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The Holocaust Trauma and Autobiographism in Ida Fink's and Charlotte Delbo's Stories

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Abstract

The research is based on a study of short story collections by Israeli writer Ida Fink's, *All the Stories*, and French writer Charlotte Delbo's, *Auschwitz and After*, to reflect the impact of the Holocaust on autobiographical elements in their work. The authors are representatives of the first generation of Holocaust survivors, which means that the mass systematic genocide during World War II was a personal traumatic experience for them. The works of female writers are studied using the theory of trauma at the genre level. Since autobiography has been considered a documentary genre with its own peculiarities, works about the Holocaust were seen as historical evidence of this event. However, based on the works of Juri Lotman and some principles of Philippe Lejeune's "autobiographical pact", we can conclude that autobiography is similar to fiction if it can meet certain aesthetic functions. Under the influence of trauma, the genre of autobiography can be modified in the literary text in such a way that the line between autobiography and fiction is blurred. Ida Fink and Charlotte Delbo write short stories with fictional narrators, but all the situations are certainly the experiences of the writers themselves, who turn to the autofiction and conventions of Philippe Lejeune's "autobiographical pact" to transfer their memories to literary heroes. The aim of the study is to define the peculiarities of the autobiographical genre, analyze its functions in Holocaust literature, identify poetic elements of autobiography, and prove that there is no canonical form of narration about the Holocaust-Era, as the writers were searching for how to articulate their traumatic experience in experimental forms.

Key Words: trauma, Holocaust literature, women's writing, autobiography, autobiographical pact.



The purpose of our study is to find out how the trauma of the Holocaust affected the form of writing about oneself through a fictional subject and what poetic elements are present in the autobiographies of Ida Fink's *All the Stories* and Charlotte Delbo's *Auschwitz and After*. To realize this intention, it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of "autobiographical writing" and "writing about yourself";¹ theoretically justify the impact of trauma on narratological techniques, distinguish the line between autobiographical and fictional, and perform a comparative analysis of Ida Fink's and Charlotte Delbo's writings.²

1 Yulia Pavlenko, *Chornyl'na Istoriia: Pys'mo pro Sebe Fiktsiinoho Subiekta [Ink History. A Letter About a Fictional Subject]* (Kyiv: Ed. KNLU Center, 2018), 26.

2 Anastasiia Mikhieieva, "The Holocaust Trauma and Autobiographism in Ida Fink's and Charlotte Delbo's Stories" (paper presented at the Chance for Science Conference, The

The category of “biography” occupies an important place in Holocaust literature. Researcher Vadym Vasylenko notes that the documentary literature about the event that caused the trauma is not aimed at the reconstruction of a “physiological pattern”, but at “restoring the presence of the trace”.³ That is, the goal of many witnesses who wrote about the Holocaust (Edith Eger, Anna Frank, Krystyna Zhivulskaya, etc.) was to historically convey the fact through subjective perception so that the documentary literature of Holocaust witnesses could gather a holistic picture and own history of the genocide of the Jews. The methodological principles of studying the works of Ida Fink and Charlotte Delbo in terms of autobiography will determine the impact of trauma on the understanding of the writers’ own selves and their own memories. In addition, the data can help characterize certain narratological features of Holocaust fiction.

If the documentary literature about the Holocaust includes a story about the facts of a person’s life, usually chronologically, with dates and places, the writing about oneself aims to tell a story with elements of the author’s biography. The very blurring of the boundaries between true autobiographical history and fiction is called “writing about oneself”. There are discussions about the kinship or delimitation of concepts of (auto)biographical literature and writing about yourself. Scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Juri Lotman, and Roland Barthes studied the place of the author and the narrator, and the question of personal writing was studied by such researchers as Valentina Fesenko, Mikhail Epstein, and Yulia Pavlenko. In the monograph *Ink History*, Yulia Pavlenko raises the question of “writing about oneself” and (auto)biography. She gives examples from the works of J.-F. Miro, who identified these two concepts and believed that “writing about oneself” is an autobiography. On the other hand, Yulia Pavlenko believes that autobiography is a non-canonical genre, so it is difficult to define its boundaries precisely. The researcher argues that authors write about a fictional character in order to expand the associative fields of metaphors that are impossible in writing about the real self,⁴ and formulates the following definition of “fictional character’s self-writing”: “This is an artistic phenomenon, created by the writing work of the intradiegetic narrator.”⁵

Gerard Genette distinguishes two types of narrative–factual and fictional.⁶ The actual one is based on real information from the author’s life; the fictional one has a subject of the story that tells about events; and a part of the autobiographical

University of Leipzig, 9 September 2022), <https://www.chance-for-science.eu/index.php/cfs-speaker/10-speakers/156-mikhieieva>. The objective of the speech correlates with the objective of this paper, but the final results are presented in this paper.

3 Vadym Vasylenko, “Modyfikatsiia Travmy v Ukrain’skii Emihratsiinii Prozi Druhoi Polovyny XX Stolittia” [“Modification of Injury in the Ukrainian Emigration Prose of The Second Half of the Twentieth Century”] (PhD diss., Shevchenko Institute of Literature, 2016), 110.

4 Pavlenko, *Chornyl’na Istoriia*, 35.

5 *Ibid.*, 29.

6 *Ibid.*, 33.

information about the author is mixed with the fictional one. At the same time, the French scholar Philippe Lejeune, who believed that the study of private literature should focus on the act of expression, studied the distinction between fictional and factual. He proposed the concept of an “autobiographical pact”. In the pact, the hero is a fictional character, and the reader is a real person. The purpose of the pact is to provide guidance on the originality of the presentation, or “declaration of autobiographical intent”, which may be present in the title or annotation of the work.⁷ The subject of such writing, unlike the hero, has no gender, identity, or body image; it is designed to convey the words of the author to the reader. The “autobiographical pact” and the act of “writing about oneself” are connected by the fact that the reader, in “agreement” with the author, can identify the autobiographical hero with the writer himself and his biography. These concepts exist in tandem because writing about a fictional hero involves concluding a “pact” with the reader.

After the Holocaust, the number of various (auto)biographical works increased rapidly, including the publication of diaries and memoirs (Anne Frank, Clara Kramer, Bjorn Westley, Simon Sterling, Christina Heeger, etc.). This is because the survivors wanted to tell the world about their experiences, thus preserving the memory of the Holocaust. It is important to remember that documentary writing is, in any case, subjective, so these memories should be seen in the context of the Holocaust as a historical phenomenon. At the same time, some survivors, unable or unwilling to articulate their memories, began writing fiction about the Holocaust, where fictional characters are the heroes. Although such scholars as Wilhelm Dilthey state that only biographical writing might be reliable as his study of hermeneutics explains that only by the objectification of oneself the writing could be reliable, considering the Holocaust impact, even fictional writing might carry reliable and historical information. In this context, fiction allows the author not to identify himself again with painful experiences but to transfer his memories to a fictional hero. In addition, it is fiction that involves the widespread use of stylistic devices, which allows you to create symbols and enhance the emotional background. As the Holocaust is an unprecedented historical event, there are (auto)biographical elements and memoirs of the author in the fiction. This transfer of one's own memories to the artistic hero is called autofiction, which is primarily a way of reading work, not writing, and is due to the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism in the 1960s and 1970s. The French writer Serge Dubrovsky first introduced this term in 1977 in the novel *Son*. Moreover, researcher Roland Barthes put forward the well-known idea of the “death of the author” and believed that the reader is allowed to endlessly interpret the text, including appealing to the biography of the author.⁸ Thus, the author can transfer certain elements of his biography in such a way that the reader has to recognize them in the flow of fictional text. The notion of autofiction also includes the “autobiographical pact” because the

7 Philippe Lejeune. *Le Pacte Autobiographique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975), 33.

8 Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image, Music, Text*, transl. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), 142–8.

writer invests autobiographical information about himself/herself in a fictional character, who is the prototype of the author.

In addition, there are studies of the text focused on the specifics of the embodiment of the existential consciousness of the author, which reflect the nature of the author's mentality in his creative method. That is, the author's intentions to write pseudo-fictional or pseudo-non-fictional biographical works of art⁹ may be due to certain personal experiences or an unwillingness to write directly about oneself, especially under the influence of trauma or unpleasant experiences.

Professor Meg Jensen, who noted that traumatized writers create (auto)biographical fiction, has studied the impact of traumatic events on biographical writing, and she suggests that researchers should look for alternative aesthetic methods to interpret these works.¹⁰ Regardless of the type of writing, authors refer to the "pseudosymbolic language of post-trauma",¹¹ i.e., authors who write about themselves under the influence of trauma can choose a form of autobiographical work of art with elements of autofiction to express their feelings without the need to justify them.¹² Meg Jensen turns to David Mitchell's research in the field of autofictional post-traumatic writing and concludes that authors who have survived trauma are characterized by the repetitiveness of symbols and images; for example, in Virginia Woolf, the image of waves is repeated. In addition, Meg Jensen, in her work *Post-Traumatic Memory Projects: Autobiographical Fiction and Counter-Monuments*, reflects on the trauma of the Holocaust in the context of (auto)biographical writing and considers what form of text should be used for the Holocaust. On the one hand, Meg Jensen cites Annette Wieviorka's quote that "history is best conveyed through non-fiction";¹³ on the other hand, the author of the article quotes Shoshana Felman as saying that "art is an eternal language. The mourning for the lost".¹⁴ Thus, according to Meg Jensen, it is difficult to achieve a unified approach to writing about the Holocaust because each writer experiences his own trauma individually and chooses the genres, forms, and means that he considers appropriate. This proves that the literature on the Holocaust, in the absence of the canon of writing, refers more to the content of the work than to its form.

The issue of autofictional writing about the Holocaust is still relevant, as research is conducted at an interdisciplinary level, and literary critics are interested in not only highlighting historical facts in the text but also understanding how to analyze and

9 Marta Varykasha, "Literatura Non-Fiction: Pomizh Faktom i Fiksiieiu" ["Nonfiction Literature: Between the Fact and the Fiction"], *Aktual'ni Problemy Slovians'koi Filolohii* 23, part 3 (2010): 29, <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/38201/03-Varykasha.pdf>.

10 Meg Jensen, "Post-Traumatic Memory Projects: Autobiographical Fiction and Counter-Monuments," *Textual Practice* 28, no. 4 (June 2014): 7.

11 Juliet Mitchell, "Trauma, Recognition, and the Place of Language," *Diacritics* 28, no. 4 (Winter, 1998): 121, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1566396>.

12 Jensen, "Post-Traumatic," 8.

13 Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2006), 22.

14 Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious* (Harvard University Press, 2002), 107.

interpret the work. For example, Ruth Franklin, who studies the genre of Holocaust fiction, asks, "What is the difference between writing a novel about the Holocaust and fabricated memoirs?"¹⁵ Other researchers, Phyllis Lasner and Danny Cohen, believe that it is fiction about the Holocaust that allows the reader to better understand historical events through art. Thus, using the research of foreign and domestic scholars, we can analyze the works of two writers who survived the Holocaust—Ida Fink and Charlotte Delbo.

To better understand the autobiographical writing of Israeli writer Ida Fink and French writer Charlotte Delbo, we should use the biographical approach and comparative method because the separation of the fictional and the factual is impossible without drawing parallels between the work and the real life of the authors. Ida Fink spent the years of the Holocaust in Germany with forged documents. She invented new names and changed her identity to hide her ethnicity. For Ida Fink, the Holocaust was a traumatic experience not only because she lost her mother, lived in difficult conditions, etc., but also because she had an identity crisis. She realized that she belonged to the Jewish people and that her origin was the cause of her suffering. The issue of self-identification influenced her story in such a way that her autofictional characters are different, i.e., the writer can insert autobiographical elements into a male narrator, a female narrator, a German, a Pole, a Jew, etc.

Ida Fink's collection *All the Stories* (2004) contains all the author's literary works written during the period 1975–2004. Alex Zahavi, a researcher of her work, writes that it is impossible to connect "the boundaries of our poor imagination" and reality in these stories.¹⁶ In an interview, the author herself stated: "There is a share of authenticity and truth in each of my stories. The external atmosphere is fiction. There is no fiction in the inner atmosphere."¹⁷ Thus, the writer herself defines the boundaries of reality and fiction but admits that not all stories are autobiographical because some of the stories she heard from survivors while working at the Yad Vashem memorial complex or saw when she lived in the occupied city. Among the true stories, fiction is a layer of autobiography, which is reflected in the repetitiveness of images or determined during a detailed study of the biography of Ida Fink. Repetitiveness embodies not only traumatic experiences (as noted in the study by Meg Jensen) but also forms a kind of "game" with the reader, who should decode the image of the author among her stories.

