



# Holocaust Perpetrators in History and Fiction

27-28 October 2022



CLARK  
UNIVERSITY



STRASSLER CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST  
AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

Cover image:

Upper left: Adolf Eichmann stands in a protective glass booth flanked by Israeli police during his April 5, 1961 trial in Jerusalem (*Alamy*); Upper right: Adolf Eichmann – Anthropomorphic portrait, ca. 1957. Oil on canvas by Adolf Frankl, tattoo number B 14395 (*Familie Frankl*); Lower left: Ben Kingsley as Adolf Eichmann in *Operation Finale*, 2018; Lower right: Adolf Eichmann on a rabbit farm in Argentina, c. 1954 (*Alamy*)

# WELCOME

*Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.*

- Mark Twain

As a historian seriously engaged with the subject of Holocaust perpetrators, I have long found these words of Mark Twain intriguing. Thus, I am pleased to welcome scholars who share my interest in examining representations of Holocaust perpetrators in fiction and visual arts to this two-day workshop. I look forward to productive papers and discussions that zero in on “possibilities,” as well as “truth,” although I hope that the relationship between the two will be a major point of discussion. Representations of Hitler may interest us, but given the abundant scholarly literature on him, these will not be our primary concern. Rather, we will consider the wide variety of individuals who committed or supported Nazi crimes including face-to-face killers, camp guards, desk perpetrators, men and women, Germans and non-Germans, bystanders, and even privileged camp inmates, and others.

The workshop is structured into a series of conversations that deal with fictional representations in literature, movies, and visual arts. Fiction, for the purpose of our discussion, is defined in non-normative fashion as everything that deals with Holocaust perpetrators in an imaginative way, as opposed to scholarly and judicial approaches that follow standards of factual authenticity, verifiability, and consistency. Participants will analyze a variety of genres and works that are variously intellectually challenging and complex or indulge in simplifications, sensationalism, or fetishism. The exchange between specific products of Holocaust perpetrator fiction and larger collective memories will also be crucial to the discussion.

The juxtaposition between demonizing perpetrators as the epitome of evil versus humanizing them has received considerable attention. We will move beyond this binary to consider whether the evil doing of perpetrators is morally universalized or historically contextualized in fiction, film, and the visual arts. Overall, the issue of ‘possibilities’ is crucial: in which ways, if at all, do fictional representations of Holocaust perpetrators go beyond, question, ignore, or reproduce historical and judicial depictions? Can a fictional turn yield new insights into perpetrator behavior or its memory? While we may come away with more questions than answers, the discussions will hopefully be rich and rewarding.

I am grateful to Dr. Jeffrey Kraines and the William P. Goldman Foundation for their generous sponsorship and interest in the topic. The workshop participants have graciously devoted their time and intellectual gifts to this enterprise, for which I am most appreciative. None of this would be possible without the input of Executive Director Mary Jane Rein, the superior organization of Program Manager Robyn Conroy, and the hospitality of Administrative Assistant Alissa Duke, who deserve our warm thanks.

Sincerely,

Thomas Kühne, PhD

*Director, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies  
Strassler Colin Flug Professor of Holocaust History*

# PROGRAM

## THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER

### Higgins Lounge / Dana Commons

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

#### OPENING EVENT

#### **Holocaust Perpetrators in History and Fiction: A Conversation**

Christopher Browning, Erin McGlothlin, and Thomas Kühne

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

#### RECEPTION

## FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER

### Kent Seminar Room / Strassler Center

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.

#### WELCOME

Thomas Kühne, Clark University

#### PANEL I

#### LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS: SERIOUS AND COMIC

#### CHAIR:

Stephen M. Levin, Clark University

#### PANELISTS:

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

#### **Holocaust Perpetrators in Fiction: Between Mimetic and Antimimetic Representational Modes**

Erin McGlothlin, Washington University in St. Louis

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

#### **Holocaust Perpetrators in Comics: Complicity, Implication, and the Family**

Laurike in 't Veld, Erasmus University

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

#### LUNCH

Rose Library / Strassler Center

**PANEL II**

**CINEMATIC DEPICTIONS: LOWBROW AND HIGHBROW**

CHAIR: Ken MacLean, Clark University

PANELISTS:

1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

**Nazi Monsters and Astrofascists: Perpetrator Representation in Horror and Science Fiction Film and Television**

Brian E. Crim, University of Lynchburg College

2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

**No Ordinary Love: Romances between Perpetrators and Prisoners in Holocaust Feature Films**

Brad Prager, University of Missouri

3:45 – 4:00 p.m.

