

CHAPTER 10

DRAWING A TREE AS AN EXPLORATORY MEDIUM

1. INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial the tree has been an important symbolic form for persons and tree images readily come up in colloquial speech. On the basis of its vertical position it can be valid as an analogy for the specifically human and it also speaks to persons as an image of life, striving, growing and flourishing.

Koch (101, 24) takes the growth of a healthy tree as the point of departure for the tree drawing as an exploratory medium and stresses especially the spatial symbolism the drawing expresses. Van Lennep (291, 28), who has expanded on Koch's work, also views the tree as a symbol of a person and, in particular, assumes that the roots, the trunk and the crown, as inseparable parts, can be related to the human figure. These parts can symbolize the following:

- a) The **roots** are related to the "firmness" or "looseness" of a person's ground or foundation. Regarding a child, this is connected with the relationships in his educative situation;
- b) the **trunk** is symbolic of **becoming** and also is strongly related to the child's educative situation;
- c) the **crown** symbolizes the **actualization of the psychic life** as such.

Easier than most other objects, for a child, a tree can acquire a "face" in which case it then really is "humanized" by him.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The child is provided with an ordinary (no. 2) and/or colored pencil, an ordinary sized (8 1/2 x 11) blank piece of paper and an eraser. The paper is placed squarely on the table in front of him. He is asked to first draw a tree in the **summer**. This can be any type of tree. Then he is asked to draw a tree in the **winter**. Following Van Lennep (291, 34), after completing a drawing of an **ordinary** tree, the child is asked to draw a **fantasy** tree and then a **dream** tree. The purpose of these last two drawings is to allow still greater freedom regarding the symbolic.

The emotional inhibition that might exist in the situation of drawing the first tree, for the most part, is not lived experienced while drawing the last two trees. Also, a stronger appeal is directed to the child, via imagining and fantasizing, to loosen himself from the intention to remain as faithful as possible to reality and not rely as much on memory as with drawing an ordinary tree.

After he finishes the **fantasy** and **dream trees**, allow him to tell a "little story" about them.

How long it takes the child to complete each drawing is also noted.

3. INTERPRETING THE DRAWINGS

3.1 Orientation

As with drawing a person, there are no fixed norms according to which the drawings are to be judged. Van Lennep (291, 54) approaches the drawn tree from the general tree analogy as well as by asking himself what the drawer has done with the analogy in terms of the way the drawn tree is an image of the drawer himself and can disclose his personal behaviors.

In accordance with his potentialities, it is assumed that the child will draw what is important to him, also regarding the tree-person analogy. Thus, the roots for him will be connected to his "anchoredness" in his educative situation and the trunk and crown will be related to his own identity-discovery and emancipation within his educative situation.

With the aim of interpretation, Van Lennep (291, 71) approaches the child's drawings as follows: It is first verified how large the tree is and the area of the paper it fills, what its position is on the paper and what the coherence is of the roots, trunk and crown.

It always has to be kept in mind that it is a unique person who draws and who attributes his particular meaning to what he draws since the three aspects taken as the point of departure for interpretation remain abstract and can have other meanings if they are isolated from the concrete whole.

In particular, attention is given to anything conspicuous. Often a child will draw a face in the tree or a spider, a birds nest, a little house, etc. In addition, attention is given to such accessories as damage, the structure of the trunk, the type of tree, e.g., a weeping willow.

Deviations regarding any of the three aspects (roots, trunk, crown) always have to be interpreted phenomenologically and then possible evidence sought for the interpretations. Thus, e.g., Koch (101, 133) has interpreted "wounds" to the trees as indicating bodily damage, a point of view that no longer can be endorsed since it also can have other meanings such as traumatization, etc. Moreover, the drawn trees have to also be viewed in relationship to each other.

Against the background of the above there then also is particular attention given to the following:

3.2 Observation

The child can perform in a variety of ways. For example, he can cooperate, or he can view the investigator as someone who disagrees with the meanings he brings there; or he can try to make a good impression by controlling or trying to hide his rebelliousness, insecurity or anxiety, etc. These matters will have a decisive influence on his drawings.

3.3 The position of the drawing on the paper (see 291, 151; 101, 28)

Because a tree stands vertically in space, it is really obvious that the child also place the paper vertically on the table in front of himself. Therefore, when the paper is turned diagonally this refers to opposition and rebelliousness. It really is an indication of rebellion against generally accepted values and conventions and he shows a rejection for the self-evident invitations that the world directs to him in order to put his own yardsticks in their place and on the basis of which he comes into conflict with current views. Thus, a person who perhaps quickly discovers that his tree cannot "grow" anymore in height because of inadequate space allows the tree to become broader.

Younger children usually draw objects that are on the ground on the bottom of the paper while older children and adults mostly choose

the middle of the paper. A person always stands in the middle of his world and therefore he also chooses the middle of the paper.

3.3.1 Left on the paper (see 291, 154; 101, 30)

By only drawing on the left part of the paper, the child does not use the space available. In everyday intercourse we often hear that someone is "left of the government" and **left** is interpreted as wrong. The drawing on the left of the paper also can be viewed as placed on the wrong side.

Regarding the child's educative situation, this also implies that he "stands to the side", as it were, and that there might be relationship problems present, e.g., that he doesn't feel accepted. In terms of emancipation, this implies that he lived experiences himself as inadequate and cannot participate with others on an equal footing.

Large trees on the left of the paper can indicate his strong feeling to apply himself but not being able to do so in everyday relationships. Thus, this really refers to passivity and there is mention of an **onlooker** rather than an active **participant**.

3.3.1.1 In the upper left corner (see 291, 159)

For a child, a corner always has a particular significance. He has to stand in the corner for punishment, and when someone is really in difficulty, "he is driven into a corner". However, a lonely person also retreats into a "safe" corner to find protection there.

