

other factors in causing different responses to similar types of claims. And finally, given the authors' initial ambition to analyze "post-national" state transformations through the analytical window of Islam's legal integration, cross-sectional comparisons to other policy domains would have been welcome, not to speak of the challenges posed by other religious groups (e.g., by Christian fundamentalists, p. 152) to liberal democracy.

Having moved such questions to the center of attention is, however, not a minor contribution within an interdisciplinary research field whose precise contours are slowly taking shape. One of the first scholarly publications to survey the legal dynamics of integrating Islam on both sides of the Atlantic, the book therefore deserves to be widely read.

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Creating the Witness. Documenting Genocide on Film, Video, and the Internet. By Leshu Torchin. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2012. 267 pp. \$25.00 paper.

Reviewed by Alejandro Baer, Department of Sociology/Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota

Paul: "I am glad that you have shot this footage and that the world will see it. It is the only way we have a chance that people might intervene."

Jack: "Yeah, and if no one intervenes, is it still a good thing to show?"

Paul: "How can they not intervene when they witness such atrocities?"

This brief dialogue in the film *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), between Paul Rusesabagina, a Rwandan Hutu who hid and protected over a thousand Tutsi refugees during the 1994 genocide, and a BBC cameraman who shot footage of the massacre, epitomizes the fundamental dilemma that this book explores with clarity and conciseness. Distant atrocities can be witnessed globally through visual media, and this fact has nourished the hope of journalists, filmmakers, and human rights activists over the past hundred years: If people see, they will act accordingly.

Leshu Torchin explores how media such as film, video, and the internet have visually represented genocide and human rights transgressions for the purpose of promoting popular awareness

and response. The book takes up cases from the contemporary mediascape in addition to paradigmatic historical cases, such as the actions in response to the Armenian crisis, considered the first international human rights movement in the U.S. history.

Torchin's book is steeped in a discussion of the issue of virtual witnessing, whose foundations were laid by important previous works such as Barbie Zelizer's *Remembering to Forget* (1998) and Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003). The former claimed that the iconic authority of Holocaust images had contributed to the "normalization" of atrocity, producing political and moral habituation among audiences. The latter was skeptical about the naive promise rooted in the visual discourse of photojournalism. Pictures can inspire dissent, foster violence, or create apathy, and Sontag cited a long history of the representation of the pain of others.

Torchin's approach is undoubtedly more optimistic, in part because she focuses on cases where the media had a considerable role in calling attention to atrocities and in eliciting response or, in Torchin's words, in transforming audiences into "witnessing publics." Her approach is far from that of Critical Theory, which would vehemently condemn the conflation of moral and political agency with entertainment and the "culture industry." Torchin recognizes the potential of video and popular culture to serve "as an active site for engagement, political debate, and the practice of citizenship" (p. 13). The examples analyzed in the book—such as the motion picture *Ravished Armenia* (1919), based on a survivor's testimony, or the collaboration between the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Google Earth on the Darfur crisis—indicate the overlap of several arenas and the ever-increasing blurring of otherwise rigid boundaries. Moreover, Torchin claims that multiple instances of popular media formats and commodified media experiences—such as YouTube internet streaming or online video games—are not necessarily at odds with the "field of witnessing."

According to the title, this book focuses on cases of genocide. However, there is an intrinsic contradiction between the definition of genocide and its visual representation. Can "the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such" be conveyed through visual documentation?

The book delves into this conundrum by thoroughly exposing the codes, conventions, and visual cues that signal mass atrocity in general and genocide in particular and constitute the interpretative grid for rendering images of a specific instance of atrocity meaningful for the audience. Publicizing genocide, we learn, is not a self-evident or transparent enterprise. The fact that it rests on "visualizing" strategies through legal means, by employing the term "genocide" as defined in international law, and iconic means, by establishing a relationship to Holocaust imagery, however, leaves

the reader with a feeling of unease. Torchin analyzes different players, rhetorical tropes, available platforms, and avenues of action that are “effective” and appeal to the audience’s emotions in powerful ways. But, as such, can those strategies not also be misused in many different ways?

The slogan of WITNESS, the international human rights non-governmental organization whose functioning is analyzed in the last chapter of the book, is “See it, film it, change it.” As in the encounter between the local hero and the Western journalist in *Hotel Rwanda*, the phrase is a proof of the unchallenged force of the visual revelation mantra. However, between seeing/filming and changing, a key concept is lacking: understanding. And here is where Susan Sontag’s seemingly old-fashioned and Platonian critique of camera-mediated images is still relevant today. “Photography implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it,” Sontag (1982) wrote in *On Photography*. “But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from *not* accepting the world as it looks.” Can images make us understand? There are still realities that no picture can convey.

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 Sontag, Susan (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador.
 Zelizer, Barbie (1998) *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

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Bonds of Citizenship: Law and the Labors of Emancipation. By Hoang Gia Phan. New York: New York Univ. Press, 2013. 256 pp. \$24.00 paper; \$75.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Christopher Tomlins, School of Law, University of California, Irvine

Bonds of Citizenship is a bold attempt to upend received contours of antebellum constitutional and legal history, and interpretive practice, by braiding legal studies with literary criticism and labor history. There is much here to admire and from which to learn.

To cut to the core: Phan argues that although the founders were pro-slavery, the document they produced sustains antislavery