The structure of the collection *All the Stories* is symbolic—the works are arranged chronologically not in relation to the time of publication, but in accordance with historical events—from the beginning of the war, through the capitulation of the Nazis and post-Holocaust reality. By analyzing the collection *All the Stories*, we can trace the common and distinctive features between the works that have a documentary basis

15 Ruth Franklin, *A Thousand Darknenses: Lies And Truth In Holocaust Fiction* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

16 Aleks Zahavi, "Edut Shei Yezirat Omanut" ["Testimony Which Is a Work Of Art"], *Erez Aheret*, March 1, 2002, 71.

17 Daniel Blatman, "Reayon im Hasoferet Ida Fink, Nizolet Shoa" ["An Interview with Ida Fink, Holocaust Survivor"], *Bishviley Hazikaron*, February, 1996.

and those that are fictional. Since it is not possible to know the truth from each story, and Ida Fink herself wrote during her lifetime that all texts have (auto)biographical elements, we can only trace which works are more autobiographical and directly related to Ida Fink's life and which have prototypes—the writer may have heard of them and changed them stylistically. Isolation of (auto)biographical works provides an opportunity to analyze similar elements in the narrative and to establish how Ida Fink chooses to write about herself under the influence of trauma, or how the trauma of the Holocaust affects self-awareness. We divided the works according to the type of narration because, depending on the narrator, the story is perceived in a certain way, and Ida Fink tends to repeat autobiographical elements in a certain manner.

Ida Fink mostly writes in the first person feminine (*The Scrap of Time*, *Sigmund*, *Julia*, *Eugenia*, *Jean Christophe*, *The Dog*, *The Sailing Garden*, etc.), but there are stories from the first person masculine (*The Black Monster*, *The Promotion*, *The Crazy*, *The Investigator for Magaphynsky*, etc.), or even from the third person (*The End*, *The Pig*, *Resurrection of the Baker from the Dead*). The narrator plays an important role in the autobiographical game between the author and the reader because each narrator models a way of perceiving reality. The male voice creates the effect of alienation and a sense of fictionality. The first-person narrative of the feminine brings to mind the image of the author, the young Ida Fink, who was a participant in the events, and the third-person narrative depicts the adult author, Ida Fink, who is an omniscient narrator. Ida Fink's autobiographical novel, *The Journey*, was written in the first person, and there are many stories that contain recurring elements and seem to hint at autobiography.

The Ukrainian historian Tetiana Fedoriv, who gives examples from the archives of Zbarazh about the people mentioned in the novel *The Journey*,¹⁸ researches the connection between the autobiography of the writer and the events in her novel. Many names are repeated in the collection *All the Stories*. Tetiana Fedoriv mentions toponyms and proper names that can be found in various stories of Ida Fink, for example, the city of Z. (Zbarazh), the river Gnizna, the Market Square, the Temple Hill, and more. Many heroes of the works are real, and there is documentary evidence of their existence and their future fate; however, the question remains as to why the writer altered the fate of her family and friends.

Among the names that appear in Ida Fink's stories and have real prototypes, Tetiana Fedoriv mentions Aunt Julia Hirschhorn (*Julia*, *Julia's Difficult Arrival*), Aunt Sabina Seidmann (*Sabina under the Bags*), and Aunt Stephanie (*Eugenia*, *The Death of the Queen*). In these stories, which reveal the fate of women, the author mostly changes the end of the heroine's life (in the work Julia dies of a heart attack, Sabina and her daughter—from shelling, and Stephanie in one story throws herself out the window, and in another, she is deported during the action). In addition, such stories are characterized by narration in the form of memories from the third person, i.e., – Ida

18 Tetiana Fedoriv, "Misto Ta Liudy Idy Fink" ["City and People of Ida Fink"], Culture, accessed August, 22, 2022, <https://culture.pl/ua/stattia/misto-ta-1%D1%96udy-idy-fink>.

Fink writes about her relatives or acquaintances in a mixed form—partly from childhood memories, partly from eyewitness accounts. If in such works about her acquaintances or relatives, Ida Fink, in fact, writes a biography of the individual, then in another type of work, also from the first person, there are stories whose authenticity is difficult to prove, but in such texts, the writer encodes elements of her biography through the story of a fictional heroine. Such works can be attributed to autofiction, where neither the form nor the content implies that the story is biographical.

Ida Fink's autobiographical works include *The Scrap of Time*, *The Second Scrap of Time*, *Sigmund*, *The Sailing Garden*, *Jean Christophe*, ^{***}, *Behind the Hedge*, and so on. These stories focus on typical characters or situations that could have happened, but hardly with the author herself. For example, in the story *Sigmund*, Ida Fink puts her love of music in the characters (the author studied at the Mykola Lysenko Music Institute in Lviv), in the story *Jean Christoph*, the author writes about her love of literature through the heroines who build a highway in Germany, in ^{***}—about what was seen from the repository, etc. Thus, the real events of Ida Fink's life are modified and organically combined with the text such that only during a detailed reading they can be distinguished.

The relationship between autofiction, the Holocaust, and genre in Charlotte Delbo's texts is resolved differently. It is logical that the author could not invent a place like Auschwitz, which later became a symbol of mourning and remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust. During the Nazi occupation of France, Charlotte Delbo and her husband belonged to the resistance movement of the Vichy regime. In 1942, they were arrested; her husband was executed, and Charlotte was sent to concentration camps. She spent a year in camps near Paris, but in 1943, she, along with 229 other French women, was sent to Auschwitz. Of those French women, only 49 returned, including Delbo. All her experiences are described in her collections, among which *Auschwitz and after*. This collection contains three parts: *None of Us Will Return*, *Meaningless Knowledge*, and *Countdown of Our Days*—and each of them reveals the year of the writer's stay in concentration camps. The author's fate and biography are strikingly different from those of many other Holocaust witnesses, as Charlotte Delbo was not a Jew, lived in France, and was imprisoned because she was a communist. Although in Western historiography the Holocaust means the mass execution of Jews, nowadays the Holocaust (or the Holocaust-Era) refers to the mass extermination of homosexuals, the mentally ill, the disabled, Romani people, communists, etc., who did not suit to the Nazi image of "Aryan". That is why Charlotte Delbo's nationality did not soften her stay in the camps because she was a communist, so Delbo's work is replete with stylistic devices to denote suffering and sorrow. The writer does not specifically talk about the fate of Jews, who are most often associated with the Holocaust, but about the suffering of people in general. Undoubtedly, her experience at Auschwitz influenced her autobiography and genre, as she realized that she could be punished for supporting the resistance movement, unlike many Jews for whom the Holocaust was unfounded.

Charlotte Delbo begins the first part of *Auschwitz and After* with the words “I’m not sure that what I wrote is true. I am certain it is truthful.”¹⁹ The writer is hesitant about the possibility that this could have happened, but she has experienced the horrors of Auschwitz and can accurately describe everything she saw. The uniqueness of the (auto)biographical method in *Auschwitz and After* is that the story unfolds more on an emotional level than on an effective one—from the peak of suffering at Auschwitz to the relief of wandering in transit camps and to liberation. Regarding this feature, we suggest that Charlotte Delbo’s writing is autobiographical, but due to the lack of typical elements of biographical writing and nonlinear narrative, there is an effect of “lost self-determination”. It means that the author does not focus on the fate of one person or the nation they want to destroy but writes about all the people who survived the Holocaust. Auschwitz did not affect her identity but destroyed her as a person, and this has the effect that the perception of her own biography is also distorted.

The researcher Thomas Trezise argues that Charlotte Delbo’s writing is characterized by “fragmentary articulation of trauma and survival”.²⁰ What is experienced in concentration camps is so destructive to the individual and the person that prisoners are perceived as “mannequins” or mothers who have been “face and hand” become “stripes before our eyes”.²¹ Complementing Thomas Trezise, the researcher Elizabeth Scheiber calls such metaphors “a reminiscence of surrealism”.²² The researcher notes that Charlotte Delbo does not state the facts but forces the reader to immerse themselves in the experiences of prisoners.

The author reveals the experience not through dialogues and actions but through stylistic devices: “Oh you, who know, did you know that hunger makes the eyes sparkle, that thirst dims them”.²³ Nicole Thatcher suggests that this choice of describing her experiences in the death camp of Charlotte Delbo chooses not to “hide the reality of the camps through images and dramatization, but to touch the reader, addressing his feelings, so the reader becomes part of the vision and takes participation in events”.²⁴ The writer often depicts the feelings of hunger, thirst, cold, exhaustion, pain, and so on. She impersonates and abstracts everything that happens around her because she writes about the natural feelings of all people. Thus, autofiction, compared to the works of Ida Fink, decreases. This is a peculiar feature of the reproduction of autobiography through sensuality. Furthermore, the names of Charlotte Delbo’s comrades and her husband, who was executed, indicate that the stories in the collection are autobiographical. Among the names she mentions in the text are the revolutionaries

19 Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz et Apres* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 2018), 1.