A tree placed in the upper left on the paper also has no possibility of becoming larger and in this sense it indicates an unwillingness to explore and a weak future perspective, especially on the basis of feelings of inadequacy.

3.3.1.2 In the lower left corner (see 291, 162)

Such a placement might indicate a serious unwillingness to explore since the available space does not obstruct the tree from "growing" taller. Children who draw their trees in the lower left corner are usually timid, reserved and unwilling to establish interpersonal relationships. This is especially the case if the trees are placed in the same position (on all drawings). This also indicates a

perseveration that is evidence of an inability to distance oneself to an adequate gnostic-cognitive level.

3.3.2 Trees right on the paper (see 291, 176; 101, 30)

Right refers to a striving to close the other off. However, when the trees are placed on the extreme right side, this might indicate that there is no place allowed for another and that the child really will not allow the other into his world.

Interchanging placings to the left or right on the paper is an indication that the person is divided within himself and is really revolting against his educative situation.

3.4 Size of trees (see 291, 116-137)

Most children do not use the entire sheet of paper. Statistics show that the dispersion regarding the height and breadth of drawn trees are approximately between 5 and 9 inches and 4 and 7 inches, respectively. Large trees, then, will be those that are bigger than 9 x 7 inches and small trees those less than 5 x 4 inches.

"Large" refers to maturity, importance, independence and powerfulness while "small" refers, among other things, to insignificance, weakness, inadequacy.

One should always try to determine what underlies a particular child's choice of a large or small tree. Thus, e.g., a large tree can refer to uncertainty and feelings of inadequacy since he wants to compensate just for these. Perhaps he is not able to maintain himself in competitive situations and he eagerly wants to dominate and be the center of attention but he does not succeed in accomplishing this in interpersonal relationships. Perhaps he also can try striking a superior attitude because he is not able really to maintain himself as an achieving person. Thus, a large tree is not always a sign of feeling big and doing great but also of boastfulness.

A little tree might indicate that the child is modest and shy and would rather follow than take the lead. There is mention of a feeling of inadequacy and the belief that others are better than he is. He does not take the initiative easily and prefers rather to be told what to do. There also is mention of an unwillingness to explore. Also it can be that he tries to shirk his responsibilities by displaying

his own ineffectiveness and incompetence. However, the drawer of a little tree also can feel himself wronged and this feeling can manifest itself in aggressive or depressive ways.

In general, children who draw little trees can be viewed as quiet and turned inward. This might indicate affective neglect and a search for emotional security.

Children do not always draw all of the trees of equal size. If he begins with a little tree and gradually draws larger trees, this can indicate feelings of uncertainty in unfamiliar situations.

3.5 The different subparts

It has already been emphasized that a child's drawings always have to be viewed as the result of the meanings a unique child has attributed to his situation (see Chapter 9, section 2) and this fact should figure prominently during the orthopedagogic evaluator's interpretation of his drawings.

However, fruitful use can be made of Koch's (101) valuable findings regarding the specific aspects of the drawings. But where the following are summary discussions of examples of descriptions offered by Koch, they should never be implemented as isolated and decisive findings.

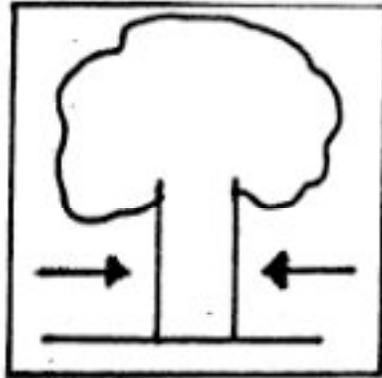
3.5.1 The roots

As a rule, the roots are not drawn but where they appear this indicates a clear feeling of uncertainty and dependence and a seeking of support. This strongly suggests the possibility of defective affective guidance in the primary educative situation.

3.5.2 The trunk

According to Van Lennep (291, 191), the trunk symbolizes a person's bodiliness. It represents the firm and permanent and is less subject to change than the crown. A tree really cannot exist without a trunk. Also, Koch (101, 39) views the trunk as the center and says that it refers to the child's relationship with himself and his own bodiliness. Among others, he distinguishes the following "types" of trunks:

a) The straight parallel trunk (101, 166)

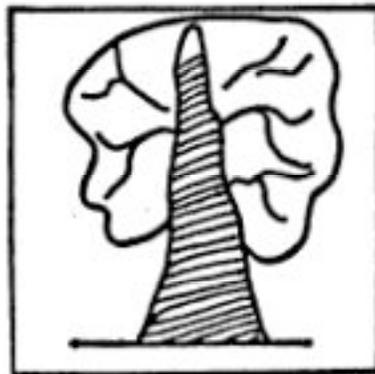


b) The split trunk (101, 129)



This can indicate a bodily threat or attack and the possibility of a weak self-feeling, and also of distrust.

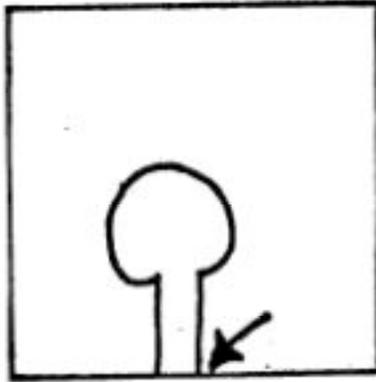
c) The T-trunk (101, 129-131)



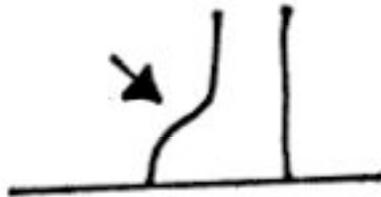
Discrepancies in the "type" of trunk in successive drawings can indicate an ambivalent attunement.

