

**Beyond the Red-Barbed Wire: A Study of Holocaust Literature Covers**Kate Jones<sup>1</sup>

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The study of literature demands close reading of the texts and words add to the reader's analysis, thoughts, and images. Much can be gathered from close reading that adds to one's understanding in their particular field of interest, but the first impression seen does not lie within the text but the moment the book is selected. The book is bound accordingly and publishers hope the spine stands prominent amongst others on the shelves to eager consumers. However, at times it is appropriate to look beyond the text and analyse the images of the Holocaust--specifically the images on the covers of Holocaust Literature. Current cover design of Holocaust Literature is problematic because often they follow a prescribed formula of a certain set of images and colours. As a result of red and black colours being tied to the Nazi Party they hinder stories from expanding out from underneath the ties of the Third Reich and inhibit ownership of personal experiences. Overused images such as barbed wire inhibit the reader's creative reading experience and do not allow them to form their own imagery throughout the book. Using barbed wire has held back the possibilities of a more variety of images to be offered on covers and those that offer multiple tropes and images of the Holocaust hinder reader's knowledge. Exploring Holocaust Literature covers cannot be discussed without placing them in the context of the publishing and design business. Publishing firms use colour and imagery tropes of the Holocaust in hopes for a well-marketed and profitable book but this course of design does more

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to hinder the growth of the genre rather than offer a platform for readers to explore their own knowledge and understanding of Holocaust Literature.

Imagery and memory in Holocaust Studies has been given serious attention in the scholarly world concerning museums, memorials, films, and fictionalized young adult literature; however, there has been little discourse on how covers of Holocaust literature are presented. Scholars such as Tim Cole, Peter Novick, and Susan Sontag have provided analysis of victimization and Nazism in popular culture and the power of Holocaust memory and the growing concern of profit and what Cole calls the “Shoah business”<sup>2</sup>. Norman Finkelstein in his book, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* echoes Cole’s thoughts on the Holocaust becoming the roots for profitable industry.<sup>3</sup> He cites examples that the Holocaust attracts those who are looking for popular recognition and discusses the alarming numerous accounts of those falsifying their Holocaust experiences in literature.

This article will cover an untapped and underutilized source on the discussion of the marketing of memory through book covers. In the discussion that follows it will be appropriate to judge a book by its cover. How are book covers contributing to Holocaust memory and to the field Holocaust Literature? In order to answer this question this article will look into cover design as a business to highlight processes of marketing and publication in the book industry. Second, using mostly memoirs a discussion will analyse why red and black colours are overwhelmingly controlling covers in Holocaust Literature. Lastly, a concluding argument will be made that continuing in traditional book cover design only entraps Holocaust memory and representation; but, that change in this area is not only possible but a necessity to expanding the understanding of the Holocaust and the way it is represented in literature. By using evidence from the studies

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<sup>2</sup> “Shoah business” used by Tim Cole in *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler, How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (New York: Verso, 2000).

of colour psychology, interpretation in Holocaust imagery and using the evolution of book cover design in *Night* by Elie Wiesel as a case study this article will discuss how overused images and depictions of the Holocaust have stagnated our growth as an intellectual society that is still too strongly tied to the Third Reich seventy-three years after falling from power.

Representation of Holocaust memory and imagery has long been at the centre of debates among scholars for decades.<sup>4</sup> With the number of movies, plays, books, memorials, novels, exhibitions, and museums that are available the debates are unlikely to subside anytime soon. For some the discomfort comes from the sheer number of representations and reproduction of Holocaust iconography in media forms. Historian Tim Cole discusses issues about representation in his book *Selling the Holocaust* and how this history is being “bought, packaged, and sold”<sup>5</sup>. Cole explains that Holocaust memory has become a source of cultural capitalism and thus a problematic method of representation. His concerns about the Holocaust becoming a “heritage industry”<sup>6</sup> supports this discussion of book covers of being marketed as part of the Holocaust business. His arguments can be applied to book covers as not selling the narrative but contributing to selling the Holocaust to a mass market.

Peter Novick’s *The Holocaust in American Life* also engages with how representation of the Holocaust has evolved into Americanized memory. Mainly through the mini-series *Holocaust* and *Schindler’s List* he examines the limited scope of Holocaust memory in the West.<sup>7</sup> The United States and United Kingdom hold the majority of publishing houses and book design companies in the world, and as Western societies they are more geographically and culturally removed from the Holocaust than Europe. Moreover, he points out that the extremity of the Holocaust as reference point for other atrocities could make horrors of lesser magnitude pale in comparison,

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<sup>4</sup> Scholars such as Tim Cole and Peter Novick.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> “Heritage industry”, used by Cole.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

and desensitize us as a consequence.<sup>8</sup> Other books on atrocity such as the Rwandan Genocide, Native American Genocides, and civil war massacres in the East are not marketed as precise as compared to those in Holocaust Literature. Novick's claim about the limited scope of the Holocaust in the West adds another element to analyse when looking at covers of Holocaust Literature as culturally tied to the depth of exposure to stories of atrocity and suffering in non-Western countries. His discussion supports that a problem with Holocaust Literature covers are that they reflect the limited amount of exposure and knowledge about the Holocaust in that culture. Historical circumstances will undoubtedly influence future choices about remembering the Holocaust, the author concludes, but responsibility for those decisions ultimately rests in our hands. But whose hands of industry falls the responsibility? Those of the reader as a consumer or those of cover designers in the marketing industry?

Cover design is a huge part of the book industry and publishers send out contracts to designers who can create the best portrait for revenue. Upon investigating, design is actually a complicated and precise process that designer Sean Jennett talks about in his work on *The Making of Books*,

The problem of jacket design is to set forth the essential details of title, author, and publisher in such a way that the result shall be appropriate to the book, in its general layout and in its literary style, and at the same time attractive and effective in salesmanship. On the whole publishers understand very well the axiom that advertisement cannot afford to be verbose and restrict the wording on the jacket to the bare essentials.

The aim is to influence potential purchasers, and elaboration and verbosity are least likely to succeed.<sup>9</sup>

While Jennett promotes that designs that are simple in nature produce the best covers the overall goal is to make the book attractive to customers browsing in a bookstore. Although book buying has largely evolved into the arena of online shopping the browser still widely takes into account

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<sup>8</sup> Monty Noam Penkower, 'Shaping Holocaust Memory', *American Jewish History*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (2000), pp. 127-32.

<sup>9</sup> Sean Jennett, *The Making of Books* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1951), p. 434.

the front cover<sup>10</sup>. Unless the browser needed a specific title the lack of a front cover image online acts as a deterrent from purchasing. A graphic artist and long-time cover designer, Richard Hendel states, “There are two philosophical approaches to book design: there are those who feel a design should be timeless and neutral and others who feel it should reflect the content in a more obvious way (using typography or design elements relevant to what the book is about)”<sup>11</sup>. Among designers there should be a medium where readers are not exhausted by the symbolic imagery, but since the evolution of book design readers have shown to enjoy a little embellishment to attract their attention. Hendel revealed that when he gets a contract for design he spends a lot of time doing image research and although he does not get the full manuscript he will read the synopsis and a little bit more from the manuscript if he requests it from the acquisitions editor, “to ensure that I really get a feel for the book. I try to understand the tone, the characters involved, and the setting”<sup>12</sup>. Also, stating that designers of non-fiction rarely read most of the manuscript his thoroughness behind cover design is an element of publishing should be replicated to more design agents. For Holocaust Literature this is a two-edged sword. Designers reveal that their own small amount of research makes up most of the ideas for book covers, unless they have time for further reading in the text. Expanding image memory of the Holocaust remains vital, but Niccole Matthews reminds us,

The cover plays a vital part in positioning a book or author in the market. The retail environment for books has become highly competitive and covers have to be correct for the chosen market, whether a supermarket audience or a Waterstone’s customer. Covers have to work in a variety of environments, from on the web to face out in the bookshop, in a poster on the Underground or on television. Good designs help sell the book to the retailer, and encourage them to place the book prominently.<sup>13</sup>

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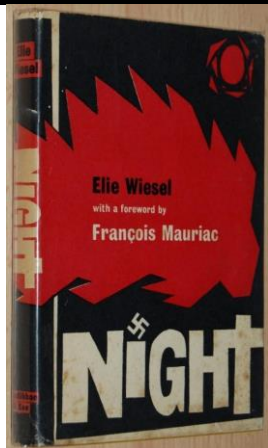
<sup>10</sup> The author acknowledges that there may be instances where covers are not shown online.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Hendel, *Aspects of Contemporary Book Design* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013), p. 7.

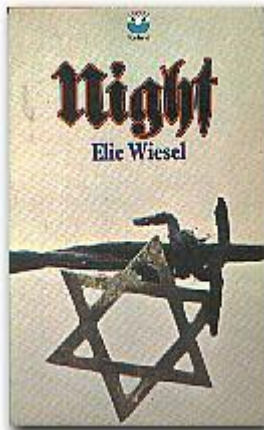
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> Niccole Matthews and Niccianne Moody, *Judging a Book by Its Cover* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), p. 29.

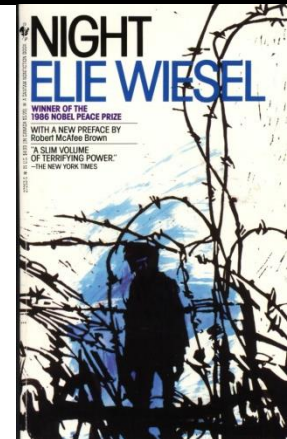
Cover designs helps market the publishers and designers are not necessarily concerned about representation but focused on creating an eye-catching cover to attract the browser's attention from across the bookstore with the most identifiable tropes and symbols of the Holocaust.



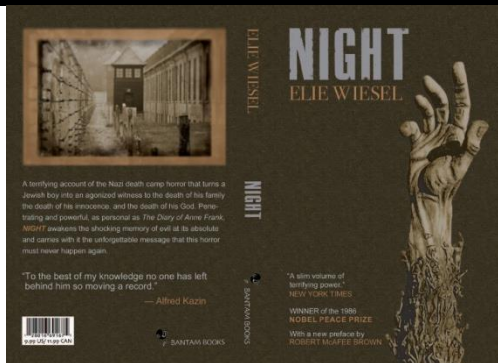
**Figure 1:** 1960 edition. Published by MacGibbon & Kee. Photo courtesy of Abebooks.com



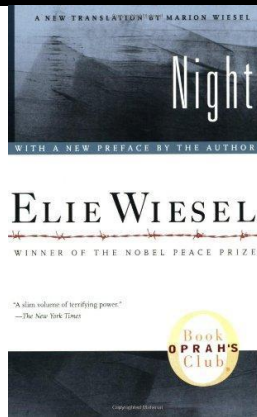
**Figure 2:** 1972 edition. Published by Fontana Books. Photo courtesy of Abebooks.com



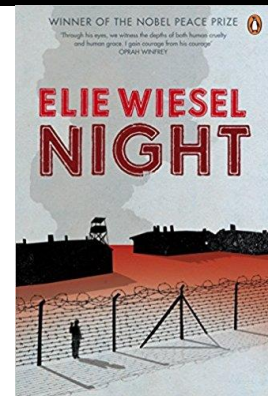
**Figure 3:** 1982 edition. Published by Bantam Books. Photo courtesy of Abebooks.com



**Figure 4:** 1986 edition. Published by Bantam Books. Photo courtesy of Abebooks.com



**Figure 5:** 2006 edition. Published by Hill & Wang. Photo courtesy of Abebooks.com



**Figure 6:** 2008 edition. Published by Penguin Books. Photo courtesy of Abebooks.com

Among Holocaust memoirs, *Night* by Elie Wiesel is one of the most well-known novels on bookshelves and classrooms alike that target mostly young adults. Since its original publication in 1955, the cover has gone through several transformations with various publishers. After researching these transformations, these covers are a good example of the evolution a book can have. Bantam Books Publishers released the book (as seen in **Figure 4**) with a dark brown cover with a hand on the front cover, and as it reached for the sky the forearm as small skinny grasping human-like figures can be seen trying to crawl up the man's arm. This grotesque imagery of an unnatural human arm with other smaller human models is an excellent example of expanding beyond mainstream Holocaust imagery. This 1986 edition pushes intellectual perception on to a different level. Flipping onto the back of the cover is the only time barbed wire images are displayed, but by then the book has already received enough attention from the reader to be picked up. When contemplating brown as an appropriate cover colour it could remind the scholar about the mud that has been frequently mentioned in testimonies. An example of mud and brown becoming a colour with a survivor's experience is from Kitty Hart when upon her return to Auschwitz she commented about the muddy terrain saying,

Beneath the green surface the ground is still muddy. My feet sink in. It's not so much spongy as just that little bit wetter so that it squelches and threatens to suck you down and trap you there, so that you breathe faster and want to drag your feet out and escape before it's too late. Imagine it (I can't imagine it any other way) with 100,000 people trudging through that mud, hear the plopping sound of wrenching your clog out of the mess until maybe you no longer had the strength to wrench it out.<sup>14</sup>

More memoirs and stories reflect the earthiness of the ground and the elements they were exposed to in the labour camps, and yet brown covers are so few and far between. On the opposite end, **Figure 6** is troublesome because it has taken many steps back in terms of the

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<sup>14</sup> Hellmuth Szprycer, *Kitty, Return to Auschwitz*; Interview, USC 628.

evolution of the cover and done a disservice to Wiesel's narrative by giving the reader everything. Wiesel's book is full of rich imagery that provoke private and visceral emotions which can accompany a close reading of the text. Instead of just a few strands of barbed wire—the designer created an entire concentration camp complete with a guard, a gun tower, and even billowing smoke in the background to symbolize the crematoria. Unless the reader has an avid interest in investigating the text all the imagery has been given to them; which is a great disservice to the audience because Wiesel's testimony evokes much more than the cover presents. As D.G. Myers elegantly puts it, "As a scholar, the demands that the Holocaust places upon me are determined not by me but by *him*: the corpse that gazes back at me in the last sentences of Elie Wiesel's, *Night*, the corpse whose eyes have never left me."<sup>15</sup> Myers did not have the imagery of the eyes given to her on the cover but what she gathered from a close reading of the text, and should be every reader's ambition to leave the narrative with an image that will stay close to them. There is a wide variety of memoirs with no barbed wire and follow different illustration techniques, but using Wiesel's covers as a case study are a strong starting point for an investigation into the of Holocaust representation in literature.

Colours that have become synonymous with Holocaust Literature are: red and black however, these colours are misappropriated. Red and black are colours enforced upon Holocaust Literature by the history of the Third Reich and the Nazis. The bright red was predominantly used by the Nazis in their Party flag and armbands, and the colour itself has rich possibilities for meanings and emotions but used by the Nazis it emits a tone of fear. Red is not used often as a dominant colour on Holocaust literature covers, but is almost always used in fonts for the author's name or title of the book. However, there are exceptions. In the 1992 edition of *This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentlemen* by Tadeusz Borowski, the cover portrays an image with a stoic soldier on the front covered (from left to right) in black, white, and red. The German style

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<sup>15</sup> D.G. Myers, 'Responsible for Every Single Pain: Holocaust Literature and the Ethics of Interpretation', *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (1999), pp. 266-288 (p. 285).



of the helmet, the Model 35 (M35) with vents on the left and right hand side and shaped to protect the head and neck against explosive debris with an additional visor to protect from natural elements is distinctive from other combat helmets in the Second World War. The helmet and gun erect against the soldier does not automatically mean this is a Nazi soldier; but undoubtedly the black cover, the daunting red font, and the soldier covered in the Nazi colours that tells the consumer this is a Nazi soldier. Another detail is with the dusty red on the right side of the soldier, which is also the way the soldier is pointing. The dusty red detail is frightening because this tells the reader--yes, indeed this way for the gas or this way for blood to be spilt and death to follow. The contemporary edition of Borowski's short stories only has a trace of red in the author's name on the front cover while the image is a blur of soft dark earthy tones, which emits a different tone than its predecessor.

Another literature cover that has seen a 'red' makeover change is the gruelling account of *Five Chimneys* by Olga Lengyel. The book cover in the 1970s looked like an advertisement for a horror movie. The cover was completely covered in black charcoal and the title was drawn in a red large blocked font that overwhelmed the majority of the cover. If a reader picked up the book from a bookseller's shelf they may or may not know it was a book on a woman's experience with Auschwitz. Such as with Borowski's book the modern edition of *Five Chimneys* has undergone a soft makeover with lighter tones that look like a watercolour painting and the only imposing red left from the earlier editions are the author's name. The problem with Borowski and Lengyel's early editions are that the book covers are already telling the reader what they should be feeling before they have read the first chapter. Undoubtedly, both of these books hold horrifying accounts of human atrocities, but shouldn't that be left up to reader to experience? Telling the reader what they should be feeling from the front cover does a disservice to their experience. Every Holocaust experience was different and not one survivor's testimony was typical. In that truth there should be an allowance for readers to expand upon their own

memory and how that reading expands upon their own understanding of Holocaust representation. If we put the 1992 cover of Borowski and the 1970s version of Lengyel side by side the similarities of their covers would let an unknowing reader assume that they may be told by different people but their experiences of the Holocaust would be similar. Borowski was arrested by the Nazi and sent to Auschwitz and sent on a death march to Dachau where he was liberated in the spring of 1945. He was detained as a political prisoner and while his stories have an autobiographical focus it is largely a work of fiction inspired by his experiences. Lengyel's book is more of a testimony of her experiences following her husband to Auschwitz and highlights special issues of importance to women, and is often viewed as complementary to Primo Levi's *If This is a Man*. Other than the fact that the two authors were imprisoned in Auschwitz and that they both lived to tell of their survival their Holocaust experiences were vastly different. After examining two examples of literature covers and discussing the significance of their different uses of red and black a case can be made that colour psychology plays a role in how Holocaust literature is marketed.

In his book, *Color Psychology and Color Therapy*, Faber Birren talks about the importance of the colour 'red' to the human eye, "Psychologically, red is exciting and increases restlessness and nervous tension. It represents an attraction to stimulus. Brilliant red has its value in commanding human attention".<sup>16</sup> Just as the Nazi armbands commanded human attention with the red background encircling the swastika the book cover grabs our eye as well. The Nazi flag was present everywhere during the reign of the Third Reich—over windows, in front of buildings, on armbands, etc. Today we do not see a sea of the Nazi appropriation of red across our streets or buildings; however it has taken over Holocaust Literature. Whether in image covers, spine letters, titles or authors it is rare to find a book without this dominant red in some aspect of the jacket. Alain Badiou, in his book on non-colours, comments, "There is no better way to test the

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<sup>16</sup> Faber Birren, *Color Psychology and Color Therapy* (New Jersey: University Books Inc., 1961), p. 262.

symbolic consistency of a color than to examine how it appears on flags, and especially the point at which one color in particular takes over an entire flag.”<sup>17</sup> While it is not the focal point of the Nazi flag—the red has influenced the way we see Nazi imagery to an extent that one cannot see the colour red in this context without thinking about the Third Reich in this context.

The study of colour and human responses has been a long discussed topic in a variety of disciplines that study how it impacts our daily world. Black is another colour that has become synonymous with the Third Reich and the Holocaust. We get black images from SS uniforms, the swastika, black smoke from chimneys, barbed wire, even Hitler’s moustache have become synonymous with the Holocaust. Birren talks about, “the colour black as only the mentally troubled are usually fascinated by it, though there are exceptions. Some few persons may take to the colour for its sophistication, but in this preference they may attempt to hide their truer natures”.<sup>18</sup> This quote is a perfect reflection of the Third Reich. The SS uniforms were dominated by the colour black. They were distinctive from all others and held a sophisticated position within the Third Reich accompanied by their armbands and the threatening black symbol of the swastika etched upon it. Alain Badiou used the Nazis as an example of colour pairing to make powerful images because black as a symbol, is thus intrinsically divided, very broadly speaking, between impatient, murderous nihilism and a patience built on confidence in organization. To be sure, the latter faction ultimately aligned itself with red.<sup>19</sup> The Nazis have permanently paired black and red together.

This investigation goes beyond the colours of literature covers because there are images that are becoming more rampant as acceptable constructs of the Holocaust. The atrocities of the Nazis left a horrifying impact that extended far beyond the foreboding railroad tracks of Auschwitz.

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<sup>17</sup> Alain Badiou, *Black: The Brilliance of a non-color*, trans. by Susan Spitzer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Birren, Faber, *Color & Human Response: Aspects of light and colour bearing on the reactions of living beings* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1978), p. 126.

<sup>19</sup> Badiou, *Black: The Brilliance of a Non-Colour*, p.50.

However, the literature does not convey this extended memory. In his book on Holocaust memory, Michael Bernard-Donals explains that,

In the context of the Holocaust, we and our students have seen the bodies and the camps, in both colour and in black and white, over and over. We've seen them in film footage of the liberations, and we've seen the locations of the events, decrepit and over-grown, in films like *Night and Fog* and *Shoah* and, perhaps, in person. These images work as the raw material out of which we've constructed a knowledge of the Holocaust, and when we see contemporary images of atrocity either in some recent issue of the New Yorker magazine or in, say, *Schindler's List* we remember... this memory we have built for ourselves of the Holocaust, and that disturbs it.<sup>20</sup>

Due to media influence and popular memoirs our knowledge of the Holocaust is confined to just a few images and concepts of suffering occurred. The 1970's saw a wave of fascination with Hitler and Nazi nostalgic wave hit the covers of magazines and covers alike in Britain and the US that contributed to a resurgence in swastika and Nazi overrepresentation that could be attributed to the mini-series *Holocaust*<sup>21</sup>. Another example of Holocaust memory in the 1990's was largely due to the successful film of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. Bernard-Donals points out the truth about Holocaust memory in the modern age that it is incomplete and disturbed by our preconceptions. These popular films and articles certainly have their place in Holocaust Studies, and it would be argued it could be impossible to teach without them to this modern generation but they are helping contribute to forgetful memory.<sup>22</sup> Our collective Holocaust memory is fractured and confined and this reflects upon the literature read.

One of the most overused images on book covers in Holocaust Studies are of black barbed wire. This image damages public perception instead of providing enlightenment. Conventional

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals, 'Memory and Images of the Holocaust', *College English*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (March 2004), pp. 380-402 (p. 384).

<sup>21</sup> US mini-series, directed by Marvin J. Chomsky and aired in 1978.

<sup>22</sup> Bernard-Donals, p. 384.

models of memory, in other words, suggest that by bringing the experiences of individuals to life through the image, either through feeling or through knowledge, we can bring back or replicate the experiences themselves.<sup>23</sup> As readers, we are comfortable with barbed wire images because it is widely available to us and that feeds into our memory of the Holocaust. This memory equals concentration camps and that is equated with layers of black barbed wire on the front of literature covers. Therein lays the danger with this image: it is too comfortable. Images of a Holocaust nature should make us uncomfortable enough to take the literature and question it, respect it, and turn the piece into public awareness. However, if we are continually fed the same images over and over the public awareness fades. Our knowledge on the horrors of the Holocaust should continually grow and these overused images have stagnated our perception of these experiences. This case pertains most for young adult audiences whose knowledge might not be as matured as an adult reader and their awareness of the Holocaust experiences. As scholars, one of the worst things to be done is put Holocaust literature into specific repetitious imagery that helps contribute into a dangerous descent of normality. Katja Garloff supports this in her article, "Expanding the Canon of Holocaust Literature" that by holding literary texts up to an implied standard according to which they have to represent the Jewish experience as fully and adequately as possible is impossible.<sup>24</sup> There was no one specific, "Jewish experience" in the Holocaust and our scholarship efforts should reflect that.

After researching young adult Holocaust covers it was discovered that thirty of them (there are certainly more) used barbed wire in a significant portion of front cover imagery. Four of them stood out: *Boy at the Top of the Mountain* by John Boyne, *Anca's Story* by Mark Williams, *From A Name to a Number* by Alter Wiener, and *Once* by Morris Gleitzman. Why did these four covers stand out?

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>24</sup> Katja Garloff, 'Expanding the Canon of Holocaust Literature', *New German Critique*, No. 96, Memory and the Holocaust (2005), pp. 49-74 (p. 52).

If the designer took out the barbed wire—would the cover still have the same effect? Do readers need barbed wire to tell them it is a novel about the Holocaust? John Boyne’s best known work, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Boy at the Top of the Mountain* remains in the same realm of time period. The cover is illustrated as a dark foreboding red—not a bright red that we might see accompanying the swastika but a red that suggests blood. Horizontally mixed in with the sky are layers of barbed wire that connect to nothing nor each other—because in the text there are no concentration camps or ghettos in the setting. The success of Boyne’s *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and popularity of the following film played a factor in the cover design. Niccole Matthews and Niccianne Moody in their work, *Judging a Book by Its Cover*, state that publishers that aim to sell to a mass market, will decide to play it safe with their cover design.<sup>25</sup> This cover was designed as a safe sell to the success of Boyne’s market and not necessarily the subject of the material. In 2015 the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz of *Anca’s Story* by Mark Williams was published and it portrays the cover of the typical mainstream Holocaust novel. The background of the cover is a black and white faded image of the entrance gate to Auschwitz with the slogan, “*Arbeit Macht Frei?*” and four black silhouettes walking underneath the sign with the author and title in big bolded red font that cleverly has a black swastika inside the ‘O’ and barbed wire woven amongst the title. If the reader had any doubt about what the content of the novel it has now disappeared. The design of the cover has given too much away of the story because all the imagery has been given to the reader similar to **Figure 6** in the case study of *Night*. Ultimately, this is the damage the trend of Holocaust covers has taken--the destruction of imaginative imagery through close reading of the text that should be left up to the reader to conjure. The cover was a clear design ploy to market off of the anniversary of the liberation by inputting symbols such as a swastika, barbed wire, bold black and red colouring choices, and the image of

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<sup>25</sup> Niccole Matthews and Niccianne Moody, *Judging a Book By Its Cover*, p. 22.

the infamous sign of Auschwitz. The reader is bombarded with imagery that holds little literary value.

