

# Malinski: *Fictional Narrative Between Affiliative Postmemory and the Effacement of the Holocaust*

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**Abstract:** *This article proposes a fictional narrative as a postmemory representation as a conjunction of imaginary, appropriation of a position of alterity and the repertoire of Holocaust as a global reference event. Malinski (2000), by the Irish Síoifra O'Donovan, will be seen as an articulation between resonance and effacement of the Holocaust. Albeit unintentionally, the novel may also support the historical revision that takes place contemporarily in Poland which intends to assure Poles strictly as Holocaust victims and impotent bystanders denying any effective participation in the genocide.*

**Keywords:** *Postmemory; holocaust; affiliative postmemory; Irish literature; bystanding.*

## **Malinski: Writing from a vision**

Síoifra O'Donovan was born in Dublin in 1971 and *Malinski* (2000) is her first book to be published. It narrates the life of two Polish brothers differently affected by traumatic experiences during the Second World War. The first of the three parts is dedicated to Stanislav, the older sibling unintentionally separated from his mother and brother. The boy is raised by his Catholic aunt in Krakow, by that time occupied by the Nazis and later on by the Soviets. The second part is focused on Henry that became a prisoner along with his mother when returning to the family home in Lvov, unaware that it had already become the residence of the Nazi *kapo*, Hilbig. By the end of the war, Henry and his mother leave Stanislav behind and flee to Ireland; she marries again and her son grows hiding his Polish identity and the war past. As an adult, Henry is disturbed by his ambiguous affection towards his perpetrator and by his conflicting choice of taking German culture and language as a professional career. The third and final part of the book narrates the meeting of the two brothers in Krakow after their mother's death and forty-nine years of separation when Henryk Malinski, now Henry Foley, returns to his homeland.

The narrative takes place in 1991, two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Poland is on the transition from communism to capitalism and the lingering liberation from the Soviet influence to become a member of the European Union in the future. The Irish writer proposes a double articulation of space and time: Poland and Ireland, past and present, along with two different reasons for the past separation of the brothers. Who was to blame? Mother or Henry? By the end of the novel, there is no single truth, redemption or healing for the siblings' wounds. They return to the childhood home in Lvov, the place of trauma for Henry, to find neither catharsis nor liberation, just an indication of the continuity of life – perhaps a banal

irrelevant life.

O'Donovan wrote *Malinski* after a period living in Krakow, Poland, in 1990s. She followed an interest fed along the years: her first love of Polish origin and the stories of a Polish college colleague – when together they were "like the oldest kindred spirits." The author has also lived in India and Tibet, experiences that led her to write two other books: *Pema and the Yak - A Journey into Exile* (2007) and *Lost in Shambhala* (2015).

For the Irish writer, Buddhist belief and philosophy are a fundamental personal axis for writing that manifests itself through significant visions and dreams, following a premise of coexistence between different spheres and logics of reality:

Malinski came to me in a vision, while I was living on St. Bronislaw's Street in Krakow. I saw an old man at the top of a tower block, remembering the war. It was Stanislaw. *His spirit had visited me* and I now had a duty to tell his story, and Henry's. *That is how I always begin a book, with a dream or vision.*

(...)

And when I go into a project, I am taken over by it completely... *I inhabited that time period for the time particularly of the first draft...* I dreamed of it, thought of it, and *felt like I was there, through Stanislaw particularly.* (O'Donovan 2018, my emphasis) <sup>1</sup>

According to the writer, rather than identification with the character or empathic approximation, writing would be an immersion of subjective and temporal displacement. She works as a kind of instrument of mediation between different worlds and is able to bring histories that would be already there, just waiting to be discovered. To this perspective it is also added quite different propositions that see writing as a "continuous dream, a creation flow:

Writing is inextricably linked to dreaming. Writing is allowing yourself to dream and to create, as John Gardner says, '*the continuous dream*'. *Seamless prose. Wonders. Jewels. Horrors. All delivered as if they were already there, in that other world, waiting to be discovered.* Or, as Stephen King puts it, excavated. *Stories are already intact, waiting to be discovered.*<sup>2</sup> (idem, my emphasis)

Despite being Stanislaw who appeared in a vision in Krakow as if claiming that his story must be told, it is on Henryk/Henry that O'Donovan places the most problematic issues of the plot: guilt over the separation of the family and the ensuing suffering; abuse and mutilation by the Nazi kapo; the ambiguous feelings towards his perpetrator and the German culture. From a biographical perspective, Henry's life trajectory and character reflect and exacerbate the author's father's obsession about Germany that is perceived as uncomfortable and inappropriate by her:

In my family, there were connections with Germany. My father's first wife was from Eisenach, Germany (east), and my sister was half German (half sister). *My father was obsessed with Germany, from the time his father, a prominent IRA man, Jim O'Donovan (Director of Chemicals in the War of Independence)... had masterminded a plot with the German Abwehr;<sup>3</sup> to have them parachuted in to plot against Britain in the 1930s.* Herman Goertz the German spy stayed in my father's orchard for weeks or months, and before he left, he gave him his rifle and a knife, which my father kept for years. This spy eventually in 1947 took his cyanide

capsule and was then buried in the German cemetery in Wicklow. *My father visited the grave frequently. I always thought it was so strange. And I disliked being dragged along to Germany as a child with my parents. I didn't like the atmosphere of the place, the strictness of people...*

(...)

*I think the Jews show up in the book like ghosts... and though Henry's guilt... that he lived with a man who was all up for the exterminations... and yet he actually loved Hilbig as a father because he had no other father any more... (this echoes my father's strange love for the German Spy in his garden as a child, for sure.)* (idem, my emphasis)

In spite of this conception of literary writing permeated by a mystical trait with visions, spirits and characters that may 'inhabit' the author, O'Donovan adopts a distinct approach in relation to the Jews that is determined by a fundamental separation due to her ethnic-religious non-affiliation: "Actually, I wanted to write about the Holocaust, but it did not feel qualified to do so because I'm not Jewish" (idem).

### **Affiliative postmemory and testimony**

This article proposes that *Malinski* may be seen as a fictional work of postmemory representation, in a correlation of affiliative memory to the so called "second generation" – the descendants of survivors and victims of the Holocaust. The use of the term "second" implies a fundamental continuity in which the following generation is recipient of their parental trauma. Just as the event is not determinant for the development of traumatic symptoms by the victim, offspring would not necessarily inherit the trauma experienced by their parents. Van Alphen (2006) differently proposes that the deep connection with the past presented by the descendants could result of displacement of the relation with the parents and mediation. According to Hirsch, mediation constitutes a fundamental feature for understanding postmemory as an inter- and transgenerational structure of transmission that includes continuity and rupture as result of a traumatic experience:

Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. (Hirsch 2008. 106-7)

The parents' traumatic experience as survivors and victims could thus be adopted as own by the offspring in a process involving imaginative investment, projection, and creation, as well as identification, not necessarily a family bond. Instead of an identity position, Hirsch (2001) proposes postmemory as an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance specifically related to cultural or collective trauma in which the witness by adoption could thus "remember" the suffering of others. Such appropriation could also be established by a web of transmission in the social sphere, capable of sharing the traumatic legacy at different levels thus constituting an "affiliative postmemory":

Affiliative postmemory would thus be the result of contemporaneity and generational connection with the literal second generation combined with structures of mediation that would be broadly appropriable, available, and indeed, compelling enough to encompass a larger collective in an organic web of transmission. (Hirsch 2008. 115)

O'Donovan talks about her own organic web of transmission: the German half-sister, daughter of the father's first wife; the conspiracy between her grandfather and the German pilot in 1930s; her father's obsession with Germany; the period living in Poland; the stories told by Polish Jews and non-Jews. The Second War experience was thus available to be adopted and recreated as fiction through research, affiliative postmemory, and imagination, and narrated from a more legitimate and familiar identity position - as non-Jewish.

This perception of illegitimacy to narrate the Holocaust results from the assumption of testimony as the most reliable truth of the events: only the one who lived can narrate what actually happened. The testimony acquires this prominence during the process of establishing a narrative and culture of legality for an unprecedented crime<sup>4</sup> that involved the long Nuremberg Trials (1946) and the Adolf Eichmann Trial (1961). The wide press coverage of the 1961 trial, including television broadcasting, contributed to the massification of the subject through books, films, documentaries, and TV shows<sup>5</sup>. According to Shoshana Felman, two works can be called "conceptual breakdowns" in the apprehension of the Holocaust: *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), book by Hannah Arendt, and the 566-min-long documentary film, *Shoah* (1985), by Claude Lanzmann. Despite the different proposals and the two decades of separation, both works controversially modified the vocabulary of collective memory by adding a "new idiom" to the discourse on the Holocaust, which did not remain the same as it had been before them. Felman proposes that today the accessibility to the Holocaust occurs in the space "of slippage" between law and art:

Historically, we needed law to totalize the evidence, to *totalize* the Holocaust and, through totalization, to start to apprehend its contours and its magnitude. Historically, we needed art to start to apprehend and to retrieve what the totalization has left out. Between too much proximity and too much distance, the Holocaust becomes today accessible, I will propose, in this space of *slippage between law and art*. But it is also in this space of slippage that its full grasp continues to elude us. (Felman 107, original emphasis)

Felman remarks the inherent characteristic related to trauma and the Holocaust: something will always escape; understanding and totalization will always be an attempt, an effort doomed to a partial failure, as well as the testimony of victims and survivors in relation to full efficiency and communicability. This ambivalent tension between urgency and impossibility to narrate is at the core of psychic trauma, according to Caruth:

(...) trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that it is not available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language. (Caruth 1996. 4)

Like Felman's "space of slippage", trauma becomes accessible in an intermediate space, in the passage from wound to narrative, marked by a hybrid temporality of belatedness and repeated re-presentification of the past. For Caruth, the experience and reception of trauma dynamics determine a kind of "possession" that imposes a hierarchical subjugation relationship with the trauma to the individual:

The pathology consists, rather, solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. (Caruth 1995. 4-5, original emphasis)

As an impact that demands voice and narration, Caruth's traumatic possession may be related to O'Donovan's vision of Stanislav, and especially to the idea that the character can "inhabit" her. Thus, the effective elaboration of a literary narrative may offer a double therapeutic and liberating effect in relation to both possession and need to tell other's story: in a diegetic level, for the characters and events of the plot, and for the author that would be released from been "inhabited", freed to follow other interests and themes.

In *Malinski*, alterity manifests itself in the interplay between different instances: the author's place occupied by other, the appropriation of the experience of the Second World War as affiliative postmemory, and fictional narration as subjectivity. Diminishing identity differences, the other – Polish and Catholic – constitutes a place to be occupied and taken as memory by both author and reader. To remember with the memory of the other is a variation of the recurrent theme of the double, easily extended to the relation between author and narrator, author and protagonist. Piglia (2004) precisely sees the possibility of remembering with the memory of others as the perfect metaphor of the literary experience in which reading would be the "art of building a personal memory from experiences and memories of others".

### **The non-place of the Jews in *Malinski***

In *Malinski*, the proposition that the place of the other can be occupied and become a narrative, cannot be applied to the Jews. The author chooses a different approach by making Jews more like phantasmagoria, anonymous victims of Nazi brutality that appear briefly and sporadically. These 'apparitions' present a metonymical character in relation to the Holocaust by referring to a reality that is not objectively portrayed but find resonance in the reader due to the collective repertoire of images and information: the squalid survivors of the concentration camps liberation, naked corpses piled up and pushed by bulldozers. For Huysen, the Holocaust turned out into a globalized reference, a "cipher" that can be displaced and applied to other posterior events of widespread organized violence such as the genocide in Rwanda or the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

[The Holocaust became] a cipher for the twentieth century as a whole and for the bankruptcy of the Enlightenment project. It serves as evidence of the inability of Western civilization to practice anamnesis, to reflect upon its constitutive inability to live in peace with differences and alterities, and to draw the consequences of the insidious relations between Enlightenment modernity, rational oppression, and organized violence.\*<sup>6</sup> (Huysen 2000.12-13)

Bauman pointed out that rationality and organization at the service of violence is part of understanding the Holocaust as a characteristically modern phenomenon that cannot be analyzed outside the context of cultural tendencies and technical achievements of modernity, as a clash of factors rather common and ordinary themselves. The effort of understanding the past must make us reflect on our current way of life,

(...) the quality of the institutions in which we trust for our safety, the validity of the criteria with which we measure the adequacy of our conduct and the models of interaction that we consider and accept as normal.\* (Bauman 14)

The extermination on a massive and industrial scale could only be realized and justified by the characteristics of modernity in a politically emancipated German state of audacious manipulative ambitions which detained the monopoly of the means of violence: rationality and scientific knowledge for an ethnic and racial improvement; bureaucracy and segmentation of processes aiming to an increasing efficiency production. This combination of elements enabled not only the causal detachment of the perpetrators, but mainly the moral invisibility of the victims in a high-civilized society. According to Bauman, there is a "parochial and marginalizing effect" in accepting that the only legitimate guardians and beneficiaries of the Holocaust are Jews and/or that the exceptional guilt is exclusively Germanic. We must emphasize its universality as an issue of the modern human condition and alert to the danger presented by the moral comfort of self-sacrifice, and the moral and political disarmament<sup>7</sup>.

The contemporary strength of the Holocaust is related to Bauman's warning, to the threatening shadow that still may reach us if lacks surveillance. It is especially worrisome in the context of the strengthening of conservative political forces in countries like Italy, Sweden and Denmark, of the leadership in Austrian government and seats in the German parliament for the first time since World War II<sup>8</sup>. Although published in 2000, *Malinski* is symptomatic of the effacement of the Holocaust memory as a historical event, mainly in the generation of millennials, as attested by the survey conducted in the United States by Schoen Consulting commissioned by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), which results were released in April 2018<sup>9</sup>:

70% of American adults believe that fewer people care about the Holocaust today than they used to  
58% of Americans believe that the Holocaust could happen again  
31% of Americans, and 41% of millennials, believe that two million or fewer Jews were killed in the Holocaust (the actual number is around six million)  
41% of Americans, and 66% of millennials, cannot say what Auschwitz was  
52% of Americans wrongly think Hitler came to power through force

It is not about Holocaust denial (96% believe it actually happened) or not considering it a relevant subject (93% think the Holocaust should be taught at school), but an effective loss of information and relevance, mostly derived from the distance from the original event.

In *Malinski*, the terms "Holocaust" and "genocide" are never used and the Jews are encapsulated in a single significant figure: the "Schveetheart Tailor". Devoid of a proper name and known fate, the character only appears in Henry's delusions and dreams, except for one childhood memory when mother and children visit the tailor's in Krakow's Jewish quarter.

Even before entering, Henry sees the tailor through the window, sewing with wide gestures as an orchestra conductor:

As he sewed he made wide, sweeping movements with his long arm and his absurdly long thread. He was more like an orchestral conductor than a little Jewish tailor in Lvov. Her played music on a gramophone that had a large horn. *Für Elise*. I remember that. (O'Donovan 2000. 98)

The tailor is presented with the positive singularity of his gestures, the musical atmosphere, the "sumptuous" and "divine" sweets made by his generous kind wife:

Our mother would scold us for eating too many pastries. He would always say: 'Ach... leave the boys. I am fast eater. I was all der time. I was when vas yung boy at home I vas fast, fast, fast. I vork fast, but now I slow down. Eat, boys, eat!' His wife would fuss about us, ruffling our hair as we gulped down pastry after divine pastry. 'Ach, schveetheart, Mamushka, leave the boys, day jus fast eaters like me.' (id.ibid.)

The figure of "Mr Schveetheart Tailor" is ambivalent: it is synthetically built with positivity and sympathy but on the other hand, it lacks depth and nuance. He is the only character who has his accent inscribed in his lines, reinforcing the stereotyped image of an old Jew. With no name or individuality, the Jew has neither interiority nor voice that may manifest opinion or thought. Silenced and absent, Jews and the Holocaust constitute a phantasmagoria, a traumatic resonance of denial and repetition:

I wonder was he shot or gassed. If he was gassed, was it with Zyklon B or the fumes of an old diesel tank? Ach, I don't know. The man *is gone*, his wife *is gone*, their children *are gone*, their parents *are gone*, every kin they ever had and every neighbor they ever had is gone. Maybe one of his *needles* survived in the slit between his wooden floorboards. If it did, it was a lucky needle. Goodbye Mr Schveetheart Tailor, Goodbye Mrs Schveetheart Tailor! Goodbye all of you who left the world through the chimneys of crematoria. Ollie, you thought you suffered. As the wise old Jew said, it's all relative. I praise what is truly alive, what longs to be burnt to death. Goethe. Goodnight. (id.ibid., my emphasis)

In the excerpt above, a "lucky needle" is humanized and may perhaps escape, hidden among the planks of the wooden floor. Following the same logic of an identity mirroring, the tailor is thus reified as one of his work tools. He is equally unimportant as a pin among others, to be lost as a needle in the haystack, just one corpse more among the millions of exterminated Jews.

This ghostly configuration of the Jews in the narrative results from the overlapping of several instances: identification, transgenerational transmission, memory of adoption, globalized reference, empathic imagination – and the author's emotional commitment:

(...) that passage about the old "schweetheart" tailor in Lviv is where I put my heart and soul into how I felt about the loss and extermination of the Jews in Poland... they were decimated, and I always felt from the beginning of my time in Krakow, their ghosts were around me. (O'Donovan 2018)

"Schveetheart Tailor" thus constitutes a synthetic representation of all missing or dead Jews due to the Holocaust, in a kind of compassionate reverence for the catastrophe that struck the other – non-Irish, non-Catholic. This option for this encapsulated Jewish character even unintentionally ends up at the service of not only the effacement of the Holocaust but also of the borders between victims, perpetrators and bystanders, an issue controversially debated in contemporary Poland with a nationalist and conservative political-ideological bias<sup>10</sup>.

After being separated from his mother and brother, Stanislav is sent to Krakow to stay with his fervent Catholic aunt. Aunt Magdalena is a bystander who, instead of Nazis, curses Jews, Gypsies and Communists, guilty for the exceptionally unfavorable situation, according to her own judgement. Despite not being an active anti-Semite, supporter of the persecution and extermination of the Jews, the character is very defensive and insensitive. When asked by the Nazi soldier about being a client of the Jewish antique shop, the aunt replies: "I had business with the Jew in question. But I was not on friendly terms. I am a Catholic and do not mix with that sort." (O'Donovan 2000. 34) Soon afterwards, shots are heard and a Jewess is thrown out the window; the Nazi soldier screams at her: "That old Jew bitch was thrown out of a window on a wheelchair! I told you there were Jews in the building – did you not know?! Are you happy now, you Polish Catholic vermin – happy now the Jew is dead? Ja?" (id.ibid.)

The episode combines the transgression of moral conventions – age, gender and physical disability, with the absurdity and violence of the situation. The aunt has neither reaction nor reflection about what happened, the soldier cursing her, the Jewess' or the antique shop's owner's fate. Silence attests to the normalization of something that it was previously unacceptable and that it should still be exceptional. On this switch from normalization to normality, bystanders are released from moral dilemmas and the inertia of victimization is stimulated. Even as a complex process with many variants and constraints, bystanding behavior is by no means unexpected or surprising:

There may not be many who, in principle, would refuse to perform a bystanding behavior when harm is inflicted upon a victim by a perpetrator. The majority of us would exhibit bystanding behavior while victimization is taking place. It may well be that the Holocaust forced many of us to reflect on this issue for the first time, because of the massive extent of the atrocities involved and the length of time over which it persisted. Perhaps it was only after the fact that we recognized it as a massive failure of human society and individuals to imagine its extent and to perform acts of rescuing and resistance. (Bar-On 133)

## Conclusion

A final reflection is proposed here in which *Malinski* is approximated to other fictional works<sup>11</sup> that also "adopt" the Second World War as narrative context but do not present the biographical testimonial trace that marked the generation of victims and survivors. Affected by the force of the Holocaust, the protagonism in the narratives is performed by an alterity – a non-Jewish. The characters may thus be children or adults, German or Polish Christians, but always bystanders who are also struck by circumstances, whether in the present of threat and survival or retroactively and permanently, as in *The Reader* and *Malinski*.



This approach can simultaneously reflect and also contribute to a contemporary social inertia and analgesia as bystanders. In a positive society, as proposed by Byung-Chul Han, the negativity of the Holocaust would no longer fit, thus becoming only a backdrop or an adjuvant event - shallow and flat, faded.

The positive society does not admit any negative feelings, thereby, we forget how to deal with suffering and pain, we forget how to give them *form*. For Nietzsche, the human soul owes its depth, greatness, and strength precisely by dwelling on the negative.\* (Han 18-19, original emphasis)

In an ambivalent way, *Malinski* reflects this contemporary tension between positivity and negativity. The characters are predominantly negative – unhappy and hopeless losers – , but considering the formal perspective, the work fades the negativity of the Holocaust, causing all Jews to be symbolically encapsulated in the superficial and sympathetic figure of the tailor who only reappears in nightmares and hallucinations. From the ideological point of view, especially the figure of Aunt Magdalena supports the allegation that the Poles were mostly victims<sup>12</sup>, contributing to weakening the discourse of collaboration and active involvement of the common population, as evidenced by the books by Jan T. Gross and Jan Gabrowski<sup>13</sup>.

In opposition to Bauman's warning of necessary vigilance of institutions and parameters of conduct and interaction considered normal in a democratic society, contemporaneity is been constantly and disturbingly caught between normality and normalization, whereby asylum-seekers are deported back to their countries of origin, migrants rescued at open sea are denied their request to land in European countries, children are detained and separated from their parents, illegal migrants in the United States. Considering this outlook and that 58% of Americans of the above-mentioned survey commissioned by the Claims Conference believe that the Holocaust can happen again, it is urgent to reflect on the passage from normality to normalization that despite taking place through laws and procedures, it is absolutely indissociable from the sphere of morality and ethics that rules our contemporary society.

