

# The Holocaust in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Children's, Young Adult and Adult Literature

## New Comparative Perspectives

Antwerp (Belgium), 27-29 June 2023

COHLIT-21  
COMPARATIVE HOLOCAUST LITERATURE CENTURY



### Call for Papers

The [CoHLit-21 research consortium](#) is pleased to announce the international conference *The Holocaust in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Children's, Young Adult and Adult Literature: New Comparative Perspectives*. Hosted by the [Institute of Jewish Studies](#) at the University of Antwerp and organized with additional support from [Stichting Auschwitz/Fondation Auschwitz](#) and the [Department of Literary Studies](#) at KU Leuven, the conference will take place from 27 to 29 June, 2023 in the city of Antwerp, Belgium.

#### *Scope and objectives of the conference*

Along with the emergence of the so-called 'fourth generation', we are currently observing the end of what Esther Jilovsky (2015, 24) has called 'the first phase of Holocaust memory' (embodied by the lifespan of the survivors). At the same time, we are witnessing a global proliferation of remembrance practices related to the Shoah (as well as new challenges to this memory). What is needed in this new constellation – especially if we take into account the continuing dominance of Anglo-American perspectives in Holocaust Literary Studies – is a profoundly comparative and multilingual approach that takes into account the cultural, sociological and biographical multiplicity of positions occupied by contemporary – Jewish and non-Jewish – writers and their multi-vocal engagement with the Holocaust.

While drawing further on recent efforts to venture beyond the national framework and to open up bilateral, regional or even cross-continental perspectives – on contemporary Jewish writing in general and on Holocaust literature in particular (Liska and Nolden 2008; Marszalek and Molisak 2010; Rosen 2013; Ibler 2014; Żurek and von der Lühe 2019; Artwinska and Tippner 2022), the Antwerp conference will serve a double purpose. First of all, it will seek to take stock of the most important outcomes and findings of the comparative research that has been carried out by the CoHLit-21 research team members over the past two years (in the domain of contemporary children's, young adult and adult literature alike). Speaking in spatial terms, the comparatist endeavors of the consortium have been organized around an East-West axis that encompasses three major (German, Russian and English) and three minor languages (Polish, Dutch and Hebrew) and six corresponding geographical areas (Germany, Russia, the US, Poland, the Low Countries and Israel). Apart from reflecting various degrees of spatial, cultural and historical proximity to the actual events of the Holocaust, the project's geographical scope has allowed to combine a prominent Eurocentric focus with a double intercontinental perspective (geared towards Israel and the US as the most important centers of contemporary Jewish life).

At the same time, another key objective of the concluding CoHLit-21 conference will be to open up – further and broader – comparative perspectives on 21<sup>st</sup>-century literary production and the Holocaust, beyond the languages and geographical areas that have been covered by the aforementioned comparatist project. Within the framework of the conference, we broadly understand Holocaust-

related literary production not only as a textual phenomenon (i.e., a body of artefacts intended for an adult, young adult and children's readership), but also as a social practice (embedded in specific institutional and ideological contexts and frameworks). Along these lines, we welcome both textually and contextually oriented proposals that offer a multilingual, transnational, cross-cultural – or otherwise comparative – perspective on post-2000 literary production in its engagement with the Holocaust.

#### *Suggested topics for paper proposals*

Topics and themes to be explored through a comparative lens include (but are not limited to):

- transnational and cross-cultural shifts in literary representation of the Holocaust since 2000
- Holocaust memory in contemporary literary production (familial, national, second-/third-/fourth-generation, post-memory, multidirectional memory, cosmopolitan memory, ...)
- the role of local and national memory institutions in the production, promotion and dissemination of Holocaust-themed literature
- the function of translations and adaptations in the transnational circulation of Holocaust memory
- satire, parody and blasphemy in contemporary Holocaust literature
- forms of cross-over and connection between historiographical research and literary production
- the pop-culturalization of Holocaust memory
- the use of Holocaust literature in educational programs for children and young adults
- gendered experiences and representations of the Holocaust
- temporality and spatiality in literary representations of the Holocaust
- the role of material objects and non-human actors in contemporary Holocaust literature
- the language(s) of the Holocaust
- diasporic transformations of Holocaust memory
- the nexus between the local and the global in contemporary Holocaust literature
- literary Holocaust memory vis-à-vis other histories of trauma and violence

#### *Practical information*

Paper proposals must be received in electronic form no later than December 1, 2022 and should be sent to [cohlit.21@gmail.com](mailto:cohlit.21@gmail.com). Applications should include an abstract (up to 300 words) and a short CV (up to 50 words). Abstracts should contain the following information: author(s) with affiliation(s), title and text of the proposal, selected bibliography with 3-5 academic references and five keywords.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent out in the beginning of January. Further information about registration and accommodation will be made available on the conference webpage no later than March 1, 2023. Accepted submissions will be grouped into appropriate thematic sessions by the organizers. Each day of the conference will feature a keynote lecture by an internationally acclaimed expert in the field.

#### *References*

Artwinska, Anna and Anja Tippner, eds. 2022. *The Afterlife of the Shoah in Central and Eastern European Cultures: Concepts, Problems, and the Aesthetics of Postcatastrophic Narration*, New York - London : Routledge.

- Ibler, Reinhard. 2014. *The Holocaust in the Central European Literatures and Cultures since 1989: Der Holocaust in den mitteleuropäischen Literaturen und Kulturen seit 1989*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jilovsky, Esther. 2015. *Remembering the Holocaust: Generations, Witnessing and Place*. New York - London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Liska, Vivian, and Thomas Nolden, eds. 2008. *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Europe: A Guide*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Marszalek, Magdalena, and Alina Molisak, eds. 2010. *Nach dem Vergessen. Rekurse auf den Holocaust in Ostmitteleuropa nach 1989*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos.
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- Żurek, Sławomir Jacek, and Irmela von der Lühe, eds. 2019. *Pamięć o Zagładzie / Das Gedächtnis an die Shoah*. Lublin: TN KUL.