

Katie Nissen and Emma Wertz

German Literature

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Shattered Image

For our object we chose to make a shoe box that represented their lives before the concentration camps and then what was stripped away from them in the concentration camps that led to the shattering of their self-image and lives. To represent their lives before we used photos of them happy and care free. To represent their lives after we put objects in the box that had been stripped away from them in the concentration camps. On the outside of the box we used images of the Jews before they were stripped



of everything they knew and put in concentration camps. It was of children doing various activities with wide smiles on their faces. This shows that they still had innocence and life in them.

One of the objects in the box was a piece of burnt clothing. This is a concrete and symbolic object. When they were entering

the concentration camps they took away their clothes and left them shivering and naked. This is cruel because it is demeaning to force people to be exposed in front of everyone. It is also cruel because it exposes a person to the elements such as the freezing weather. It is symbolic because it also represents the victim's bodies being burned after they were gassed.

Another object in the box was a shoe. They would sweep up all the victim's shoes into a pile and just leave them there to waste. The Nazis would eventually give the victims another set of shoes in poor condition that did not usually even fit their feet and gave them limited time to change them out. This was just another way the Nazis dehumanized the Holocaust victims that did not have any real benefit to them at all besides giving them the feeling of empowerment.



Human hair was also among the objects in the shoe box. Not only did the Nazis strip the victims of their shoes and clothes, they shaved their heads bald. This was to prevent lice from spreading throughout the camp, but it was also another way to embarrass and take away the victims' identities through their hair.

We also used a family portrait of a Jewish family with the edges burned. It is a concrete object because it displayed a memento that was often taken away from the victims. It is symbolic because it shows how families were ruined by the Holocaust considering some of them never got to see each other again.

Lastly, pieces of a glass mirror were strewn throughout the box. This is a symbolic object because it represents the shattered lives and identities of the Holocaust victims. It also represents the shattering of the images the Holocaust victims had of themselves. When the victims went into the concentration camp their clothes, shoes, hair, and any personal objects they had were taken away from them. All of

these things are part of a person's image/identity. How they dressed, how they had their hair, and what mementos they kept close to them. When all of that was taken away, so was their image and self-identity that they had created.

The cons of our representation are that it doesn't represent the mass murder of a group of people. It also doesn't represent the pain and torture that they went through. It only represented what was taken away from them when they came into the concentration camp. The pros of our representation is that it displays how certain objects that are associated with our humanity being stripped away along with their image/identity. It is relevant in today's society, because everyone can identify with those objects and can understand if those objects were stripped away it would be a traumatic experience due to the fact they were being treated as worthless animals who didn't deserve respect.

Sources:

JEWISH LIFE IN EASTERN EUROPE

Young girl returning from store with a pot of soup and a bottle if milk, Lodz. Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

Girl in Plaid dress, Mukacevo. Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

Children playing outdoors and watching a game, TOZ (Society for Safeguarding the Health of the Jewish Population) summer camp, Otwock, near Warsaw].Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

[Children playing in the Jewish quarter, Bratislava]. Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

Jewish youth, Mukacevo.Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

JEWISH COMMUNITY LIFE

[Children wrestling outside a Jewish soup kitchen, Berlin]. Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

[Jüdische Oberschule (Jewish Middle School) classroom of the Jüdische Gemeinde (Jewish Community), Grosse Hamburgerstrasse, Berlin]. Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

[Boys learning metalwork techniques, Niederschönhausen, an occupational training camp for German Jews hoping to emigrate, Pankow, Berlin]. Vishniac, Roman. Berlin, 2013

[Boys exercising in the gymnasium of the Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst]. Vishniac, Roman. New York, 2013

[Campers and camp counselor, Surprise Lake Camp]. Vishniac, Roman. New York, 2013

Outside view of the box:

