

**NARRATIVE IN THE SPONTANEOUS DRAWINGS OF SEVEN TO NINE YEAR OLD  
BOYS**

by

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the  
University of Toronto**

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# **NARRATIVE IN THE SPONTANEOUS DRAWINGS OF SEVEN TO NINE YEAR OLD BOYS**

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## **Abstract**

Qualitative research methodology was applied in this study to examine the narrative content in the spontaneous drawings of six boys seven to nine years of age, to assess their personal interest in drawing, the images which they explored and the narrative strength of the drawings produced. Their drawings were counted and categorized using Kellman's (1995) classification system for children's narrative drawing and the images were examined to find clues as to the ways the boys used drawing to understand their world.

Implications for Primary Education were discussed particularly the importance of activities which encourage the development of narrative thought, visual, verbal and written, in Primary classrooms. Despite literature which indicated that narrative drawing interest decreased at the onset of the ability to create written narrative, all of the six boys displayed a continued interest in narrative drawing.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The process of drawing with children, which has for so long been an add-on in primary education, deserves a new place in contemporary curriculum. The proposed new function for primary school drawing is narrative in nature. The argument for examining children's drawings as a form of narrative has roots in psychological studies of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and the philosophical study of aesthetics - (the study of development of personal meaning). By examining children's drawing as Gardner does (as a distinct way of knowing the world) and through the study of Aesthetics (as a way of developing personal meanings for our experiences) I have attempted to show the importance of drawing, in its most spontaneous and unguided form, in children's development. I have argued that spontaneous narrative drawings of primary aged children reveal important and under-utilized intelligence and thinking processes which are both beneficial to and sought by young children.

In the following multiple case study (Creswell, 1994; Yin, 1984), I have examined the narrative content of the spontaneous drawings of a group of boys aged seven to nine years. These drawings have been observed using a classification system for children's narrative drawing developed by Julia Kellman of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Kellman, 1995), which prior to this study has been explored on a theoretical level only. This classification system has been used to explore the interest which the boys exhibited in narrative drawing and the ways in which it is used to examine their world and their personal experiences. The use of Kellman's system was intended as a rationale for deciding which drawings could be described as narrative in nature. I was also prepared to extend Kellman's system if needed, according to collected data and comments generated by the external researchers and myself.

What I have attempted to demonstrate through examination of the boys' spontaneous narrative drawings is both their spontaneous desire to participate in narrative drawing, and their ability to express ideas and emotions through drawing independent of accompanying verbal or written narrative. The resulting analysis has been examined in comparison with the uses of drawing defined in studies of and articles (written between 1991 and 1996) about art education practices in Canada and the United States at the primary level. Although drawing has generally been included in primary classrooms, its most common use has been as a tool to further the acquisition of writing. Using drawing as illustration or inspiration for written narrative, in my opinion, is an under-utilization of the drawing process, a process which is a potential tool to assist children in their search to create personal meaning from their surroundings. I recognize in the students' spontaneous narrative drawings, a form of meaning-making which is unique and different from the meaning-making which can be expressed in words, and which is equally important and legitimate as written or verbal communication, rather than a precursor for, or illustration of written communication. In contrast with the illustrative connection to literacy acquisition, I have proposed a connection through story telling in an effort to strengthen all aspects of narrative development, verbal, written and visual, in primary aged children.

### Conceptual Framework

Philosopher Susanne Langer (1957) described art as both a product and an instrument of human insight. She suggested that art both helps us to see the world, and to portray what we see as a form of communication. Langer wrote extensively about the language of art, as did Claude Levi-Strauss (1958). This *language* can be seen in the earliest cave drawings or in a toddlers' early explorations with paper and crayons. Both cave drawings and young children's drawings document

a process which involves seeing, thinking and doing. Art educator Herbert Read (1943) suggested that even the earliest drawings of a child are telling signs of the development of the individual self. As such, artistic activity constitutes a distinct way of knowing about the world (Gardner, 1982; and Arnheim, 1969).

Howard Gardner (1982, 1983) is the most prominent advocate of artistic intelligence as a separate form of thinking. In his writing on *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), Gardner described his vision of a separate form of artistic intelligence which existed in each person and for some people was the dominant mode of intelligence. The work of Gardner has permeated contemporary education, but in the post-sputnik era, when academic results are still a guiding cornerstone of our assessment strategies, art's utilization as a separate language and a distinct form of intelligence appears to have been down-played in primary education in order to emphasize the importance of written language. Although art is accepted for its creative exploratory potential and as an outlet for emotional expression, a full understanding of the importance of visual narrative is still in its infancy in education.

