

Book Reviews



Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory. DAVID BATHRICK, BRAD PRAGER, and MICHAEL D. RICHARDSON, eds. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008. vi, 336 pp. ISBN 978-1-57113-542-1.

Visualizing the Holocaust consists of twelve essays that address how different visual media and genres have been used to document, represent, and memorialize the Holocaust. The essays are derived from presentations delivered at the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, translated into English as the German Academic Exchange Service Summer Seminar, which was held at Cornell University. The three editors and authors are all scholars from American universities, but they represent different areas of specialization, including Jewish studies, German studies, literature, film, and visual studies.

As David Bathrick explains in the introduction, what distinguishes this volume from others that have delved into the representation of the Holocaust within visual media is that the authors of this work focus on the “core philosophical and methodological issues underlying the field as a whole” (p. 16). Early Holocaust scholars embraced archival records, viewing them as evidence of the actions of the perpetrators and the impact on the victims. In contrast, postmodernist intellectuals such as Claude Lanzmann – the documentary filmmaker who produced the award-winning film *Shoah* (1985) – eschew archival photographs and film, contending that no image can capture the totality of the horror (p. 126).¹

The essays in this volume delve into a wide array of visual works (photographs, films, documentaries, home movies, museum displays, and architecture), some of them internationally acclaimed and iconic, including the photograph of the

1 They reject dominant narratives and the privileging of any one meaning or truth in historic materials. In turn, postmodernists contend that the only way to interpret culture, literature, art, and philosophy is through deconstruction. Lanzmann’s film *Shoah* remains true to the postmodernist style by relying on ten hours of fragments as an alternative to traditional documentary devices such as narration, music, and the incorporation of archival materials (p. 152).

boy who raised his hands to surrender in the Warsaw Ghetto, the image of Anne Frank, *Schindler's List*, Charlie Chaplin's film *The Great Dictator*, as well as lesser-known images and productions.

Daniel Magilow's essay examines the debate surrounding German soldier Heinz Jöst's 1941 photographs of the Warsaw Ghetto. These images provide a rare glimpse into the life of Jews interned in the Warsaw Ghetto at that time, and have been widely employed by educators and scholars around the globe to impart these important stories. Some scholars, however, have questioned their value, given Jöst's background and motivation, arguing that they are likely "perpetrator" images that were collected as wartime souvenirs rather than benign or sympathetic photographs aimed at giving meaning to the voiceless. Despite the fact that Jöst viewed himself as a neutral observer and his images were embraced by Israel during the 1980s and exhibited at Yad Vashem – the Holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem – his real intent, Magilow argues, can never be understood based on his German military status during the war. Regardless, the author contends, his images are capable of eliciting pathos and bearing witness to the atrocities (p. 43).

Several of the contributions examine Holocaust films. Michael D'Arcy and Kathryn Ball's analyses of Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* (1985) and Stephen Spielberg's work *Schindler's List* (1993), respectively, are both illuminating. D'Arcy's article reveals how the style that Lanzmann adopted for his film, as well as his refusal to include visual archival materials, made it unique and controversial. Lanzmann relied on the voices of survivors and images of locations, signs, and written documents as substitutes. As Ball explains, while Spielberg's black-and-white film incorporated archival sources, the controversy in his production was the inclusion of an Auschwitz shower scene, which, despite its benign ending,² was viewed by many as taboo, or *bilderverbot* in German, and was subsequently condemned by some intellectuals as a violation of those who perished in Auschwitz (p. 166).

Moving beyond documentaries and dramas, some of the scholars involved in this collection also examine comedic explorations of the Holocaust or parodies, such as *The Great Dictator* (1940), the Broadway version of *The Producers* (2001), and the comic-drama movies *Life Is Beautiful* (1997) and *Train of Life* (1998). Rather than fostering fear, trauma, and pathos, these films rely on humour, stereotypes, and parodies to tell the story of the Holocaust and/or Hitler. While the first three productions were international hits, *Train of Life* is a lesser-known film that David Brenner describes as a "tragi-comic and parody

2 In the movie, there is a scene where a group of women are directed to a shower room and ordered to undress. Most viewers watching the film likely assume that they will end up perishing, like so many concentration camp inmates who were asphyxiated by Zyklon B in the gas chambers. Instead, the women look up and water sprays down on them from the shower heads, to the great relief of both the women in the scene and the audience.

with recurring clichés between utopia and apocalypse, and here, between safety and the camps” (p. 273). While all of them succeed in bringing a measure of levity and laughter to the Holocaust tale, there are some definite drawbacks to these genres. As Michael Richardson points out, one of the main pitfalls is that, by challenging the Hitler myth, in many respects these films, TV shows, and comedies ultimately ensure Hitler’s immortality (p. 293).