The **base of the trunk** can be drawn in the following ways:

- a) **On the edge of the paper** (101, 128)



- b) **Base wide to the left** (101, 128)



- c) **Base wide to the right** (101, 128)



- d) **Broad base** (101, 128)



e) **Base sloping, inclined** (101, 96)



f) **Ground line above base of trunk** (101, 196)

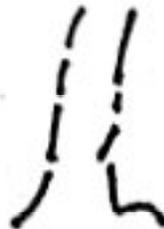


g) **Base stands on a hill or island** (101, 197)



The contour of the trunk can show the following variations:

a) **Interrupted** (101, 133)



b)

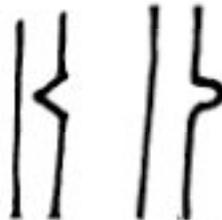
b) Irregular on left or right (101, 133)



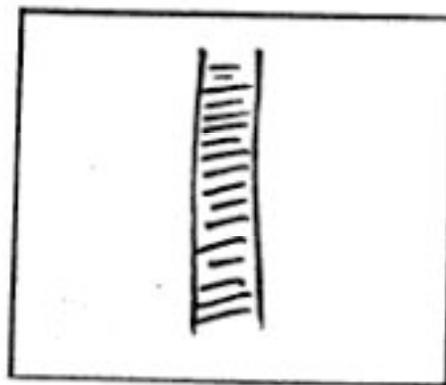
c) Wavy (101, 133)



d) Trunk notched or with node (101, 133)



Horizontal stripes on the trunk which represent the bark or curvature, really accentuate emptiness in the trunk which has to be filled and can indicate the experience of bodily deficiencies.

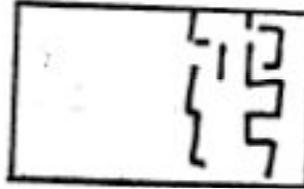


The surface of the trunk can be represented as rough, slotted or cracked with a variety of dashes, lines such as (101, 135):

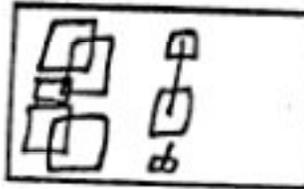
a) Pointed



b) Hooked



c) Angular



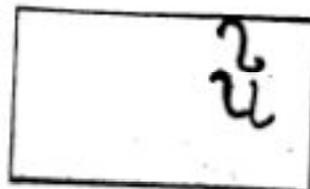
d) Straight



e) Toothed, serrated



f) Curved



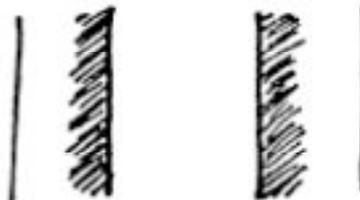
g) **Rounded**



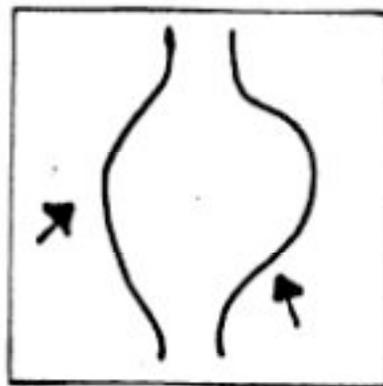
h) **Bowed**



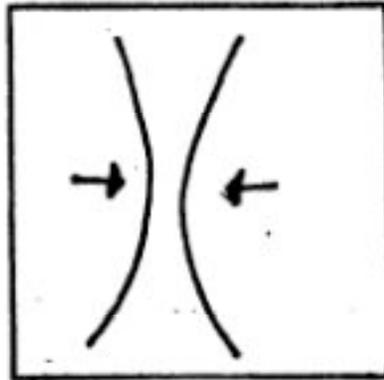
In addition, the trunk can be represented as nuanced on the right or left side (101, 135):



There can be a **thickening, widening** (101, 137)



or **narrowing** (101, 138)



Where the trunk really comes to nothing and the child doesn't know how to complete it, this indicates possible motor restraint and that he acts before he thinks. In such cases the drawings usually are sloppy and there is unsatisfactory effort in aiming to create a good drawing. This also can indicate tenseness and aggression.

3.5.3 The crown

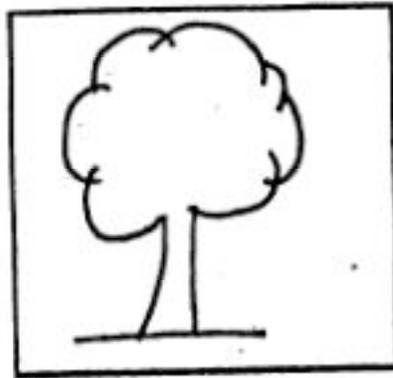
The crown is the symbol of aims and ideals. Koch (see 101, 140) views the crown as representative of a person's relationships with reality, i.e., with things and fellow persons.

According to Van Lennep (291, 124), a large crown fits to a large tree, and he indicates that often the tree is so large that the entire crown cannot fit on the paper. Then the rest of reality has to be an after-thought. Such a child ignores the limits of the paper and thus also the demands of reality. This can also indicate that future ideals are rather constrained because they are the result of his own attribution of meaning to them. Such a person strives to **achieve** in this direction but to win approval.

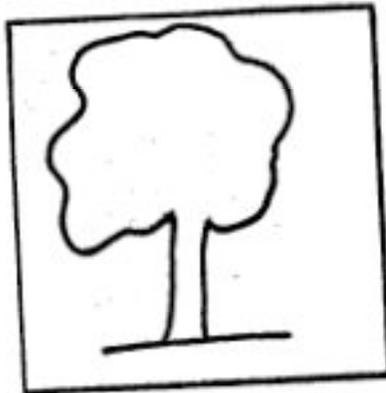
An inadequately developed crown thus is evidence of faulty formulated ideals and, as such, a weak future perspective.