Historically, drawing has been used in many ways to understand others; however, this understanding has been confined to very specific arenas rather than a broad understanding of its part as an intelligence and a narrative language. In 1926, for example, Florence Goodenough used the drawings of children as a form of intelligence-testing and developed the *Draw a Man* test which collated the mental age of children with the detail seen in their drawing of a person. This collation was found to be quite accurate in comparison to other forms of intelligence testing. In counselling psychology, Hermann Rorschach (1942) used abstract designs to understand the mental imagery of his subjects. Contemporary art therapists also examine the art work of their patients in relation to the ways they verbally describe their drawings. In each of these instances, the communicative language

of drawing has aided human understanding and the understanding of the many facets of drawing gleaned through these uses can be extrapolated to assist in the development of an understanding of the importance of narrative drawing in child development and in education.

The study of aesthetics chronicles the process of creating internal response from tangible form and from personal experience and is another way the visual arts have been seen as a tool to human understanding (Courtney, 1987). The existential philosophers, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Martin Buber proposed theories of the development of personal meaning which are still highly regarded today and are useful in understanding the narrative function of children's drawings (Courtney, 1987). The existential philosophers proposed that the major task of a developing human being is to re-invent the world around them through the reference of their own experiences. This form of re-invention was present in the current study, as the spontaneous narrative drawings of the boys were analysed as full forms of narrative communication. Drawings, like all art work, bear a complicated but close relationship to contemporary culture and personal experience. Through the lens of personal experience, each child is establishing his or her own frame of reference and documenting parts of this aesthetic process in his or her drawings.

Personal meaning-making is used in this study as an umbrella category for the process through which human beings find ways to understand their world. Narrative, whether verbal, written, or in this case, drawn, is evidence of the active search to create personal meaning. Drawn narrative can be stimulated by the suggestion of others, or it may be spontaneously created purely for one's own process and needs. The term *spontaneous narrative drawing* in this study refers to drawing which is created for the children's own reasons, not at the request of others. The richness of the spontaneous narrative drawings created by the six boys form evidence of human expression and learning which remains relatively untapped in primary education today.

In schools, primary aged children are typically encouraged to draw in response to school learning until they have gained enough literacy to respond in writing (Olshansky, 1995). For the remainder of their school life, drawing is often considered in one of the following ways: as an illustration of written work; as a teachable skill and as a therapeutic outlet (Eisner, 1972). Personal use of drawing as a form of meaning making and communication continued, however, on a spontaneous level, through to nine years of age and often beyond (Olshansky, 1995; Wolf & Perry, 1988; Feldman, 1981). The desire to continue spontaneous drawing beyond the onset of literacy is documented through the large volume of drawing produced by the seven and eight year olds in this study.

The primary years are also a time when the children's rapid development of verbal story schemata and verbal narrative indicate a strong story-telling interest (Kellman, 1995; Eisner, 1972; Pitcher & Prelinger, 1963). It is notable that children attain near adult levels of understanding of verbal story schemata by the age of six years (Young, 1986; Mikkelsen, 1983) and much earlier (Wilkinson, 1993). The spontaneously created narrative drawings produced by children of seven to nine years can be utilized as keys to understanding both the particular individuals involved, and the general images and influences to which they are subject (Kellman, 1995; Troll, 1993).

Written narrative has been accepted in research circles as one way of mapping the process of personal meaning-making (Hargreaves, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative, in post-modern research is often represented through auto-ethnography (Diamond, 1968) and other qualitative research methods, but although narrative drawing has been seen as a way of mapping emotions for therapeutic purposes in counselling psychology for many years, its acceptance as a form of recorded narrative in research has been minimal. (Two notable exceptions have occurred in the work of Kellman (1995) and Stokrocki (1994)). In all of the varied ways art has assisted in the

understanding of another's point of view, the art of children has seldom been described holistically as a form of narrative equally important as written or verbal narrative.

The stories and thoughts of boys, particularly related to exposure to media violence, have taken on new meaning in the field of violence prevention (American Psychological Association, 1993). Boys between five and ten years old are a commercial target audience for a range of television shows, computer and Nintendo games and commercial products which could be described as exonerating violence (Baker & Ball, 1969; Hamilton, 1994; Winn, 1985). Of the many studies on the effects of television violence, most concentrate on verbal interviews or observed behaviour (Cline, 1972; Gross, 1974). There is a need to examine the drawings of boys directly to explore the relationship they are attempting to create with their visual culture.

In this study, the boys chosen represent a purposeful sample of children with a variety of television experiences. Contemporary and media images, as well as violent images have been examined in tandem with Dr. Kellman's classification system for children's narrative. The secondary focus on the nature of the images presented explains the choice of boys only for this study. Further options to extend this examination are described in the section on expected outcomes.

