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Influence has not been much debated in relation to the Holocaust literature. There is no doubt that Theodore Adorno's¹ statement about the impossibility of writing after Auschwitz initiated a discussion about the Holocaust literature², but it would be difficult to prove that it has had much influence on literature itself. Today, Adorno's words are seen rather as a metaphor, a statement about the state of the European culture after the Holocaust, rather than an ethical imperative with a practical application.

It should not be surprising that the concept of influence, as used in comparative literature, has not been consciously used in the context of the Holocaust literature. The history of this writing is relatively short, perhaps too short to create definitive hierarchies and canons that could have an impact on the successive generations of writers. But it is also the nature of this writing that makes it difficult to apply the concept of influence in the way that it has been used in literary studies. What we collectively define as Holocaust literature, consists mainly of memoirs and autobiographical writing. Only a small proportion of the authors consider themselves professional writers and venture into other areas than the Holocaust. The most recognized writers such as Jean Amery, Aharon Appelfeld, Tadeusz Borowski, Ida Fink, Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel managed to blend the autobiographical writing with what we could call

the elements of fiction, or perhaps better, they succeeded in giving their personal accounts of the Holocaust a more complex artistic shape.

It is only relatively recently and with certain reluctance that we have begun to use the term 'Holocaust fiction' for the writing that departs from the traditional form of a memoir written by an eye witness.³ The term Holocaust fiction has been controversial for both artistic and ethical reasons. The ethical problems concern the possibility of writing fiction about such horrific events and at a time when memory of these events is still fresh and recorded in countless memoirs. The interface of witnessing and fiction writing added yet another dimension to this ambiguity and the widely publicized instances of literary forgeries involving such known writers like Jerzy Kosinski further intensified the prominence of ethical criteria in the discussion of the Holocaust writing. In her book *The Holocaust Fiction*, Sue Vice has tried to demonstrate that this ethical imperative may only reduce our ability to assess the literary works as artistic objects:

“ The narrator is constructed in just the same way as the characters, and has no superior factual or moral knowledge (Again, meaning is constructed not by authorial fiat but by the clash of discourses..) This is an especially significant feature in Holocaust fiction, where critics and readers may precisely *not* want to read a polyphonic text, wishing rather for the clear utterance of moral certainties.. I argue that , on the contrary,

the polyphonic testing of such certainties is just what gives Holocaust fiction its particular representational power.”⁴ It is interesting that Vice sides here clearly with the authors, or the literary works themselves, and takes it for granted that critics and readers are those who use misplaced ethical criteria while judging the literary texts.

Although ethics has dominated the discussion of the Holocaust fiction, the literariness of this genre has not been entirely neglected. To some extent the issue at stake was not so much literariness itself but the relationship of historical and literary narratives in relation to the Holocaust. The reliability of the witnesses’ accounts, their usefulness as historical material, and finally, the postmodernist belief that no one kind of narrative has a primacy over any other have vastly complicated the traditionally clear definition of genres.⁵ Perhaps in the face of these multiple complications the best we can do is to heed the wise warning issued by Irving Howe:

“To think about ways in which the literary imagination might ‘use’ the Holocaust is to entangle ourselves with a multitude of problems for which no aesthetic can prepare us. Neither encompassing theory nor religious faith enables us to reach a firm conviction that now, at last, we understand what happened during the ‘Final Solution’.”⁶

This is not a statement of despair, but a sober realization that perhaps at this point it is too early to arrive at binding conclusions concerning the

