The Dutch hiding experience in fiction

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This article discusses fictional literature about the Jewish hiding experience in the Netherlands during the Second World War. A chronological inventory shows three periods: the immediate postwar years, the 1970a and 1980s, and the 2010s.[1] A more detailed thematic exploration analyzes how aid-givers, troublesome people in hiding, religious tensions between hosts and guests, and the child's perspective are represented in fiction. In literary theory, Holocaust fiction has not always been an overall accepted genre, but when compared to historiography and psychological research on after-effects, fiction on hiding presents a remarkably truthful image of the hiding experience. Children's literature, partly, is somewhat of an exception: whereas many children lived under a false identity and thus with relative freedom of movement, children's books are more about children who are literally hidden. At the same time, children's books leave possibly questionable motives of aid-givers out of the picture. Contrary to what one would expect, this is precisely an aspect about which adult novels written shortly after the war are quite open: they do not keep silent about greed and egotism among the rescuers. Thus, from the start, fictional literature called into question the general (self-)image of the Dutch as heroic helpers of their persecuted Jewish fellow citizens, a view inspired by the diary of Anne Frank. In a sense, fiction offers a "truer" picture than the most famous non-fiction work on hiding.

Keywords: Holocaust fiction, the Netherlands, Second World War, hiding, children's literature, autobiography.

Holocaust fiction has long been a contested genre. For decades, it was considered almost a sacrilege to write an imaginary Holocaust story. One of the most prominent opponents of the genre, Elie Wiesel, famously declared that "A novel about Treblinka is either not a novel or not about Treblinka. A novel about Majdanek is about blasphemy. Is blasphemy" (Wiesel 1990, 7). As the Second World War and

[1] I would like to thank the two anonymous peer reviewers for their useful comments. I am also grateful for the linguistic changes in this article suggested by Krystyna Henke.

the Holocaust recede into memory, however, the ban on Holocaust fiction gradually seems to be lifting. Literary critics did not reject Jonathan Littell's (2006) imaginative novel *Les bienveillantes* ('The kindly ones'), which features a Holocaust perpetrator as its first-person narrator. Clearly, it would be difficult to maintain a preference for autobiographical perpetrator texts, as they are very rare. So, this acceptance may pertain to the narrative situation, because there is hardly a non-fiction alternative, in contrast with literature from the victim's perspective. However, the most important factor in this evolving acceptance is, undoubtedly, the passing of time.

Interestingly, there is a marked difference with how fictional tales on hiding are regarded, which is a somewhat less sensitive topic than concentration camp experiences. In the Netherlands, beginning right after the war, fiction about hiding has been an accepted genre. Curiously, public interest in actual diaries by people in hiding did not commence until at least fifty years later, with Anne Frank's diary as the one great exception. Even more puzzling is why the substantial body of literary works on hiding is seldom included in theoretical works on Holocaust literature, as if hiding is not deemed a part of the Holocaust experience, in all its diversity. A threefold reason for the lack of critical published works that address Dutch fiction on hiding can be identified. First, Dutch literature in general has remained underexposed internationally because of the language obstacle. Further, Holocaust fiction has long been considered a "suspect" genre. Finally, the topic of hiding as part of the Holocaust experience has never received much scholarly attention. I will explore how Dutch fictional works on hiding compare with non-fiction and how they can be positioned within the historiography of the Holocaust. Following a section in this article on literary theory of Holocaust literature in general and hiding more specifically, I will offer a chronological overview of the literary works in question and then discuss them more in detail on the basis of the most important themes that emerge in those books. Upon presenting a summary of the historiography of hiding in the Netherlands and psychological approaches to hiding, especially where children are concerned, I draw conclusions about the truthfulness or credibility of Dutch fiction on this topic.

Literary theory

Holocaust literature did not emerge as an acknowledged literary genre until the 1970s. In fact, the very first theorist that I know of was the Dutchman Sem Dresden, who wrote the essay *De literaire getuige* ('The literary witness') in 1959. This was followed in 1964 by a much shorter article, "The literature of the Holocaust" by Alexander Alvarez. Remarkably, American – and to a lesser degree, British – scholarship dominates the field, which entails the exclusion of many primary works that have not been translated into English. See, for example, Zoë

Waxman (2006), who in *Writing the Holocaust* stresses the wide variety of the authors she discusses, while adding: "The primary focus is on post war English-language materials, readily accessible to the general reader" (2). Obviously, scholars from different nationalities contribute to the field with their own linguistic and literary knowledge, such as Cynthia Haft about French literature, Andrea Reiter, Ernestine Schlant, and Susan E. Cernyak-Spatz about literature in German, and Sem Dresden about Dutch literature. Lawrence Langer (1977) wrote what is considered to be the first standard work: *The Holocaust and the literary imagination*. His focus is not on the genre that became known as documentary or testimonial literature but on the manner in which literature attempts to convey an ineffable reality and the possible conflict between facts and the imaginary world. Literature on hiding, which formally is part of the genre of Holocaust literature, on the whole falls outside his scope and that of many subsequent scholars. Alvin Rosenfeld (1980) includes poetry, Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi (1980) focuses on various kinds of fictionalization, and Zoë Waxman (2006) discusses only testimonial literature about the ghettos and the concentration camps. Frequently, Holocaust literature is divided into subcategories, based on the proximity to the events. This can be seen, for example, in Zoë Waxman's (2006) *Writing the Holocaust*, and in Elrud Ibsch's (2013) *Overleven in verhalen: Van ooggetuigen naar 'jonge wilden': Joodse schrijvers over de Shoah* ('Survival in stories: from eyewitnesses to "young savages": Jewish writers on the Shoah'). Subcategories range from diaries and chronicles written contemporaneously, to memoirs, auto-biographical fiction, and finally, writing that is entirely fictional.

James E. Young (1990) refined the debate on fact and fiction in Holocaust literature by pointing out that texts written at the time offer nothing more than a – possibly flawed – interpretation of the facts. For instance, a matter that in hind-sight is seen as the cause of a certain development does not reveal itself as such from the start and may be totally ignored by a diarist. Diaries do have the advantage of authenticity, as does testimonial literature, though the passing of time lessens that quality somewhat. Mimetic fiction is another category. It "incorporates the events into the continuum of history and human experience" (Howe 1988, 191). It does not necessarily pretend to be authentic, but it strives after plausibility and verisimilitude. The works discussed here belong to this category. The final category is fiction of a "transhistorical mode" that "transfigures the events into a mythic reality where madness reigns and all historical loci are relinquished" (Howe 1988, 191).[2] There is, as far as I am aware, no Dutch fiction on hiding that belongs to this last category. Berel Lang (2000) conducted an inter-esting thought experiment on the question of authenticity in the chapter "The

[2] Irwing Howe here quotes Sidra Ezrahi, who in turn refers to Israeli critic Hannah Yaoz (Howe does not mention details of either source).

facts of fiction" in *Holocaust Representation*. He imagined finding a document with a statement by Primo Levi that his book *If this is a man* was based on experiences and memories that someone else had told him and wondered if it would be less valuable and lose its canonical status then.

From the late 1980s on, the category of second and at present even third generation literature emerged. Naturally, these authors have to resort to fiction too, though their stories are often (partly) founded on the history of their parents, grandparents, or other relatives. The more their work takes an experimental, provocative and transgressive form, and thus can be placed within the trans-historical category, the more interest literary scholars show in the literature of this "postmemory generation," a phrase coined by Marianne Hirsch (2012). Authors like Jonathan Safran Foer, Edgar Hilsenrath, and Arnon Grunberg are noteworthy representatives of this generation. Elrud Ibsch, late professor of literary theory in Amsterdam, omits diaries as a genre in her overview of international Holocaust literature, but keeps the order mentioned earlier along the lines of proximity of the authors to the events of the Holocaust, and shows a distinct interest in experimental or transgressive fiction, a category to which she devotes four of her ten chapters in *Overleven in verhalen* (Ibsch 2013). Her fourth chapter, on writers who had been in hiding as a child, is especially relevant for this article. She discusses, in addition to Aharon Applefeld and Saul Friedländer, the Dutch authors Marga Minco (who doesn't really fit in that chapter, since she was born in 1920 – and was thus an adult during the war – but who was in hiding and wrote about that experience), Lisette Lewin, Chaja Polak, and Judith Herzberg. The latter is a poet and playwright, and therefore falls outside the scope of this article. Lisette Lewin and Chaja Polak write more about the aftermath of the war and its effects on the second generation (or the 1.5 generation: those who were little children during the war) than about hiding.

In *Anne Frank and after*, Dick van Galen Last, who at the time of its publication worked at the NIOD, the Dutch Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Rolf Wolfswinkel from the University of Cape Town, offer a historical overview of the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands based on Dutch personal testimonies. However, they address the topic of hiding only briefly, using – apart from Anne Frank – mainly Miep Gies, one of the helpers of the Frank family, Marga Minco and a fragment from a novel by Jan Wolkers that merely fleetingly touches on the subject, zooming in on the sexual relation between a girl in hiding and her aid-giver.

When considering the hiding experience in literature, the very first story that comes to mind is, of course, the one by Anne Frank. The most translated and widely read book in all of Dutch literature, her diary has been so thoroughly investigated and analyzed that I cannot even begin to give an overview of all the

valuable insights that the literary and historical research has rendered.[3] The diary, for which her father, Otto Frank, initially could not even find a publisher, gained popularity first in the United States and then the Netherlands (strange order, but that is how it happened), and then the rest of the world, thanks in part to theatrical and film adaptations (Prose 2009, part III). Perhaps that success is the reason why the theme of hiding remained rather underexposed for a long time: at the outset, the standard was set so high that other writers must have been reluctant to come forward. However, another explanation is also possible: not only in the years immediately after the war, but even now, people who were in hiding during the war feel that their experience pales in comparison to what concentration camp survivors endured and so, they often prefer to remain silent. Beginning in 1991, when the first "Hidden children" conference was organized in New York, followed by one specifically for Dutch hidden children in Amsterdam in 1992, this sentiment gradually began to change. Yet, the relative silence in view of the "hierarchy of grief" may explain why memoirs about the time in hiding are rather scarce. Nevertheless, there are some. Probably one of the earliest and most widely read such memoirs in the Netherlands is by an aid-giver: *Een Groninger pastorie in de storm* ('A vicarage in Groningen in the storm') by Johanna Ader-Appels, the widow of a vicar who was executed in 1944 for his help to hundreds of Jewish people in hiding. It was published in Amsterdam as early as 1945 and was reprinted at least twelve times. One of the Jewish individuals whom this vicar helped was Johanna-Ruth Dobschiner (1969), who also wrote a memoir. First written in English, Dobschiner's *Selected to live* was translated into Dutch and published in 1974 as *Te mogen léven: Een Nederlandse Jodin vertelt haar geschiedenis* ('To be allowed to live: A Dutch Jewish woman relates her history'), enjoying several reprints. In addition, it was translated into German, Finnish, French, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. Both these books are heavily Christian in tone and intent.

It practically goes without saying that many diaries were written in hiding. It was, after all, a good pastime activity, given that other possibilities for work and recreation were rather limited. But most of them were never published. (Currently, the Dutch Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies is in the process of digitizing the hundreds of wartime diaries in its archives and making them available to the public.) Those that did reach a wider readership were only published very late, roughly in the past twenty years. Although fiction is generally not considered a reliable historical source, the novels about hiding that appeared over the years do depict the experience faithfully, from several angles. As the majority of these novels draw on autobiographical elements, this may not come

[3] A new collection of articles, edited by Frank van Vree and Martin van Gelderen, and containing an essay by the author, is forthcoming: *Anne Frank: Achtergronden, receptie en herinneringscultuur*.

as a surprise. True to their nature, children's stories paint a somewhat rosier picture than adult literature, but without lapsing into falsehood.

Chronological overview

First period: 1945-1947

In terms of the timeline, fictional works about hiding offer a completely different picture than do diaries. As early as 1945, Willy Corsari, who was an immensely popular author at the time, published a substantial novel, *Die van ons* ('Ours'). In 1946 it was followed by Maurits Dekker's *Jozef duikt* ('Jozef goes into hiding') and Maurice Coutinho's *De stille strijd* ('The silent struggle'), written in hiding during the last year of the war (with a reprint in 1989). There was also a lengthy novel about the time of the occupation as a whole, *Verduisterde jaren* ('Eclipsed years') by Salomon de Vries Jr. (1894-1974).[4] The author was a journalist for the socialist newspaper *Het Volk* and a prolific writer and director of radio plays of which he wrote more than 75 (Joosten 2013). In *Verduisterde jaren* he paints a broad picture of the Netherlands, especially of Amsterdam, during the war. He was Jewish and survived the war in hiding. While in the novel the author figures under his own nickname Es, the emphasis is on the resistance fighter Wouter. As a result, the novel sketches a somewhat more positive picture than corresponds with reality. Betrayal and collaboration are not omitted, but the emphasis is on the attitude of the "good" Dutchman – the supposed majority of the population – even if that attitude did not lead to actual resistance. Humorous instances of witty and insolent responses to Germans create a tone of bravado. Humor is also present in incidents like those involving a small dog named Flappie, who barks ferociously when German soldiers try to break down the door; they are prepared for a vicious attack, but upon cautiously entering, Flappie sits up like a good dog, offering one of its paws as a begging gesture. The perspective of the person in hiding is presented in six long letters written by Es. He elaborates on the unceasing fear, a sense of a never-ending crisis, the lack of perspective and the internal tensions in the shelter. Lastly, in this postwar period, the novella *Comedie in mineur* ('Comedy in a minor key') by Hans Keilson (1947b) appeared in 1947.[5]

[4] Publishing of the novel started in 1945, but due to the shortage of paper in the postwar period, the publisher was not able to complete the publication of the entire book. The last thirty pages were added later. It still shows in inserted grey pages in which the publisher makes this announcement.

[5] This novella was written in German first and was published by the Amsterdam publisher Querido in 1947 (Keilson 1947a). The authorized Dutch translation by H. Sanders appeared in that same year as *Comedie in mineur* with Uitgeverij Phoenix in Bussum. In 2010, Frank Schuitemaker revised the translation, upon which it was published by Van Gennep in Amsterdam. That same year the

Second Period, 1969-1986

After a twenty-year lull following the initial postwar period, a second wave evolved around the 1970s, starting with Andreas Burnier's (1969) *Het jongensuur* ('The boys' hour'). I include Corrie ten Boom's *The hiding place* and Johanna Reiss' *The upstairs room* in this phase, even though both were written in English. However, they are set in the Netherlands and are clearly autobiographical. Remarkably, both were translated into Dutch with the same title: *De schuilplaats* ('The hiding place'). Corrie ten Boom's story about being an aid-provider was written by John and Elizabeth Sherill, although Ten Boom had shown herself an accomplished writer with her memoirs in Dutch shortly after the war. That book, *Gevangene en toch...* ('Prisoner and yet…'), however, was mainly about her experiences in the camps Vught and Ravensbrück.

Like Corrie ten Boom, Johanna Reiss, born as Annie de Leeuw, immigrated to the United States after the war; she wrote her children's book in English. Els Pelgrom (1977) received the *Gouden Griffel* ('Golden stylus'), the highest Dutch award in children's literature, for *De kinderen van het achtste woud* ('The children of the eighth forest'). In addition, the book was awarded the German Gustav Heinemann Friedenspreis for promoting world peace, tolerance, and human rights through children's literature and was reprinted many times. Its English translation is titled *The winter when time was frozen* and was published in New York in 1980. It was further translated into French, Spanish, Catalan and Japanese. Ida Vos, too, wrote several children's books about her hiding experience. These were published in the 1980s and the early 1990s. There was *Wie niet weg is wordt gezien* ('Hide and seek'), *Anna is er nog* ('Anna is still there'), which dealt mostly with the immediate postwar period, and *Witte zwanen, zwarte zwanen* ('White swans, black swans'), which was predominantly about the years preceding the period in hiding. *De sleutel is gebroken* ('The key is broken') came out in 1996.[6]

This second wave also includes Marga Minco's novella *De glazen brug* ('The glass bridge'), written as the celebrated annual gift from bookshops ('*boeken-weekgeschenk')* to their customers. Earlier, Marga Minco had become renowned for her debut with *Het bittere kruid* ('Bitter herbs') in 1957, a collection of connected short stories about the wartime experiences of the first-person narra-

English translation by Damion Searls was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in New York. The novella was translated into 12 other languages as well. Undoubtedly, a review by Francine Prose in the *New York Times* in August 2010 that called the work a masterpiece and Keilson a genius was key to this general appreciation.

[6] All of Ida Vos's books are published by Leopold in The Hague. Some are available in English translations by Terese Edelstein and Inez Smidt and are published in the U.S. They include *Hide and seek* as well as *Anna is still there* and *The key is lost*. These titles also have been translated into German, while *Wie niet weg is, wordt gezien* has been translated into Hebrew.

tor and her family. The book was very popular, not least because many high school students put it on their reading list, as the Second World War is a favorite topic and the book is pleasantly slim. In 2000, it saw its 42nd print. Only five of the twenty-two stories contained in *Het bittere kruid* are about Minco's hiding experiences, showing the frequent changes of addresses and the feeling of being at the mercy of other people's decisions. Almost thirty years later, in 1986, *De glazen brug* was published. It depicts the hiding experiences of a young woman and her search, twenty years after the war, for the woman whose name was on her forged identity paper. The novella is characterized by the constant interruption of the chronology, and a sober, non-dramatic style that leaves most of the emotions implicit. Abel Herzberg's 1975 novella *Drie rode rozen* ('Three red roses') is the only book on hiding from this period that is not based on personal experiences.

Third period, 2000-present

In the most recent period two remarkable novels appeared, both in 2010: *Parnassia* by Josha Zwaan and *Homo submersus* by historian Jacques Presser. The first title is not autobiographical. It was reprinted eighteen times in a span of four years but was largely ignored by literary critics. Jacques Presser (1899-1970) had actually already written this work between 1943 and 1944, during his time in hiding, but it was published posthumously. It is based, unmistakably, on his own experiences, without being entirely autobiographical and it includes numerous stories that the first-person narrator's host, Wim, passes on about other people in hiding, along with all kinds of problems and events related to his activities as leader of his underground network. These stories and quotes from various letters present a wide range of hiding experiences.

The publishing of diaries about hiding is a rather recent phenomenon. I mention here only three of them. First, there is the diary of Carry Ulreich (2016), who was soon nicknamed the Anne Frank of Rotterdam: *'s Nachts droom ik van vrede. Oorlogsdagboek 1941-1945* ('At night I dream of peace. War diary 1940-1945'). Then there is the diary of the poet Hanny Michaelis, one so lengthy that it was published in two volumes of more than a thousand pages each, with a subsequent abridged version (Michaelis 2016, 2017, 2019). Third, there is Edith Velmans-van Hessen's diary, which was published a little earlier (Velmans-van Hessen 1997). Translated into English as *Edith's book,* later also as *Edith's story*, it was translated into German, French, Spanish, and Japanese. It is a mixture of her diary in hiding and memories and comments added later. In this article, the diaries are only touched upon briefly, as I focus here on so-called hiding novels, even though most of them are autobiographically inspired. However, in a chapter in a forthcoming book on the background of Anne Frank's diary, I will be discussing all the Dutch diaries written in hiding more extensively (Van Vree & Van Gelderen

forthcoming). A thematic approach seems more suitable for this rather large number of novels than a one by one, separate discussion. Inevitably, some books will figure in more than one subsection.

Thematic overview

The aid-givers

The people who provide a hiding place play a significant role in almost every novel about hiding, but they occupy a particularly high degree of importance in the novels by Jacques Presser, Hans Keilson, and of course Corrie ten Boom with the aid-giver being the first-person narrator. Ten Boom depicts the aid-givers as unequivocally good and likable, especially her father and sister. Her father is an icon of piety and wisdom and her sister Betsy is the embodiment of womanly virtues and faith. Corrie herself is sketched as inelegant and untidy in her clothes and countenance, which strikes me as a literary trick to give herself some negative characteristics in order to make herself more recognizably human.

In Willy Corsari's novel *Ours,* the science student Wouter is the protagonist. One day, he fails to warn his Jewish housemate Simon when he knows the German police are looking for him. Later he hears that Simon was captured and deported, perishing in Mauthausen. He tries not to give in to his feelings of guilt, but at the same time he acknowledges that he may harbor anti-Semitic feelings because his Jewish stepmother and brother used to belittle him and come between him and his father. He decides to help Simon's mother and sister by persuading them to go into hiding and he becomes more and more involved in the underground resistance movement. *Ours* offers a kaleidoscopic picture of people who, deliberately or reluctantly, get caught up in the resistance. Their motivation lies in their past, which is made very explicit – perhaps too much so for modern tastes. From the start, the persecution of Jews is highlighted as the main reason for resistance (which is historically doubtful),[7] and as the cause for the characterization of the Nazis as evil. As for the picture of life in hiding, the novel stresses the often extraordinarily difficult circumstances and the psychological pressures of having to live together with people not of one's own choosing. Practical matters like the financial arrangements or the provision of rationing vouchers are less prominent, as are the usually frequent changes of address,

[7] Naturally, at first the resistance was provoked by the foreign occupation as such and aimed at collecting information about military movements and depots and sending this information to London where the Dutch government in exile resided. In 1943, the L.O., *de Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers* ('National Organization for Support to People in Hiding'), was initially set up to help Dutch men who were called up for labour service in Germany. In her radio speeches from London, Queen Wilhelmina hardly ever called on the Dutch population to help the Jews.

necessitated by all kinds of causes, such as the danger of being betrayed. The presence of raiders and collaborators, also among so-called aid-providers, is not ignored, but they appear mainly as a backdrop.

The children's books by Els Pelgrom, Ida Vos, and Johanna Reiss paint a rather unambiguously positive picture of the aid-givers. They are all well-meaning characters, though sometimes fearful themselves, or just not particularly nice. In *De kinderen van het achtste woud*, Els Pelgrom recounts the adventures of Noortje, who temporarily lives with her father on a farm after their evacuation from Arnhem in 1944. One adventure involves caring for a Jewish family, who is hiding in the woods, but the episode is not told in a conspicuous, overly dramatic way. The mother of the hidden family has a baby, which poses an obvious risk because it cries when hungry, and the farmer's family takes the little girl into their own home, with Noortje as her special caretaker. One day, when they are about to bring food to the hiding place, they find it empty and turned upside down: apparently, the family was discovered and captured. After the liberation, a brother of the mother comes to collect the baby, much to Noortje's regret. The Red Cross had informed the man that the family along with two young sons was deported and gassed. The story is told from Noortje's perspective, and for her the hiding history is just one of the many things that happen on the farm, just like the billeting of German soldiers and the bomb that is dropped nearby. The unsentimental tone, the partial lack of a happy ending (Noortje and her father and baby Sarah do survive the war, but the hidden family does not) and the reticence in the account of dramatic events make this book a convincing depiction of the war through a child's eyes.

In some of the adult novels the portrait of the aid-givers is much more negative. Maurits Dekker (1896-1962) was a Jewish author and self-made journalist, and one of the first Dutch anti-fascist agitators. In *Jozef duikt*, he offers a dark picture of aid-givers who act only out of self-interest. His narrator, Joseph, works as a manservant in a boarding house and is ruthlessly exploited and humiliated by his hosts, who take this chance to economize on other employees. However, they also try to squeeze their non-Jewish paying guests dry, so their depiction is more about greed than anti-Semitism. The same goes for an aid-giver in *De stille strijd* by Maurice Coutinho (1913-1992). The aid-giver is a former military man from the East-Indies who offers lodgings to his Jewish guest not for humanitarian reasons, but purely out of greed, yet his own wife is no less a victim of his appalling selfishness. It is a remarkable phenomenon that such very unpleasant "aid-givers" appear in Dutch literature so soon after the war, when a heroic and not always veracious image of the resistance and that of a supposedly helpful attitude of the Dutch population towards Jews prevailed.

The other novels show a more mixed picture. Jacques Presser (1965), who was to become the most important historian of the Holocaust in the Netherlands with his book *Ondergang: De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse jodendom, 1940 - 1945* ('Demise: The persecution and annihilation of Dutch Jewry, 1940-1945'), is assumed to have written his thinly veiled novel *Homo submersus* as a diary based on his real-life experiences of going underground during the German occupation. Yet it also includes the aid-giver's perspective: Presser starts his novel with the fake frame story ('*mystificatie*') of gathering material for a friend's dissertation on the help given to people who go into hiding, which enables him to include the tales of his host about meetings and actions of the resistance. The novel thereby offers moments in which we get a kind of inside view of the aid-giver, Wim. To the reader, Wim becomes slowly less and less likeable. His activities in the resistance, as praiseworthy as they are, appear to be primarily a way to escape his dreary existence as headmaster of a rural school, and a so-so marriage. He demonstrates that he is not averse to pursuing extramarital adventures, and he enjoys the thrill and the status that come with his central position in the local resistance. At times, he expresses anti-Semitic prejudices, holds the local population in contempt, and is hypocritical in religious matters. Even so, he is always willing to help all those in need of finding a place to hide, while in tough situations he is resourceful and creative, albeit unorthodox, in his ability to find a way out. Wim's portrait strongly reminds us of the diary of Arnold Douwes, who rescued hundreds of Jews by securing hiding places for them, mainly in the province of Drenthe, though it is highly unlikely that Presser knew either the man or his diary at the time of writing (Houwink ten Cate & Moore 2018). Without detracting anything from the nobler motives, it is fair to assume that the quest for thrill and adventure was a common feature in many resistance fighters, particularly the younger ones.

Wim's bragging and recklessness begin to pose a danger, and finally the first-person narrator deems the danger so bad that he decides to accept an offer to flee to Spain (which was actually not the case with Jacques Presser: he just went into hiding somewhere else). Wim's wife Rika, apparently more realistic than her husband, is sometimes afraid; she is trustworthy and means well, but she is also religiously rigid, unimaginative, and humorless. An overly zealous housewife, she starts her noisy scrubbing at 6 a.m., a schedule clearly not appreciated by her intellectual guest. Presser, too, points at financial exploitation: a Jewish man works hard as a farmhand, but nevertheless has to pay 500 guilders every three months; the farmer wants to continue this arrangement, but Wim puts a stop to it. *Homo submersus* stands out for its light tone. Although tragic events occur, such as people getting caught, suicides and betrayal, the first-person narrator repeatedly tries to give a humorous account of the situation and prefers to have an ironic

outlook on the way things are. He mildly mocks the religious habits and the piety of the Protestant housewife at the temporary home that is his place of hiding, but he also pokes fun at religion in general.

Hans Keilson (1909-2011) was a student of medicine in Germany when he immigrated to the Netherlands in 1936. During the occupation he went into hiding, but he participated in the resistance as well. Using well-forged identity papers, he was able to travel around and to visit and help children in hiding who showed troubled behavior. After the war he became a physician, specializing in psychiatry and continuing his work with traumatized Jewish children. He published his dissertation on sequential traumatization with children in 1979. During his time in hiding, he kept a diary, publishing a German novella about life in hiding, *Komödie in Moll*, in 1947. An authorized Dutch translation appeared that same year as *Comedie in mineur*. In 2010, a revised Dutch translation was published in Amsterdam. That same year, an English translation was published in New York. Since then, the novella has been translated into twelve other languages.

Like Presser, Keilson presents both perspectives; of Nico, the person in hiding, and of his hosts, in alternating chapters. They do not know anything about each other's backgrounds and ideas, and it is touching how everyone tries to respect the privacy and the otherness of the other party, in spite of the resentment each of them also feels from time to time. Nico resents their being able to live their normal lives (a resentment that is directed at a vase they seem to value very much, as he feels tempted to smash the object to pieces, but without actually doing so). Meanwhile the hosts, just as understandably, resent the intrusion on their quiet, unadventurous lives, realizing full well that Nico has no other choice. Keilson employs an omniscient narrator and often uses free indirect speech to represent the thoughts of the characters, which augments the reader's involvement with them. Thus, he achieves a subtle psychological portrait of both sides. He does not need to include sensational elements like adultery, treachery, rows, abuse or exploitation (none of these are unknown in the history of hiding in general) to express how both parties are weighed down by the hiding experience, host as well as guest. These well-behaved, charitable, empathetic people, who tend to believe in the good of humanity more readily than in its counterpart of evil, are depicted as people whose goodness is nevertheless fragile during these exceptional circumstances. In his posthumously published diary, which also appeared in English as *1944 diary*, Keilson (2014) articulates his suspicion that class differences may be at the root of the lack of empathy he perceives in his hostess (82). Without a doubt, the increasing scarcity of food does little to alleviate the tensions, as another person in hiding in the diary observes (Keilson 2014, 117).

In the end, Nico dies of natural causes, withering away from loneliness and lack of zest for life. They dispose of the corpse in a nearby park (an incident like this really happened in Keilson's circle, according to his diary), forgetting to cut off the laundry mark that can identify them. When they discover their mistake, they go into hiding themselves. It then becomes clear to them how difficult living in hiding is, and how severe tensions and irritations can grow even in a moderately good marriage. After they learn that the police officer who discovered the body was a "good" one and had swiftly removed the laundry mark, they return to their home, sadder and wiser, or as Keilson (2010) puts it, "ashamed and lonesome" (126).[8]

In Abel Herzberg's novella *Drie rode rozen* a similar event occurs. Salomon Zeitcheck and his wife are in hiding. The couple's two eldest children were among the first to be called to report for supposed work in Germany, which they did. When Salomon and his wife find out that their youngest daughter was captured at her hiding place, the wife takes her own life. Her death presents a great problem for the hosts – what to do with the corpse? – and they blame Salomon for it, calling him and his wife ungrateful and asocial. Their anti-Semitism emerges: "There you are, doing everything for the Jews, and then they play you a trick like this. I am beginning to understand Hitler" (Abel Herzberg 1975, 24).[9] Finally, they decide to just lay the body somewhere in the street. The hosting couple is willing to extend the arrangement with Zeitcheck, provided he continues to pay for two, because the hosts do not want to be worse off.

Marga Minco shows another kind of exploitation in *De glazen brug*: a theme that stands out in that novella is the unwanted sexual advances by Stella's male contact from the underground movement. She is able to fight him off. In the last chapter, when she is looking for information on the deceased woman whose name she used while in hiding, she finds herself in a similar situation with an impertinent guest in the village hotel. However, she is less vulnerable now; not only older but, more importantly, no longer dependent on him or on any other man.

Troublesome guests

Jacques Presser's novel *Homo submersus* presents the death of a person in hiding less as a tragic event than as a troublesome problem to be solved by the aid-giver. As a historian, Presser (1965) addresses this problem, as well as many other issues with persons in hiding in *Ondergang.*

[8] '*Ze voelden zich wat beschaamd en eenzaam* […].'
[9] '*Daar doe je alles voor de joden en dan lappen ze je dat! Ik begin die Hitler te begrijpen*.'

Readers will be inclined to sympathize with the person in hiding; persecuted and hunted, often alone and worrying about the whereabouts of loved ones, or mourning them, always wary of possible betrayal, perennially cautious not to give offense to one's rescuers, feeling chronically insecure, not being master of one's time or activities, bored and losing a sense of self – the list of afflictions and anguishes is endless. However, some novels do not gloss over the fact that those in hiding could be quite troublesome, annoying, and even dangerous to the household where they found shelter. Jacques Presser does not turn a blind eye to the harmful behavior of some of the Jews who are given shelter: their demanding attitudes, the danger they pose by their risky actions, and their threats of exposing their helpers if things go differently than they wish. Presser would later mention these elements in his historiography as well. One of the characters in his novel is nicknamed "*de Brilslang*" ('cobra', literally: 'the spectacle snake'). She is an unpleasant, egotistical woman, who demands that Wim runs all kinds of errands for her, like retrieving unnecessary items from her previous home. She also threatens to inform on the other people in hiding and the entire organization. It happens more than once and she is not the only one in hiding to demonstrate a sense of entitlement that poses a risk to others: "She expressed the same threat as the *Brilslang*: if they would be caught, we [the aid givers] would go as well" (Presser 2010, 237).[10] Therefore, those in the underground sometimes have to take harsh measures: they fake a raid and let the bothersome guest escape, after which he or she has to fend for him or herself. Another solution is holding a child of a cumbersome family hostage to prevent them from informing on the others and their hosts. Wim and his colleagues even consider killing people who make too much trouble, but in this novel it doesn't come to that. In reality such killings did sometimes occur, however. A well-known case is the murder of the German-Jewish man Walter Oettinger by his host, filmmaker Louis van Gasteren, as researched and told by Eric Slot (2015).

Corrie ten Boom relates how irresponsibly people in hiding could behave, but in her book presents it as being more unintentional than Presser does. Her character, Mrs. De Boer, hosts 18 Jews, mostly young adults. One day, restless and noisy, eight of them go out for a walk, are captured, and while pressured, reveal the hiding address, whereupon the others and Mrs. De Boer are arrested too, never to be seen again.

Erotic issues pose trouble of a different nature, though in a few cases they touch on death and threats of a possible intent to inform. Obviously, when people are locked in together, they may fall in love (or experience strong physical attraction without love), especially when there is no way to spend their energy else-

[10] '[…] *kwam ze met hetzelfde dreigement als de brilslang: als zij gepakt werden, gingen wij ook*.'

where. The resulting pregnancies and babies present an extra burden for the aid-givers: providing hospitality to adults is hard enough, but having a crying baby around, with nappies to be laundered and special food requirements, takes the effort to another level. Apart from those practical matters, the psychological dimension causes its own problems. Jacques Presser's novel is the most elaborate on this topic. In the hiding network that Wim controls, relationships, rivalries, and pregnancies repeatedly cause problems. Presser keeps the subject light. For that matter, his tone is light throughout the book. Still, he makes it clear that the bottled-up sexuality of those in hiding is a serious issue. He mentions this in his historiography as well. The first-person narrator in his novel displays signs of this, too. He flirts with Truus, who is in hiding with him, but she wants to remain faithful to her deported fiancé. His female friend Loes receives an indecent proposal from a non-Jewish man in hiding, while another girl, eighteen years old, can't escape watching a threesome at her hiding address, and a relationship of three women and one man falls apart because two of the women become pregnant by the man, while the third one is just as much in love with him as the others, and subsequently tries to kill herself. Another suicide that Presser discloses is that of a Jewish woman in a mixed marriage, who discovers that her husband has an affair while she is in hiding. Eventually, the first-person narrator falls in love with a 15-year-old girl whom he clandestinely teaches and in whom we detect an implied portrait of Presser's real wife Deborah Appel, who was a former pupil of his.

There is a parallel here with Keilson's diary and his love for Hannah, fifteen years his junior, for whom he wrote his "Sonnets for Hanna," published as part of his diary. Yet he has a wife (though they are not officially married) and a daughter elsewhere, about whom he feels protective too. His inner struggle with this situation and the dilemma it poses, his self-criticism, and his oscillating feelings of love for the two women, take center stage in his diary. In his novella, however, the erotic issue is not present. In Willy Corsari's novel it is there, but only as a minor theme. The main character, Wouter, has to go into hiding himself and gets very overwrought by the crowdedness and the dirty mess in this house and rapes a woman from the underground when she visits him. Instantly, he is deeply sorry for what he did. Meanwhile, the woman, who is secretly in love with him, at first does not mind very much, until she discovers that it was not love for her specifically, but that any woman would have sufficed. Later on they are reunited and even become a couple.

Andreas Burnier, the pseudonym of Catharina Irma Dessaur (1931-2002), was a professor of criminology. During the war, she found herself in sixteen different hiding places (Lockhorn 2015, 43-60). In her autobiographical novel *Het jongensuur* only four are mentioned. The main character's gender, including her sexuality, is one of the main topics, and each of the six chapters contains a gender-

related incident, though not always of a sexual nature. Young teenager Simone, who is ten at the outbreak of the war, does not feel at ease with her girl's body and is attracted to other girls. The title refers to a time slot during which the local swimming pool is open only for boys; Simone is denied entrance, however hard she had tried through thought exercises to become a boy. The development of the sexual identity of the first-person narrator in this coming-of-age novel underlies the whole story. The hiding history is the main theme only in appearance, as the book is structured around a number of hiding addresses in reverse chronological order from 1945 to 1940. Simone has to hide in a double sense; as a Jew and as a lesbian (had she lived today she may have adopted a transgender identity). In the chapter on the liberation, "Zanddorp 1944," she witnesses the head shaving of a woman accused of having been a German's girlfriend, and asks herself: what if she just fell in love? She concludes: "Women and Jews, it is almost the same, I thought. They can't do anything, they are always guilty" (Burnier 1969, 38).[11] In the liberation chapter, two Canadian soldiers sexually assault her. Unexpectedly, she enjoys the feeling of them stroking her breasts, but does not want to go any further. When she fights them, they let her go without raping her. Unlike sexual elements in other literature on hiding, the sexual tension in *Het jongensuur* emerges more within the character herself, than in the relations with others.

Religion

In Corrie ten Boom's story, the acts of resistance and the efforts to help Jews clearly stem from her Christian faith. Though Jesus is central to her belief, she never thinks of Judaism as superseded or valueless. For her and her family, the Jews are and remain the chosen people, the apple of God's eye. Even so, her book clearly has a missionary Christian purpose. Her belief that God will take care of her is "proven" correct by more or less miraculous incidents, such as a piece of shrapnel from aerial combat landing on her empty bed in the middle of the night, the bed that she had just left because she heard her sister Betsie in the kitchen, thus escaping injury and possibly death. Inadvertently, she reveals the negative side of having a strong faith, as well: during a raid of her house, her sister Nollie (upon German request) identifies a blonde woman with well-forged papers as being Jewish. The woman is arrested. Corrie reproaches her sister for not lying to the Germans, but Nollie replies that the woman will be quite safe in God's hands, because Nollie just adhered to his commandments. After a few days they learn that the Hollandsche Schouwburg, which is the theater that functioned as the main assembly place in Amsterdam before people were deported, was raided by

[11] '*Vrouwen en joden, dat is bijna hetzelfde, dacht ik. Ze kunnen niets terug doen, ze zijn altijd schuldig*.'

the resistance, resulting in a group of forty Jews, including the woman, being liberated. In the historiography of the Hollandsche Schouwburg such a raid is not mentioned (Van Vree, Berg & Duindam 2013), and it would be rather improbable that, had it ever occurred, only forty people would be freed, since the theater was always packed with many hundreds of captured Jews. Ten Boom's account of her concentration camp experience offers additional instances of divine interference.

Concerning their view of religion, the novels by Jacques Presser and Andreas Burnier are almost the exact opposite of Ten Boom's position. Although they recognize that the efforts to help Jews are often at least partly motivated by the Christian faith of the foster families, their perceived rigidity and intellectual backwardness is ridiculed in both books. Presser's narrator is helped by the fact that Wim, his host, is not a fervent believer himself, to put it mildly, and looks down on the uneducated and rural Christian population that provides the hiding places.

In the third chapter of Andreas Burnier's novel, Ronnie (the hiding name of Simone, the then 13-year-old first-person narrator) is in hiding in a place called Veendorp ('Moor village') with the extremely poor and Christian Reformed family of a plumber.[12] She appreciates – but not so much at the time itself – that her foster parents do not receive any money for sheltering her and act purely out of a sense of Christian duty:

> They risked their lives, with nothing in return, certainly not money, because it was unthinkable that they would do otherwise than sharing their poverty with me. My understanding and gratefulness, if present at all, were mixed with contempt and abhorrence. (Burnier 1969, 101, my translation)[13]

Certainly, she feels deep disdain for their strict and inflexible faith. The concept of sin, which plays such an important role in their lives, is incomprehensible to her:

> It was cold in Veendorp. Most people here belonged to one of the three reformed churches, and that meant contempt for anything vibrant or even

[12] In her biography of Andreas Burnier, Elisabeth Lockhorn reveals that the village was Slagharen and that in real life her foster father, Geert Migchels, was not a plumber but had a bicycle repair shop. He was deeply involved in the underground. In August 1944, German soldiers and Dutch collaborators raided his house. Ronnie, as Andreas Burnier was called, managed to escape on a bicycle. Geert Migchels perished in May 1945 in a German concentration camp; his wife did not receive confirmation of his death until 1993. In 1983, Andreas Burnier successfully requested a Yad Vashem award for Geert and Annigje Migchels as "righteous among the nations" (Lockhorn 2015, 43-60).

[13] *'Ze riskeerden hun leven, voor niets, en zeker niet voor geld, want het was ondenkbaar dat ze iets anders zouden doen dan hun armoede met mij delen. Mijn begrip en dankbaarheid, voor zover aanwezig, was gemengd met verachting en afschuw.'*

> warm. They despised each other and themselves for their innate sinfulness. They hated the human element in their children, who they conceived after brief thrusts and a grumpy 'good night'.
>
> (Burnier 1969, 102, my translation)[14]

She engages her foster father in animated discussions, trying to convince him of the irrationality of his beliefs, and with some success, it seems, at least to her. In Burnier's description the strong faith of the foster family goes hand in hand with their lack of education and poor intellectual capacity, reflected in the absence of books in the household, except for the Bible, of course.

Abel Herzberg's main character in *Drie rode rozen*, Salomon Zeitcheck, is a tailor and avid reader of literature and philosophy. As mentioned, he was in hiding with his wife, but it was not a happy marriage. The few pages that describe their years in hiding are among the saddest ever written on the subject. The total boredom, the irritation turning into hatred, the determination to make the best of it, yet soon slipping back into silence and hostility — the novella presents a depressing and haunting reading experience. However, the hiding period takes up only the first 30 pages of the book, as the novella is set in the period after the war and a religious question is its primary theme. Salomon Zeitcheck is in a constant dialogue with himself, calling the two voices within himself Salomon and Zeitcheck. His entire family has been murdered; all that has been left to him is one niece, who lives on a kibbutz in Israel. Now he wants to hold God to account. He thinks of "my friend Job […], not the Job who endured, but Job who rebelled" (Abel Herzberg 1975, 79),[15] and wants to continue the lawsuit against God that Job started. In response to God's tremendous creative accomplishments that seem to be the answer in the Bible's book of Job, he poses a counter question:

> Who killed the little children? What is the use of creating the earth, determining its dimensions, lowering its pillars and laying its cornerstone, and then making it a valley of tears? [...] Is it true that the wicked are shaken off the face of the earth? Isn't it much truer that the lust for murder creeps around and hatred determines our lives? Which is being rewarded, virtue or sin? (Abel Herzberg 1975, 79-80)[16]

14 '*In Veendorp was het koud. De meeste mensen hier behoorden tot een van de drie soorten gereformeerde kerken, en dat betekende verachting en haat voor alles wat vitaal of zelfs maar warm was. Ze verachtten elkaar en zichzelf om hun ingekankerde zondigheid. Ze haatten het menselijke in hun kinderen, die ze verwekten na een kort gestoot en een knorrig "welterusten"*.'

15 '*Job is mijn vriend. Neen, niet Job de Dulder, Job de rebel!*'

16 '*Mijn antwoord, een tegenvraag: wie heeft de kleine kinderen gedood? Wat baat het de aarde te scheppen, haar afmetingen te bepalen, haar pijlers neer te laten en haar hoeksteen te leggen en haar dan tot een dal van tranen te maken? […] is het dan waar dat de goddelozen van de aard-*

Of course, Salomon Zeitscheck sees quite well that the Shoah incarnates evil that people have committed, and that God is not the perpetrator, but he responds with the accusing question: "Who created man, and why so that he can sin?" (Abel Herzberg 1975, 61).[17] The charge, then, boils down to the accusation that God created man as a free being. The solution that Salomon Zeitscheck ultimately embraces, falls in the same realm. It is to let go of the idea of God's omnipotence and his responsibility for human suffering, whereby the recipient of the accusation becomes humankind itself. Although Abel Herzberg's text is poetic and engaging, the outcome is ultimately somewhat disappointing. The question is not where God was in Auschwitz, but where man was. Within a legal metaphor one could say that the outcome of the proceedings amounts to a declaration of inadmissibility of the charge, but in fact the entire process is a failure from the start. There is no jury. For this role, he had the inhabitants of his niece's kibbutz in mind, but they all excused themselves. Interestingly, Abel Herzberg was a lawyer in real life. It is remarkable that he would want a jury in his novella, as jury courts do not exist under Dutch law.

The author was never in hiding himself. He and his wife survived Bergen-Belsen, if only barely. His three children were able to escape when the family was about to be imprisoned in Camp Westerbork. After the war, he spoke with great appreciation about the Protestant farmer's family where his daughter Esther found shelter; at the beginning of her stay, the foster father selected the Book of Isaiah's consolation prophecy in chapter 40 for the daily reading from the Bible, thus comforting her and honoring her Judaism (Kuiper 1997, 225-226).

Religion as an important theme, though not the main one like in Herzberg's novella, also figures in *Parnassia* by Josha Zwaan, and will be discussed in the next section.

The child's perspective

Children's hiding experiences differ in many respects from adult ones. On the one hand, there is the pain of the separation from the parents (Anne Frank's situation of being together as a family was highly exceptional). On the other hand, children often had more freedom to move around. When they were provided with false identities and posed as distant relatives or orphans from bombed-out Rotterdam, for example, children could move about freely. But this was not necessarily the case, as exemplified in the children's book by Ida Vos and Johanna Reiss. Without a doubt, hiding histories offer great material for children's books: the thrill of

bodem worden afgeschud? Is het niet veel méér waar, dat de moordlust rondkruipt en de haat ons leven bepaalt? Wat wordt er beloond, de deugd of de zonde?'

[17] '*Ik, een gespletene, vraag: wie heeft de mens geschapen, en waarom zo dat hij zondigen kan?*'

possible raids, the sadness of being separated from parents, evil enemies, and the reunion with parents who return from their own hiding locations as a happy ending. This is more or less the case with the books by Johanna Reiss and Ida Vos. Both speak from their own experience and both stress how difficult it is for a child to have to stay inside for months, even years on end, and to be as quiet as possible all the time. Ida Vos demonstrates one of the aftereffects of having been in hiding when she shows in *Anna is er nog* how after the reunion her father takes little Anna to the beach to teach her how to scream, hoping to help her to regain her normal speaking voice again after years of having muted it. Johanna Reiss illustrates how her main character, Annie (her own name by birth), is pressed by her older sister to do physical exercises every day, to offset the deformities she has developed due to a lack of moving her body. Boredom and frequent quarrels between the sisters mark their confinement. The one notable deviation from the common story (though, obviously, each story is unique in its own way), is the picture of her prewar family life, which is not happy at all, because her mother is a sickly and narrow woman who thwarts their early plans to leave the country. She falls severely ill and ends up in hospital; the children go into hiding without a farewell. The mother dies, but it does not cause them great grief when they hear of it.

Ida Vos's children's books are quite traditional in the depiction of family life. Obviously, the autobiographical background will have been decisive here. Her first book, *Wie niet weg is wordt gezien,* offers a soft-focus picture of children in hiding. The theme of religious conflicts is present but is kept low key. The first hiding place is with the girl Rachel's parents at the parsonage of the local priest in Schipluiden. He does not try to convert them in any way, but eight-year-old Rachel, from whose perspective the story is told, is attracted to a statue of Mary. Later on, at another address, she witnesses the anger of a Jewish father when his son says a Catholic prayer, and the relief and emotion when the boy smoothly switches to a Jewish prayer. At the last address, where Rachel finds herself with her younger sister but without their parents, the children express their desire to become Catholic, like their foster parents. The idea of their baptism, for which they should go to church, dressed up and all, strongly appeals to them, but the refusal of their real parents to give their permission puts a stop to the plan, to their deep disappointment. The author openly suggests that the inclination of the girls is more inspired by the chance to get out of the house and have an adventure than by any deep religious conviction.

Adult literature about a child's hiding experience is of a markedly different nature. Abel Herzberg's daughter Judith became a celebrated poet and writer of theater plays. Her best-known play, *Leedvermaak* ('Malicious pleasure') deals with the postwar tensions between foster and real parents of former hidden children,

and the children's inability to form lasting love relationships. It premiered in 1982 and was published as the first part of a trilogy, together with *Rijgdraad* and *Simon* (Judith Herzberg 2002). There is an English translation as well: *The wedding party* (Judith Herzberg 1997a). In 1989, Frans Weisz turned the play into a film.

Leedvermaak is set on the wedding day of Lea's second wedding. One of the most moving scenes is a dialogue between Lea and her father in which she reproaches him for having placed her with and essentially given her away to her hiding parents:

> If I had a child, I'd take her with me, I'd keep her with me, I'd take her with me whenever and wherever to. I'd reassure her by holding her close to me. I can't imagine it: shall we give our child away to someone else? […] Who cares how old you may become? Dying is not so bad. Being abandoned, that is bad. (Judith Herzberg 1997b, 72, my translation)[18]

In the previous sections on religion and troublesome guests in this article, Andreas Burnier's novel *Het jongensuur* has already been discussed. There are some similarities with *Parnassia*, the successful debut of Josha Zwaan, who was born in 1963. A comprehensive discussion of both this novel and Burnier's *Het jongensuur* can be found in the essay "Onderduikkinderen: Onvoltooide bevrijding" ('Children in hiding: Unfinished liberation') (Siertsema 2018, 263-278).

Literary critics largely ignored *Parnassia*, yet it had twenty reprints. The novel is not autobiographical, but not entirely fictitious either. The story shows some resemblance to the Dutch *cause célèbre* of Anneke Beekman, a Jewish child born in 1940, over whose custody the Catholic foster parents (actually three sisters) fought a prolonged judicial battle with the Jewish community. The fight over her custody and religious identity came to an end only when she was recognized as an adult in 1961 and came forward as a young woman who had deliberately chosen to be Roman Catholic (Verheij 1991).

Parnassia's main character, Rivka, at age four goes into hiding with a Protestant minister and his wife. As they have no children of their own, their motives may just as much stem from the longing for a child as from altruistic considerations, and probably even more so. Rivka comes to love them and feels at ease with their Christianity. After the war, her surviving father and brother come to reclaim her, but she flatly refuses, denies her name is Rivka, and declares that she is and always will be Anneke. In adulthood she marries Joost, initially not knowing he is a Jewish camp survivor. Anneke (or An) maintains her silence

18 '*Als ik een kind had dan nam ik het mee, dan hield ik het bij me, dan nam ik het altijd overal mee heen. Dan stelde ik het gerust gewoon door het tegen me aan te houden. Ik kan me dat niet voorstellen: zullen we het kind maar aan iemand anders geven? […] Wat geeft het hoe oud je wordt? Doodgaan is niet erg – losgelaten worden dat is erg.*'

regarding her real background and does not want to listen to his memories either. She ends up neglecting and abusing her children, particularly her eldest daughter, who reminds her of her brother. Joost, traumatized by his camp experience, adds to the abuse in his own way. *Parnassia* is an unusual example of a story in which an abusing parent as main character does not altogether lose the reader's sympathy, which is a rare achievement.

The children are taken from them, and the marriage falls apart. An makes no effort to get in touch with her children. Decades later, after Joost's death, when An is in her seventies, her eldest daughter Sandra asks for a meeting and they start talking once a week at a beach pavilion called Parnassia (hence the title). Gradually and with difficulty at first, she begins to recount her past, because Sandra, who in turn maltreated her baby, wants to understand why things happened as they did. Her open and understanding attitude is perhaps a bit incredible. But she is glad to have found her roots and happily accepts her Jewish background, feeling that she finally belongs somewhere. In the end, An too accepts being Rivka and not An/ Anneke. The novel's composition alternates between the present, with the mother-daughter dialogues at Parnassia and the story of An's childhood; these memories are delivered in a third-person narrative, but completely represent her perspective.

The conflict between the foster family's Christianity and the Judaism the child was originally raised with, is more prominent in *Parnassia* than in *Het jongensuur*. Religion likely did not play a crucial part in Andreas Burnier's early life, although her family was shocked to see her say Protestant prayers before and after meals. The two novels also illustrate how the religious conviction of the foster parents hinders the child's intellectual development: in the case of Burnier's Ronnie it is only temporary, because she does not stay with those foster parents for very long, but Anneke's foster parents block the education that she aspires to, considering grammar school unnecessary for a girl, as it is expected that she will end up being a housewife and mother anyway. That is where their relationship starts to unravel. The final break-up between Anneke and her foster parents is caused by her foster father, who feels that her marriage to a Jewish man is a rejection of her Christianity. Yet, Anneke does not really acknowledge her Jewish identity until her conversations with her daughter Sandra.

The contrast between the two religions as painted by Josha Zwaan, is not quite convincing: Judaism as an impetus for inquisitiveness and intellectual development, and Christianity as a barrier to education and independent thinking. The French autobiographical novel *Rue Ordoner, Rue Labat* by philosopher Sarah Kofman (1994) can be considered as a counter argument. Here, it is the Jewish mother who tries to frustrate her daughter's education in every way possible, whereas the foster mother, who is Catholic but adheres to the principles of the

Enlightenment at the same time, encourages her and helps her along. Furthermore, this alleged difference ignores that both in orthodox Judaism and in orthodox Protestantism the position of women is a subordinate one and largely restricts them to household and child raising activities.

In spite of these minor flaws *Parnassia* presents a forceful picture of the damage that survival through the wartime hiding experience can inflict on a child. A sense of uprootedness, being torn by different emotions and attachments, and the impossibility of being able to satisfy the demands of showing loyalty towards two distinct religions add to a trauma whose scope appears to be multi-generational.

Hiding in fiction and historiography

To date there is no monograph or encompassing history on hiding, in spite of an abundance of research that has been conducted concerning various aspects of the phenomenon. For a general picture we can still rely on Loe de Jong in volumes 6 and 7 of *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* ('The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War') (De Jong 1975, 43-44, 49-52; 1976, 442-462). Help for people in hiding was not centrally organized. The national organization *Landelijke Organisatie voor Hulp aan Onderduikers* ('National organization for support to those in hiding') was created primarily for the support of men who wanted to evade forced labour in Germany, early in 1943, while the deportation of Jewish citizens began in July 1942. The countless small groups that provided support in the form of addresses where people could hide, coupons for food, financial assistance, forged identity papers, and so on, sprang into action whenever and wherever the need arose, without recording their activities. De Jong does not indicate exact numbers, but he estimates that roughly 25,000 Jews went into hiding, of which about 4,000 were children, and he concludes that between 20,000 and 40,000 families acted as hosts for them. Later research does not refute these numbers. The difficulty of pinpointing more precise numbers of those in hiding is confirmed by Holocaust historian Bob Moore (1997) in a paragraph with the telling title "The numbers involved and the problem of sources" (146-149). At first, host families that offered a place to hide came mostly from socialist and communist networks, as is reflected in the discussed fiction. Regardless of the time of writing, the fictional aid-givers are largely depicted as having a simple background without much education. The exceptions are Willy Corsari's Wouter, a student, Jacques Presser's Wim, a headmaster, an academic foster family in Andreas Burnier's novel and the vicar in Josha Zwaan's novel. Later, as Loe de Jong points out, the Christian Reformed community, comprising 8 percent of the population, provided some 25 percent of the hiding places. Many novels, including children's books, have episodes around the theme of the religious

differences between hosts and people in hiding. The hope for religious conversion as one of the motives propelling Christian aid-givers, mentioned by De Jong, is less prominent, except in *Parnassia*.

In general, the early novels on hiding evoke a much more mixed image of the aid-givers than one would expect so soon after the war. Self-interest, greed, and a longing for adventure seem to trump altruism and humanitarianism, the latter which are noble motives that are highlighted in several postwar studies on the rescue of Jews (Moore 1997, 292-293), including in titles like *The altruistic personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (Oliner & Oliner 1988), "The dynamics of decency: Dutch rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust" (Baron 1985), *Their brother's keepers: The Christian heroes and heroines who helped the oppressed escape the Nazi terror* (Friedman 1957), and *Conscience and courage: Rescuers of the Jews during the Holocaust* (Fogelman 1995). The generous and well-meaning, if sometimes naïve help offered by ordinary citizens, who more often than not are simple, working-class people, is present too in each of these early novels by Willy Corsari, Jacques Presser, Hans Keilson, and Salomon de Vries. Maurits Dekker's *Jozef duikt* and Maurice Countinho's *De stille strijd* are the marked exceptions. Loe de Jong mentions in a footnote that 75 guilders per person per month was the regular amount of money paid for "guests" in hiding, but cases where 1,000 guilders were demanded are also known (compare this to the average worker's salary of 150 guilders a month at the time). So, financial exploitation is not absent in his overview either.

De Jong outlines the various types of hiding places, from psychiatric residential homes and other institutions to underground holes and huts in the woods. In a densely populated country like the Netherlands the latter were rare and unsafe. For the most part, those in hiding did so in regular homes and farms, where concealed spaces provided an extra safeguard. This aligns with the portrayal in works of fiction. Unusual in this regard is *Kinderen van het achtste woud* in which a hut in the forest is the hiding place for a Jewish family that ended up being discovered and captured. All other hiding stories are set in regular homes.

It was easier to find hiding places for children than for adults, as De Jong mentions. Some found a stable home, but many had to move frequently from one address to another, as is the case with Andreas Burnier's main character and in some of the children's books.

In the summer of 1942 many Dutch, both Jews and non-Jews, thought the war would be over within a few months. For both parties, the hosts and the people in hiding, the unexpectedly long duration of the war proved an arduous ordeal. Those in hiding found it difficult that they were forced to be idle, leading to a monotony of seemingly endless days that was hard to bear. Deborah Dwork

distinguishes between "visible" and "invisible" people in hiding. The visible ones were living under a false identity (Dwork 1991, 81). They could move around in public, though some were not keen to go outside because of the bad quality of their forged papers. Children tended to belong to that first group and as a consequence generally experienced less boredom. However, in Johanna Reiss' *The upstairs room* and in Ida Vos's children's books the children who were in hiding were mostly part of the "invisible" group, enduring all the negative effects of boredom and lack of exercise – so much so that one of Ida Vos's characters is ready to convert to Catholicism because of the projected outing of walking to the church in a beautiful dress. Some of the adults in the fictional literature have the same problem, like Hans Keilson's character in hiding, the *onderduiker* Nico, who languishes in his solitude, and Abel Herzberg's Salomon Zeitcheck. Jacques Presser's first-person narrator, on the other hand, occupies himself with reading, writing and studying, as he is lucky enough to have someone providing the required books for him. This bears a great similarity to the real Jacques Presser, who worked on an extensive history of the United States while in hiding. For some, the total dependence on other people's decisions was even worse than the boredom. It is a theme in the novels by Salomon de Vries, Marga Minco, and Jacques Presser. De Jong mentions it too, using the phrase *kwetsende afhankelijkheid* ('hurtful dependence'). In particular, the adults in hiding, more so than the children, felt this was a difficult issue.

De Jong points out additional complications with which people in hiding had to contend, such as the challenges of adapting to a totally different milieu with uncommon (and possibly lacking) standards of hygiene and neatness, as well as other cultural interests. In fiction we see that this could go both ways: Presser's first-person narrator is annoyed by the obsessive cleaning habits of his hostess, and Andreas Burnier's main character notices not only the poverty but also what she perceives as the appalling absence of hygiene in some of her temporary homes, as does Marga Minco's first-person female narrator in *Het bittere kruid*, who in the chapter *Een ander* ('Another') has to sleep in the same bed as her hostess, the latter boasting about not ever needing to wash herself, as she claims not to be dirty and changes clothes every week.

Among the many practical problems that hosts of "invisible" people in hiding had to overcome, Loe de Jong points to medical and dental care and the issue of how to dispose of the corpse when someone had died in hiding. Remarkably, the first, which was a more common problem, does not present itself very often in Dutch fiction, whereas the latter does, as in the novellas by Keilson and Herzberg.

In the children's books of the 1970s and 1980s the authors transform their childhood experiences into children's stories that certainly do not keep silent

about the negative aspects of life in hiding. But these are for the most part intrinsically connected to the material situation, whereas the adult literature of this period, notably by Abel Herzberg and Judith Herzberg, focuses more on the human factor of egotism and lack of empathy of the aid-providers. By contrast, the evangelizing story of Corrie ten Boom sketches an exceptionally positive picture.

Being confined to a small space with a random set of people clearly led to irritations and suppressed aggression that could easily turn into hysteria. De Jong does not sugarcoat that people in hiding could be uncongenial or posed an extra risk because of their reckless behavior, sometimes even threatening to denounce their hosts if they did not get their way. The section named "Troublesome guests" in this article shows that some fiction honestly captures that reality.

In *Victims and survivors* British historian Bob Moore arrives at roughly the same conclusion as Loe de Jong (Moore 1997, 146-160). However, he pays more attention to the various reasons for not going into hiding, highlighting especially the deference to authority, a common trait in Dutch society and therefore also among the Dutch Jews, who were, after all, for the most part well integrated in the Netherlands. Fictional works attest to this reluctance to go into hiding, too. Examples are Countinho's *De stille strijd*, Marga Minco's *Het bittere kruid* and *De glazen brug*, and Johanna Reiss's children's book *The upstairs room*, where the mother obstructs her family's efforts to find a hiding place. Yet, the reasons in these fictional instances differ from the one in Bob Moore's analysis: here it is more disbelief that matters in society will turn out badly, along with a – very understandable – attachment to the comfort of one's own home, as well as the unwillingness to take a leap into the unknown, especially when the hiding place was not with family or friends but was provided by the underground movement.

