

WORKS CITED

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TERRY GOLDIE

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Andrew Leak and George Paizis, eds. *The Holocaust and the Text: Speaking the Unspeakable*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. Pp. ix, 196. \$39.95.

For the most part, the eleven essays gathered in this collection address the Holocaust from the vantage point of European scholars analysing the works of European writers. Both editors teach French at the University of London, and their trans-Channel perspectives shed light on *l'univers concentrationnaire*. Quoting in their "Introduction" Geoffrey Hartmann's statement that "knowledge has not become understanding," (3) the editors search for a phenomenology to bridge the half-century gap between Holocaust and post-Holocaust worlds. Their discussion focuses on history and representation: Levinas refuses representation, Appelfeld chooses an oblique view because one does not look directly into the sun, and other writers resort to methods of defamiliarization, polyphony, and psychoanalysis.

Berel Lang's "Holocaust Genres and the Turn to History" is the only American contribution to this volume. Lang argues that the unspeakable *must* be spoken, and examines such genres as diary, memoir, and novel with their grounding in history.

Robert Gordon surveys 55 works of Italian writing from 1945-47 with Primo Levi's *If This is a Man* as the main text, Deportation, resistance, modes of neo-realism, genres, gender, and Dante's *Inferno* fall under his scrutiny.

Anna Hardman examines women's testimony beginning with *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (1993) which deals with such writers as Charlotte Delbo and Ida Fink. Despite attempts to bond into friendship, family, or community, feminine values within the camps remain ambiguous. Just as women present a unique perspective on the Holocaust, so too do children in Andrea Reiter's essay. Ironically Jewish children identified with the Nazis: "Children were more likely to be impressed by the smart uniforms of the SS. They were captivated by the position of power their torturers represented" (85).

Bryan Cheyette analyzes George Steiner's post-Holocaust fiction, and Robert Eaglestone discusses Emmanuel Levinas's (non-) representation of the Holocaust. For the most part Levinas avoids any discussion of the Holocaust, but in one rare instance he describes his experience as a French prisoner of war in Nazi Germany, and that description is ambiguous. On the one hand his French uniform protects him from Hitlerian violence; on the other hand, "the other men, called free, who had dealings with us . . . stripped us of our human skin" (98). The vagueness of these "other," "free" men reinforces the breakdown of subhuman Jewish identity in a world of "parenthesis." This bracketing of experience during imprisonment shifts events to grammatological signifiers, and Levinas's description ends in similar fashion. "How can we deliver a message about our humanity which, from behind the bars of quotation marks, will come across as anything but monkey talk?" (98) The confusion of language, identity and incarceration arises from shifts between physical conditions and textual markers. Beyond the paradoxical subtitle "speaking the unspeakable," Levinas's rendering of the Holocaust and the text "unspeaks the speakable."

Ann Parry's essay applies two themes — European philosophic speculation about the construction of "the Jew" and the immemoriality of the Shoah — to three texts: Emanuel Litvinoff's narrative *The Lost European*, Robert Harris's thriller *Father Land*, and W. G. Sebald's collection of short stories, *The Emigrants*. Her "trans-Channel" essay brings to bear the thinking of Lyotard and Lacoué-Labarthe on English-German fiction.

Sue Vice goes further afield to Australia to examine the controversy surrounding Helen Demidenko's award-winning novel, *The Hand that Signed the Paper*. Eventually a journalist discovered that Demidenko was a pseudonym for Helen Darville who had no Ukrainian relatives. Darville was charged with plagiarism, but her publisher Allen & Unwin argued that postmodern fiction need not document its historical sources. By resorting to Bakhtin's theory of polyphony, critics are able to defend Darville's novel against charges of anti-semitism. From Bakhtin's heteroglossia the essay proceeds to psychoanalysis in D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* and Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*. The author also invokes Michael André Bernstein's critique of "backshadowing," which sees the Holocaust as both inevitable and unimaginable.

Her essay ends with a paragraph devoted to Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*. Having argued for polymorphism in postmodernism, Sue Vice attacks Michaels's "monologism" and "exquisite fabrication" in *Fugitive Pieces*. Her dismissal is too abrupt, for a case could be made for "double-voicedness" in Michaels's poetic novel. For the most part *The Holocaust and the Text* addresses prose representation, whereas the protagonist in *Fugitive Pieces* may be language itself, and the title alone

points in the direction of polyphony. Is Michaels's "poetry after Auschwitz" less legitimate than Appelfeld's "indirection" or Patrick Modiano's fugue for two voices, *La place de l'étoile*, treated in the essays that follow?

The final essay in this volume negotiates the terrain between Robert Antelme's account of his experiences in the concentration camps, *L'espèce humaine*, and Marguerite Duras's response to her husband in *La douleur*. Like the other essays, this one adds to our knowledge and our understanding of the Holocaust. Yet for all of its sophisticated techniques and theories, *The Holocaust and the Text* reaches its limits at the "unspeakable." After a little over a half-century, historical distance offers advantages and disadvantages. The Holocaust itself made possible the impossible (and vice versa), writing is a first-stage remove, and theorizing a second-stage distancing. While much attention has been paid to temporal distancing from trauma, perhaps more consideration needs to be given to geography, for the transatlantic experience of most North American Jews calls for a different understanding than the Euro-centred immediacy in *The Holocaust and the Text*.

MICHAEL GREENSTEIN

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Gillian Whitlock. *The Intimate Empire: Reading Women's Autobiography*. London: Cassell, 2000. Pp. viii, 232. \$26.95 pb.

Recent trends in literary criticism of autobiography have moved toward an increasingly complex reading of the autobiographical subject, particularly the female subject. Questioning traditional concepts of autobiography as form and as reading practice, theorists in the 1970s such as Paul de Man, James Olney, and Philippe Lejeune examined relationships between the autobiographical narrating self and the written text. In the 1980s, critics Mary Mason (1980), Domna Stanton (1984), Estelle Jelinek (1986), Sidonie Smith (1987), Sheri Benstock (1988) and Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenk (1988) reread and reinterpreted women's writings and their place in the autobiographical canon to show how female gender affects the form of autobiography. Theorizing began to move beyond the impact of gender on autobiographical form to address the imbricated effects of race, culture, class, and situation on the construction of the female autobiographer's text, a project informed through work by Françoise Lionnet (1989), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (1992), Marlene Kadar (1992), Helen Buss (1993), and Leigh Gilmore (1994).

Enlarging on the work of previous theorists in *The Intimate Empire: Reading Women's Autobiography*, Gillian Whitlock particularizes the complex intercourses between gender, race, culture, and class when the