

Memory and the Holocaust



Presented at the Mt. David Summit on March 24, 2006

Marian Goddard '07

Elizabeth Tobin, History

Four Memoirs of Hidden Girl Survivors of the Holocaust

Jewish children in Europe were specific targets of Nazism because children represented the future of Judaism. Only six to seven percent of European Jewish children were left alive at the end of the Holocaust. The majority of these surviving children were hidden by gentile rescuers. The memoirs of hidden children are significant for constructing a complete Holocaust history because until recently, hidden children did not engage with their past. What are common aspects of how young girls hidden in Poland remember their hidden childhood? I found that the four memoirs I read identify invisibility and cravings for normalcy as common experiences of hidden girls. They also share a unique style, which simulates a child's voice, obviously influenced by an adult perspective.

Invisibility, Normalcy, and Reconnecting With the Past: Four Memoirs By Hidden Girl Survivors of the Holocaust

“Trying to find the facts of my past and the truth behind the facts, I write. In the car while driving, in the morning in a corner of my room, in front of a computer, at strange tables, while waiting for my Yoga class, while lined up in a supermarket, at breakfast with my friends after a Sunday walk. On a cold winter morning icicles hang from my eyelashes above a dark-blue propylene ski mask when I walk in the park, but I don't hide behind the mask anymore.”

—Miriam Winter, *Trains*

Jewish children in Europe were specific targets of Nazism because children represented the future of Judaism. The Holocaust claimed the lives of 1.5 million Jewish children out of an original population of 1.6 million. This means that only six to seven percent of European Jewish children were left alive at the end of the

Holocaust.¹ The majority of these surviving children were hidden by gentile rescuers. There were two types of hiding, literal hiding and passing as a Christian. As stated by Eva Fogelman in her essay “The Psychology Behind Being a Hidden Child,” literal hiding entailed physical concealment and therefore was a “passive” hiding which entailed invisibility. Fogelman calls passing as a Christian an “active” hiding since these children were visible and had to inhabit a new identity, a different type of invisibility.²

The memoirs of hidden children are significant for constructing a complete Holocaust history because until recently, hidden children did not engage with their past. Hidden children survivors suppressed their past for several reasons. First, their experiences were minimized and marginalized by elders who assumed youth protected child survivors from trauma. Kerry Bluglass states that adult survivors thought hidden children were protected from trauma because they were less mentally developed.³ Children survivors were unable to correct this misconception because they came of age in the pre-Spock era in which children were supposed to be seen but not heard.⁴ Second, adult survivors rejected the experiences of hidden children survivors as authentic Holocaust experiences because, as one hidden child stated, “since we had survived to tell the tale, it could not have been so bad.”⁵ Third, hidden children survivors suppressed their memories in order to construct an atmosphere of normalcy in their post-war lives.

Many hidden children did not share their experiences until they reached middle age.⁶ As stated by Abraham H. Foxman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League, many of these survivors acknowledged their hidden childhoods for the first time at the “International Gathering of Hidden Children,” held in May 1991 in New York City.⁷ The memoirs of hidden children are a means of reconnecting with the past. These memoirs have a particular style because they were written at least fifty years after the Holocaust. In their memoirs, hidden children survivors try to recreate their child self; however, their adult perspective is obvious. Sue Vice calls this narrative style a split subject in which “the narrative voice is an adult one, even if the viewpoint is a child’s.”⁸ Therefore, these memoirs share themes, invisibility and a craving for normalcy, and a unique style.

Of particular interest within the larger category of hidden children survivors are the experiences of young girls hidden in Poland. Why look only at the memoirs of girls? I decided to analyze only memoirs by women in order to narrow my research. This said, gender is significant in these memoirs even though it is not the focus of this paper. Girls were more easily hidden. Jewish boys were circumcised, making it dangerous to pass a boy as a Christian.⁹ Girls and boys likely had similar experiences while hiding. Following the war, gender influenced the experiences of girls. Girls actively sought normalcy. Surviving hidden girls centered their post-war lives on family, a specifically female gender norm.

