Humphrey Jennings, Charles Madge, Kathleen Raine and others, the poet David Gascoyne saw 'a great glow in the sky'. Gascoyne, who had been taking part in the discussions which led to the foundation of Mass-Observation, comments on the incineration of the Crystal Palace: 'For most of us - we Mass-Observationists that is to say - it represented in a sort of symbolic way an image of the world-conflagration which we were already beginning to think of as about to break out, and we felt that it meant this, unconsciously, to the general public, hence the unusual fascination it seemed to have for everyone at the time'. There was, it turns out, something doubly symbolic about the fire: while the Crystal Palace itself was utterly gutted and left little trace of its Victorian heyday, the adjoining tower which was being used for experimental television broadcasts was miraculously spared. If the fire presaged future catastrophes

it also seemed to signal a new era in mass-communication.

Two days after the fire, on 3 December, news broke that King Edward VIII wanted to marry Wallis Simpson, an American divorcee. A constitutional crisis was in progress and abdication seemed imminent. To the Mass-Observationists, signs of change were everywhere: it seemed like a great opportunity to take the pulse of the nation and perhaps to edge it into further change. In an early Mass-Observation questionnaire, recipients were asked whether they were glad or sorry that the Crystal Palace burnt down, and whether or not they wanted the King to marry Wallis Simpson. They were also asked: 'Can you believe you are going to die?'; 'How do you want to die?'; 'Do you welcome or shrink from the contact by touch or smell of your fellow men?' The questions, to be answered (with a nod towards the practice of free association) without hesitation, were designed to provoke unguarded responses that might release unconscious reactions to the social world. The Mass-Observation group, at least in its first manifestation, was made up of the same people who only a few months earlier had launched the first Surrealist exhibition in Britain, at the New Burlington Galleries, London. It is hard not to see Mass-Observation as, in part, a response to the innocuous buffoonery (Salvador Dalí lectured in a deep-sea diving suit, for instance) and aesthetic cosiness that seemed to envelop that exhibition. Humphrey Jennings was on the organising committee for the exhibition and also one of the most vociferous critics of the way that Surrealism in this London outing was promoted as the latest swanky version of Romanticism. Aimed quite specifically at Herbert Read and Jennings's old Cambridge friend Hugh Sykes Davies (both of them contributing to the Faber book *Surrealism* which was edited by Read) the critique is still cutting: 'our "advanced" poster designers and "emancipated" business men - what a gift Surrealism is to them when it is presented in the aura of "necessity", "culture", and "truth"'. And in another barb Jennings suggests that 'to be already a "painter", a "writer", an "artist", a "surrealist", what a handicap'. The challenge was set: either Surrealism was everywhere - a deep structure of the social world - or it was nothing, a mere confection.

This is the challenge that Mass-Observation initially took up. Jennings, Madge and others sought ways of registering 'coincidences' and the 'marvellous' in the most ordinary and the most collective circumstances of life. Theirs was a Surrealism dedicated to the everyday - to the extraordinariness of the ordinary and the ordinariness of the extraordinary. As Kevin Jackson's book shows, Jennings soon found himself in competition with Tom Harrison, the precocious ornithologist (he published a book on bird life in the area around Harrow while still at school there) and ethnographer who soon became the driving force of Mass-Observation. Jackson provides an anecdote that seems to sum up the situation: we are in Charles Madge's and Kathleen Raine's house in Blackheath; Jennings and Harrison are both holding forth, both shouting trying to drown out the other; each has one elbow leaning on the same fireplace. Jennings ended

up withdrawing from Mass-Observation, but not before producing the only major example, *May 12, 1937*, of Mass-Observation's desire to give 'working-class and middle-class people a chance to speak for themselves, about themselves'. Edited by Jennings and Madge, *May 12, 1937* is a collage of different voices describing their experiences of this particular day with the bare minimum of editorial comment. If in the end Jennings's involvement with Mass-Observation was short-lived, the challenge of a truly social sense of the surreal was something that can be seen to animate his work from the late 1930s onwards - it is deeply embedded in the attitude of the work. Certainly it allows 'Jennings the filmmaker' to be seen in a different light.

