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Impious Renewal

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STELLINGEN

behorende bij het proefschrift

Impious Renewal

The Holocaust and Jewish American Fiction After Postmodernism

van

Joost Krijnen

1. In order to adequately understand contemporary culture's relationship to the Holocaust, it is essential to court a sense of intellectual impiety.
2. Literature and fiction about the Holocaust are in no way inferior to the genres of Holocaust history and testimony. In fact, the former play a crucial part *along-side* the latter in constructing and mediating knowledge and understandings of the past.
3. Contrary to those critics who have sought to establish and chart the "limits of representation" with regard to the Holocaust, contemporary art and literature suggest that there are no such limits.
4. The Americanization of the Holocaust cannot simply be equated with the distortion of history. In fact, to Americanize the Holocaust *and* to historicize the Holocaust both represent efforts to interpret the past from particular and culturally contingent perspectives.
5. Cultural trauma theory's reliance on psychoanalytical metaphors may effectively obscure rather than illuminate the complex historical, cultural, political, and ideological negotiations through which cultural memory is constructed.
6. The fiction of Michael Chabon, Jonathan Safran Foer, Nicole Krauss, and Nathan Englander is able to forge a relationship to the Holocaust precisely by emphasizing its own temporal, geographical, and cultural distance to this history.
7. To judge the general health of Jewish American identity on the basis of the extent to which it is centered on the memory of the Holocaust is to misconstrue the nature of Jewish American identity in the twenty-first century.
8. The highly fictionalized and fantastic engagements with Jewish history and culture in Foer's *Everything Is Illuminated* and Chabon's *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* suggest that the tenets of Jewish tradition remain meaningful precisely to the extent that they may be recast and reinterpreted indefinitely.

9. Pragmatism offers tools to rethink, reformulate, and, ultimately, leave behind, some of the key problems that beset contemporary postmodernism.
10. The fiction of Chabon, Foer, and Krauss is postmodern in the sense that it continually emphasizes the constructed or “fictional” nature of concepts like meaning, knowledge, history, morality, and love. Yet it is no longer quite postmodern in the sense that it emphasizes that it is precisely as outright fictions that such concepts may still be meaningful and useful.
11. Even when they appear historically justified, references to the Holocaust in debates about contemporary (world) politics and social questions in practice more often pervert rather than advance discussions.
12. The ban on Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* in the Netherlands is not only undemocratic, but it also infantilizes Dutch citizens.