20 Thomas Trezise, “The Question of Community in Charlotte Delbo’s *Auschwitz and After*,” *MLN* 117, no. 4 (2002): 860.

21 Delbo, *Auschwitz et Apres*, 27.

22 Elizabeth Schreiber, “Figurative Language in Delbo’s *Auschwitz et Apres*,” *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 11, no. 1 (March 2009): 2.

23 Delbo, *Auschwitz et Apres*, 11.

24 Nicole Thatcher, *A Literary Analysis of Charlotte Delbo’s Concentration Camp Representation* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 34.

and communists Daniel Casanova, Marie Claude Van-Couturier, and others. The mutual support of the girls in Auschwitz and the mention of them form an autobiographical element of the collection and add to the abstract life of Auschwitz a shade of the author's personality, which is revealed through a small number of dialogues.

It is important to mention the way Charlotte Delbo wrote *Auschwitz and After*. The writer herself said: "As soon as I gathered a little strength, I started writing; I was amazed that the text seemed to spill out of me." The author calls her writing "the need to build a life", i.e., it is literature that allows her to share her experiences and honor the memory of those who did not survive. In the preface to *Auschwitz and After*, L. Langer notes that Charlotte Delbo "writes not as a victim, but as a heroine".²⁵ Her letter has no purpose of accusing anyone or taking revenge; she wants the reader to "try to look, try to see".²⁶ The writer lets the reader into the most unpleasant and personal experiences in such a way that he/she "knows" everything from the very beginning of the collection. It is this method of writing when the author can share the same emotions and feelings with the reader, that helps to rethink and experience the trauma of being in a death camp.

Thus, a comparison of the features of the (auto)biographical writing of Ida Fink and Charlotte Delbo reveals many distinctive features that influenced the autobiography in the works of the authors. The writers are of different ethnicities, from different social classes, with different political and religious views. They also experienced the Holocaust in different ways: Ida Fink hid in Germany with forged documents, and Charlotte Delbo spent a year in concentration camps, including Auschwitz. Undoubtedly, the Holocaust influenced the lives of both authors and their creative paths, but each of them transfers these memories through art differently. Ida Fink articulates her trauma through autofictional characters, avoiding a straightforward linear narrative about herself, which is why her stories do not fit the definition of an (auto)biography. The writer leaves the names of her acquaintances, relatives, place names, and childhood memories to convey her own experiences, but to do so is veiled. Perhaps this approach suggests that the author cannot accept her trauma completely. In addition, Ida Fink "plays" with the reader because she leaves in each story clues to unravel herself, which the reader must compose and recognize. If Charlotte Delbo talks about the destruction of people, Ida Fink writes openly about the Holocaust itself, describing the events on an emotional level. At the same time, despite the many differences between women writers, one can find common features that distinguish the literature on the Holocaust. They are women who survived the Holocaust in extreme conditions. They fought for survival but did not passively accept reality.

In conclusion, we can mention that the forms of trauma affect the writer's rethinking of himself/herself in such a way that the author can articulate their own trauma through fictional literature. Often, such experiments with form and content

25 Delbo, *Auschwitz et Apres*, IX.

26 *Ibid.*, 84.

are due to the desire (S. Delbo) or reluctance (I. Fink) to speak directly about the painful memories. The trauma of the Holocaust has also influenced genre modifications in the work of women writers who write short stories, fragmenting them with metatext, memoirs, and lyrics. What the writers have in common is that their works do not fully meet the requirements of the biographical genre, but the authors use artistic means (metaphors, epithets, hyperbolization), nonlinear narration, etc., to transfer the story from the dry factual plane to the emotional plane—to the experience of eyewitnesses. No matter which writing strategy the author chooses, it is clear that the genre of (auto) biography in Holocaust literature is a tool for articulating the painful memories of survivors who, in search of new forms, experiment with methods of perpetuating the memory of the greatest genocide of the twentieth century.

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