Jennings died in 1950 at the age of 43 after falling from a rock on the Greek island of Poros. He was looking for locations for a film on health in Europe, commissioned by the European Economic Commission. All the obituaries lamented the loss of a pioneering documentary filmmaker. But, as Kathleen Raine reminded people at the time, Jennings was also a painter, a poet, a literary critic and editor. He was, though, above all these, and across all these, a collagist - a *monteur*. During his adult years Jennings collected quotations that he annotated with the intention of editing them into a book on the industrial revolution. The eventual book, *Pandæmonium: The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers*, was published in 1985 - roughly 46 years after Jennings first approached a publisher about the project. Like *May 12*, it is a work of montage with little authorial 'voice over', which is also a quality of his best films. It is an amazingly non-egotistical way of working, and it fits the belief that the coincidences and juxtapositions that matter are ones found in the world at large rather than in the torrid or torpid dreams of artists. The cinematic proclivities of this approach should be obvious. In fact, both *Pandæmonium* and *May 12* can be read as highly detailed film treatments - albeit treatments that suggest a very specific constructivist and surrealist approach to filmmaking.

Jennings joined John Grierson's GPO Film Unit in 1934, initially on an ad hoc basis. Grierson and Jennings never got on well, and Jennings only found his feet within the Unit after Alberto Cavalcanti joined. It is worth remembering that the emergence of a poetic documentary tradition in Britain, which at times has seemed so provincial, so insular, had much to do with the energy and enthusiasm of this Brazilian filmmaker who had previously made avant-garde films in Paris. Cavalcanti, Jennings and the New Zealander Len Lye provided another dimension to Grierson's more austere approach to documentary - it was a dimension that brought the experiments of the Soviet constructivists (particularly Sergei Eisenstein - also present in Grierson's approach) and various strands of European modernism (including Surrealism, as well as painterly modernism more generally) into contact with the social reformism of the documentary movement. Jennings ended up making nearly 30 films for the GPO Film Unit and its wartime replacement, the Crown Film Unit. Many of these are not particularly significant, but a few of them are extraordinary; they

generated a filmic grammar that furthered the Mass-Observationist project of finding poetic forms for the Surrealism of everyday life.

Amongst these, the wartime propaganda film *Listen to Britain* is exemplary. *Listen to Britain* is a sound film but not a 'talky'. As Jackson suggests, the film is at times a work of *musique concrète*: an orchestration of whistles, motors, bits of conversation and so on. Sound, and the recent technologies of sound, is the theme that animates the film. One of the interests that Jennings shared with his friend Charles Madge was a fascination with technology, and mass-communication technologies in particular. In *Listen to Britain*, radio is a clear protagonist and supplies a theme that runs through many of Jennings's films - the possibility of virtual communities, of people knitted together by their communal listening. The film pictures factory workers singing along to the BBC show *Music While You Work*, families attentively listening to the news, soldiers concentrating on the Overseas Service, and so on. Here the sociability of the radio works as social glue, actively generating a wartime nation. Given the value that Nazi Germany placed on the 'People's Radio Receiver' and the technologically mediated voice of the Führer, it is unavoidably a difficult propaganda image. But here Surrealism rescues the image from its authoritarian connotations, partly by a concentration on the phenomena of listening. There is something strange about watching people listening, especially when the film's focus seems to be specifically on the listening rather than on the material being listened to. The watcher is at once reminded of the uncanny actuality of radio, of ghost voices, public voices, congregating in private rooms. Similarly, the Surrealist interest in 'coincidence' is made both concrete and more democratic through the virtual and simultaneous event of listening alone but together. With radio the coincidences are predictable - potentially, everyone might have heard last night's Flanagan and Allen show - but materially they are still coincidences. The ability of radio to generate public intimacy is not just limited to this earlier historical moment; the feeling many people had, after the recent death of the DJ and broadcaster John Peel, that they had lost someone close to them testifies to the continued strength of radio as a peculiarly intimate communicative form.

The longest sequence in *Listen to Britain* is of the RAF Orchestra playing Mozart's Piano Concerto in G major in the National Gallery, with Myra Hess on piano. While several shots focus on Hess's hands, most of the focus is on the faces of the audience listening to the music. Watching these faces, the film seems to ask if you can tell the difference between bored listening and rapt attention. It seems fairly straightforward at first, concentration seems to be visible in the knitted brow and the leaning poses of listeners, but just when you think a member of the audience is listening to the music with every fibre of their being they do something with their hands that suggests that they may well be fairly indifferent to the music, or simply preoccupied with their own thoughts. The choice of Mozart is not, of course, accidental. Jennings was careful to avoid the xenophobia of much war

propaganda; indeed, as propaganda goes, the film is amazingly indifferent to the identity of the 'enemy'. The contrast between fighting Nazism and valuing German culture is given a more heavy-handed treatment in Jennings's later wartime film *A Diary for Timothy*. Anyone who has listened to the recordings of Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore in *Beyond the Fringe* will have a hard time taking parts of *A Diary for Timothy* seriously. The scene in *Beyond the Fringe* where they satirise British wartime propaganda and 'stiff-upper-lip-ness' is mostly based on Jennings's film. The scene that goes: 'the music you are listening to, Timothy, is German music. We are fighting the Germans. That is something you are going to have to work out later on', is almost a verbatim quote from the film.