Holocaust and its representations. Certainly, while following the critical debates about the Holocaust literature one cannot avoid feeling that the debate shows some characteristics of a not yet extinct volcano – nothing is settled and new evidence may undermine, what looked like a well established view. This temporary nature of many conclusions is due to the fact that the Holocaust writing is not yet a completed project. There are still memoirs and witnesses' accounts that are awaiting publication, and the linguistic variety of these materials means that a translation of a book from a less known language can lead if not to a seismic shift of critical assumptions, so at least to the modification of the previously held view. There are many examples of such late evidence. Tadeusz Borowski's stories make more sense while seen in the context of his earlier poetry recovered over several decades from his friends.⁷ In turn, Zofia Nalkowska's 1946 collection *Medallions*, translated into English only in 2000 tells us that Borowski was not the only author of early short stories about the concentration camps.⁸ *Medallions* also help us to understand that there may be a certain pattern of Holocaust short story writing we can discern in the works of Ida Fink, Hanna Krall's and recently Roma Ligocka.⁹ These and similar cases suggest that interpreting the Holocaust literature is more like a knitting of a complex garment rather than drawing a straight line. Undoing the stitches and looking back is

equally, if not more important, than following the designer's original pattern.

In any discussion of the Holocaust literature time is, of course the main factor. There is no doubt that the further we are removed from the days of the 'Final Solution', the Holocaust writing will be more 'stabilized' and future generation will respond to it differently.

The first signs of the change are already visible. In historical research, literary criticism and even more in psychoanalysis, we often hear about the 'second' and 'third' Holocaust generations. Generally, the term refers to children and grand children of the survivors, and the issue at stake is the impact the survivors' war experiences had on their families. *Maus. A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman is a classic example of such 'second generation' Holocaust writing. There are also a number of historical studies of the Holocaust written by the 'second generation' scholars, Some of them read as if they had been written on behalf of the parents who were not able to write, mainly for psychological reasons, while others foreground a nearly scientific objectivity as to demonstrate that the family connection with the survivor should not have an impact on the expressed views.¹⁰ There are also more and more books in which authors are trying to reconstruct the lost world of East European Jews, a variant of the Jewish *Yizkor Book Project* but meant for a general reader.¹¹ Although written by the 'second generation' authors, they have a clear

aim to provide as faithful written description of the extinct Jewish life as possible for those who have no personal or family connection either with the Holocaust, or the Jewish life before the Second World War.¹² Finally, there are more popular, non-literary manifestations of the removal of the Holocaust writing from the actual historical events. Perhaps the most conspicuous example is the transformation of the Jewish district of Kraków following Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*. Previously neglected Kazimierz has become a focus point for countless, primarily American tourists, who want to see the 'authentic' Jewish quarter. It is not clear any more whether Kazimierz is seen as 'authentic', because it was once populated by the Jews, or whether its 'authenticity' is legitimized by Spielberg's film. Although to many this blurring of the boundaries still feels controversial, there is no doubt that the future generations will see the Holocaust in a different light than we do. The confusion of what happened, with what we believe happened, and what is represented as 'real' will undoubtedly give rise to new forms of response to what today is viewed as sacrosanct. A comment that 'Kazimierz is a bit like Pompeii' will probably not raise many eyebrows in the years to come,¹³ and the blend of memory, history and representation will certainly give rise to new types of Holocaust fiction.

This however, is only a speculation based on personal observation. What can be demonstrated today is the rise of one type of Holocaust fiction,

where the issue of influence will become more important than it has been so far. The ‘documentary’, and closely related to it, ‘pseudofactual’ has been practiced for some time and received a good deal of critical attention. As early as 1982 Barbara Foley defined ‘pseudofactual’ fiction as “an imitation of a mode of non-fictional discourse – memoir, diary, letter – that itself refers to the historical world.”¹⁴ Foley’s distinction here is rather strict – a novel is pseudofactual only if it imitates the “mode of non-fictional discourses”.¹⁵ An inclusion of documents within a fictional narrative does not make a novel ‘pseudofactual’, its underlying mode of representation remains either realistic or unrealistic.