¹ Jane Marks, *The Hidden Children: Secret Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 276.

² Eva Fogelman, “The Psychology Behind Being a Hidden Child,” found in Marks, Jane, *Hidden Children*, 293.

³ Kerry Bluglass, *Hidden from the Holocaust: Stories of Resilient Children Who Survived and Thrived* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 26.

⁴ Bluglass, Kerry, *Hidden*, 26.

⁵ Qtd. in André Stein, *Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1993), 270.

⁶ Stein, André, *Hidden Children*, 270.

⁷ Abraham H. Foxman, “Preface,” found in Jane Marks, *The Hidden Children: Secret Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), vii.

⁸ Sue Vice, *Children Writing the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 65.

⁹ Deborah Dwork, *Children With a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 71.

The main question that I ask is what are common aspects of how young girls hidden in Poland remember their hidden childhood? The particular memoirs that I discuss are Naomi Samson's *Hide*, Nelly S. Toll's *Behind the Secret Window*, Theresa Cahn-Tober's *Hide and Seek*, and Miriam Winter's *Trains*.¹⁰ Samson was nine and a half when she went into literal hiding in 1942, and Toll was six when she went into literal hiding in 1941. Cahn-Tober assumed a Christian identity in 1941 at the age of five, and Winter assumed a Christian identity in 1943 at the age of nine. These memoirs share several themes. First, children in hiding had to become invisible in order to survive. Second, after the Holocaust, these survivors silenced their pasts in order to become "normal" women. A fellow child survivor, André Stein, describes the adult struggles of hidden children. He writes:

Most of us remained quiet. And quietly we went on achieving. Rather than clinging to our losses, we searched for what was still possible. We raised families, built honorable careers, created financial security and joined communities – in short, we learned to look normal. We achieved a great deal, but we remained silently restless. Phantoms were still haunting us in the dark of the night or in solitude. [...] But we made accommodations to cut the monster down to a size we could wrestle to the ground so that we could live like "normal" people.¹¹

Third, these memoirists use writing to remember their hidden childhoods. These hidden girl survivors write to "feel connected to [their] past, [to] integrate it into [their] current self."¹²

In *Hide*, Naomi Samson tells about her concealment with her mother and several of her siblings in their "kriuvka," literally "hideout."¹³ The kriuvka was a hole in hay packed into the crawl space under Mrs. Kowalik's barn. Samson states that she assumed invisibility through physical and verbal confinement. The lack of space, and the imposed silence were the most oppressive aspects of Samson's hiding in the kriuvka. She writes, "I was able to sit down without my head touching the first floor above us. So could Josh. But Mama and Janice, being taller, had to sit with their heads bent down toward their chests or lean to the side."¹⁴ Samson's hiding place was so physically restrictive that at the end of their time in hiding she was unable to walk. She writes, "Through two long, harsh winters in hiding we always curled up in a fetal position to try to keep warm. Since we were of growing age, the muscles in the backs of our knees had grown together."¹⁵ Confinement in small spaces was common for concealed children. Ela Mahler explains that the physical effects of hiding on Samson were commonplace, "Among the surviving children there were many who lost their ability to walk, became half-blind, or suffered from skin diseases, tuberculosis, and other chronic illnesses as a result of living for months in the most incredible places, in conditions unfit for human beings."¹⁶

¹⁰ Naomi Samson, *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), English.
Nelly S. Toll, *Behind the Secret Window: Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During World War II* (New York: Dial Books of Penguin Books, 1993), English.
Theresa Cahn-Tober, *Hide and Seek: A Wartime Childhood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), English.
Miriam Winter, *Trains: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During and After World War II* (Jackson: Kelton Press, 1997), English.

¹¹ Stein, André, *Hidden Children*, 271-2.

¹² Marks, Jane, *Hidden Children*, 303.

¹³ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 39.

¹⁴ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 41.

¹⁵ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 123.

¹⁶Ela Mahler, "The Fate of Jewish Children During the Holocaust" (*Yad Vashem Bulletin* 15 (1964): 48-54), 54.

Imposed silence was another common experience for hidden children. Upon first entering the kriuvka, Mrs. Kowalik tells Samson and her family, “Not a sound out of you while you are here. The walls have ears. You never know who can hear you and give you out to the sheriff. If you have to talk, do so in a whisper.”¹⁷ Deborah Dwork explains, in her book *Children With a Star*, that the experiences of concealed children were dominated by their invisibility. Dwork writes, “The essential problem was to leave no evidence or sign of one’s presence, to live without trace or vestige of existence. This was accomplished through concealment and dissimulation. [...] Just as the children were not to be visible, they were not to be heard.”¹⁸

Invisibility was traumatizing for hidden children because their spheres were necessarily limited. Dwork writes, “To go into hiding meant that all, or nearly all, ties with society were severed. [...] Completely cut off from any community, without mobility or access to either goods or services [...], their lives became straitened and circumscribed.”¹⁹ This disconnect is significant because hidden children coped with their limited sphere by taking refuge in their imagination. Samson dreamt of freedom and of emigration to America where she would tell her story: “I used to lie in the kriuvka dreaming of the possibility that we would be freed. Free to live like other people! And somehow I knew we would come to America if we were free, and I would see myself standing on a bench and telling my story to the American people.”²⁰ Samson used her imagination to escape the “extraordinarily punitive prison cell”²¹ of concealment and invisibility.

The above passage about Samson’s dream to emigrate to the United States illustrates the unique style of the memoirs of hidden children because it is an example of a split subject. Samson recreates her child voice by writing in the present tense and by using simple sentence structures. While this passage is childlike, it is colored by an adult perspective. Here, Samson is engaged in bearing witness. This terminology is part of a post-Holocaust terminology of which Samson’s child-self would not have been aware, thereby illustrating her adult conscious. This passage is characteristic of Samson’s memoir as a whole.

Samson suppressed her memories in order to lead what she thought was a normal, post-war life. She states that she did not share her experiences because she did not want to make people sad: “No, you can’t make people sad. Anyway, people still don’t want to hear about it.”²² Samson thought that by keeping her Holocaust experience hidden, she would be more successful in becoming a normal American woman. She writes, “No one must know that I am a refugee of World War II. No one must find out I’m a Holocaust survivor. My English is pretty good. I’m careful not to say words I can’t pronounce well. I dress nicely, and I try to look like an American.”²³ Samson also ensured she raised a “normal” family. Samson’s explains that she and her husband “cared for our young ones, we played with them, read books to them, took them places, and did everything a normal American family did.”²⁴

¹⁷ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 40.

¹⁸ Dwork, Deborah, *Children With a Star*, 71.

¹⁹ Dwork, Deborah, *Children With a Star*, 68.

²⁰ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 89.

²¹ Dwork, Deborah, *Children With a Star*, 69.

²² Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 188.

²³ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 189.

²⁴ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 188.

Samson suppressed her memories and subsequently forced herself back into hiding so as to become a normal American woman raising a normal American family. Her memoir illustrates the strain caused by her silence:

Inside me, though, there was little Naomi, pulling the strings, reminding me, through flashbacks, of the bad times. Little Naomi desperately wanted to come out, to tell the whole story, and to cry. But the grown-up Naomi would say, “No, you can’t [...] So stay down, little kid. Don’t rock the boat. Go back and hide.” So I was trying to act normal, but it was getting harder all the time. The bubble inside me was growing bigger and bigger.²⁵

Samson writes *Hide* as an active engagement with her past after decades of silence. Samson’s son writes in his preface that his mother’s memoir is “not only the recounting of her memories but also the culmination of a life-long struggle to live with them, a struggle that did not neatly end when the war was over in 1945.”²⁶ In her memoir, Samson integrates her past with her present. Samson uses her memoir to bear witness as a Holocaust survivor, and she dedicates her memoir to Jewish children. She writes, “No more running, no more hiding for me and for all Jewish children. Yes, we are free to live. That is definitely my greatest revenge against all Nazis in the world.”²⁷ Therefore, Samson’s active engagement with her past allows her to bear witness as a Holocaust survivor.

Nelly Toll was literally concealed, and her memoir, *Behind the Secret Window*, emphasizes her invisibility, achieved through confinement and silence. Toll and her mother were confined to a single room within an apartment. If anyone ever came to visit their rescuers, Toll and her mother crawled into their special hiding place, the secret window. Toll writes, “‘This place was once a window,’ Papa told me, ‘but it has been bricked over on the street side. It can’t be seen from the outside.’ The windowsill was wide enough for Mama and me to crouch on sideways if we ever needed to hide in there – if anyone should want to see our room.”²⁸ Like Samson, Toll was confined to a small space, and she was told, “The walls have ears, and so do the neighbors,”²⁹ making silence necessary. The most traumatic moments of Toll’s memoir are those in which she is almost seen, when she almost loses her invisibility. For example, Toll describes her distress when friends of her rescuers came into her hiding place in order to watch buildings burning after an air raid. Toll narrowly escaped notice. Toll writes, “It was not until after they had finally left and I ran into Mama’s arms that Pani Krysia covered her face and began to cry. Did they see us? Would they report us to the Gestapo? That night hardly anyone could fall asleep. I could hear the turning and twisting, the creaking springs.”³⁰ Therefore, for Toll, as for Samson, invisibility dominates her memory of hiding.

Like Samson, Toll used her imagination as a coping mechanism for her concealment and invisibility. While in hiding Toll painted pictures and wrote accompanying stories as an escape. She writes:

Once I started to paint, a new world opened up for me. It was as if the little box of watercolors made a bright path straight through the apartment walls to the outdoors. [...] In my pictures there was no war, no danger, no police, and no tears. Everyone liked each other in my make-believe

²⁵ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 188.

²⁶ Joseph Samson, “Preface,” found in Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, xi.

²⁷ Samson, Naomi, *Hide*, 194.

²⁸ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 82.

²⁹ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 83.

³⁰ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 121.

land, and all the people were as free as kites in the sky or butterflies in the field. They were like newfound companions to me in my loneliness, and I couldn't wait to take my next walk on paper with my watercolor friends. I almost always showed children together with other children or adults, except for one painting – a portrait I called 'All Alone.'³¹

This passage illustrates Toll's craving for her idealized pre-war childhood. Like Samson, Toll was cut off from a normal childhood experience. Dwork explains that going into hiding entailed an end to normal childhood in that hidden children had "to sever all normal activities."³² Toll's imagination allowed her to cope with her invisibility and subsequent loss of a normal childhood.

Toll also uses a split narrative style. She, like Samson, references the post-Holocaust terminology of bearing witness. At one point in her memoir, the Gestapo barged into the apartment and Toll and her mother were almost discovered. At this moment Toll's biggest fear is, "If they took us, I thought, our possessions would be destroyed also. No one would ever know about my precious writings and my paintings."³³ It is unlikely that Toll intended to keep record of her hiding with her paintings, especially because her paintings are fictitious. Toll painted to fight loneliness and boredom.³⁴ The previous passage shows Toll's adult commitment to bearing witness because her paintings and stories were the solitary proof of her life as a hidden child. Without these products of her concealment, Toll has no evidence of her hidden childhood. Toll's emphasis on bearing witness is an adult moment because her understanding of the importance of her paintings goes beyond her child consciousness. Toll's paintings are published in her memoir.

Toll narrates her craving for a return to "normalcy." While in hiding, Toll's mother taught Toll:

Mama tried to be my teacher too. I didn't like math lessons, but I enjoyed English, especially when I had new vocabulary words to learn. My favorite subject was Greek mythology, with its wonderful gods and goddesses who made me forget the danger that was around us. Mama also taught me history, weaving tales of faraway lands and people.³⁵

Dwork states that such lessons "signified in a very basic and fundamental way that [hidden children] meant to return to society, that they believed they would resume a normal life."³⁶ After the war Toll, unlike Samson, did not repress her memories in order to achieve normalcy; instead, she and her mother attempted to recreate their pre-war family lifestyle. Her mother remarried, thereby recreating a family. Toll identifies this new family as the first element of her return to normalcy. She writes, "We slowly journeyed toward normalcy again after our move to the rooming house. I took on Henek's last name, and we became a family."³⁷ Leaving Poland was the next element of Toll's return to normalcy. She writes, "I was glad we were leaving Lwów behind us forever, with its terrible memories and its bloodstained earth."³⁸ This passage illustrates Toll's escapist mind frame. She

³¹ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 94.

³² Dwork, Deborah, *Children With a Star*, 69.

³³ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 107.

³⁴ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 94.

³⁵ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 96.

³⁶ Dwork, Deborah, *Children With a Star*, 75.

³⁷ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 155.

³⁸ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 156.

left her childhood behind so that it would not taint her future. Toll “married, raised two children, and continued [her] education, of which art was an integral part.”³⁹

Children hidden through assuming Christian identities also became invisible because they survived by assimilating with Christian children. In *Hide and Seek* Theresa Cahn-Tober shows that taking on a new name and abandoning her “Jewish” name was the most critical experience of her hidden childhood. Nechama Tec, also a hidden child, in her essay “A Historical Perspective: Tracing the History of the Hidden-Child Experience” states, “giving up our identity meant playing a part, becoming someone else. The better we played the role, the safer we were.”⁴⁰ In her memoir Cahn-Tober describes how she assumed her new identity. She writes:

Marysia rehearses me: What is my name? Teresa Chrystyna Urban, Tereska for short. How old am I? Seven. What is my religion? Catholic. Where are my parents? Dead; I am an orphan. Who is Marysia? Marysia is my aunt. My mother was her sister. I am going to live with my aunt. We repeat these facts until I get them right, quickly, with no hesitation. I work at remembering. Then I work at forgetting – forgetting that I am Jewish. That my name is Irena. That I am Jewish. That I am only five. That I am Jewish. That I have parents who have sent me away.⁴¹

Cahn-Tober’s words show that her new identity was initially only a pretend identity, but that it quickly became her only identity. Cahn-Tober made her old identity disappear in order to become a Christian girl. She writes, “In these simple steps, my family has disappeared. I have disappeared, too. I’m no longer Irena Stefania Licht. I’m Teresa Chrystyna Urban, a girl two years older than myself.”⁴² By forgetting her old identity, Cahn-Tober optimized her survival because her new identity allowed her to become invisible; she became indistinguishable from other Christian girls. Such assimilation was necessary for survival because only by “becoming part of a group, and not appearing different from that group’s members”⁴³ could Jewish children survive the Holocaust.

Another aspect of assimilation was active participation in Christianity. Cahn-Tober was not unusual in that she willingly embraced and internalized Christianity. Cahn-Tober felt affinity for Jesus as he was nailed to the cross. She writes, “Poor Jesus, I thought, as I always did when confronted with an image of the blood dripping from his wounds. I glanced at my favorite statue, the one of Baby Jesus in his mother’s arms. Some monsters had nailed this baby to the cross. I hated them.”⁴⁴ Cahn-Tober also felt protected by her newly adopted religion. Her adopted identity allowed her to distance herself from the “crime” of being Jewish. She writes, “And besides, I caught myself thinking somewhat guiltily, it’s got nothing to do with me. I’m a Catholic now.”⁴⁵ Other children passing as Christians shared this feeling of protection. For example, Eva Nisenzweig states, “I was really beginning to believe in the Christian God, Jesus. He was protecting those who believed in him. [...]

³⁹ Toll, Nelly S., *Secret Window*, 161.

⁴⁰ Nechama Tec, “A Historical Perspective: Tracing the History of the Hidden-Child Experience,” found in Marks, Jane, *Hidden Children*, 287.

⁴¹ Cahn-Tober, Theresa, *Hide and Seek*, 41.

⁴² Cahn-Tober, Theresa, *Hide and Seek*, 40.

⁴³ Vice, Sue, *Children Writing*, 101.

⁴⁴ Cahn-Tober, *Hide and Seek*, 75.

