

## Holocaust Child Survivors' Memoirs as Reflected in Appelfeld's *The Story of a Life*

Dana Mihăilescu  
*University of Bucharest*

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**Dana Mihăilescu,**

**"Holocaust Child Survivors' Memoirs as Reflected in Appelfeld's *The Story of a Life*"**

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Thematic Issue ***Life Writing and the Trauma of War***. Ed. **Louise O. Vasvári and I-Chun Wang**

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**Abstract:** In her article "Holocaust Child Survivors' Memoirs as Reflected in Appelfeld's *The Story of a Life*" Dana Mihăilescu identifies characteristics of child survivors' memoirs in Aharon Appelfeld's writing. Mihăilescu addresses the following main question: is the structure of child survivors' memoirs similar to that of Holocaust memoirs written by adult survivors or is there a tendency to focus on certain aspects given the young age some had at the time? Mihăilescu argues that unlike regular autobiographies by Holocaust adult survivors, child survivors' memoirs are less constructed around factual events of private and public relevance and that they concentrate instead on deeply-entrenched sensations and the imminence of the death of parents and loss children experienced during World War II. Further, Mihăilescu argues that it is important to recognize that in the case of a child survivor turned author like Appelfeld, the act of deferred mourning is inscribed in the technique of memoir construction via the continuous interruption of straightforward chronological organization.

**Dana MIHĂILESCU**

### **Holocaust Child Survivors' Memoirs as Reflected in Appelfeld's *The Story of a Life***

Two recent anthologies, *Literature of the Holocaust* (2013) edited by Alan Rosen and *Holocaust Literature: A History and Guide* (2012) by David Roskies and Naomi Diamant explore the characteristics of Holocaust fictional and autobiographical narratives written during or after the Holocaust by various generations of survivors in different languages. Among autobiographical genres, Roskies and Diamant identify diaries and reportage as the core wartime autobiographical writing that used to "mobilize the public," and provide it with a much-needed "means for mourning" (2), while postwar autobiographical writings were characterized by "a recurrence of the coming-of-age story, the bildungsroman" which in early renderings was usually written in "a collective voice" (3). Moreover, Roskies and Diamant and Rosen alike explain how in the postwar years the memoir became "the genre that set the standard" in Holocaust writing (Rosen 4) and memory has been "the new catchword of Holocaust studies, understood to be a species of trauma" (Roskies and Diamant 5).

In a 2005 study dedicated to the impact of the increased number of published memoirs of Jewish survivors on Holocaust remembrance Ștefan Ionescu identifies the main patterns of survivors' memoirs as dependent on the post-1960s shift of Holocaust studies scholars' interest from examining perpetrators' actions and documents undergirding the extermination process to analyzing Jewish documents, victims' responses, and daily life in camps, ghettos, or in hiding. In this sense, Ionescu highlights how survivors' memoirs from the end of World War II to the 1970s revolved around the authors' attempt to describe as accurately as possible the technical and institutional aspects of camps or ghettos, the implementation and effects of anti-Semitic legislation, and the characteristic features of prominent Nazi officers. In contrast, especially for post-1980s memoirs, the main themes have revolved around victims' daily life, mutual help, rescue efforts, and the attitudes of bystanders such as administrative personnel, clerks, local peasants, or residents (see Ionescu 369). Additionally, the remoteness of the events has also resulted in some authors' inclusion of references to other published or publically available Holocaust documents in their memoirs and in their ability to discuss topics which had been considered too sensitive in the early post-war years such as the weaknesses or biased character of their own memories (see Ionescu 370). Rosen's, Diamant's and Roskies's, and Ionescu's studies, however, do not explore age in Holocaust survivors' memoirs as to whether or not child survivors' autobiographical accounts include other features of interest for scholars or use the existent patterns with a twist.