## Notes

1 Answers to my questions sent by e-mail by the author. Received on Jan 12th 2018.

2 “About me”, author’s website. In: <http://siofraodonovan.com/>. Access on Jul 16th 2018.

3 The Abwehr was the German military intelligence service for the Reichswehr and Wehrmacht from 1920 to 1945.

4 In the face of an event without prior comparative references, the need for framing and differentiation made it possible to create new law concepts such as "crime against humanity" and the neologism "genocide". Philippe Sands, Professor of Law at University College London, worked as a lawyer on the cases of crimes against humanity that took place in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Libya, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iran, Syria and Lebanon. He has historically reconstructed the two concepts from the trajectory of his own family of Jewish origin in *East West Street*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2016.

5 One of the programs that raised the public's awareness to the subject was the dramatic TV mini-series *Holocaust*, directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, produced and aired on the US network NBC, with Meryl Streep and James Woods.

6 This excerpt and all the following marked by (\*) are my translated versions from the Brazilian editions.

7 Such reflection on 'normality' and the acceptance of governmental criteria and decisions is now particularly relevant in the face of the right-wing and far-right political increasing around the

- world, especially in the wake of the migration crisis. In Italy, the new populist government vetoed landing of 600-people from a Médecins Sans Frontières NGO ship. (Jun. 11th 2018). In <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/11/world/europe/italy-migrant-boat-aquarius.html>
- Roberto Saviano, author of *Gomorra*, book on the Italian mafia, comments:  
And if Europe fails in its mission to host and integrate migrants, those European leaders who can't measure up to the situation would do better to hold their tongues, rather than go in for calculated insults. It is Italy's duty to battle for change for the better, not to descend into the most boorish nativism. Human lives are at stake. In <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/19/italy-war-migrants-fear-civil-rights>. Access on Jul. 23rd 2018.
- In May and June 2018, more than 2,000 children were separated from their parents, illegal immigrants detained in the USA. In <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44503318>. Access on Jul. 23rd 2018.
- 8 In <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/german-election-results-exit-poll-2017-live-latest-afd-mps-merkel-alternative-a7964796.html> Access on Dec 8th 2017.
  - 9 In <http://www.claimscon.org/study>. Access on Jul 27th 2018. "Holocaust Is Fading From Memory, Survey Finds", New York Times, Apr 12th 2018. In <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/us/holocaust-education.html> Access on Jul 28th 2018.
  - 10 In February 2018 it was approved by the Senate and the Sejm, the Polish Lower House, with the sanction of the president Andrzej Duda, a law that criminalizes the use of the expression "Polish concentration camps" and prohibits any accusation to the Poles of collaboration in the perpetration of the Holocaust. The criminal sentence is up to three years in prison applicable to citizens of any nationality. Following the polarized national discourse of victims and heroes, the law aims to shield the Poles, strengthening victimization as part of the national identity. "We, the Poles, were victims, as were Jews" declared the former Prime Minister Beata Szydło of PiS - Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice), the right-wing party ruling Poland since 2016. In <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/01/poland-holocaust-speech-law-senate-israel-us> Access on Feb 6th 2018.
  - 11 *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, by John Boyne (2006), *The Book Thief*, by Markus Zusak (2005), *The Reader*, by Bernhard Schlink (Der Vorleser, 1995) and *The Kommandant's Girl*, by Pam Jenoff (2007).
  - 12 Jonathan Freedland, *The Guardian* columnist: "Polish nationalists want Poles to have been the untainted victims of Nazism: it's hard to admit that too many were willing assistants to genocide. Like almost every nation occupied by the Nazis, and unlike Germany itself, Poland has not yet made a clear-eyed reckoning with its past." In <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/02/poland-holocaust-free-speech-nazi>. Access in Jul 28th 2018.
  - 13 The Polish US-based historian Jan T. Gross wrote about the Jedwabne massacre in 1941 (*Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*, New York: Arrow Books, Random House, 2003) and the pogrom in Kielce in 1946 (*Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*, New York: Random House, 2007), both very violent incidents that counted with the direct participation of the local population. Controversial, Gross was investigated by stating that the Poles killed more Jews than Nazis during World War II. In <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/14/academics-defend-historian-over-polish-jew-killings-claims>. Access on Nov 13th 2017.  
Jan Gabrowski, a Polish Canada-based historian, published *Hunt for the Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013) on the persecution of Jews in the region of Dabrowa Tarnowska, Poland.

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