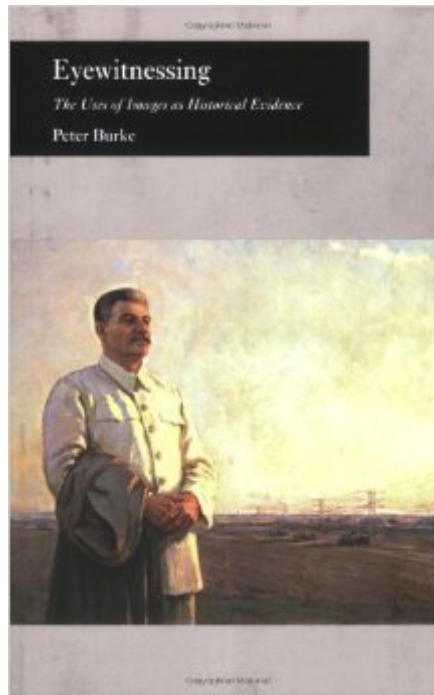


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Eyewitnessing: The Uses Of Images As Historical Evidence



Synopsis

What place do images hold among other kinds of historical evidence? In *Eyewitnessing*, Peter Burke reviews graphics, photographs, films, and other media from many countries and periods and examines their pragmatic uses. This profusely illustrated book surveys the opportunities and the challenges of using images to understand other times. In a thorough and compelling defense of the importance of the visual to history, Burke argues that images should not be considered mere reflections of their time and place, but rather extensions of the social contexts in which they were produced. The author describes and evaluates the methods by which art historians have traditionally analyzed images, and finds them insufficient to deal with the complexities of visual imagery. In developing a richer mode of visual interpretation, Burke devotes much attention to religious icons and narratives and political propaganda posters, caricatures, and maps. *Eyewitnessing* also addresses the economics of images—some, such as films, are commodities in themselves, and others are created to advertise other products. Concentrating on the representation of social groups, the author explores stereotypes as well as notions of foreignness and gender. In this wide-ranging, highly accessible volume, Burke helps us to understand the promise and the pitfalls of using visual evidence in the writing of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Burke discusses using images as historical resources and evidence, focusing on both the positive insights that might be garnered from imagery as well as the potential problems. One such

historiographical danger is that the historian might view images from within their present context and not with the same significance or contextual milieu that the original historical actors might have attributed to them. This point, and others throughout the text, are elementary to many historians; others could use a friendly reminder of presentist tendencies. While there is nothing revolutionary to modern historians in Burke's text, it is a pleasant reminder of some of the pitfalls in constructing historical narrative based on visual evidence.

Peter Burke is one of the best historians of his age. Highly recommended

Very helpful when it comes to teaching my son history through images.

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