The following are a few examples (Koch, 101, 141-155) of the **forms** in which a crown can be drawn:

a) Spherical (101, 142)



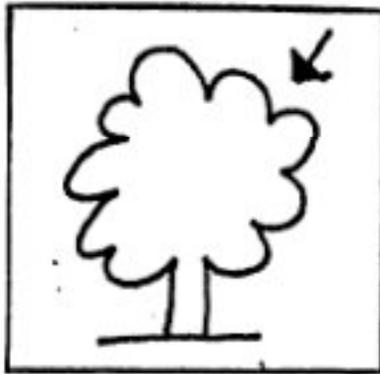
b) Wavy, curly contour (101, 142)



c) Branches with a skin drawn around them (101, 141)



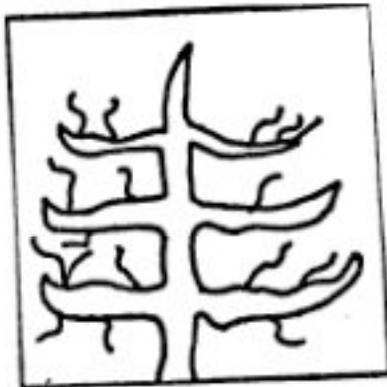
d) Bowed contour (101, 142)



e) Palm tree branches (101, 142)



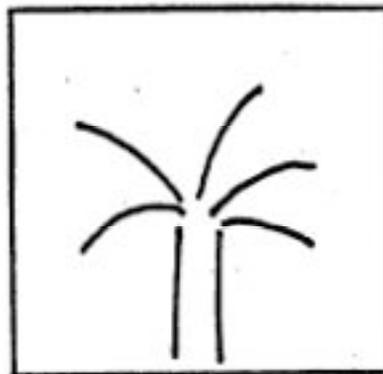
f) Vine formed (101, 143)



g) **Centripetal** (101, 144)



h) **Centrifugal** (101, 145)

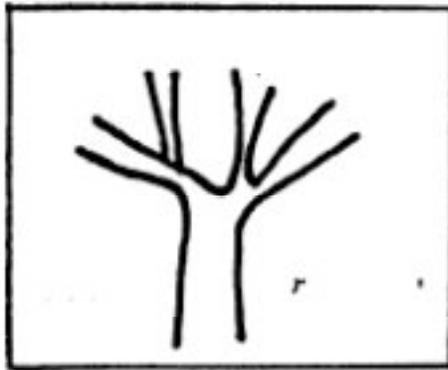


i) **Concentric** (101, 145)



j) **Branches** in the crown can refer to a multitude and diversity of ideals and goals. The branches also can assume a variety of forms such as the following:

i) **Thickening branches (101, 146)**



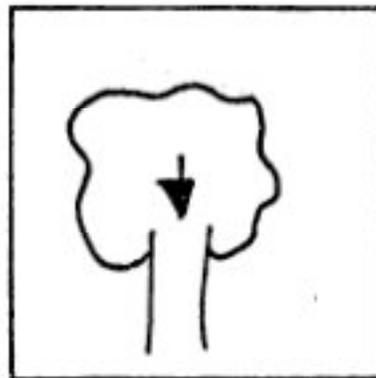
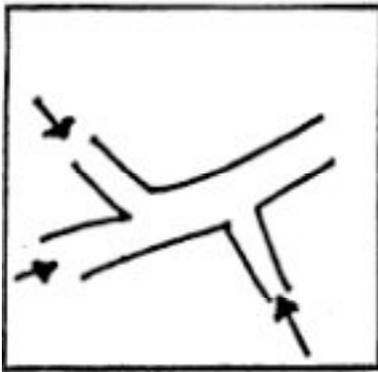
ii) **Branches with thickenings and/or narrowings (101, 146)**



iii) **Parallel branches (101, 146)**



iv) Pipe-formed branches (101, 146)

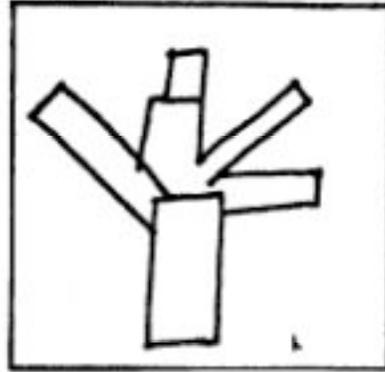


Pipe trunk

v) Interrupted branches (101, 154)



vi) **Lead trunk and branches**



In addition, the crown as a whole can show the following tendencies:

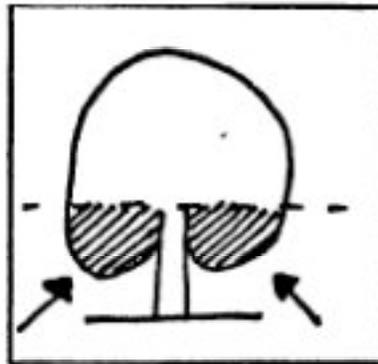
a) **Crown aimed up** (101, 174)



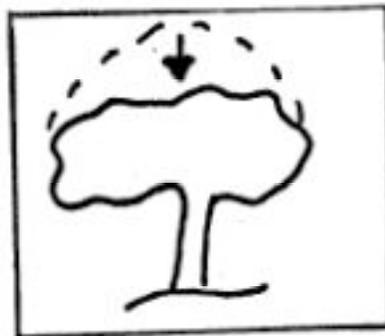
b) **Crown falls down** (101, 174)



- c) **Crown falls like a sack along the trunk** (101, 175)

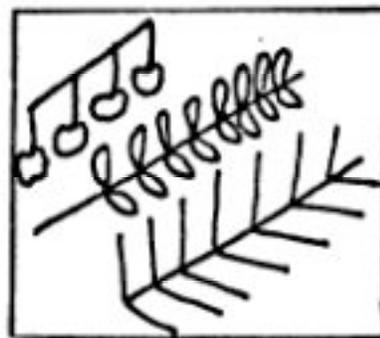


- d) **Flat crown** (101, 188)

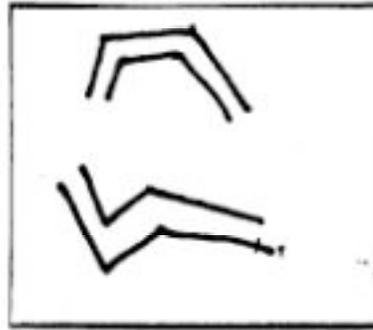


The crown also can be completed with a representation of a variety of forms of leaves, etc. In this regard, Koch refers to the following, among others:

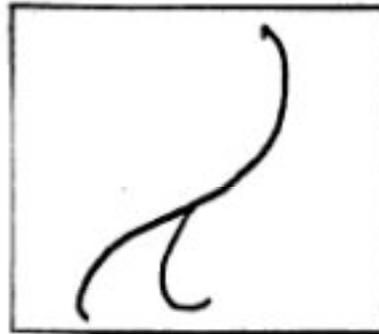
- a) **Stereotypic forms** (101, 158, 164-165)



b) **Branches with straight and angled forms (101, 167)**



c) **Crooked, round, bowed, wavy lines (101, 167)**



d) **Crossing branches (101, 177)**



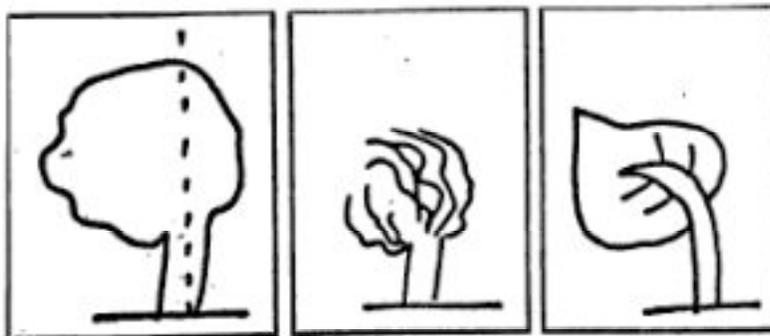
e) **Shadow-like crown** (101, 170)



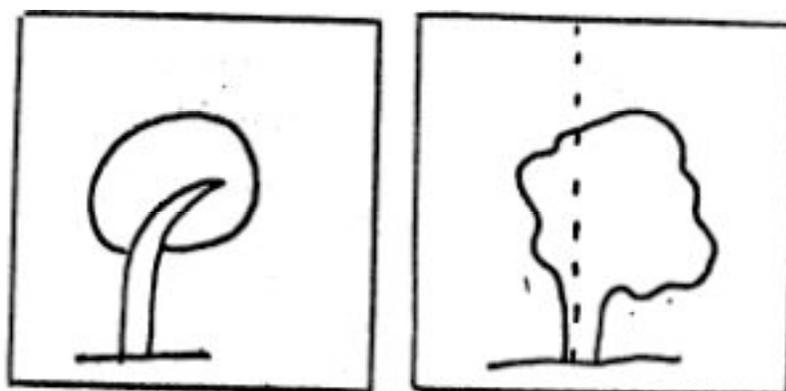
When a crown is completed to the finest detail this can indicate perfectionism. Then branches, leaves, fruit and more are deliberately drawn one by one.

A loose structure indicates possible problems of willing, a weak intentional directedness and an inability to distance oneself to a gnostic-cognitive level.

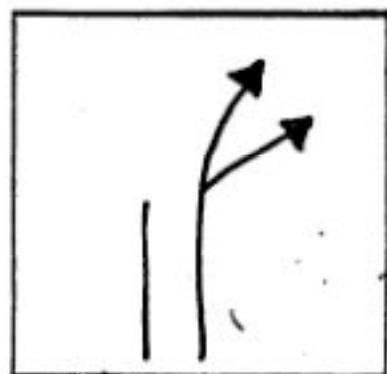
A **crown accented to the left** indicates introversion (see 101, 179).



A **crown accented to the right** indicates extroversion and an advance toward things and fellow persons and, as such, a more gnostic-cognitive attunement (see 101, 179).



When the **crown is inclined upward** this can be an indication of a favorable future direction (see 101, 174).



A **crown that is "flattened" or inclines downward**, such as a poplar tree, indicates an habitual pathic-affective involvement with reality (see 101, 175, 187).



3.5.4 The coherence of roots, trunk and crown

Van Lennep (291, 180) calls attention to the fact that if a child does not take into account the coherence of the trunk and crown, usually one or another problem is present. Unless there are conspicuous motor problems noted that can influence the harmony, it can be accepted that a child who ignores the general coherence has to contend with problems in actualizing his psychic life.

Defective coherence is usually clear where large branches sprout from the trunk, or where branches show **interruptions**. This also indicates defective attending, poor persistence and unreliable thinking.

A child who is unwilling to draw also will not complete his drawings.

3.5.5 Wounds

A "pruned" tree refers to an **encroachment** from the outside. Where such drawings appear, a distinction has to be made about whether it implies [a need for] "support" or perhaps is rather evidence of a "restraint" or "disfiguring". Close attention also has to be paid to the possible appearances of such wounds, e.g., a sawed off branch, etc. the child's reasons for such a drawing have to be determined (see 101, 183, 186).

3.6 Accessories

A great variety of **accessories** can appear such as a support for the trunk, fruit, thorns, blossoms, leaves, birds, bird nests, eggs, little

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A great variety of **accessories** can appear such as a support for the trunk, fruit, thorns, blossoms, leaves, birds, bird nests, eggs, little men, baskets and anything else that is "hung", falling objects (leaves, branches, blossoms, fruit) (see 101, 200-212).

The investigator has to clarify phenomenologically why a particular child has introduced the particular "accessories" since they cannot merely be accepted as "coincidental".

Sometimes the drawer tries to "improve" his drawings with captions to give notice that by them he succeeds in formulating his inner lived-experiences as he would like to.

4. SYNTHESIS

Particular contents of the tree drawings and possible indications regarding the actualization of the psychic life

INTELLIGENCE

poor ability: lead trunk and branches after 13 years.
more practical: T-trunk; base of trunk wide; crown vine formed.

good ability: three-dimensional.

underactualization:

general: shakily formed lines.

trunk: T-trunk; interrupted trunk lines; thick; grows narrow; trunk open at bottom; perseverations; stereotypic; break in trunk and limbs.

crown: chaotic lines; centrifugal; foliage and other "accessories"; slopes down.

MANIFESTATIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCING

pathic-affective:

general: shakily formed lines.

trunk: upper level heavy; pointed lines.

crown: Foliage; branches covered with bark.

gnostic-cognitive:

general:

trunk: straight, parallel after 12 years.

crown:

pathic-affective lability and impulsivity:

general: shakily formed lines; lines and coloring in (shadings) are black and dark; blossoms; tree in upper left corner of paper.

trunk: bottom open; interrupted lines; thickens or narrows; straight tree base.

crown: chaotic lines; interrupted branches; branches fall under; crossing branches.

pathic-affective stability:

general: thinly formed lines.

trunk: straight, angled form after 12 years; wavy contour; upper level coarse curved, round and bowed lines.

crown:

gnostic-cognitive disorder:

general: blossoms.

trunk: lead trunk and branches after 13 years.

crown: leans to left; chaotic lines.

concrete-visual thinking:

general:

trunk: base wide (in puberty), T-trunk.

crown: spherical form.

abstract thinking:

general: three-dimensional.

trunk: open, pipe-form; straight and parallel after 12 years.

crown: vine formed.

ACTUALIZATION OF BECOMING AN ADULT

infantile:

general: tree placed in bottom left corner; roots.

trunk:

crown:

inadequate exploration, emancipation, distantiation, objectification, differentiation:

general: ground line; roots and trunk together.

trunk: T-trunk; bottom open; interrupted lines; thickening or narrowing; straight trunk base; interrupted.

crown: chaotic lines; falling foliage, etc.; leans left.

insecure:

general: roots; line form and coloring (shading) black and dark; shaky.

trunk: placed on island or hill; interruptions in trunk lines; open bottom; placed against support or pole; sloping ground line.

crown: accent to right; shaky contour; falling under; interruption in branches; open branches in crown; landscape; falling foliage, etc.

self-confident:

general: three-dimensional.

trunk:

crown:

inadequate cognitive lived experiencing:

general: tree placed left and above.

trunk: base on bottom of paper; left or right irregular; curved; branches cut off.

wants to impress:
 crown: flat; empty spaces.
 general: heavy lines; shaky.
 trunk:
 crown:

dependent on mother:
 general:
 trunk: base wide to left.
 crown:

little persistence:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: fruit after 12 years.

quarrelsome, undisciplined:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: chaotic branches which cross.

shuns authority:
 general:
 trunk: base wide to right.
 crown:

directed to orderliness:
 general: sharp, precise lines.
 trunk:
 crown: vine formed.

ambivalences:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: branches cross.

tense:
 general: bent (crooked), round, wavy lines (after 12 years).
 trunk:
 crown: spherical form with abundant branches and foliage.

stubborn:
 general: three-dimensional.
 trunk: interruptions; irregular left or right; straight and parallel (after 12 years), straight; angled forms.
 crown: centrifugal.

arrogant, impudent:
 general: three-dimensional.

trunk:
crown: emphasis to right; centrifugal; branches become thicker.

decisive:

general: wide lines; dark, black (after 12 years).
trunk: upper level crude (round and curved or bowed lines).
crown: centripetal; branches in crown; chaotic lines; centrifugal.

indecisive:

general: thin lines.
trunk: interruptions.
crown: falling under; open; pipe-formed branches; interruptions in branches; branches cross; landscape.

bodily experiences:

general: line roots (experiences difficulty moving).
trunk: node; curved; thinning.
crown:

absent-minded:

general:
trunk: open below.
crown: interruptions in branches; centrifugal; open; pipe-formed branches.

successful interpersonal relationships:

general:
trunk: upper level crude (curved, round or bowed lines)
crown: wavy contour, branches end in ball of clouds.

problems with interpersonal relationships:

general: tree low and to left.
trunk: curved lines.
crown: sawed-off branches.

polite, charming, considerate, diplomatic:

general:
trunk:
crown: branches end in ball of clouds; bowed characteristics in crown.

extratensive (outgoing):

general:
trunk:

crown: falling under; emphasis to right; centrifugal; branches become thicker; wavy contour.

introvertive:

general:

trunk: nuances to left; thickening or thinning.

crown: leaning to left; bark covered branches.

shy, bashful:

general:

trunk:

crown: branches end in ball of clouds.

mistrusting, suspicious:

general: tree drawn left and below.

trunk: base broad to right; sloping ground line.

crown: palm tree branches.

quick-tempered:

general:

trunk:

crown: pointing up.

cautious:

general:

trunk:

crown: palm tree branches.

proud:

general: drawn left and above.

trunk: T-trunk; stands on an island or hill.

crown:

feels guilty:

general:

trunk: curved lines.

crown:

passive:

general: drawn left and above.

trunk: ground line above base.

crown: falling down.

active, restless, enthusiastic:

general: drawn right and above.

trunk:

crown: drawn as curls; points up.

aggressive:

general: hard, dark lines; changes position of paper.

trunk: pointed lines.

possible crown: centrifugal; thorns.
 traumas:
 general:
 trunk: narrows or thickens.
 crown: branches narrow or thicken.

independent, resolute (firm):
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: centripetal.

takes initiative, diligent:
 general: three-dimensional
 trunk:
 crown: centrifugal.

self-conscious:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: emphasis to right.

self-satisfied:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: concentric.

reserved:
 general: tree drawn in lower left.
 trunk:
 crown: flat; falling down.

eager to achieve:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: leans to the right.

reluctant:
 general:
 trunk: sloped ground line (after 12 years).
 crown:

willing:
 general:
 trunk:
 crown: leans to the right.

playful, teasing:
 general: accessories (birds, etc.).
 trunk:
 crown:

The following drawings were done by children restrained in becoming adult.

Drawings 1, 2, 3 and 4 were completed by Karl, 16 years one month and in 11th grade (IQ = 117, V = 103, NV = 130).

According to his parents, he has "lost interest in school work" and early on his grades showed a considerable decline. Also, these days he is very rebellious, obstinate and "continually in conflict with his teachers".

Karl is an attractive, strong, athletically built boy and is "particularly skilled with his hands". He wears glasses and because of a bad back does not participate in contact sports.

In school he is a class leader and is very popular with his peers because he usually takes the lead. He finds many faults in his teachers and often accepts his own views of matters as correct. Moreover, he does not have much regard for pupil advising and the school routine.

In die Sauro



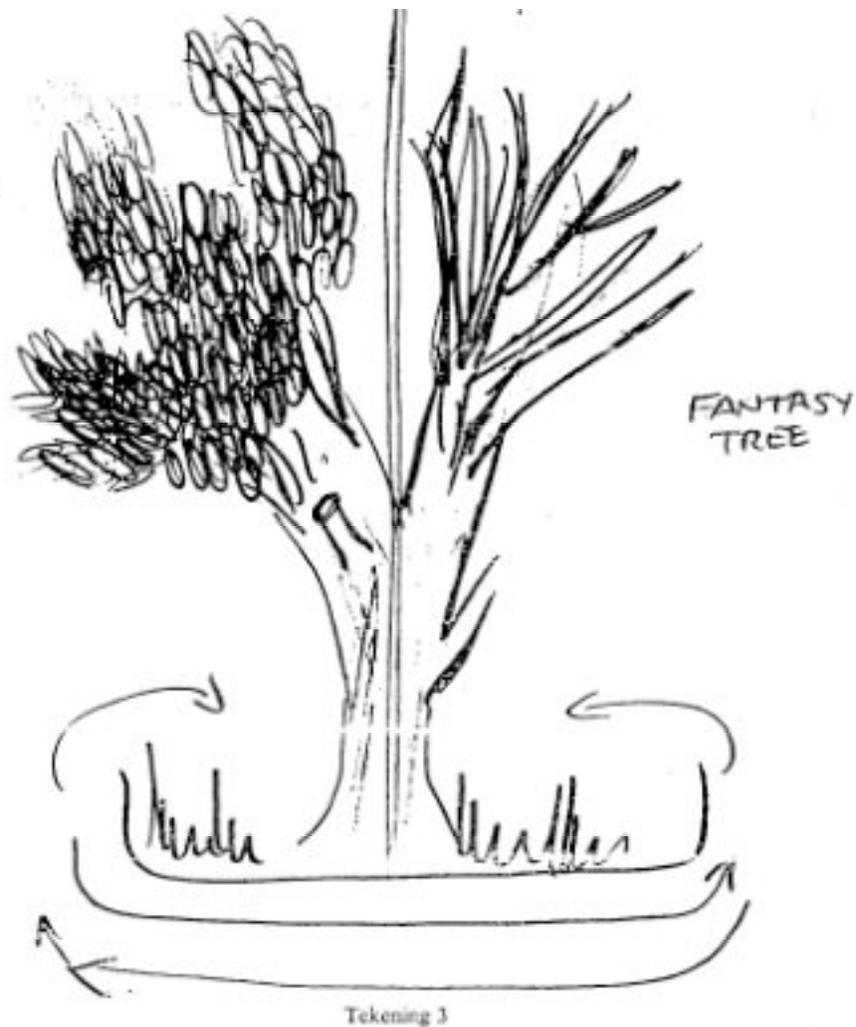
Tekening 1

The educative relationship at home appears to be relatively favorable although his mother, in particular, places a high premium on good scholastic achievement and in this regard seldom shows any satisfaction. Indeed, there are very few expressions of appreciation for any achievements because the parents really view achieving as self evident.

Winter



Tekening 2



Drawings 1, 2, 3

Characteristics of drawings and possible interpretations

Split in the trunk of the fantasy and summer tree: experiences his personal actualization as retarded.

Ground lines: experiences inadequacy and uncertainty; a more practical attunement.

Broadened base of trunk: retrained becoming and thinking, learning difficulties.

Forked branches: emotional lability and yet a readiness to explore; more bound to the concrete.

Branches cut off: feelings of inadequacy; bodily experiences; feelings of not being understood; feelings of guilt.
Coarse upper trunk: sensitive to other's opinions about himself in interpersonal relationships.
Use of dark lines: feelings of aggression, anxiety and insecurity.
Centrifugal crown: extrovertive; aggressive.
"Axis" around which tree rotates: feelings of uncertainty, inadequacy and a seeking of support.
Frontal view: orientation problems; obstinate; pigheaded; impudent; presumptuous.
Pointed branches: critical; sensitive; aggressive.
Falling leaves: feelings of uncertainty and depression.

With respect to the request to draw a fantasy tree, he sketched a tree that rotates around an axis. Half of the tree's branches are covered with leaves while the other half are bare. This drawing speaks clearly of a duality regarding the actualization of his potentialities in the sense that on the one hand he has a physically strong build but is not allowed to participate in sports; on the other hand, he has very good intellectual potential at his disposal and yet does not achieve scholastically as his parents expect him to. The to-and-fro rotation of the tree also clearly suggests a seeking to eliminate this duality and its correlated disturbed future perspective.