These scholars' important insights are complemented by Louise O. Vasvári who presents a survey of Holocaust centered autobiographies by Hungarian Jewish women who were adults or child survivors during World War II highlighting the former's emphases on sexual activities and gender issues like pregnancies and abortions in the camps. Vasvári also discusses postwar relations with absent or surviving parents rather than Holocaust events per se, standing for their unsuccessful attempts towards "resolving history" (<<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1419>>). However, similarly to currently available scholarship, Vasvári does not explore the matter of age of children during World War II as to how they recount their Holocaust experiences. Hence my focus on Holocaust child survivors' memoirs in order to complement scholarship on the topic to date. I trace how the category of child survivors came to be recognized in Holocaust historiography and identify specific characteristics of child survivors' memoirs as reflected in the writing of Aharon Appelfeld (born near Czernowitz in 1932). The main questions I am trying to address are whether the structure of child survivors' memoirs is similar to that of Holocaust memoirs written by adult survivors or whether there is a tendency to focus on certain aspects given the young age of survivors. What is specific to an autobiography written by someone who has very few or blurred childhood memories from Holocaust times?

One of the earliest full-length studies signaling the importance of examining child survivors' voices, as well as the specific features of their memories is Claudine Vegh's 1979 book, *Je ne lui ai pas dit au revoir. Des enfants des déportés parlent*, based on her dissertation in psychiatry. Vegh presents one of the earliest collections of oral testimonies by child survivors like herself, although at the time of her work she did not recognize the group as forming a survivors' category, but dubbed them simply as children of deported parents. She included seventeen interviews with men and women from among her friends and relatives who agreed to talk about their war recollections after thirty-five years. All these people had been between three and thirteen years old in 1941 when the persecution of their families began in France. All of them were left orphans by the end of the war "losing one or both parents" and outwardly appearing as "unquestionably integrated, both socially and professionally" (Vegh 30-31). In all cases, this was the first time they agreed to talk about their experiences and go beyond the wall of silence they had cultivated for so many decades. The leitmotif of the collection which unites these people's testimonies is their recurrent phrase, "I didn't say goodbye," one that represents the high cost of separation that marked the subsequent lives of this generation first of all by their transplantation in a new environment during the war in which their "real identity" had to be hidden and second, by their anguish that their parents would not be able to find them after the war (Vegh 97). Given this, Vegh's book indicates deferred mourning as the specific experience of child survivors who lost one or both parents during the Holocaust. This happened as a result of their uncertainty about the parents' lot epitomized by haunting questions like, "Where did they die? In the sealed convoys? In the camp itself? Were they selected on arrival? Did they die of exhaustion, of cold, of hunger? Were they beaten to death? Did they die in the gas chambers?" (Vegh 100).

Another Holocaust survivor who escaped to the United States in 1939 after being briefly interred at Dachau and Buchenwald, Bruno Bettelheim, explains the same act of deferred mourning as a characteristic of child survivors' experiences in the afterword to the 1984 English edition of Vegh's book. He notes how unlike children who lost their parents in catastrophes represented by periods of starvation or war devastations and who could then mourn them in public, also benefiting from the help of mass media, part of the tragedy of Holocaust child survivors who lost their parents after an initial separation was their deferred act of mourning. These children were at first completely unaware of their parents' situation and they did not benefit from communal support. Later on they had no "tangible, physical evidence of the parents' death: no corpse to be buried, no grave to be visited" (Bettelheim 171), so they were left only with grief and pain. Finally, there was no outside mass media support for these children's losses under the Nazis. Instead, "society, the powers which ruled life, the state, the obligation of which is to protect the child's life, were determined to destroy the Jewish children, as it was the state that first robbed them of their parents and then murdered them" (Bettelheim 176). Not surprisingly, these child survivors' relation to Jewish identity became highly problematic and was associated by them to the feeling of being permanently threatened by an imminent death. Moreover, it was only after three decades of an averted gaze because of deferred mourning that most child survivors who were orphaned during the Holocaust could start the process of mourning in front of persons willing to listen and help. I should note that André Stein's 1993 *Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust* includes in the book's ten stories of child survivors which suggest that he is aware of some of the issues I am discussing in my study.

In addition to the above-mentioned studies, in a chapter on child survivors from her 2006 book *Crises of Memory and the Second World War*, Susan Rubin Suleiman touches upon the importance of age in discussing the group of child survivors which she calls "the 1.5 generation," by which she understands those who were "too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to *have been* there during the Nazi persecution of Jews" (Suleiman 179). Further, Suleiman notes that this generation's shared characteristic was "premature bewilderment and helplessness" in the sense that for them "the trauma occurred (or at least, began) before the formation of stable identity that we associate with adulthood, and in some cases before any conscious sense of self" (181). Given that the generational consciousness of these people, Suleiman herself included, only occurred in the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, diversity of attitudes, behaviors, and life choices is specific to them; Suleiman identifies the dominant themes of child survivors' writings as including "themes of unstable identity and psychological splitting, a preoccupation with absence, emptiness, silence, a permanent sense of loneliness and loss, including the loss of memories relating to family and childhood ... an anguished questioning about what it means to be Jewish after the Holocaust" as well as "their preoccupation, either explicitly stated or implied in their formal choices, with the question of *how* to tell the story" (184).

Using as case studies the autobiographical works of two French Jewish child survivors turned authors, *W or the Memory of Childhood* (1975) by Jacques Perce and *Double or Nothing* (1971) by Raymond Federman, Suleiman places at the center of her analysis the attempt to answer the question of "how ... one [from the generation of child survivors] write[s] an autobiography when one has 'no childhood memories,' as Perce states hyperbolically in the opening of the very first memory chapter of the book" (187). The solution she identifies in child survivors' works is their decision to prop memory with fiction while placing the issue of absent or blurred memory at the center of the autobiography, one resulting in the form of what Philippe Lejeune calls the "critical text" of autobiography (220), "comprising both personal memories and a critique of memory that comments on its own hesitations, incompletions, or errors" (Suleiman 187), in which the two basic pillars of child survivors' narrative construction become postponement — a basic principle of digression and suspension — and "preterition, the self-contradictory figure of approach and avoidance, affirmation and negation, amnesia and anamnesis," the simultaneous recognition and denial of painful reality (Suleiman 206). I believe that Suleiman's findings are relevant but, in her analysis, they are unfortunately circumscribed to the mere examination of autobiographical accounts by two paradigmatic authors for groups of experimental novelists of the 1960s and 1970s, Perce being a well-known member of the literary group Oulipo who were interested in making word and mathematic games the basis of their works and Federman being an exponent member of the avant-garde by bringing from France the postmodernist manifesto of surfiction to the U.S. in 1975, trajectories which Suleiman expresses in her article (185, 197). Leaving the examination of child survivors' autobiographical accounts at the level of such experimental authors runs the risk of identifying the above characteristics of their works as primarily an outgrowth of their literary affiliation rather than a function of their child survivor status. That is why I attempt to see if the autobiographical accounts of child survivors who were not experimental writers foreground or not similar preoccupations with those of Perce and Federman as a result of their child survivor status.

I show how Appelfeld benefited from a happy family unit which increased the importance of his early pleasurable memories prior to the war and which accounts for his borrowing some patterns of memoir writing from adult survivors. At the same time, I investigate the importance of another contextual life feature for such children during the war, that of orphans. This coordinate of analysis is relevant because it shows that even in the case of older children who had their personality and memory structures formed by the beginning of the war, the toll of unpleasant memories took up dire forms for those who remained orphans and had to live on their own, either in hiding like Appelfeld or in an orphanage thus resulting in disruptive forms of memoir construction. This analysis allows me to underline the specifics of Holocaust child survivors' memoirs by the foregrounding of deferred mourning as the central moment of crisis in comparison to the dominant pattern of Holocaust adult survivors' memoirs that centers on recuperating and foregrounding chronological facts of the catastrophe in various locations that also involved their own personal experience.

Appelfeld first experienced the Holocaust in Czernowitz, a city in northern Bukovina with a complex political history. Andrej Angrick describes how the region belonged to Romania from the end of World War I in 1918 until June 1940, to the Soviet Union from June 1940 to July 1941, and to Romania from July 1941 until the end of World War II as a result of the Barbarossa Campaign organized by German nazi authorities as a means to occupy territories from the Soviet Union. Most importantly, Angrick presents a nuanced outlook on Romanian, Soviet, Ukrainian, and German interests in the area ranging from policies of Romanization implemented prior to June 1940, then policies of Sovietization in 1940-1941, Romanians' post-July 1941 attempts to deport and imprison Ukrainians afraid of the latter's nationalist policies coupled with the decision not to deport certain Jews in the interest of the economy, and then the German pressure to focus on Romanian authorities' deportations of Jews which only partially succeeded between June 1942 and October 1942. In the latter period there were two waves of Jews' deportation from Czernowitz. Appelfeld was interned in 1941 in the Czernowitz ghetto after his mother was killed and then he was placed on a forced march across Ukraine to a labor camp from Transnistria in the fall of 1941 along his father. As Appelfeld describes in his memoir, he soon escaped, being separated from his father, whom he only later discovered by chance near Ben Shanan in Israel (see Schwartz 37) and the boy lived the rest of the war years in hiding in the Ukrainian forests amid threatening peasants who were always ready to turn Jewish children over to nazi authorities. He even passed as a gentile orphan in order to find work, running errands for prostitutes and thieves. After being liberated by the Russian army, he joined the army as a kitchen boy, then became part of the stream of refugees to Naples, Italy, and finally left for Palestine in 1946 (see Wolfe 358). On the one hand, his *The Story of a Life* corresponds to the major concerns of survivors' memoirs of the 1980s-1990s. On the other hand, the memoir maps several types of memories either characterizing a child of the Holocaust like himself — one who was seven years old by the time the war started, so at the borderline age towards completing his sense of personality development and self-formation — or younger children whose consciousness and sense of self were not yet developed.

I analyze Appelfeld's memoir *The Story of a Life* to the extent to which it corresponds or not to the general patterns of Holocaust survivors' memoirs of the 1980s and 1990s. In this sense, the thirty chapters making Appelfeld's memoir by and large follow the general pattern of post-1980s survivors' autobiographies identified by Ionescu: they offer insight into Jewish residents' daily life in various locations, in this case pre-Holocaust Czernowitz and the surrounding countryside and in the Czernowitz ghetto and Transnistrian camps during World War II. Simultaneously, they explore mutual help and rescue efforts by delineating the good deeds of certain individuals from the ghetto and other places and highlight the attitudes of bystanders such as local peasants or residents when Appelfeld was in hiding in the Ukrainian countryside. Appelfeld also discusses topics which were considered too sensitive in the early post-war years such as the weaknesses of his own memories and the issue of retribution and revenge. Moreover, Appelfeld's memoir can also be considered a coming-of-age story since it narrates the development of the author's personality and life from the times of pre-war family existence foregrounded in chapters 1 to 4 to Holocaust life in the ghetto, the deportation to Transnistria, and his subsequent life in hiding in chapters 5 to 10, his post-war life in Italian displaced persons (DP) camps presented in chapters 11 to 15, and his later existence in Israel in chapters 16 to 30. Nevertheless, the chronological account specific to survivors' memoirs is at best loose in the case of Appelfeld and this is sustained by his decision to leave the memoir's chapters untitled and therefore not offer any guiding marks to direct readers' grasp of their meaning. Most importantly, the loose chronology of Appelfeld's chapters derives from his characteristic style of narrative construction which privileges "the frequent omission of causal relationships between events ... the technique of juxtaposition rather than comprehensible continuity" (Ramras-Raush 494). Appelfeld brackets the causal relationship between events from one chapter to another by one major means. His strategy is one of interruption of his chronological account of personal experiences by first offering a series of chapters that deal with the earliest memories he remembers as a four-year-old spending his holidays in the Bukovina countryside at the side of his grandparents (chapter 1) and maternal uncle Felix (chapter 2), as well as the emergent sense of insecurity in the surroundings of Czernowitz after 1937 following the first anti-Semitic measures implemented on family members (chapters 3 and 4), and then suddenly breaking the readers' expectations by continuing with chapters 5 and 6 which no longer focus on his family's life, but are about the first victims of the ghetto to be sent to death camps or by zeroing in on the way in which some individuals helped others to survive. Then chapters 8 and 9 go back to describing his personal experiences and those of his parents before he was separated from them, but his coming-of-age story is again interrupted by chapter 10 which speaks of brothers Rauchwergers' help to orphans and chapter 11 which recounts the terrible atrocities from the Keffer Pen, an animal enclosure within the Kaschlund camp, where guard dogs used for hunting and chasing escapees were kept. Moreover, if up to chapter 16 the structuring of chapters keeps to a chronological development of personal and others' experiences from pre-Holocaust to post-Holocaust DP camp events, chapter 17 brings the focus back on a particular episode of the Holocaust, namely the forced march to the Ukraine which the author experienced alongside his father, thus preventing any clearly stepwise structuring that could direct readers' insight into Holocaust events. The same technique of moving back and forth between personal and other people's stories and divergent timelines characterizes the form of construction for the entire memoir which makes the act of reflection a central element of the autobiography.

At times, the reading of Appelfeld's autobiography is rendered even more difficult by the choice to begin certain chapters by pondering on the issue of problematic memory as in the opening of chapter 7: "In a way, it was a pity that it went by in such a blur, and that I was only a child. During the war, children were ignored. Children were like the straw on which everyone trod" (47). It is similar with the beginning of chapter 8: "More than fifty years have passed since the end of the war. I have forgotten much, even things that were very close to me — places in particular, dates, and the names of people

— and yet I can still sense those days in every part of my body. Whenever it rains, it's cold, or a fierce wind is blowing, I am taken back to the ghetto, to the camp, or to the forest where I spent my days. Memory, it seems, has deep roots in the body" (50). Such detours from focusing on factual events during the Holocaust by placing instead the tortuous character of blurred or absent memory at the center of the autobiography correspond to one of the specific features of a child survivor's Holocaust memoir, in comparison to the more processed chronological rendering of events favored by adult survivors' Holocaust memoirs as identified by Susan Rubin Suleiman, making it what Lejeune calls a "critical" autobiography (220) which balances personal memories with a critique of these memories engaging with their own hesitations, incompletions, or erring. Appelfeld's chapter openings furthermore complement Suleiman's and Lejeune's relevant, already-mentioned findings by enlarging the scope of his autobiography's critical component as not only a critique of memory, but also (1) as an indication of the limitations of the general public and psychoanalysts' take on the Holocaust until the 1980s, when those who were children during the Holocaust were considered unable to understand the events they lived through, and hence not affected by the Holocaust, and (2) as a metanarrative commentary that becomes a primary component in child survivors' autobiographies, representing a hindsight attempt to process the meaning of events that was unavailable to them during the war given their young age. Overall, these techniques of interruptions and metanarratives or self-critical comments interspersed with the description of actual events during the Holocaust help to sustain Suleiman's point that in a child survivor's memoir postponement and "preterition," the simultaneous recognition and denial of painful reality become the dominant elements of the narrative.

Appelfeld delineates two main types of memory characterizing his childhood years: the internalization of pleasant family-centered memories of the Czernowitz area prior to the war which he can somehow still remember because of being already seven at the outbreak of World War II, and, most importantly, the fact that unlike adults, children's primary memories from Holocaust times were fragmented recollections which returned with force in their adult lives. In Appelfeld's memoir pleasant memories occur in prewar times and are narrated in the first two chapters: he recalls his happy childhood within a bourgeois family, his carefree life at his maternal grandparents' village house and the house of his mother's Uncle Felix, an agronomist living in luxury who was a collector of paintings. In the postwar context, however, there occurs a reconfiguration of such pleasant memories reminiscent of Proust's famous associative memory technique. This time the everyday object likely to trigger a happy moment of the past is replaced by an everyday object that reminds the survivor of the dangerous, fear-instilling Holocaust atmosphere which has become engrained in his memory. We read, for instance, "Sometimes just the aroma of a certain dish or dampness of shoes or a sudden noise is enough to take me back into the middle of the war, and then it seems to me that it never really ended, but that it has continued without my knowledge" (90). Later in his memoir, Appelfeld confesses that most of the Holocaust memories he has carried around to the present are not negative ones, but those of humane acts no matter how temporary: "true, selfishness was more frequent and generosity rarer, but what have in fact been engraved into my memory are those moments of clarity and humanity, when a doomed man was able to set aside his petty and narrow self-interest and sacrifice himself for another" (141). Appelfeld suggests that for someone whose sense of awareness had managed to develop during the Holocaust, pleasant memories which could represent an important coping mechanism and survival strategy were essential, although they might have represented a marginal phenomenon during those times. He also adds "contemplation" as the particular component of such memories for the survival of a child who was separated from parents by noting that "contemplation made me forget about the hunger and the fear, and visions of home would return to me. These hours were perhaps the most joyful ones, if one can use this description to describe life during a war. The little boy who was on the verge of getting lost — or even killed — in that savage foreign land could go back to being the child of his father and his mother: walking with them along summer streets, an ice-cream cone in his hand, or swimming with them in the River Prut" (139). Contemplation refers to the child's internalization of past good times with the family as long as he was old enough to remember these elements before separation from parents which occurred by the time he was nine years old.

Importantly, Appelfeld suggests indirectly the highly precarious and fleeting character of his pleasant memories since they are associated with his parents on the brink of death, in particular in relation to his mother. The issue of losing parents is never addressed straightforwardly in Appelfeld's memoir, but it becomes the core trauma point of his Holocaust experience since reference to his parents' presence as an image of a protective shield is invoked on four occasions during the narrative, while the interrupting chapters which move away from his personal experience to general comments about Holocaust events and the deeds of others are always centered around orphaned, abandoned, or lone children. These cases show the psychological imprint left by separation and death on child survivors, an impact which Appelfeld himself feels when his mother dies. The initial reference to the mother occurs in chapter 8 and identifies her as a locus of pleasant memories and protection for the son who has been hiding in a forest after her death: "the water opened my eyes, and I saw my mother, whom I hadn't been able to visualize for many days. First I saw her standing by the window and gazing out of it, as she used to. But then she suddenly turned to me, wondering how I came to be alone in the forest. I walked toward her, but I immediately understood that if I went too far I'd lose sight of the stream, and so I stopped" (51). Here the image of the mother is narrated as a comforting one helping the child to keep on living, but one whose protective contours are soon questioned by the fear of losing the surviving liquid represented by water. A bit later on, the actual death of the mother as she was walking on the streets of their village and was shot by Germans along other Jews is mentioned once in the narrative as a critical opening of the son for whom the engagement with this pain is too much to contain apart from this fleeting note: "my mother was murdered at the beginning of the war. I didn't see her die, but I did hear her one and only scream. Her death is deep inside me, but more a part of

me than her death is her reappearance after it. Any time I'm happy or sad I see her face. She's either leaning on the windowsill or staying at the doorway of our house, as if she's about to come toward me" (51). I posit that this passage is the key to understanding the specific functioning of a child survivor's memoir in the case of a child who becomes an orphan during the war. In this case, the act of "preiteration" (Suleiman) appears to be centered on the inexplicable and unaccepted separation from parents whose death occurs out of sight, but whose haunting presence gathers the ambiguous role of both suggesting lingering protection for the child (hence the reappearances of the mother in the framework of the childhood home) and deferred mourning suggested by Vegh and Bettelheim. In Appelfeld's memoir this act of deferred mourning is suggested by his hopeful embrace of the mother and father figures once he remains alone hiding in the Ukrainian countryside and when his parents would come to him at night in his dreams (54) or it becomes associated to natural omens like a strong wind, or a sunset without a flaming sky seen as symbols that "my parents were waiting for me" and "protecting me throughout the war" (62), all these occurring even if Appelfeld the child is aware of his mother's death.

In chapter 15, there is further reference to Appelfeld's parents when he writes about the forced march he undergoes with his father and after the mother is no longer alive; the father is presented as taking up the role of the mother in the way he tries to keep the son alive as soldiers drive them on: "at night he rubs my arms and legs and wipes them with the lining of his coat, and for a moment it seems to me that not only my father is with me, but also my mother, whom I loved so much" (93). What I find of particular interest here is the implicit suggestion of the imminent second separation from the father by the invocation of the already lost mother. This second separation, now from his father becomes so painful for the child that it cannot be addressed at all as such in the memoir. Not surprisingly, in chapter 17 returning to the episode of the forced march Appelfeld identifies the burden of losing his parents once again indirectly by referring to himself as the bearer of a new identity as an orphan: "within a few weeks, the seven-year-old who had been enveloped in so much love and warmth had lost his mother and become an abandoned ghetto child, and eventually this child wound up trudging alongside his father on a forced march across the Ukrainian steppes. The dying lay beside the dead along the road, and the child limped on with his remaining strength, accompanied by the few who could still walk ... From that moment, I was an orphan, and now began the loneliness and the closing off" (41). And in chapter 21 Appelfeld narrates contemplation as a protective block of the child, in a fifth reference to the parents. However, by now readers are aware of the burden of loss and pain encompassed in the lingering pleasant memories of a child survivor by a psychologically charged refusal to accept the loss of the parents while simultaneously being aware of it. Additionally, the above-described focus of all the chapters not dealing with his personal experiences on the feelings of other orphaned or lone children during the Holocaust makes the issue of orphanhood the central concern of Appelfeld's memoir because the state in itself epitomizes the sense of "friction and disquiet" which has never left such a tried person.

Appelfeld differentiates between children's and adults' memories of the Holocaust in point of "content" and delineates the complicated position children in general held precisely because they were reared during the Holocaust and writes not only about the specifics of those like him who were older than seven years when experiencing trauma, but also about the younger children whose personality and capacity of memory were still being formed as they were living through traumatic experiences. He notes how especially very young children seemed to lack the previous happy memories of their early years which the adults carried along: "while the adults spoke of what had been, for the children the Holocaust was the present, their childhood and youth. They knew no other childhood. Or happiness. They grew up in dread. They knew no other life" (*Beyond Despair* 37). Rather than having a previous life to stand them guard, the Holocaust was the first nourishing event that formed these infants, "the black milk, as the poet [Celan] said, that they sucked morning, noon, and night" (*Beyond Despair* 37). In *The Story of a Life*, we read that in the case of adults, factual memories were possible, while for children a surplus, imaginative, fluid type of memory beyond facts was characteristic, one functioning at the level of disparate, unconsciously resurfacing sensations and feelings. Put differently, unlike regular autobiographical texts by adults, Appelfeld's memoir does not center on important factual data of either private or public relevance but is constructed around the predominance of the narrative technique of interruption of family cohesion from one chapter to another and around the interweaving of personal and critical metanarrative flashbacks. This suggests Emily Miller Budick's observation that in the case of Appelfeld, the Holocaust child survivor turned author who cannot remember names and places uses the natural landscape of his childhood in Bukovina, which "pre-exists the loss and horror of war," as "the repository of his self," "a repository for his earliest memories of home and family" (166). This natural landscape works as a surrogate parent in the wake of his mother's death, one that allows Appelfeld "to hold in his mind's eye the image of him and his parents as an intact, flourishing family" (Miller Budick 167).

There is yet another difference between Appelfeld's and adults' memories to this effect: it can be attributed to the adults' developed consciousness versus the young child's consciousness-in-the-making. In the latter's case, Appelfeld suggests the predominance of somatic embodied memories during the war for a child positing that a child survivor's memories are largely situated in a realm beyond consciousness, one which is dominated by uncontrollable, entrenched, and traumatic sensations which have almost become a second nature. He specifies this towards the end of his memoir in trying to defend his early imaginative writing about the Holocaust against the criticism of editors who at first rejected his memoir to publish and who argued that anyone who chooses to write about the Holocaust should only include detailed and accurate facts. Anything else was considered a case of debasing and falsifying fiction: "Had the proponents of 'the facts' been willing to listen to me, I would have reminded them that I was only seven at the outbreak of World War II. The war was etched inside my body, but

not in my memory. In my writing I wasn't imagining but drawing out, from the very depth of my being, the feelings and impressions I had absorbed because of my lack of awareness" (*The Story of a Life* 186). In response to criticisms of his memoir, Appelfeld explains that in a child survivor's autobiography Holocaust memories are not about clear-cut narratives and detailed facts. Instead, Holocaust memories are about entrenched somatic sensations which resurface continuously in one's subsequent life and function like blurred, complicated drawings rather than straightforward narratives. Most importantly, he associates the predominance of such memories in children to their lack of awareness thus underlining Suleiman's argumentation that children who were between three and ten years old during the Holocaust were "old enough to remember, but too young to understand" (283). This lack of awareness actually represented children's not-yet-developed consciousness which had inscribed the traumatic, non-narratable, unpleasant memories of the Holocaust leading to long-lasting effects.

In conclusion, Appelfeld's recollections are relevant for tracing the dependence of child survivors' unpleasant somatic memories upon their not-yet-crystallized sense of self, memory, and being. As Appelfeld notes in *Beyond Despair*, "in the case of the children who grew up in the Holocaust, life during the Holocaust was something ... they had absorbed in their blood" (37). Following his observations, Appelfeld believes that children of the Holocaust were the first to offer an artistic expression of the period in their autobiographies because they did not need adult survivors' sublimation, apologetics, or glorification, but narrated naturally the events of their quotidian life. Appelfeld's memoir shows how unlike regular autobiographies by Holocaust adult survivors, child survivors' memoirs are less constructed around factual events of private and public relevance and that they concentrate on deeply entrenched sensations and the imminence of the death of parents and loss children experienced during World War II. Finally, it is important to recognize that in the case of a child survivor turned author like Appelfeld, the act of deferred mourning is inscribed in the technique of memoir construction via the continuous interruption of straightforward chronological organization.

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Author's profile: Dana Mihăilescu teaches English and US-American Studies at the University of Bucharest. Her interests in scholarship include Jewish American Studies, Holocaust survivor testimonies, trauma and witnessing, and ethics and memory. In addition to numerous articles in English, Mihăilescu's recent book publications include *Regimes of Vulnerability in Jewish American Media and Literature* (2015) and the edited volume *Mapping Generations of Traumatic Memory in American Narratives* (with Roxana Oltean and Mihaela Precup, 2014).  
E-mail: <[dana.mihailescu@ils.unibuc.ro](mailto:dana.mihailescu@ils.unibuc.ro)>