Collage was Humphrey Jennings's *métier*. It was his way of exploring the secrets of the social world. He was also, at times, a conventional Surrealist, juxtaposing elements in unsettling combinations. There is a collage by Jennings which is a favourite of mine. It is from 1936, and very simple - a cake superimposed on an alpine landscape. The joke is obvious, a literalism, and is there in the title: *Mountain Inn and Swiss Roll*. It is a 'confection', as Jennings's friend Julian Trevelyan would have it. But even as a confection it works on a surprising number of levels. The pun of place name and cake type is further punned by the sight of the mountain and the fact that the cake is a 'roll'. The juxtaposition of mountain and cake take us to a world of class distinctions. The Alpine scenery hovers on the edge of kitsch, while the cake declares its petit bourgeois respectability. But here, juxtaposed, it is the discontinuity of scale that does all the work. The cake is larger than the mountain inn and sits at the bottom of the mountain range like a giant turd; the peculiarities of class propriety stake their revenge on the majesty of nature. Such work is witty and cutting, but it isn't what he should be best remembered for.

At his best he directed collage to the more substantial project of recording the coincidences and uncanny energies that were at large in the social world. Whether these were the prescient symbols of the Crystal Palace conflagration or the day to day actuality of wireless listening, Jennings had an acute ear and eye for the matter that matters. The late 1930s were of course a time of mass irrationalism organised into cultures of death. To retool and reboot Surrealism so that it might commandeer the energies of the unconscious social world and mobilise this for socially progressive ends was not an easy manoeuvre to perform. It was, and still is, a manoeuvre that flirts with danger. Once you start scratching away at the ordinary you are as likely to find monsters as marvels.

BOOKNOTES

Alys Eve Weinbaum, *Wayward Reproductions: Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2004; 352pp, £69 hardback, £17.50 paperback.

The mapping of the human genome and the development of new reproductive technologies have generated a flurry of critical work about race, gender and genomics. If 'race' loses its genetic basis, does it also lose its critical meaningfulness? Can in vitro fertilization and artificial insemination work to challenge existing gender hierarchies and herald non-normative forms of kinship? Alys Eve Weinbaum's important new book traces the emergence of such questions, and answers them with a decisive 'no'. Such technologies, she argues, remain ensnared in the 'race/reproduction bind' - the commonplace notion that race is biologically reproduced.

Tracing the race/reproduction bind through a wide range of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts, Weinbaum demonstrates how racism, nationalism, and imperialism depend upon the belief that race is reproducible. She turns Kate Chopin, Michel Foucault, and Friedrich Nietzsche into unlikely but productive interlocutors; each, she argues, elaborates a 'genealogical' practice within conventional understandings of the reproducibility of race, exposing the constructedness of origins in place of nature. It is precisely because genealogy is implicated in race and reproduction that it can be used against itself to '[critique] racial nationalism' and '[undo] the race/reproduction bind' (59). As such, Weinbaum's is a feminist project of recuperation, but not of celebration. Using genealogy to avoid romanticizing reproduction, she nonetheless claims reproduction as a privileged term in understanding systems of domination and oppression in transatlantic modernity.

One of the innovations of her project is the diversity of the discourses she brings together. She offers new readings of foundational writings by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Friedrich Engels, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, W.E.B. Du Bois and others, showing how the workings of the race/reproduction bind 'defamiliarize' (7) otherwise familiar texts and traditions. Her intervention into feminism is most pointed in this respect. She argues, for instance, that feminist celebrations of Gilman refuse to acknowledge the links between feminism and racism - not only in Gilman's time but in our own. Likewise, her chapter on Engel's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* seeks to resolve an impasse in Marxist feminist scholarship. By excavating the racialized reproductive politics that undergird Engel's work, she counters readings that dismiss it as inattentive to race.

