

A Holocaust Narrative of Humiliation and Resilience

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Aharon Appelfeld's (b. February 16, 1932) "The Story of a Life," is a first person narrative of humiliation and resilience. This account reveals how the timing of trauma affects one's later life. Appelfeld was eight and a half when Germans and Romanians shot his mother and grandmother. Shortly thereafter the boy and his father escaped to a ghetto but were later rounded up and incarcerated in a camp from which the child escaped (Appelfeld, 1998). For most of the rest of the war the boy lived silently by his wits in a forest, a circumstance which made returning to a wider social group problematic. He found adjusting to postwar life in Israel very difficult partly because Holocaust survivors were not greatly respected or understood in postwar Israel (Tolan, 2006). Moreover, he did not fit into the kibbutz life very easily. Fortunately he had great talent as a novelist and eventually found his footing in a new land.