

For my Family

I am above all a just man, *Napoleon, 1804*

Never again will a story be told as if it is the only one, *John Berger*

It's all moonshine next to the education of the heart, *Sir Walter Scott*



Malheureusement les génies médiocres sont condamnés à imiter les défauts des grands maîtres sans en apprécier les beautés: de là le mal que Michel-Ange fait à la peinture, Shakespeare à l'art dramatique et que Beethoven fait nos jours à la musique.

(Unfortunately, mediocre talents are condemned to imitate the faults of the great masters without achieving their virtues: hence the harm Michelangelo does to painting, Shakespeare to drama, and nowadays Beethoven to music.)

From Beethoven's Notebooks, 1816, source unknown)

Michael Black was born in Liverpool in 1962. He studied literature and history at York University before completing a doctorate at Cambridge University in South African history, and has spent his adult life fascinated with exploring the territory at which literature ends and history begins (or vice-versa). His stage plays, which have been performed in Edinburgh, York, Cardiff, Manchester and London as well as in eastern Europe, frequently give witness to this, as does *Crossing Out The Emperor*, his first novel. Of this he is convinced; the real territory of creation is myth.