

ABSTRACT

This dissertation began with the motivation to help build an understanding of resilience as demonstrated by the second generation children of Holocaust survivors by exploring the question:

How is it that the members of a generation that have been brought up under the shadow of the Holocaust and its losses, are able to not only to get on with their lives, but to be successful and helpful and compassionate with their fellow human beings”?

Other questions emerged during the course of the research offering the possibility to universalize this discussion and give meaning to 2nd Geners who have inherited the guilt and sorrow from all sides of the Holocaust: the perpetrators; the bystanders; the collaborators; the resisters, the rescuers, or the partisans; as well as 2nd Generation children and adults affected by other devastating events: Native Americans; Korean, Dutch, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Palestinian, Iraqi, Egyptian people including Sephardic Jewish people (includes displaced Jewish people from Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Africa, Yemen). This led to two additional questions:

How can other 2nd Geners affected by the all sides all of the Holocaust, the perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, neighbours give meaning to their legacy for the sake of their inheritors?

Globally, how can successive generations affected by trauma, displacement and devastation get on with their lives and be successful, helpful and compassionate?

Finally, I had a deeply personal question and that was to explore a felt memory I have carried in my back since childhood that might explain how my siblings died under the Nazi régime. This led to a fourth question:

Do we carry memory from one generation to another?

In order to explore these questions, I chose to write with a generative perspective rather than a claim of ‘*what is the case or not the case*’ given my need to discover the undefinable and ‘*discuss the undiscussable*’. My mode of discovery was through autoethnography, narrative and dialogue, under the epistemology of Social Constructionism. I applied a multimodal approach using text, documents, poetry, art, photographs, film and song to help me uncover layers of meaning not available to positivist, objective, and empirical modes of data gathering.

In particular, I drew on a 1940 drawing by Paul Klee, titled "*Burdened Children/Belastete Kinder*". The interplay of the lines and shapes within an undefined space not intended to be grasped, enabled me to discover multiple meanings in the ethnography of 2nd Generations.



I call the dissertation a discourse because it is a discourse that I and my fellow 2nd Generations entered into. The Reader too becomes part of this discourse, and is addressed as another participant in the narrative. I invite the Reader to use this discourse to edify their own pursuit towards resilience, explore the impact of their own past on their lives, and potentially, on the lives of their descendants.

Results

1. Created a new meaning of resilience and memory;
2. Developed a greater understanding of the ethnography of the 2nd Generation children of Holocaust survivors;
3. Explored new constructs of memory including: post-memory, trans-generational memory, absent memory, phantom memories and incorporation;
4. Created new theoretical and dialogical constructs on secondary inheritors of trauma, displacement and devastation -- including the generations who have inherited the guilt and sorrow from all sides of the Holocaust: the perpetrators; the bystanders; the collaborators; or the resistance fighters;
5. Planted the seeds for new theoretical and dialogical constructs on secondary inheritors of a number of other kinds of trauma, including: national, ecological, technological trauma, displacement, victimization and loss that can occur in all parts of the world; and
6. Posited some methodological considerations for holding group dialogues with secondary inheritors of trauma, displacement and disastrous events.