As someone who has worked with survivors and Holocaust-related archival records, I found this volume and the scholarly debates captured in these essays extremely stimulating and engaging, as well as disturbing when it comes to the outright rejection of archival records by some postmodernist intellectuals and filmmakers. From the archival perspective, it would seem obvious that one should tread lightly when relying on visual archival materials to document the Holocaust and depict those who were victimized and murdered by the Nazis. Although several of the authors correctly stress the importance of fully investigating, interrogating, and scrutinizing the images and films used for this purpose, the postmodernist approach of boycotting visual archival materials is both drastic and distressing in its denial of a significant element of the historical record. One of the intellectuals featured in this compilation, French philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman, denounces this postmodernist perspective as reductionist, particularly the premise that because no image can capture the totality of the horror then ipso facto all images are devoid of value. He argues that by dismissing the entire visual archive of the Shoah, filmmakers like Lanzmann “abdicate the subjective responsibility of the critic by blaming the object to which he or she must try to establish a meaningful and nuanced analytical and ethical relationship” (p. 130).

Visualizing the Holocaust should be of great interest to the archival community because the essays focus on the scholarly debates surrounding visual archival records that document the Holocaust as well as some of the related controversies. One of the major drawbacks, however, is that it may not be accessible to a broad audience, given the preponderance of postmodernist language and jargon in many of the articles. Moreover, one might question whether the debate that is highlighted by many of the authors is still topical, since postmodernism has been in decline in academia for some time.³ For those comfortable

3 Alan Kirby, Rebecca Goldstein, and Edward Docx are part of a growing movement of scholars and authors hailing the decline and even demise of postmodernism within the cultural marketplace. See Alan Kirby, “The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond,” *Philosophy Now* 58 (July/August 2006), accessed 10 January 2014, http://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond; Rebecca Goldstein, “Sell Descartes, Buy Spinoza,” *Prospect Magazine* (May 2011), accessed 10 January 2014, <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/sell-descartes-buy-spinoza/#.UtQAiXknwds>; and Edward Docx, “Postmodernism Is Dead,” *Prospect Magazine* (July 2011), accessed 10 January 2014, <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/postmodernism-is-dead-va-exhibition-age-of-authenticism/#.UtQBTXknwdt>.

enough to wade through its opaque language and complex theoretical debates, it is reassuring and invigorating to witness many of the scholars extolling the value and potential of visual archival records that document the Holocaust. It is quite apparent that, despite the fact that the Holocaust happened seventy years ago, archivists, curators, and scholars will continue to grapple with how best to tell the stories of those involved in a sensitive and compelling manner, as well as how to discover new and innovative ways to interpret these sources and ultimately make them more accessible to audiences around the globe.

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Canadian Copyright Law, 4th ed. LESLEY ELLEN HARRIS. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2013. xviii, 350 pp. ISBN 978-1-118-07851-8. **Canadian Copyright: A Citizen's Guide**, 2nd ed. LAURA J. MURRAY and SAMUEL E. TROSOW. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013. xviii, 286 pp. ISBN 978-1-77113-013-4.

After four attempts,¹ significant amendments to the *Canadian Copyright Act* received royal assent in June 2012, and most of the amendments came into force on 7 November 2012. Although some minor changes have been made in the fifteen years since the last round of amendments in 1997, they did not warrant new editions of the standard reference books on copyright. However, the 2012 amendments and significant case law relating to fair dealing² were the impetus for new editions of Lesley Ellen Harris's *Canadian Copyright Law* and Laura J. Murray and Samuel E. Trosow's *Canadian Copyright: A Citizen's Guide*. This review describes each in turn, including any noteworthy changes from the previous editions, before comparing and evaluating the two volumes from the perspective of the information professional.

Lesley Ellen Harris is a copyright educator, author, and lawyer. This is the fourth edition of *Canadian Copyright Law*; the first appeared in 1991 and the third in 2001. Much has changed in Canadian copyright law in the intervening decade, but Harris has maintained the organization of the content as in the previous editions. Only the chapter on digital copyright and electronic rights has

- 1 Laura J. Murray and Samuel E. Trosow, *Canadian Copyright: A Citizen's Guide*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013), 28.
- 2 Fair dealing is a limitation on the exclusive rights of a copyright owner that permits use of a work for the specified purposes of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting.