

second-generation survivors of a collective trauma. Natan Kellermann categorizes the various forms of transmission of trauma as “overt and covert,” “manifest and tacit,” and “conscious and unconscious,” and cites R. M. Prince (“Second Generation Effects of Historical Trauma,” 1985) who underlines the extreme complexity of the mechanism of second-generation effects and enumerates the multiple influencing factors involved.¹⁹

Within the realm of all this complexity, I suggest my own categorization of second-generation voices which I hope will shed light on my approach and criteria in dealing with the subject and make this study more accessible and convincing.

In this chapter, I focus on one major category as regards the transmission of the parents’ trauma, namely, second-generation responses as they are shaped and conditioned by a family atmosphere in which the parents’ past experience was kept a secret. Under this rubric, I discuss a variety of reactions on the part of the children—such as resentment, aversion, awe, alienation, and distancing—toward or against parents who refused to share their stories. I believe that these reactions are factors and determinants that play a role in shaping the children’s character and personality. I further believe that despite the paradoxical nature of trauma being transmitted without verbal communication, the children’s various reactions are also influential in shaping their perception of that trauma. Those reactions come into play and are reflected in the literature they produce when, as adults, they face the need to

¹⁹ Kellermann, “Transmission of Holocaust Trauma,” p. 4.