COFFEE BREAK

**PANEL III**

**VISUAL IMAGES: THEN AND NOW**

CHAIR:

Frances Tanzer, Clark University

PANELISTS:

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Cold War Conflict and Generational Critique: Imagining the Nazi Perpetrator in the Visual Arts, 1950-70**

Paul B. Jaskot, Duke University

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

**Facing Perpetrators in Contemporary Visual Arts: Patterns, Ethics, and Reception**

Diana Popescu, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

DINNER

Via Italian Table

89 Shrewsbury Street

## SPEAKERS AND CHAIRS



**Christopher R. Browning** (Frank Porter Graham Professor of History Emeritus, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) is the author of eight books, including *Ordinary Men: Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1998), *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (2004), and *Remembering Survival. Inside a Nazi Slave Labor Camp* (2011). Browning is a three-time recipient of the Jewish National Book Award—Holocaust Category as well as a recipient of the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research. He has served as an expert witness in “war crimes” trials in Australia, Canada, and Great Britain.

He has also served as an expert witness in two “Holocaust denial” cases: the second Zündel trial in Toronto in 1988 and in David Irving’s libel suit against Deborah Libstadt in London in 2000.



**Brian E. Crim** (John Franklin East Distinguished Professor in the Humanities and Professor of History, University of Lynchburg) previously served as an intelligence analyst with the US Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security (2001-2005). He has published three books and over a dozen journal articles and book chapters. Select works include *Antisemitism in the German Military Community and the Jewish Response, 1914-1938* (2014), *Our Germans: Project Paperclip and the National Security State* (2018), and *Planet Auschwitz: Holocaust Representation in Science Fiction and Horror Film and Television* (2020). While researching *Our Germans*, Crim discovered and edited a memoir from one of the “Ritchie Boys,” a German-Jewish intelligence officer named

Walter Jessel who interrogated high-ranking Nazis. The memoir was published in 2017 as *Class of '31: A German-Jewish Émigré's Journey across Defeated Germany*. Crim is currently writing his fourth book tentatively entitled *In the Shadows: Spy Fiction after 9/11*.





**Paul B. Jaskot** (Professor of Art History & German Studies, Duke University and Co-Director, Digital Art History & Visual Culture Research Lab.) was the Ina Levine Invitational Scholar at the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC in 2021-2022. His research focuses on the relationship between architecture and politics in modern Germany, with a specific emphasis on the National Socialist period. He is the author, editor, and co-author of multiple articles and books on this topic including, most recently, *The Nazi Perpetrator: Postwar German Art and the Politics of the Right* (2012) as author and *New Approaches to an Integrated History of the Holocaust: Social History, Representation, Theory* (2018) as co-editor. In

addition, Jaskot is a founding member of the Holocaust Geography Collaborative, an international collective of scholars working on how digital mapping and other computational methods help us to advance questions concerning the genocide of the European Jews.



**Thomas Kühne** (Strassler Center Director and Strassler Colin Flug Professor of Holocaust History, Clark University) researches war, genocide, and society, long-term traditions of political culture and political emotions in Europe, and the problem of locating the Holocaust and Nazi Germany in the continuities and discontinuities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Center for Contemporary History in Germany, and the German Research Foundation. His recent books include *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918 – 1945* (2010) and *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence*

*in the Twentieth Century* (2017). Kühne's current research examines the constructive side of mass violence in a broader historical and comparative perspective as well as with the relation between historiography and collective memories of genocides.



