

Edited Volume on Holocaust in Popular Culture

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Call for Publications

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India

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Human Rights, Popular Culture Studies, Literature, Modern European History / Studies, Race / Ethnic Studies

Call for Chapter Proposals

Holocaust in Popular Culture

Dr Mahitosh Mandal and Prof Priyanka Das (eds.)

Deadline for Abstract Submission: 31 March 2020

Notification of Acceptance: 15 April 2020

Abstracts not exceeding 300 words along with a bionote of 100 words should be sent to holocaustpopcult@gmail.com

Please mention "Abstract_ Holocaust" as the subject line of your email.

Concept Note:

"The Final Solution" to the so-called Jewish Question as designed by the Nazi perpetrators, involving the systematic state-sponsored killing of 6 million Jews, left an indelible mark on human history. Since then, the Holocaust has entered the public consciousness and through educational institutions and culture industry, it has increasingly become a crucial part of academic and political discourse. Academic engagement has often played a crucial role in unfolding literary representations through systematic pedagogy. A major way of engaging with the Holocaust has been interdisciplinarity wherein literature, politics, and history have, by default, been intertwined. The interface between Holocaust and Popular Culture, with its emphasis on the visual - has, however, contributed largely to the expansion of Holocaust studies in recent times. The proliferation of movies, graphic narratives, video games, memes, advertisements etc, on the subject of Holocaust, has indeed revolutionized academic pedagogy within the space of the classroom as it has also contributed to the dissemination of Holocaust narratives outside the academic space.

Nonetheless, the artistic representation of the Holocaust has been debated from the very beginning. Adorno's remark, "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric", has allegedly affected the poetics of

someone like Paul Celan in particular, but at the same time, it has also brought to the forefront the ethics of representing the Holocaust. In fact, the production of documentaries like *Night and Fog* encountered an impasse because of mimetic impossibility. This problem was all the more intensified the moment the subject of the Holocaust entered the domain of popular culture. The serio-comic aspect of popular culture has been considered by some as an offence to the victims while it is this very aspect that played a crucial role in mass awareness. The employment of humour in *Life is Beautiful* (1997) has been criticised as a form of disrespect to the victims, while the use of slapstick comedy in *The Great Dictator* (1940) has been celebrated as a tool of resistance. Similar cases can be traced where the subtext of the Holocaust has been used in various art forms. Tatiana Navka's Holocaust-themed ice-dance to the song "Beautiful That Way" invited harsh responses, while Adolek Kohn's survivor's dance "I will survive Auschwitz" on the remains of concentration camps sparked outrage. Certain instances of taking selfie on the memorial sites and posting the same on social media have also triggered unending debates.

Focusing on the theme of Holocaust in Popular Culture, the volume aims to address these following aspects:

Political: Holocaust has become a global discourse in the sense that it is not only remembered as a thing of the past but also compared to transnational human tragedies, ethnic cleansing, and genocides. Added to that, it is intriguing to find out how we make sense of terms like Fascism, Neo-Nazism, Antisemitism which have entered the political rhetoric of our times. Thus, the historicity and contemporaneity of the Holocaust in the context of world politics could be discussed and debated.

Aesthetic: How do we respond to the use of the Holocaust in popular culture? Does Holocaust demand a new form of aesthetics? Can art capture the traumatic experience of the victims in the concentration camps? These questions could be addressed to understand the im/possibility of aesthetic representation of arguably the most tragic event in human history.

Pedagogic: Although popular culture has often been neglected in mainstream academia, its presence in institutional curricula has contributed immensely to Holocaust Studies. It has also been imperative in shaping 'Memory Studies' which is largely derived from but not limited to the event of the Holocaust, and which has lately come into prominence as one of the emerging fields of research.

Ethical: Revisiting Holocaust would undoubtedly involve questions pertaining to ethics of remembering and forgetting, denial of the Holocaust, the ethical justification provided by the Nazi perpetrators (Hitler as *Übermensch*), and the suspension of the ethical as experienced by the victims in the concentration camps.

Paper proposals are invited in the following suggested areas which include, but are not limited to:

- Holocaust in Literature
- Holocaust in Cinema and TV Series
- Holocaust in Graphic Narratives
- Holocaust in Social Media
- Holocaust in Advertisements
- Holocaust in Video Games

- Holocaust in Dance and Music
- Holocaust in Painting and Photography
- Holocaust and contemporary politics
- Holocaust and parallel human tragedies
- Holocaust and Tourism

The edited book will be organized into theme-based sections emerging from submissions. In case of any query, please write to the editors: Dr Mahitosh Mandal at mahitosh.eng@presiuniv.ac.in and Priyanka Das at priyanka.eng@presiuniv.ac.in

On acceptance, full chapters of 5000-6000 words are to be submitted by 30 June 2020.

Dr Mahitosh Mandal, Assistant Professor of English at Presidency University, Kolkata, is the author of the book *Jacques Lacan: From Clinic to Culture* (Orient BlackSwan, 2018). His PhD thesis is titled "Vivekananda and the Question of the Other: A Critique of Alterity and Subalternity." He specializes in Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Dalit studies, and Holocaust studies.

Priyanka Das, Assistant Professor of English at Presidency University, Kolkata, is a scholar of Popular Culture and teaches science fiction, critical theory and Holocaust in literature. Her M. Phil dissertation was on the objectification of Male Body in Bollywood Movies and Advertisements. Her PhD is on the politics of visibility in the popular Television show *Game of Thrones*.

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