James. E Young’s definition of the link between fiction and a document provides for a far more flexible understanding of a ‘documentary’ novel.¹⁶ It allows both the kind of approach Foley identified in the ‘pseudofactual novel’ as well as other, more varied intermingling of the fictional narrative and documentary material. Young’s definition is broader because of his different understanding of what constitutes a fact and what fiction: “If there is a line between fact and fiction, it may by necessity be a widening border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other.”¹⁷ But the dissolving borders should not justify a perverted use of documents in fiction so as to trigger an emotional

response from the readers. The documents should be used, as Young suggests, to “authenticate-and thereby naturalize – its [i.e.the narrative’s] particular interpretation of events”.¹⁸

In the view of the above discussion, it is not surprising that the ‘documentary’ Holocaust fiction sparked several heated debates. Both Foley and Young quote instances of authors who intentionally blurred the boundaries between fiction and the facts in order to grip the readers’ imagination. William Styron’s *Sophies’s Choice*, and D.M. Thomas’ *The White Hotel* are seen today as the most conspicuous examples of misusing historical evidence for supposedly artistic reasons.

Despite these prominent and some less publicized cases, the documentary fiction about the Holocaust continues to thrive, and it seems to me that in the foreseeable future this is the type of writing has the best chance to find popularity with the readers.

There are three examples of documentary fiction written in the last few years that perhaps give some indication where the genre may be heading. Surprisingly, only one of the books under discussion has achieved some degree of international popularity, and probably not because of its merit but because of the earlier reputation of the author.¹⁹ Each book comes from a different part of the world: *Once* was written by naturalised Australian, Morris Gleitzman. *Call the Swallow* by Fergus O’Connel, an Irish project manager, and *Polsk Krigsommar* by Mogels Kjelgaard

Danish writer living in Sweden and writing in Swedish, his second language.²⁰

There is at least one characteristic feature that these books have in common, namely, the authors make an explicit statement about the origins of their interest in the Holocaust and the relationship between the fiction and documentary material on which the books were based.

Gleitzman's statement is particularly strongly emphasized, perhaps because his book is intended for children. He refers to his family roots in Krakow, and acknowledges that his writing was inspired by Janusz Korczak. "On the way to writing this story I read many other stories – diaries, letters, notes and memories of people who were young at the time of the Holocaust."- writes Gleitzman, and then, to show how this reading translated into fiction, he adds: "This story is my imagination trying to grasp the unimaginable"²¹ How much importance Gleitzman is attaching to a distinction between the facts and fiction is evident from his website, where he systematically lists the books he used while preparing to write *Once*.²²

In the "Authors's Note" Fergus O'Connell meticulously lists the documentary sources he referred to, and clearly explains how the characters and events in his novel relate to the events and historical sources he was using. It is significant that he opens this chapter with the following note: "With a book like this whose subject is *Shoa*, it seems to

me terribly important – indeed mandatory – that the reader is clear which parts are fiction and which are not.”²³

In his short preface to *Polsk Krigsommar*, Mogens Kjelgaard refers to his research on the subject in the historical museum in Tykocin, and like the two other authors warns the readers that there is a substantial difference between his novel and a historical account of the Holocaust. The opening paragraph of the preface reads: “ This novel should not be treated like a document, nevertheless the presented events and characters are authentic. The book derives from the memoirs and accounts of the inhabitants of Tykocin and its surrounding areas.”²⁴

There is no reason to doubt that these statements are entirely honest, and in fact there are no instances in these three books that the authors are deliberately trying to experiment with the factual material in the authors mentioned by Foley and Young did. However, the interesting questions we may ask are the following – if the authors made a clear distinction between the fiction and the documentary, why did they decide to write these novels at all? Why do they imagine that a novel is an appropriate form to talk about the Holocaust?

There is no doubt that none of the three authors attempted, in the words of Young, to wring “pleasure from the naked pains of the victims”,²⁵ neither did they, as we have seen above, taken liberties with historical accuracy. Obviously, one answer would be that, what we call a historical

novel has been a popular genre for a long time. History presented as a tale, is often much more palatable to us, the readers, than the history provided as a factual capsule. This is felt even by the professional historians, who following the shining examples of Simon Shama or Norman Davies, have learned that apart from the fact that historical accounts need to be precise and well documented, they must display the authors' stylistic agility. It is not so much the fact itself, but what Young calls the "rhetoric of fact" that makes a history book alive in the eye of a contemporary reader.²⁶