Hiding in fiction and psychology

Loe de Jong stated that children between the ages of one and six suffered the most from the consequences of going into hiding and that only babies were not negatively affected (provided of course that they had a loving foster family). Now, some fifty years after he wrote this, we know that his comments about infants not suffering adverse effects have been proven wrong. The "First International Gathering of Children Hidden During World War II" in 1991 led to scholarly attention for the aftereffects of the trauma of the hiding experience on children. Psychologists such as Eva Fogelman (1993) point to the separation from the parents and in many cases later again from the foster parents, the identity confusion, sometimes focused on the issue of religion, the constant fear of discovery and distrust of the outside world, and the need to be as unobtrusive as possible, as the main traumatizing factors of the years in hiding. Josha Zwaan's

novel *Parnassia*, Judith Herzberg's play *Leedvermaak,* and for the most part implicitly also Marga Minco's *De glazen brug* are the only works discussed here that address the issue of the aftereffects of hiding. Although Fogelman (1993) states: "What we learn from hidden children is that abuse does not have to breed abuse in future generations" (306), that obviously does not go for *Parnassia*'s main character, though she is not abused herself. Other observations by Fogelman are echoed in the novel's plot: the feeling of being torn between the Christian faith of the foster parents and the Jewish tradition of the biological parents, but also the healing force of sharing one's hiding past with one's children.

Some fifteen years after Fogelman's work, Diane Wolf (2007) published a comprehensive study of Dutch hidden children in *Beyond Anne Frank*. She describes how for many hidden children the liberation was the start of an even more painful time than the war years. The separation from foster parents and the reunion with surviving parents, who were often traumatized by their own hiding or camp experience, rarely translated into a happy ending. Surviving parents paid scant attention to their children's troubles, and when only one parent had returned and remarried, the relationship with the stepparent was not always a loving or even an appreciative one. The tensions between hidden children and surviving parents, the difficulty in forming stable relationships, and the struggle to find one's own identity appear repeatedly in the work of authors from the postmemory generation, such as Lisette Lewin and Chaja Polak (the term postmemory is a bit misleading, since they were born before the war and do have their own memories of the war, however not of the concentration camps, which was the original point of reference). They were hidden children themselves but in their literary work they do not focus on the hiding experience itself; therefore, I left them out of my thematic overview. After all, the literature of the postmemory generation is quite a notable category of its own.

The extensive research that has been conducted on the aftereffects of hiding on children does not, to my knowledge, exist concerning the trauma of adults who were in hiding. The topic appears indirectly only in Herzberg's novella through the main character's solitude, which he defies with inner dialogue.

We can conclude that all authors of fiction on hiding had hiding experiences themselves, with the exception of Willy Corsari, Abel Herzberg and Josha Zwaan. Generally speaking, their novels sketch a truthful picture, consistent with historiography. Children's books tend to leave out or soften the at times egotistical motives of aid-givers. However, the most recent novel, Josha Zwaan's, starkly presents the negative psychological effects and their transference to the next generations. Physical abuse of formerly hidden children is not reported, at least not as a common feature.

It goes without saying that in spite of its reliance on a truthful reality, fiction will not be a credible source for historiography. Nevertheless, it can and should be taken into consideration as a reflection of what society was ready to see and accept at the time of publishing. In this regard, it is remarkable that the first period under discussion shows a critical image of aid-givers, offering a nuanced view of the otherwise somewhat one-sided heroic image that soon dominated the common view of the attitude of the Dutch population during the war. At the other end, in the third period of 21st century fiction on the topic, *Parnassia* creates empathy for the child who is the object of the postwar struggle over the guardianship of former hidden children, at the same time refuting the inadvertent sanctification of child survivors of this (or any other) painful history. To some extent, *Parnassia* shows the same themes as Judith Herzberg's theater play *Leedvermaak*: the tension between real and foster parents, the troubles of a former hidden child in coming to terms with her past and the competing loyalties that accompany it. *Parnassia* appeared almost three decades later, and that may account for two features that are not, or hardly, to be found in *Leedvermaak*: the transference of the hiding trauma to the next generation, and the struggle of finding one's own identity. That last challenge could well be a reflection of the zeitgeist of the early 21st century and its preoccupation with group identity. Even so, the postwar fight over Jewish orphans in Christian foster families as such clearly underlies the incorporation of the theme in literary fiction.

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L'expérience des Juifs cachés aux Pays-Bas selon les textes de fiction

On peut distinguer dans les textes de fiction touchant à l'hébergement clandestin des Juifs aux Pays-Bas trois périodes : les textes publiés durant la période d'après-guerre, ceux parus pendant les années 1970 et 1980, et ceux, finalement, publiés depuis les années 2010. L'article dresse d'abord un inventaire de tous les romans et courts récits portant sur ce sujet et examine ensuite de manière plus détaillée quelques thèmes communs à cette littérature, thèmes qui se chevauchent d'ailleurs partiellement, à savoir la personnalité de ceux qui hébergent des Juifs et ce qui les motive,

les problèmes posés par le comportement des Juifs clandestins, les tensions religieuses entre les clandestins et leurs hôtes, et enfin les enfants juifs cachés et la relation avec leurs vrais parents et les parents « adoptifs » qui les hébergent. Bien que la théorie littéraire ait longtemps adoptée une attitude quelque peu réservée envers la littérature de l'holocauste, l'analyse présentée dans cet article montre que cette littérature – souvent écrite d'ailleurs par des auteurs qui ont eux-mêmes été cachés – dresse un tableau de l'hébergement clandestin des Juifs qui correspond grandement à celui dressé par des études historiques et psychologiques du phénomène. On peut en conclure que ces textes de fiction reflètent la réalité vécue par les Juifs clandestins sans être bien sûr tout à fait factuels. Les romans jeunesse constituent, cependant, dans une certaine mesure, une exception. En effet, ils tendent à réduire l'expérience vécue par l'enfant caché à celle de l'enfant qui doit demeurer cacher en tout temps, alors que l'enfant, vivant sous une fausse identité, pouvait souvent se déplacer plus ou moins librement. Ils brossent, par ailleurs, un portrait souvent trop favorable de ceux qui hébergeaient l'enfant. Il est, d'ailleurs, frappant que ce sont justement les textes publiés dans l'immédiat après-guerre et s'adressant à un lectorat adulte qui ne passent aucunement sous silence les motivations parfois douteuses de ceux qui venaient en aide aux Juifs, telles que la cupidité et l'égoïsme. Bref, ces textes introduisent tout de suite des nuances dans l'image que les Pays-Bas se sont donnés et qui est demeurée longtemps dominante grâce entre autres à la popularité du journal d'Anne Frank, l'image notamment de sauveteurs nobles qui seraient venus à la rescousse de leurs concitoyens juifs persécutés comme de véritables héros.

De Joodse onderduik in Nederland in de fictionele literatuur

In de fictionele literatuur die is gepubliceerd over de Joodse onderduik in Nederland tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog zijn drie periodes te onderscheiden. Na een inventarisatie van alle romans en novellen over dit onderwerp volgt een meer gedetailleerde beschrijving van enkele veel voorkomende thema's, die elkaar deels overlappen: karakter en motieven van de onderduikgevers, problematisch gedrag van de onderduikers, religieuze spanningen tussen onderduikgevers en onderduikers, en ondergedoken kinderen en de verhouding tot hun echte en hun onderduikouders. Terwijl de literatuurwetenschap lange tijd tamelijk gereserveerd stond tegenover Holocaust fictie blijkt uit deze analyse dat fictie over de onderduik – overigens grotendeels van schrijvers die zelf onderduikervaring hadden – een beeld geeft dat sterk overeenkomt met de geschiedschrijving en inzichten uit de psychologie, en in die zin als waarheidsgetrouw beschouwd kan worden, zonder dat het om feitelijke juistheid gaat. Kinderboeken vormen enigszins een uitzondering op die bevinding, daar zij een wat eenzijdig

beeld geven, namelijk vooral van onderduik als een zich verborgen moeten houden, terwijl kinderen zich vaak onder valse identiteit vrijelijk konden bewegen. Tegelijk worden de onderduikgevers wat rooskleurig voorgesteld. Verrassend is dat juist in volwassen fictie van kort na de oorlog de negatieve kanten van onderduikgevers, zoals hebzucht en egoïsme, bepaald niet verdonkeremaand worden. Daarmee werd al meteeen een nuancering aangebracht in het beeld van nobele redders die heldhaftig hun bedreigde Joodse landgenoten te hulp schoten, het (zelf)beeld van Nederland dat mede door de populariteit van het dagboek van Anne Frank lang dominant geweest is.