As Weinbaum persuasively and ambitiously reveals, the race/reproduction

bind is so formative of transatlantic modernity that it is seemingly impossible to undo. And yet her political project is ultimately to do just that. In her final chapter on W.E.B. Du Bois she follows the race/reproduction bind through *The Souls of Black Folk*, *Dark Princess*, and *Dusk of Dawn* to suggest that at the end of his career Du Bois theorizes race as outside of reproduction. While in *Souls* and *Dark Princess* the black maternal body becomes the locus of first national and then international belonging, in *Dusk* Du Bois creates an alternative genealogy that theorizes race as 'affective' (225) instead of biological. He thus models a critical practice that uses genealogy to unbind race from reproduction. Such a practice is at the heart of this book, and it is an admirable political project. But its possibilities seem almost undermined by the very thoroughness with which Weinbaum demonstrates the endurance of the race/reproduction bind.

Asha Nadkarni

Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002; 334 pp, £40 hardback.

It is 1874. Imagine yourself tête-à-tête with George Eliot. You are seated so close to G.H. Lewes that you can smell the faint mustiness of his suit, and the not-so-faint rankness of warm bodies pressed too close together. Charles Darwin's tobacco-laced breath breaks the anticipatory silence with sceptical snorts. Out of the darkness a chair levitates.

Flash forward a decade: the prickly scent of crisp paper, fresh ink and newly minted ideas greets your nose. You watch a sardonic, slightly bemused Oscar Wilde unwittingly lead a pre-eminent thought-reader to a pin, hidden in the recesses of this *Pall Mall Gazette* office.

These are just two of the spaces to which Roger Luckhurst traces the many laboratory lives of telepathy. Mapping these spaces, he locates telepathy within scientific, spiritualist, anthropological and literary debates, and at the nexus of contestations for legitimate knowledge. The book aims to narrate the genesis of telepathy from a non-judgmental position. In doing so, it offers a multidisciplinary revision of recent accounts of the late Victorian period. Luckhurst divides the abundance of information into two parts, each creatively organised by a series of aptly titled subsections. The first establishes telepathy's emergence within the scientific terrains of the nineteenth century. Luckhurst seamlessly interweaves cultural theory with the methodology of science and technology studies. He draws from a wide variety of theorists, from Foucault and Adorno to Bruno Latour and Steven Shapin. Yet his jargon-free prose navigates deftly through theoretical hoops, always informed, never heavy-handed. The writing crackles with energy, moving us quickly across each page as it introduces us to a motley crew of Victorian ghostbusters.

Detailing the intimate dramas of some of the nineteenth century's most compelling and colourful figures, Luckhurst brings them to life. We first

meet William Crookes: chemist, spectroscopist and spiritualist. This well-respected scientist endured the cold-shoulders of his more conservative colleagues when he decided to examine whether spiritualist phenomena could be determined by existent scientific law; he subsequently became fixated on photographing the medium Florence Cook and her 'control', the alluring Katie King. Frederic Myers - poet, classicist, literary critic and amateur psychologist - coined the term 'telepathy' and introduced important ideas on the subliminal consciousness. Then there is W.T. Stead: social reformer, political activist, guru of affective journalism and editor of numerous papers such as the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Review of Reviews* and short-lived but widely-circulated *Borderland*. When not telepathically dictating memoranda to one of his many pretty secretaries he was busy automatically writing, and publishing the letters of the voluminously prolific (though dead) 'Julia'. Another intriguing player is the British anthropologist Mary Kingsley, who lauded her own powers of cross-cultural empathy and claimed to be able to 'think in black'.

These are just a few of the many larger-than-life characters that Luckhurst resuscitates on his pages. The second half of the book extends his cultural history of telepathy into a discussion of its many permutations throughout *fin-de-siècle* literary terrains, from Kipling's tales, to Gothic sensation, to New Woman fiction to the productions of the James brothers, William and Henry. The task of reviewing traditional accounts of the late nineteenth century through the many constellations of telepathy cannot help but take into account numerous very different literary works, both familiar and obscure. One of the casualties of the book's panoramic breadth is the minutiae of an in-depth treatment. The intellectual antics of the ever-entertaining Andrew Lang, for example, occupy a mere six pages. This impressive, dizzying array of texts can make the reader reel with sensory and informational overload. Luckhurst's aim of challenging the predominance of degeneration theory and its consequences for how we read gothic literature deserves a book in itself. It is, however, only one of many equally important arguments he makes. Ultimately, we want him to bypass the literary texts and tell us more tales about the people involved. But perhaps Luckhurst is right, and they speak to us best not through the drama of their lives, but through the fiction they created.

Lisa Brocklebank