⁴⁵ Cahn-Tober, *Hide and Seek*, 76.

I did not want to be Jewish. I wanted to be a Catholic so that I could be protected by their God.”⁴⁶ This further shows how hidden children passing as Christian internalized their new identities, which distinguishes them from concealed children.

Sue Vice explains that the memoirs of hidden children who passed as Christians are different from the memoirs of adults who passed as Christians because “a clear division between assumed and ‘real’ identity was not available to hidden children. Rather these accounts represent a process of learning and internalizing certain habits and behaviors.”⁴⁷ Cahn-Tober’s memoir illustrates Vice’s point. This memoir is dominated by Cahn-Tober’s gradual forgetting of her old name and identity. She writes, “Over time, the memories of my parents faded, like old photographs. The game of make-believe turned into reality; I grew into my part. [...] It no longer seemed strange to call Marysia “Aunt.” At times, by mistake, I called her Mama.”⁴⁸

This memoir uses a split narrative similar to the split narrative style employed by Samson and Toll. Cahn-Tober uses the present tense to recreate her child voice, and she uses past tense for adult observations. Cahn-Tober creates dialogue which suggests a childlike naiveté, but this dialogue is layered with an adult awareness of deeper meanings. For example, Cahn-Tober creates dialogue when she recounts her parents’ decision to change their last name from Licht to Lighton upon immigrating to the United States. In dialogue, Cahn-Tober cites problems with pronunciation as the reason for this name change. This illustrates her childhood naiveté. In the next sentence, Cahn-Tober interjects her adult sensibility and writes, “It wasn’t about difficult pronunciation. ‘Licht’ spelled JEW. That’s why we had to shed it during the war. [...] Were we to hide our Jewishness again in America? ‘I hate Lighton.’”⁴⁹ This passage shows Cahn-Tober’s adult anger at having to take on yet another identity.

Cahn-Tober’s⁵⁰ name change from Licht to Lighton illustrates her parents’ need to blend and to seem normal. In order to achieve normalcy Cahn-Tober’s parents internalized their memories. As a result, Cahn-Tober was forced to continue to suppress her memories upon emigrating to the United States. She writes:

As Teresa (later changed to Theresa) Irena (later changed to Irene) soon to be Lighton stepped onto American soil, she chose to forget: Irena Licht, age three (and the barely known Gittle) in Katowice; Teresa Chrystyna Urban, age six, in Przemysl and Warsaw; Teresa Chrystyna Kaliszewska, age eight, in Mstow; Teresa Chrystyna Teodorowicz, age nine, in Bydgoszcz; both Tirtza and Teresa Irena Licht, age ten in Neu Freiman. A curtain came down and cut me off from these little girls, Catholic and Jewish, who had been me.

Cahn-Tober distanced herself from her previous identities. She was forced to separate herself from her different identities, representative of her Holocaust experience, in order to become a normal American girl.

Like Cahn-Tober’s memoir, Miriam Winter’s memoir *Trains* is dominated by the implications of her name change. Winter pinpoints the beginning of her Holocaust experience as the moment when her name changed for the first time. Her memoir begins, “My mother called me Mirka. They all called me Mirka. Until the fall of 1941, I was a daughter, a granddaughter, a sister, a niece, and we lived like a tightly knotted string of beads:

⁴⁶ Qtd. in Mordecai Paldi, “Fear and Comfort: The Plight of Hidden Jewish Children in Wartime Poland” (*Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 6.4 (1991): 397-413), 403.

⁴⁷ Vice, Sue, *Children Writing*, 91.

⁴⁸ Cahn-Tober, *Hide and Seek*, 49.

⁴⁹ Cahn-Tober, *Hide and Seek*, 188.