With the Holocaust there is an additional problem. Many historians claim that it was a unique case of genocide,²⁷ yet the use of the word 'unique' is usually applied to the event, and not the victims. The appalling uniqueness of the 'Final Solution' rests in the fact that the murder of the Jews was total, with no exception. In fact, the Nazi rhetoric of large numbers was probably instrumental in the whole process of deportations to the death camps. The documents, which survived do not mention individuals, but treat the deportees as a dehumanized mass that needs to be processed. Some critics raise also the issue of Holocaust memoirs, which often seem to be alike, as if the survivors had gone through exactly the same experiences,²⁸ which in all honesty they did, being a small part of this enormous and anonymous system of destruction. The issue of vast numbers and anonymity of its victims is what most of us

find difficult to comprehend and overcome while confronted with the Holocaust. Wisława Szymborska poem “ A Large Number” is probably the most profound and at the same time most succinct formulation of this problem:

Four billion people on this earth,

But my imagination is still the same.

It's bad with large numbers.

It's still taken by particularity.

It flies in the dark like a flashlight,

illuminating only random faces

while all the rest go blindly by,

never coming to mind and never really missed.

But even a Dante couldn't get it right.

Let alone someone who is not.

Even with all the muses behind me.²⁹

Without the particularity, Szymborska writes about, effective narrative fiction is almost impossible. This is what Borowski tried to grapple with in his short story “The People Who Walked On”. How to write a story when ‘between two throw-ins in a soccer game, right behind my back, three thousand people had been put to death’ ?³⁰ And yet, what he eventually retains in his memory and writes about are not abstract

numbers but few individuals – a woman standing over a burning pit and a readheaded girl asking rhetorical questions about justice and punishment.³¹ Fiction needs characters that have a degree of autonomy in decision making, and what happens in a novel very much depends on the outcome of these decisions. Unfortunately, in real life whether outside, or inside the camps, the Jews were no in position to make decisions. Even if somebody decided to escape from the ghetto, his predicament did not depend on his own will but on the good or bad will of the gentiles. Other European nationals, even in the most terrorised countries by the Nazis, like Poland, had much more freedom of choice. They could decide, for instance, whether to help the Jews, risking their own lives, to denounce them to the Nazis, or to take a position of neutral bystanders.³² To the Jews such choices were not available.

It seems then that the ability to cast convincing characters is one of the most difficult tasks for any author of the documentary Holocaust fiction.³³

Each of the three writers solves the problems in a different way.

Gleiztman presents the story through the eyes of small Jewish boy Felix, whose parents tried to save him by entrusting him to Catholic nuns in a small Polish town. But Felix does not fully understand what is happening around him. He believes his parents are going to visit him. When they do not, he escapes from the convent and begins to look for them. Because

Felix is only half aware of what is happening around him, he proceeds without assessing his decisions within a wider political context. All decisions he makes are based on the child's understanding of the surrounding world. As a result Gelitzman does not need to provide too many details of the historical context, because it is the readers' task to enter the world as seen through Felix's eyes. We know that the story is taking place in Poland and that the Jews are under threat, and this is all there is to know. We can see how effective this device is in the scene when Felix is watching a deportation:

“A big man in a scuffed leather jacket has his hand on Zelda's shoulder and is pleading with the Nazi officer in a foreign language. I think he's speaking Nazi. Which is strange because he's wearing a Jewish armband.

The Nazi officer let's go of Zelda's hair and raises his gun and points it at the man's head.

The man doesn't weep or grovel. He lifts up the leather bag he's carrying, which is also fairly scuffed, and holds it in front of the Nazi officer's face.

Why is he doing it?

The Nazi officer glances at the bag, still looking bored. He raises his other hand, grabs a tuft of the man's beard and twists it hard with his leather glove. The man stands there and lets him.

The local people watching all laugh and cheer.

The man looks sad but ignores them.³⁴

What normally would require an explanation – the language the characters spoke, the significance of the Jewish armband, the man's gesture, the local people's laughter, remains unexplained. The readers, who we may assume are the same age as Felix, are learning the details gradually at the same pace Felix is learning them. The cognitive development of the central character in the book is very much connected to the narrative. Felix gradually learns the bitter truth about the war, but he also becomes aware that his ability to tell stories deriving from early childhood reading, helps him and his friends to cope with harsh reality. He can frame his narrative within the stories he has previously read, therefore each chapter opens with the word *once*, which is also the title of the book. The childhood stories may be helpful, but their reality and the reality of the war.

“Once I escaped from an orphanage in the mountains and I didn't have to do any of the things you do in escape stories.

Dig a tunnel.

Disguise myself as a priest

Make a rope from nun robes knotted together.

I just walked out through the main gate.³⁵

The childhood stories may be helpful, but they do not prepare for the reality of the war. At the end of the book we find Felix, and his friend Zelda off the railway track after they had jumped off the train going to a concentration camp. Historical probability is that Felix and Zelda perished, and the author does not seek to provide a redemptive comment, in the vein of the final scene in *Schindler's List*. The young readers not being fully aware of the historical circumstances, does not assume automatically that Felix was about to be killed. As a result Felix remains on the railway truck suspended between life and death - a fully-fledged character, not one of the nameless victims of the Final Solution.

Mogens Kjelgaard set himself a more difficult task – to present a war predicament of Tykocin a small but historically significant town in eastern Poland, where the Jews were allowed to settle in the 16th century. In a way the Kjelgaard tried to achieve what Richmond did in *Konin* – a reconstruction of Jewish life in the summer of 1941 when over 2000 Jews, half of the inhabitants of Tykocin were deported and killed. The story is narrated by a Polish teacher, who during the war was hiding a Jewish girl. The other protagonists are a Jewish fishmonger, Moshe Brenner, and his business contact, a Polish farmer Jozef Kuncewicz. The attempt to present a wider social perspective means that the novel has all the typical characters of the period – orthodox Jews, the Jews sympathizing with the invading Soviet army, anti-Semitic Poles, the

members of the Polish underground, as well as people who just wanted to survive the war quietly. There is also a spectrum of German characters here – from the usual cruel Nazis to a corporal showing a lot of sympathy towards the local population. This is why Kjelgaard claims that although the book is not a document, what it describes is *authentic*, that is it resembles something which might have happened. And indeed, it would be difficult to disagree with the author. Historical research on the area neighbouring Tykocin clearly indicates that the Nazi and Soviet occupations did have a profound impact on the way local population behaved during the war – there were acts of heroism as well as acts of revenge, denunciation and collaboration with the occupying armies.³⁶

The rigour of ‘typicality’ has however, such consequences that it is difficult to construct fictional characters that are three dimensional individuals rather than representatives of certain types of behaviour.

Kjelgaard succeeds perhaps only with two characters – Moshe Brenner and Jozef Kuncewicz. But even here we can clearly see that the possibility of choice is given rather to Kuncewicz, since he agrees to hide Brenner’s children from the Nazis, and then turns them out when his own family is under threat. Brenner’s choice was limited only to the possibility of asking Kuncewicz for help for his children, but he himself had no illusions about the predicament of his family and all the other Jews in Tykocin.

In *Call the Swallow*, Fergus O'Connell casts even a wider net than Kjelgaard, trying to give an account of the Lodz ghetto, the predicament of the Polish Jews under the Nazi's and the Soviets, as well as the understanding how ordinary Germans evolved into Nazi criminals. This is done within a framework of family histories. The principal actors are David Steinbaum, his wife, with son Marek and David's sisters, Ariela and Katya. There is also a parallel German family of Rudolf Fest – a Nazi functionary involved in the preparation of the Final Solution, his wife Ursula and his wife's sister Lisa. Formally, the book is more complex than the other two. Within the main narrative frame there are quotations from the Nazi documents and a fictitious Lodz ghetto diary of David Steinbaum. There are also long flashes into the pre-war past, mainly to provide a historical background and some explanation of the characters' behaviour during the war. The book ends in the post war period where the narrator tells us what happened to all the principal actors of the novel. These formal devices allow the author to move us from place to place and follow his characters in Warsaw, Lodz, Berlin, Eastern Poland and eventually, what used to be West Germany.

