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After the Fact: The Holocaust in Twenty-First Century Documentary Film by Brad Prager (review)

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as pure and superior. Explicit discussions of comparative quality seem unnecessary given that Jaimey Fisher's analysis of Petzold's films would be sufficient in and of themselves to convince any reader/viewer that Petzold is an extraordinary, reflective, and engaging filmmaker with an important and compelling vision.

Muriel Cormican, *University of West Georgia*

After the Fact: The Holocaust in Twenty-First Century Documentary Film.

By Brad Prager. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. Pp. 291. Paper \$25.99. ISBN 978-1623564445.

This meticulously researched and insightful study on contemporary Holocaust documentaries deals with works of filmmakers who seek “new, alternate approaches to reconciling history and memory” (25). The chapters are constructed around the following themes: concentration camp tourism, the influence of Steven Spielberg's iconic feature film *Schindler's List* on subsequent films, forgiveness and resentment, Jewish survivors and second and third generation families of perpetrators grappling with the past, and the relationship between past and present as played out by the juxtaposition of archival footage viewed by survivors in the present.

Prager's discussion of Rex Bloomstein's *KZ* (2005) and Ra'anana Alexandrowicz's *Martin* (1999) in chapter 1 centers on the question of whether ruins of camps and their museums are appropriate tourist attractions. *KZ* focuses on tourists visiting the Mauthausen camp in Austria and on the inhabitants of the town. The film makes clear that visitors cannot truly encounter the past in the museum, which begs the question of the purpose of such camp memorials as well as of the films about these sites. Tour guide Harald Brachner, an alcoholic in decline who struggles with his engagement with the past, serves as the film's focal point and contrasts starkly with other locals who appear naïve or indifferent to the history that surrounds them. These two paradigms for encounters with the past—complete denial or depression—appear to be the only alternative reactions to the camp.

One of the most interesting passages in the book centers on the film *Martin*, as Prager analyzes the film within a larger discussion of the purpose of such memorials. German historian Volker Knigge claims that most of us expect a feeling of *Betroffenheit* (“shock” or “sadness”) when visiting such sites. In a similar vein, Theodor Adorno wrote in *Education after Auschwitz* (1966) that the goal of education after the Holocaust is to expose the motives that led to the horror. Prager asks if the hope that Holocaust memorials and museums “should make visitors reflect on causes and prompt reconsideration of what it is in culture that lead to atrocity” is unrealistic (49). In *Martin*, the director interacts with Martin Zaidenstadt, a survivor of Dachau, whose testimony may be inaccurate. Prager suggests that the “empathic unsettlement,”

(a term coined by Dominick LaCapra in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 2000) that listeners experience when hearing a survivor's testimony is more important than the actual truth of the details.

Forgiveness as a form of liberation is the focal point of Prager's illuminating analysis of *Forgiving Dr. Mengele* (2005) and *Landscapes of Memory: The Life of Ruth Klüger* (2011), which gains depth with references to Jean Améry's and Primo Levi's discussions of survival, forgiveness, and resentment. The former focuses on Eva Kor, who survived Auschwitz along with her twin sister Miriam, as she views her ability to forgive as a life-changing experience that liberated her from pain. The latter depicts Klüger, whose mourning for her dead brother complicates the act of forgiving; she feels that she does not have the right to forgive in his name. Klüger's sentiment mirrors that of Levi, who did not view himself as a true witness to Auschwitz because he survived. Aspects of her resentment also resemble that of Améry, the Viennese Auschwitz survivor who wanted to force perpetrators indifferent to a victim's suffering into his psychic space in which the past is never truly past.

