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Living in the Liminal Space of Dream and Reality  
Children's Drawings of the Holocaust

UTE HARING, REESA SORIN, AND NERINA CALTABIANO

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# Living in the Liminal Space of Dream and Reality: Children's Drawings of the Holocaust

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*Abstract: This article reports on a document study of children's drawings from the Terezin concentration camp during the Holocaust years of 1941–45. The research discusses drawings, first as a background to the Holocaust, where children were living in that liminal space between dream and reality. Next, using Haring's Content, Interpretive and Developmental (CID) method of analysis, an exploration of children's lives—as expressed through their drawings—is presented. Within this liminal space, emotions such as despair, depression, and fear accompanied by intuitive knowledge, memory, resilience, and wellness were experienced. The Terezin drawings demonstrate children's intuitive knowledge and feelings of foreboding, as well as their resilience and hope for the future.*

*Keywords: Holocaust Children's Drawings, CID Method of Analysis, Children's Art*

## Introduction

After the First World War, Germany suffered extreme economic hardships, imposed by the *Treaty of Versailles* (Bateson 2011). When Hitler came to power in 1933, his party used this situation as a motivation to scapegoat the Jewish population (Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman 2005). Jews had been unable to settle permanently in Europe, being as “service nomads” incapable by law of acquiring land, and therefore concentrated on business and banking (Slezkine 2004, 9). The historical, cultural, religious, social, and economic situation in Europe finally culminated in Hitler's determination for the genocide of the Jewish people. As Rutland states, “Nazi propaganda reinforced the negative stereotypes of Jews, leading to their humiliation and mass murder” (2010, 75). The Jewish population, as well as the German people, “were constantly deceived and could not possibly know the fate that lay ahead” (Salmons 2003, 146). Jewish children, in particular, were targeted and perished with their parents. While much has already been researched, Lander asks for more study and research to be conducted about different aspects of the Holocaust (2013). This document research on the interpretation of the Terezin children's drawings and paintings aims to add insights into this area. For the remainder of this article, we refer to them as “drawings,” although paintings are included as well.

## Background to the Children's Drawings from Terezin

The “Depression Era,” which followed a decade after WWI, promoted hatred against Jews who held a strong influence over the European financial system (Noakes 2004). The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) offered to bring Germany to greatness again and financial independence for state and individuals (Posner 1997). When Hitler came to power in 1933, no one in Germany could foresee the “programmed horror the German military conceived for the Jews” (Krystal 2006, 37). The lives of six million Jews, as well as countless anti-Nazis, people with disabilities, gypsies, and “vagabonds” were destroyed. Thousands of those who vanished in gas-chambers were children, “their ashes have long since drifted across the fields around Auschwitz” (Weil, cited in Frankova and Povolna 2011, 11).

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vanished in gas-chambers were children, “their ashes have long since drifted across the fields around Auschwitz” (Weil, cited in Frankova and Povolna 2011, 11).

Jewish financial involvement had been developed due to their not being able to buy land for farming and get permanently settled in any European country (Flannery, as cited in Pista 1997, 7; Slezkine 2004). This fact created an underlying hatred against Jews and was fuelled by the realization of Hitler’s associates that Jewish people had riches in savings and private collections that could be confiscated by the Secret Service (SS) (Posner 1997; Toltz 2011). The “taking of spoils” escalated into the mistreatment, torture, and transportation of the Jewish population (Toltz 2011). For the Jews, life ended in a “tunnel with no opening” (Frankova and Povolna 2011, 9). As Krystal notes, “An entire race of people had been condemned to death” and “an entire way of life was destroyed” (2006, 43).

In 1941, one of numerous ghettos for Jewish people was established in Terezin (formerly Theresienstadt), Czechoslovakia. Its purpose was to deceive the Jewish population; claiming that it was a retirement settlement (Blatter and Milton 1981). Equally, propaganda told the German people that the Jews were provided a “privileged” place to live (Brush 2004, 861). An inspection by the Red Cross in 1944 was carefully prepared by the Secret Service (SS) for Terezin as a model camp (Stargardt 1998), “to fool sceptical outsiders” (Brush 2004, 861).

It is difficult to imagine the anxiety, fear, and confusion the inmates of Jewish ghettos felt, being stripped not only of their clothes but also of their former lives, trying to survive “in the paradox of existence [where]...hunger, illness and deportations were as much part of daily life in Theresienstadt as were its cabarets, concerts, and lectures” (Dutlinger 2000, 2). Special mention has to be made of the children’s opera *Brundibaer*, an opera where good transcends evil and which, according to Toltz, was performed fifty-five times in Terezin, to the delight of the children (Toltz 2011). But Terezin was only a collection place, a “transit camp” before the final transport to the gas chambers of Auschwitz (Brush 2004).

It had been a most desolate place for the 141,184 Jewish people who were deported to Terezin in 1941–45 (Adler, as cited in Stargardt 1998, 215). Only 16,832 survived on liberation by the Russian Army. Of the 12,000 children sent to Theresienstadt aged under fifteen, only 1,560 stayed alive (Dutlinger 2000). Statistics, however, have been most inaccurate; “some sources display the number of child survivors as a mere 100” (Krystal 2006, 155).

Dutlinger states that the children “were persecuted along with their families for racial, religious, or political reasons” (2000, 26). Stargardt, as well as Frankova and Povolna, assure us that the children knew nothing of their destiny (1998, 2011). The question remains: if the children were aware of their imminent fate, “were they traumatized with fright?” (Costanza 1982, 74). They could equally have been affected by the unpredictability of their existence, like the adults (Posner 1997). Children (being children) may have seen the world differently adjusting more easily than adults to the horror around them (Malchiodi 1998). There may be symbols in their drawings/paintings that make obvious what happened to them in this liminal space. Colin notes the children in Terezin “balanced delicately between youthful optimism and idealism on the one hand, and [the] cynicism and hopelessness of reality...on the other” (Colin 2007, 3).

## Previous Interpretations of Terezin Children’s Art

Most children in Terezin were looked after in children’s homes by the *Jugendfuersorge* or “youth-welfare-department.” This organisation had been established by Jewish Elders with hope for the future because this was “the real treasure—the children of Israel and their memory” ((Stargardt 1998; Slezkine 2004, 7). Some children, mainly girls, had art lessons from Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898–1944), a “Jewish artist, intellectual and political activist in Vienna before the Second World War” (Linesch 2004, 57). Dicker-Brandeis was later considered by some to be “the first art therapist” (Glazer, as cited in Linesch 2004, 59). “She taught them art and gave them hope...to create a better world” (Spitz 2012, 2). For the children of Terezin, Dicker-Brandeis provided a “form of escape from joyless reality; it was a delight and therapy” (Frankova

and Povolna 2011, 84). Friedl Dicker-Brandeis perished in Auschwitz together with her students in 1944 (Leshnoff 2006). Four thousand children's drawings and paintings were smuggled out of Terezin after the liberation on May 8, 1945 (Frankova and Povolna 2011).

Interpretations of Children's Holocaust Art have been sparse, partly because of the "commemorative status" of this work. Analysts would "refrain from investing these artworks with the symbolic duty of speaking for all the other murdered children who left no testimony behind" (Stargardt 1998, 192–3). Stargardt has carefully categorized the child art of Terezin into three distinctive types. First, he identifies a strictly technical approach, where medium and technique are important for the design of the drawing or painting. This is seen in collages, geometric designs, and abstract patterns. Second, he notes that the art itself was created to express themes, like "Seder, Christmas, images of home, and countryside" and third, he highlights that the images are "drawings of everyday life in the ghetto" (Stargardt 1998, 195).

Stargardt's interpretation centres around themes of everyday life, with due respect to the children who did not survive the Holocaust. He notices a "sense of composition...[which] is remarkable, [most] probably produced in response to a given theme" (Stargardt 1998, 196). He advises "to exercise real caution" (using the words of Dicker-Brandeis) as children might have tried to please the teacher (161). Stargardt muses that "for the historian, the risks of over- and mis- interpretation are too great because we lack clear methodological precedence." (197). He chose to analyse the third category of the Terezin Holocaust drawings, using "two issues of key importance—food and home" which influenced the children's lives (212).

Frankova and Povolna equally distinguish between the three categories, stating that in the first category are artworks which show "the gentle guidance and sometimes experienced touch of the artist and teacher (Dicker-Brandeis)" (2011, 83). In the second category, art is produced by following a given theme and in the third is art created in free lessons where children selected "what just came into their mind" (Frankova and Povolna 2011, 83). Considering the contents of the drawings, Frankova and Povolna reported that the children drew from memory what children of that age group would normally draw (landscapes, families, animals, flowers, games, and fairies), but a small part of drawings showed everyday life such as "the dormitories, bunks, the Terezin barracks, transport and many sadder themes" (Frankova and Povolna 2011, 83).

Other researchers, such as Golomb and Malchiodi, have similarly viewed the drawings and paintings of the Terezin children (1992, 1998). Golomb (1992) found the drawings significant, albeit typical of children of this developmental stage. She sighted themes of daily life and memories but found that hardly any drawings showed Nazi brutality, confirming likewise Stargardt's assumption that unhappy or traumatized children will not necessarily represent what is happening but rather recall happy times (1998). Golomb refrained from analysing the colours the children had used, knowing about their limited art supply, but stated that "if a theme is personally meaningful for a child the drawings can convey his emotions" (Golomb 1992, 149). Malchiodi, an art therapist, agrees that the Terezin children's drawings regardless of life in the ghetto presented "things of beauty" despite the horror the children witnessed every day (Malchiodi 1998, 159). Both researchers determined that this probably represented an "act of spiritual defiance in the face of overwhelming powers," apparently expressing "hope and faith" (Golomb 1992, 148; Malchiodi 1998, 159).

Stargardt asks if we can interpret these drawings as "expressing real life or fantasies" as in the drawings past and present are often merged—"a time and place before the world went wrong"—to imagine a future (Stargardt 1998, 225). He states that "apparently 'optimistic' pictures [are not] necessarily the work of happy children" (Stargardt 1998, 192). This is because "trauma has many faces and the answers in creative form are especially multifaceted in children" (Brummer as cited in Weissova 2008, 151). Stargardt surmises that "we can only glimpse from these drawings," from these "involuntary snapshots, the emotional conflicts...we cannot ever quite know what lies behind even optimistic artworks" (1998, 235). Does knowledge of the Holocaust colour our emotional response to the drawings? Stargardt states that "there is no

established historical method for looking at the visual material produced by children” (197) and demands to “view them afresh without the benefit of seeing where the railway tracks led next” (233). Therefore, it is conducive for research to interpret this distinct group of drawings using the CID method, as established in previous research (Haring, 2012). In this article, we present the findings from the theme of “liminal space” to fill a gap in the literature concerning the Holocaust children’s artwork.

## Methodology

Drawings by Terezin children were at first randomly selected from the collection as presented in books and online. They were then purposively chosen by the authors to supply the richest insight into the lives of the children, as well as provide the most insightful symbolic expression of their thinking and feeling. This method related information and achieved a deeper understanding of what the children experienced and then transmitted in their drawings. As Case and Dalley state, “the image mediates between unconscious and conscious, holding past, present and future aspects of a [child]” (2013, 137).

This research was qualitative in nature, employing a document analysis approach. “The practice of qualitative document analysis (QDA) [is] an emergent methodology, rather than a rigid set of procedures with tight parameters” (Altheide, Coyle, DeVries and Schneider, as cited in Hesse-Biber, Nagy, and Leavy 2008, 127).

Documents (the drawings of the Terezin children) were analysed using the Content, Interpretive, and Developmental (CID) method of analysis (Haring 2012). The CID method includes content analysis, interpretive analysis, and developmental analysis. Content analysis is the “process of organising information into categories related to the central question of the research” (Bowen 2009, 133–34). Interpretive analysis helps to find deeper meanings within child art by employing a variety of techniques; several methods can be combined as “[m]ixing methods allows one to see things from different perspectives and to look at data in creative ways” (568). Developmental analysis was explored and critiqued as the first in the line of interpretation of child art. For this, researchers have tried to combine specific stages of cognitive development to the child’s development in graphic ability. An extended description of the CID method can be found in Haring and Sorin (2014).

Due to the inclusion of interpretive analysis, and within it “intuitive analysis,” defined by Colman as “immediate understanding, knowledge or awareness, derived neither from perception nor from reasoning,” a high degree of subjectivity could be expected and was addressed through an “audit trail” (Colman 2003, 378). An audit trail permits readers “to trace the course of the research” (Shenton 2004, 72). Further, some factual information was considered while analysing the work. For example, art material was difficult to obtain in Terezin. Children often had to use cardboard instead of drawing paper and any watercolour paint or pencils available to them (Dutlinger 2000).

## Findings: The Liminal World

A rabbi recently stated:

We dwell on the interface between two worlds  
—a world as it was  
a world as it is meant to be  
(Rabbi Schneerson n.d.)

Through analysing the Terezin children’s drawings using the CID method, a number of themes were uncovered, of which “liminal space” was one: “Liminality entails an effective separation from the everyday routines and entry into an alternative social encounter in which different rules,

different values and different relations apply” (Atkinson and Robson 2012, 1350). Within this liminal space, emotions and states such as despair, depression, and fear accompanied by intuitive knowledge, memory, resilience and wellness were experienced.

### **Despair, Depression, and Fear**

The Terezin children lived through the nightmare of enforced removal from their home. According to Nuttman-Shwartz, Huss, and Altman, “Forced relocation means involuntarily moving a population from familiar surroundings to a new environment” (2010, 1). When moved away from their accustomed surroundings, their homes, families, friends, pets, and toys, the world had drastically changed. Relocation has a traumatic effect, especially on children (Nuttman-Shwartz, Huss, and Altman 2010). In Terezin, the children were living between dream and reality. Their memories and dreams (expressed in their drawings) gave them the power to face the unimaginable, absurd life around them (Toltz 2011).

Bone considered a different aspect of Liminality. She hypothesized that the liminal space, where imagination and creativity exist, is “being in the flow” and leads to recovery and healing; making the child’s world whole again (2008). Csikszentmihalyi calls this state “a holistic sensation that people have when they act with total involvement” (Csikszentmihalyi, as cited in Beard 2015, 353).

Rockwood Lane affirms that when a person is involved with “creative or spiritual acts, even as a passive observer, the process creates hope”; a positive outlook is attained and coping strategies are developed (Lane 2005, 122). In therapy, it is long known that art activities may heal children who have experienced trauma due to living through disaster or abuse. Drawing gives children with limited communication skills an opportunity to express their deep-seated emotions connected with trauma (Rubin 1984).

Despair and depression occur within this liminal time and space. According to Malchiodi, despair and depression are difficult to detect in children (1998). The Terezin art work was accomplished by children of age ten to fifteen (Frankova and Povolna 2011). Stargardt challenges Englaender’s perception that “children of this age live only in the present” (as quoted in Stargardt 1998, 224), pointing out that details and themes displayed in the drawings often combine the past and present. Equally, the CID interpretation of the drawings demonstrates that the older children, especially the boys, were intuitively aware of their liminal situation. As Sigal and Weinfeld explain: “It is only in adolescence [from 12 years on] that we become capable of perceiving our vulnerability to potentially life-threatening events” (2001, 77). The Holocaust children expressed in their drawings despair, depression and the “Fear of the Unknown,” which is one of the strongest emotions a child can ever experience (Sorin 2003, 121).

Helga Weissova’s painting of the “Sluice in the Courtyard 1” (Figure 1) describes the desolate situation everyone in Terezin experienced on arrival (Toltz 2011). It shows exhausted bodies and piles of luggage waiting to be numbered and sorted into useful or to be discarded (Weissova 2008). This means that young, strong adults, able to work in a factory or farm, were sent off in a different direction to those too young, too old, or too weak, who stayed on in Terezin until dying of disease or transported to certain death in Auschwitz (Weissova 2008; Toltz 2011). The children became aware of the depressive liminality of their existence. This is forcefully expressed in young Vilem Eisner’s unnamed drawing (Figure 2).



Helga Weissová-Hosková  
*The Sluice in the Courtyard I*  
Watercolor and ink,  
September 9, 1943  
Wallstein Verlag,  
Göttingen, Germany

Figure 1: Sluice in the Courtyard I  
Source: Weissova 2008



Figure 2: Unnamed Drawing by Vilem Eisner  
Source: Frankova and Povolna 2011

It seems a cage-like situation: bunk-beds are overpowering while the people are rather squashed on the bench and seen from the back which indicates no individuality is discernible. Strong brushstrokes mainly in black combine with dark green and dark red: a hopeless situation made mysterious by the gloomy shadows. Life was joyless or as Pavel Friedman, a child in Terezin, wrote, “Butterflies don’t live here in the ghetto” (Frankova and Povolna 2011, 7).

Another snapshot into the reality of the children’s existence in Terezin is depicted in thirteen-year-old Helga Weissova’s painting of the “Bread on the Hearses” (Weissova 2008, 44). It illustrates that food was of utmost importance. In her painting (Figure 3), the heavy cast iron hearse is piled high with bread loaves. It could be assumed that the self is presented here in the middle of the painting, her gaze down on the much wanted food with arms outstretched to enclose all loaves (reminiscent of “Bread of Life”).





Figure 3: Bread on the Hearses  
Source: Weissova 2008

According to Stargardt, everyone in Terezin was hungry all the time (2008). People would scavenge in the garbage bins for something to eat (Weissova 2008). She recalls that, “everything was transported on old hearses—luggage, bread and elderly persons” (Weissova 2008, 44). It is questionable whether *Jugendfuersorge* (“Welfare for the Young,” defined in Stargardt 1998, 210) was displayed on the side of the wagon. This could have been wishful thinking, however, it shows her desire that the bread be only for the children.

One third of the population in Terezin died of diseases like Typhus or starvation (Weissova 2008 Frankova and Povolna 2011). The children experienced “everyday life in all its tragedy” (Schimmerling in Weissova 2008, 12). They were continuously confronted with death: they observed and intuitively understood that the hearses carried both bread and corpses. This would have had a lasting effect on the children; as Weissova recounts, “The impressions that were to orient me from this point in time ended my childhood” (Wiegand in Weissova 2008, 150).

### Intuitive Knowledge

Another state within this liminal space and time is intuitive knowledge, defined by Colman as “immediate understanding, knowledge or awareness, derived neither from perception nor from reasoning” (2003, 378). The children intuitively knew about their predicament, although Frankova and Povolna claimed that the children “saw reality, but they still maintained their childish outlook” (2011, 10). Costanza noted that they sometimes escaped “into a world of fantasy” (1982, 77). Harris asserted that “[s]ymbolization through fantasy may itself enable children to erect a fortress in the mind that defends them from the worst psychological effects” (Harris 2009, 2). Bigger added a further aspect to liminality, to include “an in-between state of mind, in between fact and fiction” (Bigger 2009, 212). This becomes obvious in Dora Zdekauerova’s drawing (Figure 4), where she has intuitively displayed her fear of the unknown. A dangerous situation is depicted for the princess, foreshadowed by the black background and the orange fire-breathing dragon. The strange, rather sketchy magician in the background is adding a sense of dread to the drawing. The princess seems to await her fate, holding her hands on her back and does not show feet, which could be a sign of feeling powerless (Di Leo 1983). She is diverting her gaze away from the dragon.



Figure 4: Dora Zdekauerova's Drawing  
Source: Frankova and Povolna 2011

The black shading behind the delicate girl could convey the danger the princess (the artist?) is facing at this moment. Cirlot explains that this symbol shows “the search for the anima and its liberation from the subjugation in which it is held by malign and inferior powers, it seems to be of mystical origin” (1971, 186). The young girl has avoided to draw the hands of the princess, they are hidden behind her back. According to Malchiodi, children find it difficult to draw hands “in a realistically satisfying way” (1998, 95).

The princess is a favourite symbol of young girls aged ten to twelve (McClure Vollrath 2006). The child has depicted the objects as she imagined them: delicate lines and colours for the princess (beautiful white soft dress and blonde hair). The dragon has crosshatched green skin, a spiky back, red/orange wings, and sharp claws. Its head is drawn as a circle with a beak. It is breathing fire. The dragon is larger in size than the girl and appears fearsome. Cirlot stated that “Present-day psychology defines the dragon-symbol as ‘something terrible to overcome,’ for only he who conquers the dragon becomes a hero” (1971, 88). Jung further suggests that the dragon quite simply represents evil (as cited in Cirlot 1971).

In close examination of the Terezin drawings, Costanza highlighted a feeling of discomfort within otherwise familiar objects (1982). In the artwork above, the magician seems a disconcerting figure, perhaps a disguised symbol of authority. He appears in a stance of power, disconnected from the fairy-tale theme, carrying a hastily drawn swastika on his costume. This seems to reveal the real fear this child intuitively felt.

The presence and positioning of objects in a drawing also needs to be considered. For example, Gregorian et al. (1996) noted the presence of a black sun in many traumatized children's drawings. It became obvious in the analysis of the Terezin drawings/paintings that the sun, which is usually depicted in children's drawings, was missing from all work that the children had produced (except in some collages or abstract artwork), but noteworthy in eleven-year-old Margit Koretzova's colourful depiction of the life cycle of butterflies (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Koretzova's Depiction of the Life Cycle of Butterflies  
 Source: Frankova and Povolna 2011

Here it shows the sun as setting in the west (top left corner) which, according to Rollins is an expression of inner spiritual knowledge of the end of life (2005). This agrees with Jung's view that a sun in the top left corner represents death at the end of the life cycle; "Jung compares a life cycle to the path of the sun. It rises at birth from the horizon and moves one hundred and eighty degrees in an arc to set again at the horizon at the time of death" (Bertoia 1993, 106). Furthermore, the depiction of the life cycle of butterflies demonstrates the child's intuitive knowledge, another feature which can present in liminality. Cirlot stated that "[a]mong the ancients, (the butterfly was) an emblem of the soul and of unconscious attraction towards the light" (1971, 35). For young Weissova, butterflies meant "freedom." She hoped for metamorphosis, symbolic of her wish to end the liminal existence in space and time in Terezin (Shakespeare 2013).

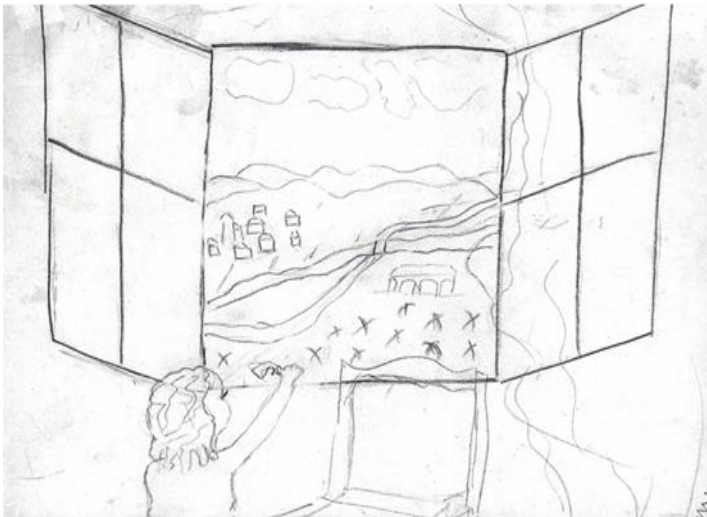
## Memory

Memory is another aspect emerging in liminal space and time. Two drawings of unknown children speak to the aspect of memory, unnamed drawing (Figure 6) and "At the Dormitory Window" (Figure 7). There is a sadness in "At the Dormitory Window," drawn by another unknown child (Figure 7). The real world seems far away. It is outside of the child's present situation. She is longing to look further than the window, waving a handkerchief. It is most unusual that there are no other living objects included besides the girl: no trees, no plants, no sun, and no people in the landscape. In this drawing, the girl has pushed a chair against the window to help her look into the countryside, as she remembers it. It is almost as if she wants to escape: similar to Iris, another young girl from Terezin, who wrote "We want to go home, just home" (Frankova and Povolna 2011, 16). Straight lines of the opened window have been executed by a ruler. This and the stereotyped houses could be an indicator that the child feels unsafe (Malchiodi 1998). The self is drawn in a rather ethereal way, similar to the chair and curtains. No shading has been attempted; perhaps the drawing was never completed.



Figure 6: Theresienstadt Child's Drawing

Source: <https://gerryco23.wordpress.com/2013/11/28/judith-kerr-the-tiger-and-the-pink-rabbit-that-hitler-stole/>



Unknown Child Artist  
At the Dormitory Window  
Pencil on paper  
19.5 x 24 cm, n.d.  
The Jewish Museum, Prague  
#121-515

Figure 7: "At the Dormitory Window"

Source: *Dutlinger 2000*

## Resilience and Wellness

The drawings of the Terezin children show symbolic expressions of resilience, wellness and adjustment to a difficult situation. Costanza insists that many of the drawings were of happy children, because they show memories of joyful times together with their families (1982). "Memory puts us back in touch with the 'essence of things,' with what is beyond time itself" (McConkey as cited in Jones 2003, 35). For Stargardt, this means that the children are "still dreaming of their old homes" (Stargardt 1998, 227) and that they depict material which gave them "the greatest comfort" in their daydreams (231). Segal writes: "the daydreaming ignores internal reality and deeper conflict. It is an omnipotent wish fulfilment" (1991, 103).

Hanus Perl's drawing (Figure 8) indicates "snapshots of memory," spotlighting his family. The drawing is executed on yellow paper; perspective has been attempted; and it shows extensive and careful shading on all items except for the beach. Extensive shading has been linked to depression (Di Leo 1983; Malchiodi 1998). However, in this instance, it could be seen as an attempt to cautiously bring the disassociated parts of the drawing together—the furniture, the people, and the boy, which could be a representation of the self. The bigger figure could be the father. However, both individuals are represented with no feet, which could mean that they are grounded and cannot run away. The father has no arms; he is totally powerless (Di Leo 1983). Both figures suggest that the artist, Hanus Perl, was aware that they were at the mercy of the Terezin situation. The imagined beach scene could have been added later to fill the page and to achieve some form of balance. The woman, possibly the mother, pushes a pram; the younger boy has arms and feet, while the girl seems to be covered in cloth and sand. A cat is watching and a dog is running towards them. However, Jewish children were not allowed pets, even in pre-ghetto time (Stargardt 1998). Di Leo indicated that buttons on clothing, here depicted on the shirts of the father and the child, could be pointing to "maladjustment" (Figure 8) to the Terezin situation (1983). Further, the scene of disassociated furniture items under three glaring lights seems disturbing and depressing. Still, as Berger observed in another context, these parts belong together (2001). That which is not there is equally important as that which can be seen. Hecht notes: "These furnitures and fixtures...are more than mere things...they are a collection with meaning and memory" (2001,123). It is the memory of a happy family life that brings both sadness and hope for the future as seen in the smiling baby cup on the table.

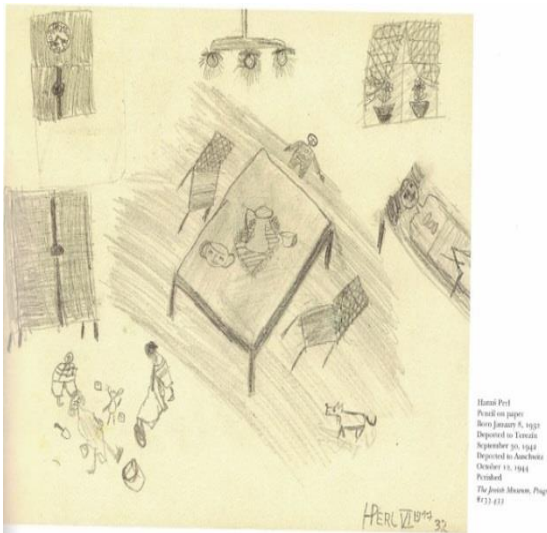


Figure 8: Hanus Perl's Drawing  
Source: Dutlinger 2000



Figure 9: Gabi Frei's Drawing of a Park  
Source: Dutlinger 2000

An idyllic scene of an outing in a park is depicted in the drawing by Gabi Frei (Figure 9). Children are playing different games between trees, mothers with prams, watching their children playing, while some people are sitting on benches. Perspective has been attempted by placing trees in the foreground or further back. The trees show full crowns, achieved by squiggly lines in extending circles, seemingly (to be) looked at from below. According to Di Leo, trees stand for the self and tree tops stand for intellect and social tendency (Di Leo 1983). Also, the different sizes of people show the child's awareness of adult-child relationships (Malchiodi 1998). Movement has been achieved: birds and an aeroplane are flying overhead and jump ropes are in the air. The ratio of human-made objects and natural objects is well adjusted. The group of eight, holding hands, are wearing what appears to be a school uniform. The flying aeroplane seems to

have swastikas painted on the wings. These two features and the unsmiling people could be seen as Frei unconsciously knowing that life in the park has come to an end. This child has been yearning for a normal social life, more so as the S.S. had forbidden Jewish Polish children to play in parks (Eisen, as cited in Fine 1989).

Memories of traditional symbols from “collective ideology create[s] a transitional space in which both stress and resilience can interact and heal,” thereby achieving wellbeing (Huss, Nuttman-Shwartz, and Altman 2012, 58). For the multidimensional aspects of wellbeing, McMahon, Williams, and Tapsell cite Hettler’s definition of wellbeing or wellness, which includes physical, spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional concepts of overall health and happiness (2011). Further, Malchiodi defines resilience in children as an “ability to maintain a positive and meaningful view of life”, which she links to spirituality (1998, 156). The drawing of a “Table with a Chanukkah lamp” by Irena Karpelesova (Figure 10) depicts the child’s remembrance of the Festival of Light when eight successive candles are lit from the ninth in the middle. The space has been filled. It is a pleasantly arranged, well-balanced design.



Figure 10: “Table with a Chanukkah Lamp” by Irena Karpelesova  
 Source: Frankova and Polovna 2011

Perspective is attempted through shading of the walls and under the table, which could have been used as “artistic intent” (Di Leo 1983, 22). There appear to be people, flowers, and corners of buildings and, in the right window, possibly a sun. This could suggest that life goes on in the outer world and does not include this child. She might be yearning for a different time in life: the inside room is full of light as the child remembers the lighting of the candles as peaceful, sacred and blessing–giving (Chabad.org 2014). Wellings defines the symbol of light as enclosing “joy and hope, a sense of spirit, immortality” (2001, 33). For Bertoia, the choice of yellow light symbolizes important spiritual or intuitive knowledge (1993). Equally Furth (as cited in Malchiodi 1998), states that depiction of the child’s family’s religious symbols provides comfort and mirrors “harmony between body and soul” (Malchiodi 1998, 218). These positive symbols help the developing child to grow towards resilience and wellness.

## Conclusion

Liminal space was one of the themes investigated in this research. This was undertaken using the CID method and resulted in the finding that the Holocaust children existed in liminal space. In this space, emotions such as despair, depression and fear, accompanied by intuitive knowledge, memory, resilience, and wellness seemed to have been experienced and expressed in their

drawings. In a time where the children of the Holocaust were living between dream and reality in an absurd environment, these symbolic expressions may have led to recovery and healing, making the children's world whole again. While a limitation of this research is the small number of drawings examined here, future research using more drawings and exploring different themes than Liminality could be valuable to our understanding of the Terezin children's drawings.

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