There is no doubt that O'Connell puts more emphasis on the documentary than the two other writers. There are more details about the war and occupation of Poland, and statistical data about the Nazi death machine as well as sometimes shocking descriptions of torture and mass executions,

undoubtedly based on authentic documents. To counterbalance this, O'Connell is putting much effort into portraying the characters' psychology, particularly of the Germans. The 'triangular' relationship between Rudolf Fest, and the two sisters, as well as the life story of a Nazi criminal Otto are to show how the 'ordinary' Germans were transformed either into active into murders, or accomplices of the Hitler's regime. But with all this effort put in, one feels that the psychological formula takes the author too far. In his view the degeneration of the German nation finds a mirror reflection in the degeneration in the private lives of individuals. Not only does Rudolf have a relationship and children with both sisters, but it also turns out that the two sisters have an equally ambiguous relationship with each other. As a result, what meant to be a tragedy turns into a farce during a drunken party, when the four characters find themselves locked into more than a friendly embrace.

“ ‘Let's go to the bedroom,’ he whispered.

Nobody said anything but the three of them began to sway towards the bedroom.

‘I love you,’ he said, his eyes meeting theirs in turn.

With a hand behind each of their heads he pulled them closer to him so that all three sets of lips touched. He realised he was able to differentiate between two different types of lipstick, and found this amazing. The two

sisters kissed again. Rudolf watched their breasts pressing together Time for the big roll of the dice.”³⁷

Neither *Call the Swallow*, nor the other two novels have attracted much publicity. On one hand, this may be disappointing, but on the other, we perhaps should rejoice in the fact that a Holocaust novel does not attract public attention only because its link with the Holocaust. It may be the case that we are now getting to the point that the public perception of the Holocaust is getting more *normalized*. To survivors, historians, some politicians and many individuals who believe that the lessons from the Holocaust should be learned by each generation, the very word *normalized* in this context may seem to be inappropriate, or even offensive. But the formula of avoiding the mistakes because of the lessons learned from the past, although morally sound, is not necessarily true either when applied to individual lives or collective social experience. The genocide in Rwanda, and the catastrophic ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia suggest that somebody else’s experience, even of such magnitude like the extermination of the Jews, is of limited use and does not necessarily translate into some transcendental wisdom. In her poem “The End and the Beginning” Szyborska goes even further and suggests that it is not the memory of the past, but a careless oblivion that allows the history to move forward.

Someone, broom in hand,
Still remembers how it was.
Someone else listens, nodding
His unshattered head.
But others are bound to be bustling nearby
who'll find all that
a little boring.

From time to time someone still must
Dig up a rusted argument
From underneath a bush
And haul it off to the dump.

Those who knew
what this was all about
must make way for those
who know little.
And less than that.

And at last nothing less than nothing.³⁸

There is no doubt that those who 'know little and less than that' will
become more prominent within the next few decades. The building of

monuments, museums and other forms of commemoration may slow down the process but they will not stop it. In this context the documentary Holocaust fiction may play a beneficial role. It will not only keep the memory going for a bit longer, it will also help to preserve the tangible link between the 'documented' past and the artistic licence.

In literary studies, it has been customary to discuss influence in terms of impact of individual writers. The concept has been reinforced by Harold Bloom who understood influence in a personalized way, as "major figures with the persistence to wrestle with their strong precursors, even to the death."³⁹ With the Holocaust writing it is too early to take such a particular view. The influence comes from too many sources to be pinned down so precisely, and if there is 'wrestling' involved, it of a different kind, a wrestling with the haunting memories of the past and with the loss of the world to which the memories relate. It would be interesting to hypothesize what the Holocaust fiction is going to be like when the documentary link will become obsolete. The early attempts have not been particularly successful, but those who have made judgements have been too close to the events to see the Holocaust novel only as fiction. Those who know "nothing and less than nothing" may have a different view in the future.

¹ T. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967), p.19.

² See for instance the discussion of Adorno in I. Howe, 'Writing the Holocaust', in B. Lang, *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. B. Lang (New York, 1988), pp. 178-182.