Prager's discussion of the questionable, ethical use of perpetrator images from Nazi propaganda films in recent documentaries offers the most thought-provoking arguments. Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah* (1985), perceived by many as the "gold standard" of Holocaust documentaries, does not contain wartime Nazi footage, because including such images requires a filmmaker to assume, even if only temporarily, the perpetrator's viewpoint. Although Yael Hersonski incorporates footage from a 1942 Nazi propaganda film depicting the Warsaw Ghetto in *A Film Unfinished* (2010), survivors undercut the ostensible messages of the images with their testimony. For example, a witness explains that Nazi filmmakers had ghetto inhabitants feign indifference to suffering by walking by corpses without showing concern. The demand to hide empathy tells us a lot about the film's producers: as Prager notes, they stage their own cruelty through the victims by displacing it upon them (202). Moreover, by showing the same sequences from multiple perspectives and by allowing multiple victims to respond to them, the filmmaker subverts the Nazi perspective. The counterargument for not using such images centers on the belief that images, not language (commentary, subtitles, etc.), will have a greater impact upon the viewer. Prager cites Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, who controlled the production of films and was convinced of the domination of images over language upon viewers (195).

Prager's discussions of films within the larger issues of Holocaust representations and questions of cinematic portrayals of history and memory contribute to his most enlightening analyses. Other strengths include his extensive knowledge of Holocaust literature and films, and his insightful analysis of cinematic techniques that support his interpretations of directors' intentions. Although Prager refers frequently to iconic Holocaust documentaries such as *Night and Fog* and *Shoah* and situates

the documentaries in an instructive context of film history, his analyses of films and cinematic techniques would have been enriched with more references to theoretical foundations such as Marxist or feminist film theory.

Most of the study's relatively minor shortcomings pertain to editing issues. Some of the plot summaries of films are unnecessarily lengthy. The writing is clear and free of jargon, but the arguments could have been more succinct and less weighed down with excessive details. Readers may find it difficult, at times, to follow the main argument, because they may be lost in the numerous "detours" that the author makes. Some of the information in these detours could have been put in footnotes or endnotes. Nevertheless, Prager's discussions contain penetrating insights into significant ethical issues of Holocaust representations such as fidelity to historical truths, the emotional impact and educational value of Holocaust documentaries, the handling of survivor testimony, and the questionable use of perpetrator images from propaganda films.

Margarete Landwehr, *West Chester University*

Zivilgesellschaft im Widerstreit. Konkurrenz zwischen Staat, Ökonomie und Zivilgesellschaft in der Realisierung des gesamtgesellschaftlichen Gemeinwohls.

By Reinhard Hildebrandt. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015. Pp. 211. Cloth €44.95. ISBN 978-3631658765.

Angesichts knapper öffentlicher Kassen und der steigenden sozialen Ungerechtigkeit in den Industrienationen haben alternative Gesellschaftsentwürfe derzeit Hochkonjunktur. In Zeiten, in denen der Staat immer weniger elementare Aufgaben für das Gemeinwesen übernimmt, in denen ökonomische Interessen zunehmend politische Entscheidungen beeinflussen, gewinnt die "Zivilgesellschaft" (wieder) an Bedeutung. Die Zunahme an Bürgerprotesten gegen Großprojekte und Privatisierungsvorhaben macht dies deutlich.

Das Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (<https://www.bmz.de/de/service/glossar/Z/zivilgesellschaft.html>, 2010–2016) definiert Zivilgesellschaft als "einen Bereich innerhalb der Gesellschaft, der zwischen dem staatlichen, dem wirtschaftlichen und dem privaten Sektor angesiedelt ist." Zivilgesellschaft umfasse dabei die Gesamtheit des Engagements der Bürger eines Landes, welches sich nicht an Profiten oder parteipolitischen Interessen orientiere. Allein in Deutschland engagiert sich jeder Dritte ehrenamtlich in Vereinen, Verbänden, Initiativen oder sozialen Bewegungen. Politikwissenschaftler halten Zivilgesellschaft für notwendig, um eine pluralistische Gesellschaft von engagierten Bürgern zu schaffen. Allerdings führt eine Vielfalt zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen, wie Annette Zimmer ("Die aktuellen Probleme der Zivilgesellschaft," 2012) betont, allein noch nicht zu einer starken Demokratie. Erst indem sie ideologische, normative,