One of the most terrifying covers *From a Name to a Number* by Alter Wiener was examined and the issue with this cover is that it has turned victim into perpetrator by design. In the faded background lies an image of the author after liberation with his sunken face and hollowed eyes with his camp number in black bolded numbers sent in front. The reason for this description of the cover as terrifying is because of the barbed wire forming diagonal blocks across the page, and from left to right the shadow goes from dark to light. What could be thought was a large 'X' underneath the right eye was actually a poorly faded Star of David actually stretched over the entire cover, but the only point where it is visible is underneath his eye. The cover to this book looks like an advertisement for another horror film rather than a book of Holocaust literature. The design was poorly constructed. The author is not a serial killer, but a Holocaust survivor and the portrayal gives off a dark and menacing feel. Lastly, *Once* by Morris Gleitzman receives a different kind of attention for this analysis. The cover portrays a light blue with a strand of barbed wire diagonally strewn across the page with a small boy walking on it as if he were walking on a tightrope with his arms stretched out for balance. Rather than finding fault with this cover it stood out for the correct use of Holocaust imagery. Yes, barbed wire is featured but it has not overtaken the whole illustration; also, there are no red colours anywhere, and using a light blue welcomes the reader to ponder what awaits inside the pages. The figure balancing the barbed wire as a tightrope is youthful and invites the reader into the story and can be especially attractive to younger readers. This is an example of how Holocaust imagery compliments the novel instead of distracting from the narrative.

The goal in pulling out these specific novels for discussion is not to attack the authors, because they have surprisingly little to do with cover design, but to have a closer look on how barbed

wire as an image of the Holocaust hinders readers from forming their own images. Yes, most of the above stories took place in camps, but are there no other images to conjure? What about rows of wooden bunks, muddy roll calls, bowls of soup or a crust of bread, a rugged utensil, or shoes? If a cover does not have barbed wire in any of its imagery—does that mean it's not Holocaust? Or is the book not Holocaust enough?

As this discussion draws to a close the importance of publishing Holocaust Literature remains greater than ever as a way to expose awareness of the Holocaust and dangers of the Third Reich against those they deemed as enemies to a variety of audiences. However caution should be used when considering how and if the imagery adds to or takes away from the narrative. Should all barbed wire be removed from book covers? There is a place for that imagery about concentration camps, imprisonment, being culturally set apart and fenced in; but, if all the imagery we can conjure up in our minds (especially with camp narratives) is barbed wire then we are doing a disservice to our field of study. As stated above there are a plethora of other images to use in order to represent people's experiences in the Holocaust and are being underutilized in cover design. Holocaust Literature falls under the industry of cover design and have always been a huge part of marketing books and a mainline to increase revenue in sales. When the designer rarely has all the information needed for giving an accurate collection of images there are often disconnections between the cover and the narrative that follows.

But what remains to be done? The trends in Holocaust literature covers have always been geared towards targeting the reader and are designed with the perception of what catches the attention of the online browser and bookstore shopper. Therefore this author calls upon cover designers to request more than just a synopsis from the acquisitions officer of the publishing firm, and to look beyond cliché images and colours. The power in a great cover lies not in what is given to the reader, but specifically what is not shown that invites the reader to form their own



images, conclusions, and their own vision about the narrative that is presented. What about the role of consumers? What is their role in changing covers of Holocaust Literature—if any? Perhaps, the neon green cover in white font on the spine could be a brilliant new memoir about female perpetrators in concentration camps or the brown dishevelled boot pictured against a setting sun could give new insight into children in labour camps. This article has highlighted areas to grow, but consider where other strengths and weaknesses of Holocaust Literature are. Book covers are the first insight a reader receives about what their experience might entail and it is worth investing in. By improving what we read in Holocaust Literature and expanding the boundaries of our mental imagery we continue to bring knowledge to the world that a once nihilistic black and red organization inflicted its terror upon those who did not fit their image, and so we must improve ours.

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