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The Discursive Construction of History Remembering the Wehrmacht's War of Annihilation

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HANNES HEER works in Hamburg, Germany as a historian, writer and exhibition producer. From 1993 to 2000 he worked at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, directing the first Wehrmacht Exhibition. He has written numerous publications on National Socialism, the Wehrmacht and post-war recollection.

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How do democratic and pluralistic societies cope with traumatic events in their past? What strategies and taboos are employed in reconstructing wars, revolutions, torturing, mass killings and genocide in a way that makes their contradiction of basic human rights and values invisible? The process of reconstructing history takes place in different domains of life and in a range of genres. Narratives are frequently reproduced through political speeches, films, documentaries and schoolbooks. Moreover, they are also transmitted in the private spheres of families and across generations. This interdisciplinary volume analyzes in detail, for the first time, the history and image of the German Wehrmacht and the debates in Austria and Germany surrounding two exhibitions about Wehrmacht war crimes during World War II – exhibitions which have to be regarded as a major intervention in the construction of national historical narratives and 'myths', and which provoked widespread political and media reaction, ranging from the scandalized to the critically reflective.

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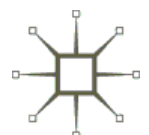
Reviews:

'Ruth Wodak and her interdisciplinary team shed light on the Wehrmacht crimes during WWII as well as their subsequent reception and representation. The volume gives an excellent overview of this important part of the history and aftermath of the Holocaust. Its specific layout and structure can also serve as a paradigm for comparable studies.' - Dirk Rupnow, *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*

...the questions of collective memory and public discourse raised in these empirical studies are...of the highest importance...This book, rich in detail and ethical clarity, deserves a wide readership.' - John D.H. Downing, Southern Illinois University, *Discourse and Society*

'...an accomplished collection of articles written on a high level with findings of scholarly interest.' - *Jewish Political Studies Review*

'The book under review is welcome as a contribution to the history of the exhibition in particular and thus of German "memory politics" in general, as well as to discourse analysis and historical society. It is a wide-ranging and thought-provoking volume.' - *Journal of Genocide Research*



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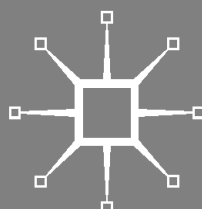
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â€” 2007, â€œCommemorating the past: the discursive construction of official narratives about the rebirth of the Second Austrian Republicâ€”, Discourse and Communication, 1 (3), p. 337-363. Wodak R., Fairclough N., 2010, â€œRecontextualizing European higher education policies: the cases of Austria and Romaniaâ€”, Critical Discourse Studies, 7 (1), p. 19-40. Wodak R., De Cillia R., Reisigl M., Liebhart K., 2009 [1999], The Discursive Construction of National Identity, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press (2nd revised edition). Wodak R., Menz F., Mitten R., Stern F., 1994, Die Sprachen der Vergangenhei