⁵⁰ Cahn-Tober is her married name.

always together. Then, the string broke, and I wasn't called Mirka anymore."⁵¹ Winter's name change is particularly troubling because she lost her pre-war memories. She is unable to remember her real name and is uncertain about her parents' names. The only pre-war fragment of memory Winter retains is the tactile memory of a dish her mother used to make called *czulent*.⁵² Winter calls her inability to remember "nonremembrance."⁵³

Unlike Cahn-Tober, Winter approaches her assumed identity with a violent tone. Cahn-Tober approaches her assumed identity as a game of pretending, hence the title of her memoir, *Hide and Seek*. Winter approaches her assumed identity as layers of lies that she is unable to escape in her adulthood. She writes, "Lies saved my life during the war, and I didn't stop lying when the war ended."⁵⁴ The permanence of Winter's assumed identity is commonplace for children hidden through passing as Christians. Winter internalized her assumed identity; she became "a shepherd girl taking a cow into the pasture,"⁵⁵ and she became an observant Catholic. Winter found comfort in Catholicism: "Slowly the singing and the prayers carved a path into my heart. I went to mass every Sunday. I learned the prayers and said them often. In the back pew of the church I felt safe. Paper flowers on the altar: pink roses, red poppies, blue cornflowers."⁵⁶ In fact, the first time that Winter questions her belief in Christianity is in 1949, but she hides her disillusionment. She writes:

One morning I stumbled out of my bed and wrote in my diary, 'I don't believe in God.' Frightened, I tore the page out. At first I crumpled the paper and threw it into the wastebasket; then, afraid that someone might read my confession, I tore the page into tiny bits, which I burned in the white ceramic oven that stood in the corner of our room.⁵⁷

This passage illustrates her continued fear of becoming an outsider. She does not want others to know of her disillusionment because she is afraid of persecution.

Pervasive in *Trains* is Winter's craving for normalcy. Winter's affinity with Christianity results from this craving. Normal for Winter meant not being Jewish. After liberation, Winter continued to hide her real, Jewish identity. She writes, "It wasn't easy to find us. After the war, I buried my past. I neither talked nor thought about it. Still hiding behind a Christian name, I didn't even admit that I was Jewish."⁵⁸ Winter hid behind her assumed identity even after the war so as to attain some semblance of normalcy. She describes how she masqueraded as a cheerful teenager when really she was tormented by her losses:

Outwardly, I skipped and bounced. They still called me *Pchelka*⁵⁹. No one could come close to me; I aspired to be witty, acerbic, biting, and fast, yet still closely corseted, closed, cold, private.

⁵¹ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 19.

⁵² Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 89.

⁵³ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 24.

⁵⁴ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 19.

⁵⁵ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 58.

⁵⁶ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 51.

⁵⁷ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 164.

⁵⁸ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 23.

⁵⁹ "a little flea," Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 158.

But sometimes my cover, like an eggshell too thin to transport, would crack in the theater, in the cinema, at night when no one watched me.⁶⁰

This passage illustrates the price paid by Winter for her continued hiding. *Trains* illustrates why Winter and many other Holocaust survivors in Poland continued to hide their identities after the war. Winter hid because of the continuing anti-Semitic atmosphere of Poland. Eva Fogelman cites the deaths of forty-two Jews in Kielce, Poland on July 4, 1946 as an example of violence towards Jews following the end of the war.⁶¹ This hostility towards Jews is manifest in *Trains*. Winter gives an example of anti-Semitism in Poland from the sixties. She writes, “During the Arab-Israeli conflict that led to the 1967 Six Day War the Polish government took the side of the Arabs and condemned Israel. The government-owned press continued an anti-Jewish campaign. Every-day I read articles condemning Jews.”⁶²

Winter reconnects with her hidden childhood by writing. Her memoir is unique in its style because it is highly fragmented. Sue Vice states, “Despite seeming an ideal way in which to present children’s-eye views of the past, fragmentariness is not a common narrative mode.”⁶³ Winter’s memoir is fragmented because it is an integral part of her remembering. Winter had very little memory of her pre-war life, for example she could not remember her mother’s face. Therefore, she writes in order to bring her hidden childhood into focus. In her chapter “Bydgoszcz 1951-1953” Winter describes how she reconnected with her past by finally accepting her hidden childhood. She writes:

Learning piece by piece, I went from not wanting to know, from trying to forget, from leaving everything at once, from not wanting to remember, from discarding the past like unwanted rummage, to a search taken up to late, without a map, with no guideposts and no directions, to slow and painful discoveries. Some pebbles fit the mosaic.⁶⁴

Winter’s memoir, more so than the other memoirs discussed, is an active reconnecting with the past. Winter frequently zooms out of her past and zooms in on her present. She writes chapters similar to the “Digression” chapters in Paul Steinberg’s *Speak You Also*.⁶⁵ Winter uses episodes from her present to talk about her writing process. She states, “Trying to find the facts of my past and the truth behind the facts, I write.”⁶⁶ This passage is typical of Winter’s memoir and it illustrates that writing is Winter’s tool for reconnecting with her hidden childhood. *Trains* is particularly memorable because of Winter’s honesty about her lack of memory resulting from years of suppressing childhood memories.

Hidden children survivors were hidden in two distinctly different fashions. They were hidden literally, confined and silenced, or they were hidden by assuming Christian identities. The memoirs of these children, specifically Samson’s *Hide*, Toll’s *Behind the Secret Window*, Cahn-Tober’s *Hide and Seek*, and Winter’s *Trains*, identify invisibility and cravings for normalcy as common experiences of hidden girls. The style of these mem-

⁶⁰ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 167.

⁶¹ Fogelman, Eva, “Psychology,” found in Marks, Jane, *Hidden Children*, 296.

⁶² Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 188.

⁶³ Vice, Sue, *Children Writing*, 159.

⁶⁴ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 177.

⁶⁵ Paul Steinberg, *Speak You Also: A Survivor’s Reckoning* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996).

⁶⁶ Winter, Miriam, *Trains*, 207.

oirs is also unique because these memoirs are used by these survivors to remember their hidden childhoods. Therefore, these memoirs allow these survivors to reconnect with their pasts.

Bibliography

Bluglass, Kerry. *Hidden from the Holocaust: Stories of Resilient Children Who Survived and Thrived*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003.

Cahn-Tober, Theresa. *Hide and Seek: A Wartime Childhood*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002.

Dwork, Deborah. *Children With a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Fogelman, Eva. "The Psychology Behind Being a Hidden Child," found in Jane Marks. *The Hidden Children: Secret Survivors of the Holocaust*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.

Foxman, Abraham H. "Preface," found in Jane Marks, *The Hidden Children: Secret Survivors of the Holocaust*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.

Laqueur, Walter. "The Fate of a Generation" Partisan Review 66.3 (1999): 404-16.

Mahler, Ela. "The Fate of Jewish Children During the Holocaust" Yad Vashem Bulletin 15 (1964): 48-54.

Marks, Jane. *The Hidden Children: Secret Survivors of the Holocaust*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.

Muller-Paisner, Vera. *Broken Chain: Catholics Uncover the Holocaust's Hidden Legacy and Discover Their Jewish Roots*. Charlottesville: Pitchstone Publishing, 2005.

Paldiel, Mordecai. "Fear and Comfort: The Plight of Hidden Jewish Children in Wartime Poland" Holocaust and Genocide Studies 6.4 (1991): 397-413.

Pawlikowski, John T. "Recent Books on the Catholic Church in Poland" Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry 13 (2000): 401-5.

Samson, Naomi. *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Samson, Joseph. "Preface," found in Naomi Samson. *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Stein, André. *Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1993.

Steinberg, Paul. *Speak You Also: A Survivor's Reckoning*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996.

- Tec, Nechama. "A Historical Perspective: Tracing the History of the Hidden-Child Experience," found in Jane Marks. *Hidden Children: Secret Survivors of the Holocaust*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.
- Toll, Nelly S. *Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During World War Two*. New York: Dial Book of Penguin Books, 1993.
- Vice, Sue. *Children Writing the Holocaust*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Winter, Miriam. *Trains: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During and After World War II*. Jackson: Kelton Press, 1997.
- Wiesel, Elie. "The Holocaust's First Target" Dimensions 6.3 (1992): 8-10.