His lived experience of a coagulation in his future expectations is also evident in his drawing of a person (drawing 4) where he has put the figure behind a wall. However, the wall is low which suggests that the obstacle is not viewed as insurmountable. The man is apparently dressed in overalls and might represent a builder, although building tools such as a trowel are missing. His striving to create something with his hands is apparently represented here but at the same time also the possible failure to adequately take into account the demands of reality and thoroughly planning in order to reach his aim.

The interpretation of the formal aspects of his person drawing reflects his feelings of aggression, uncertainty, rejection; his seeking support; his emotional lability; that he is an extrovertive person also reflected and correlates with the results of his tree drawings.



Drawings 5, 6 and 7 were completed by Gary, 14 years 6 months and in 8th grade (IQ = 95, V = 74, NV = 124).

He is **extremely** unhappy at home. His parents divorced when he was 5 years old. His father is remarried and he did not meet his stepmother for several years and they do not get along with each other. There are continuous heated family quarrels. Also, he lived experiences his father as not paying any attention to him.

Gary wet his bed until he was 13 years old; he tells many lies and repeatedly "steals" objects from his stepmother; his progress in school is extremely poor and he has already fail one examination; this year he has played hooky a number of times. He has an intense

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June. SUMMER



Tekning 5

Winter



Tekening 6

Fantasy tree



Tekening 7

Drawings 5, 6, 7

Characteristics of drawings and possible interpretations

Diffuse lines on the trunks: feeling lost.

Base of trunk broad: restrained becoming, learning difficulties, restrained thinking.

Thickening in branches: bashfulness, affective lability; feels imprisoned in educative situation; restrained thinking; learning problems.

Drawings 5, 6, 7

Characteristics of drawings and possible interpretations

Diffuse lines on the trunks: feeling lost.

Base of trunk broad: restrained becoming, learning difficulties, restrained thinking.

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Ball-shaped crown: anxiety for reality; bound to concrete-visual; inclined to daydream; deficient energy; naive; poor concentration; reserved; unwilling to explore.

Pipe-shaped (up) branches: will not let himself bond; disobedient; intentions not carried out; readily procrastinates; purposeless; indecisive; influencable; affectively superficial; disoriented.

Trunk open below: hesitant; uncertain; rebellious; unstable; affectively impulsive.

Crown of chaotic lines: affective impulsivity; purposeless; confused; inconsistent; psychic life underactualized; unmethodical approaches.

Floating: attention problems; anger.

Trees placed to left and slightly above: withdrawing; passive; lonely; feels inadequate.

Tree house, ladder and little steps: feels dejected and dissatisfied with his situation; seeks authentic emotional bonds.

Fruit: strives to be influential; defective future perspective; affective impulsivity.

In his drawings Gary very clearly represents his desire to escape his current educative situation. The ladders (see summer and fantasy trees) suggest a search for an escape-route and the fact that he withdraws into his own world of imagination and fantasy. The intense threat that his home situation has for him also is clearly represented in his house drawing (**drawing 8**) that, on the one hand, represents a "flat building" with a lot of rooms represented, and, on the other hand, a number of **red** bolts of lightning. The bolts of lightning aimed at the house also represent very clearly his **aggression** toward his primary educators (parents). The **closed**

gate at the end of the **circular driveway** also represents his lived-experienced failures to escape his currently threatening situation.

Drawing 9 was completed by Jane (see drawings of a person, numbers 4 and 5, in Chapter 10).

Regarding the request to draw a **fantasy tree**, Jane drew an immortal spirit in the form of a woman that, irrespective of the suggestion that she carries on her shoulders the "problems of life", is "happy". The desire to be free from the conventional speaks very clearly in her own description of her representation: "She tore loose before the beginning of time." She knows what values are held before her but does not and will not integrate them into her outlook on life because she does not see them as meaningful. Yet she lived experiences feelings of guilt in this regard and she proclaims the fact that she recognizes the difference between good and evil. The floating tree and the planets very clearly represent her feelings of uncertainty and a search for stability.



There are conspicuous signs of “normative neglect” and the establishment of an experiential world-in-opposition. She is rebellious about the “pain: she believes is her calling and feels that she really is “crucified”.

There is an intense seeking of happiness and she then escapes into an unreal world where she hopes that she can escape her feelings of loneliness and uncertainty and find security. However, the faces are all tense and strained and do not agree with her own comments.



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There is an intense search for happiness and she then escapes into an unreal world where she hopes that she can escape her feelings of loneliness and uncertainty and find security. However, the faces are all tense and strained and do not agree with her own comments about happiness. "An immortal spirit. She's happy. I can see it in her eyes. She tore loose some place and is drifting through space. She tore loose before the beginning of time. She's good and evil--it depends upon her mood. She may be thinking about evil that she is going to commit."

Her seeking sexual warmth also is prominent in her intentional going out to the world (see the main figure and the emphasis on the mouths of the figures in the crown of the tree).

There is mention of a disturbed future perspective because the "immortal spirit" gives no evidence of an origin, aim or future expectation--it remains only "afloat".

Experiences in connection with the use of drugs also cannot be eliminated. In addition, there also is the possibility that she has become familiar with Eastern occultists (see the domed mosques). The incorporation of Christian and Eastern religions (see the resemblance to the image of a crucified Christ) accentuates confusion and uncertainty about religious values and her ambivalence regarding them. The fact that the mosques (castles?) are built on a planet are evidence that they do not rest on a solid foundation and further emphasizes her uncertainty regarding generally accepted life values. However, the many branches (arms) suggest an urgent search for security, for something to hold fast to.