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Lawrence Baron. Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema (Book Review)

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Lawrence Baron. *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. Pp. vii, 307. Paper $29.95.

Projecting the Holocaust is a valuable addition to extant scholarship on Holocaust cinema and offers a refreshingly inclusive and positive take on how feature films contribute to our understanding of history. In contrast to other surveys of Holocaust cinema, Baron includes films that focus on stories of perpetrators, non-Jewish victims, the experiences of the second generation, and neo-Nazi groups. This inclusivity is also evident in Baron's position that the Holocaust is not the property of specific countries or peoples and that its representation speaks to universal concerns about human civilization as well as to particular questions about national identities (10–11).

The book is divided into eight chapters. In the first, Baron explains his categorization criteria, distinguishes his study from those of others, and offers a synopsis of the remaining chapters. The ensuing chapters are organized both chronologically and thematically: films made between 1945 and 1979; biopic films of the 1980s; mixed-couple love stories of the 1990s; Holocaust comedies of the 1990s; Holocaust films for young audiences; stories of neo-Nazis, rescuers, and the second generation in recent cinema; and films since 2000 in a variety of genres.

Baron's technique in each chapter is to focus on a selection of specific films and contextualize his analysis by situating each film in the history of the genre or period under discussion. This is an effective method for combining survey with more substantive analysis. One problem with Baron's book, however, is the lack of any detailed explanation of the process he used to compile the database of international films that he refers to for statistical purposes in tables incorporated as evidence in each chapter. Without knowing how many films he viewed, how and where he located them, and whether his sample was restricted to films available

with English subtitles, the statistical tables are unconvincing.

The range of films Baron addresses is impressive, but negotiating such a volume of material can lead to the occasional mistake in fact, as in his assertion that Hans Mertens in Staudte's *The Murderers are among Us* (1946) was a camp survivor (27), when in fact he was a soldier in the German army who witnessed a massacre of Polish civilians. Although the scope of the study is large, length limitations set by the publisher necessitated cuts in the number of analyses Baron includes (vii–viii) and may explain the omission of a substantive discussion of Frank Beyer's *Naked among Wolves* (1963), which gets only passing mention (144).

Baron's footnotes and extensive bibliography demonstrate his familiarity with a wealth of scholarship in the field of Holocaust Studies, while his responses to other readings of the films he surveys reveal his tendency to weigh the potential benefits of Holocaust cinema for the general public against the, at times, entrenched positions of Holocaust scholars and critics. Baron's accessible and stimulating book fills in some significant gaps in studies of Holocaust feature films and is a useful reference for specialists as well as those with a more general interest in the subject.

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