**Stephen M. Levin** (Associate Professor of English; Director, Graduate Studies in English, Clark University) specializes in contemporary British and postcolonial literature, transnational cultural studies, and critical and literary theory. His research focuses on the ways in which twentieth-century global conditions have shaped contemporary culture and produced new discourses of self and identity. His book, *The Contemporary Anglophone Travel Novel: The Aesthetics of Self-Fashioning in the Era of Globalization* (2008) explores different modes of constructing selfhood through leisure travel and

considers the ways these responses sustain or challenge ideologies of colonialism. He is currently completing essays for publication on the political thought of the Caribbean intellectual C.L.R. James, the status of realism in recent postcolonial fiction, and the politics of contemporary literary prizes.



**Erin McGlothlin** (Professor of German and Jewish Studies and Vice Dean of Undergraduate Affairs at Washington University, St. Louis) conducts research in the areas of Holocaust literature and film. She is the author of *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration* (2006) and *The Mind of the Holocaust Perpetrator in Fiction and Nonfiction* (2021) and has co-edited three volumes, including *Persistent Legacy: The Holocaust and German Studies* (2016, with Jennifer

Kapczynski) and *The Construction of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah and its Outtakes* (2020, with Brad Prager and Markus Zisselsberger).





**Ken MacLean** (Professor, International Development and Social Change and Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University) researches state-sponsored violence, humanitarian affairs, dissident politics, and human rights. His recent book, *Crimes in Archival Form: Human Rights, Fact Production, and Myanmar* (2022) explores the many ways in which human rights “facts” are produced rather than found. Such conversations, he argues, are particularly urgent in an era when the perpetrators of large-scale human rights violations exploit misinformation, weaponize disinformation, and employ outright falsehoods to undermine the credibility of those who document abuses and demand that they be held accountable for them in the

court of public opinion and in courts of law. The book invites practitioners and scholars alike to be more transparent about how human rights “fact” production works, why it is important, and when its use should prompt concern.



**Brad Prager** (Catherine Paine Middlebush Chair of Humanities and Professor of German Studies and Film Studies, University of Missouri) is the author of *After the Fact: The Holocaust in Twenty-First Century Documentary Film* (2015), *The Cinema of Werner Herzog: Aesthetic Ecstasy and Truth* (2007), *Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images* (2007), and monographs devoted to Christian Petzold’s films *Phoenix* and *Yella*. He is the co-editor of a volume on Visual Studies and the Holocaust entitled *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (2008) and, together with Erin McGlothlin and Markus Zisselsberger, a volume on Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* and its outtakes. During 2022-23, he

holds the Alexander Grass Memorial Fellowship at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.



**Diana I. Popescu** (Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, University of London) focuses on public history and the reception of violent histories. In particular, she explores aspects related to the ethics and the aesthetics of representing the Holocaust in public art, museum exhibitions and memorial projects, and how members of the public engage with and respond to such representations. She is the editor of the book *Visitor Experience at Holocaust Memorials and Museums* (2022), and co-editor of *Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era* (2015), and of *Performative Holocaust*

*Commemoration in the 21st century* (2021).



**Frances Tanzer** (Rose Professor of Holocaust Studies and Modern Jewish History and Culture, Clark University) writes histories of modern Europe that focus on the paradoxical but crucial roles of refugees and minorities in shaping the continent's identities and cultures. She is currently completing a book entitled, *Vanishing Vienna: Jewish Absence in Postwar Central Europe*, which analyzes the fraught attempts

to restore the cultural dynamism of pre-Nazi Vienna as Austrians and Jews reimagined themselves and Central European culture after the Holocaust. This book focuses on how Jews and non-Jews experienced, confronted, and represented Jewish absence as they pursued projects of cultural reconstruction from the Anschluss in 1938 to the present-day. Her second book project, *Klezmer Dynasty: An Intimate History of Modern Jewish Culture, 1880 – 2019*, examines her own family, the Brandwein klezmer musicians of Habsburg Galicia.



**Laurike in 't Veld** (Graduate School Coordinator, Delft University of Technology and Research Associate, Center for Historical Culture, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands) examines popular cultural depictions of war and genocide. She is particularly interested in comics, graphic novels, films and documentaries. She is the author of *The Representation of Genocide in Graphic Novels: Considering the Role of Kitsch* (2019) and *Perpetrators in Comics: Exploring Complicity, Responsibility, and Representation* (forthcoming 2022).