Living Room Witnesses: The Holocaust on American Television

Jeffrey Shandler

The Holocaust has become a powerful presence in the American moral landscape, and television, Jeffrey Shandler argues, has played a leading role in forging this singular relationship. Illustrated with clips from telecasts, ranging from the 1950s to the 1990s, his lecture considers the different ways that the medium of television has enabled Americans to feel that they are morally charged witnesses to one of the most disturbing chapters of history. Examples include excerpts from early documentaries, popular weekly drama series, and news reports.

Jeffrey Shandler is Professor and Chair of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University. His books include While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust; Adventures in Yiddishland: Post-vernacular Language and Culture; Jews, God, and Videotape: Religion and Media in America; and Shtetl! A Vernacular Intellectual History. His next book, Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors’ Stories and New Media Practices, will appear in fall 2017.