³ I discuss the issue of Holocaust fiction in 'Holocaust in Translation', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 30/2 (2001), 169-175.

⁴ S. Vice, *Holocaust Fiction*, (London, 2001), p. 9

⁵ These issues have been extensively discussed, and Efraim Sicher's *The Holocaust Novel*, (New York, 2005) is a good guide to the debate.

⁶ I. Howe, 'Writing the Holocaust', p. 175.

⁷ See 'Nieznane wiersze Tadeusza Borowskiego' (Previously unpublished poems by Tadeusz Borowski - edition with a commentary). *Tworczosc* 1 (1992), 91-102.

⁸ Z. Nalkowska, *Medallions*, (Evanston, Illinois, 2000).

⁹ I. Fink, *A Scrap of Time and Other Stories*, (London, 1988), H. Krall, *The Woman From Hamburg and Other Stories*, (New York, 2005), R. Ligocka, *Kobieta w podróży*, (Kraków, 2003)

¹⁰ Norman Finkelstein's *Holocaust Industry* (London, 2001) is an example of the first type, while Gunnar Paulsson's *Secret City*, (Yale, 2003) is a good example of the second type of the 'second generation' book.

¹¹ Yizkor Book Project can be viewed at <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/>

¹² T. Richmond's *Konin* (London, 1995) and Eva Hoffman's, *Shtetl*, (London, 1997) are good examples of such reconstructions.

¹³ This is the comment I heard in the streets of Kraków in the summer of 2006

¹⁴ B. Foley, 'Fiction, Fiction, Fascism: Testimony and Mimesis in Holocaust Narratives'. *Comparative Literature* 34/4 (1982), 330-360.

¹⁵ B. Foley, 351.

¹⁶ J.E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, (Bloomington, 1988), 51-80.

¹⁷ J.E. Young, 52. Young also talks here about the mediated and constructed nature of photography, referring to Susan Sontag. This is discussed in detail by Janina Struk in her book *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence*, (London, 2004).

¹⁸ J.E. Young, 63.

¹⁹ M. Gleitzman, *Once*, (Camberwell, 2005)

²⁰ F. O'Connel, *Call the Swallow*, (Cork, 2002), M. Kjelgaard, *Polsk Krigssommer*, (Lund-Lublin, 2001)

²¹ M. Gleitzman, 50-51

²² See <http://www.morrisgleitzman.com/once/index.html>

²³ F. O'Connel, 378.

²⁴ M. Kjelgaard, 7.

²⁵ E. Young, 62.

²⁶ More on the term "rhetoric of fact" and "figurative historicists" see E. Young, 62-63.

²⁷ The uniqueness of the Holocaust is still debated by the historians. See M. Levene, ed. *Genocide in the Age of nation State* vols. 1 and 2, (London, 2005).

²⁸ See R. Hilberg, "I Was Not There" in B. Lang, 18-19. The issue of similarity of the Holocaust accounts is however, often caused by the quality of translation. See P. Kuhiwczak, "Grammar of Survival", in M. Salama-Carr, *Translation and Conflict*, (Rodopi, forthcoming 2007)

²⁹ W. Szyborska, "A Large Number" in *View with a Grain of Sand*, trans. S. Baranczak and C. Cavanagh (New York, 1995), 95.

³⁰ T. Borowski, "The People Who Walked On" in *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, trans. By B. Vedder, (London, 1967), 84

³¹ T. Borowski, 97.

³² In his war memoir *The Author of Himself* (Princeton, 2001) Marcel Reich-Ranicki describes like a Pole who hid him in Warsaw, considered this act as his personal choice, his own, private war with Hitler.

³³ In "Writing the Holocaust" I. Howe discusses some other aspects of this dilemma.

³⁴ M. Gleitzman, 74-75

³⁵ M. Gleitzman, 27.

³⁶ For details see J. Gross, *Neighbors*, (Princeton, 2001)

³⁷ F. O'Connell, 323.

³⁸ W. Szyborska, "The End and the Beginning, 178-179.

³⁹ H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, (New York, 1973), 5.