I realize there are limitations to this examination since the best one can do is to attempt to paraphrase the meaning of a drawing in words. In this case, the innuendo and the subtlety of the drawing cannot always be expressed. Susanne Langer described these limitations by saying: "the import of an art symbol cannot be paraphrased in discourse" (1957, p. 68). In an effort to bring the world of the visual art into a conversation with this thesis, I have tried to counteract this difficulty through inclusion of images from the children's work, and have discussed the images holistically as forms of narrative as opposed to dissecting the elements from which they are composed.

The findings of this study call upon primary teachers to allow opportunities for spontaneous drawing and to continually examine the drawings of their students as tools to understanding the current and continually changing context within which their students live and learn. Teachers are encouraged to broaden their own conception of the importance of drawing to include spontaneous narrative drawing in the primary grades with a view to assisting their students to achieve aesthetic development. Teachers are also encouraged to view narrative drawing as part of a trio of equally important narrative processes: written, verbal and visual and to teach to develop all forms of narrative thought in their students. A new relationship is discussed for drawing other than the current emphasis on drawing as an illustration of written narrative and forges connections through the language arts with story telling, strengthening all three types of narrative in the process: visual, verbal and written.

### The Question

The research question reads: "What evidence is there, if any, that the spontaneous drawings of seven to nine year old boys could be viewed as tools to understanding individual search for narrative meaning and if this evidence exists, what are its possible educational implications?"

### Terminology

Evidence. In this context, evidence refers to the persistent presence of narrative subject matter observed in the drawings of the boys (as described in the methodology).

Narrative. For the purposes of this examination, narrative content will be defined as those drawings which can be classified as observed attempts at storytelling with pictures. In its broadest sense, all drawing, like all writing attempts to tell. Here, however, it will be more tightly defined. Three types of narrative drawing as defined by Kellman (1995) will be examined in the boys' work. They are: narrative as invention; narrative as description; and narrative as negotiation, as defined in

the Methodology. A narrative drawing will have two or more story elements which operate together to tell a story and will fit within one of Kellman's three types of narrative.

Spontaneous. The research design will involve collection techniques which exclude adult intervention in the decision to draw, in topic selection, or in materials. Drawings will only be done because the child freely seeks drawing media to express his feelings in this way.

Educational implications. In this section, studies involving the uses of drawing in primary aged school will be examined to determine whether current educational practice encompasses the utilization of drawing as a form of narrative in the primary grades. The Waldorf school curriculum will be briefly discussed in regards to the goals of development of all aspects of narrative thought as well as the use of unstructured sketch books in the primary grades.

#### Expected Outcomes

This study has allowed reflection on the importance of spontaneous narrative drawing to primary aged children. By allowing the boys to select how often and what they draw, a naturalistic representation of the importance of drawing in their lives can be represented. By employing Kellman's classification system for children's narrative drawing, I have attempted to demonstrate that the images produced by the six boys in this study could be considered to be narrative in nature. By further examining the drawing themes, I have explored possible connections between influences in the children's world, such as exposure to television violence. This exploration has been secondary, however, to the main goal of the study, which has been to demonstrate the narrative nature of the spontaneous drawings produced by the six boys involved in this study.

Possible future extensions of this study could include:

- 1) an examination of the same boys' work at 12 years old to determine comparative interest in narrative drawing;

- 2) an examination of art work of children from divergent backgrounds, including children experiencing various types of difficulties which were excluded from this study;
- 3) an examination of art work of both boys and girls of primary age;
- 4) an examination of spontaneous drawings created in a school setting.

Methodology

Qualitative Design

Qualitative research methodology was applied in this study to examine the narrative content in the spontaneous drawings of the six boys. A qualitative approach was chosen although in some ways, the study varies from a typical qualitative study because of the parameters of the question being researched. A qualitative study usually involves (Creswell, 1994, pp. 4-7):

- 1) interaction between the researcher and the researched;
- 2) emergent methodology;
- 3) inductive analysis;
- 4) member checks of validity.

I will address each of these points as they apply to the current study.

Interaction between the Researcher and the Researched. In designing this study I was confronted with the most difficult first question. Realizing that qualitative analysis would be the most holistic way of examining the children's drawings, I was also aware that it would be difficult to achieve the study's goal of examining spontaneous drawings while establishing a research relationship with participants. It would be difficult to collect totally spontaneous drawings from the boys in relationship to me. I felt that the most natural setting in which to determine how often this group of six boys would choose to draw purely for their own pleasure was the privacy and relaxed atmosphere of their own homes, with collection instructions given to co-operating parents who acted as partners in the study. I chose to use a qualitative paradigm while understanding that the criteria of relationship would not be met in the usual fashion. Instead, I examined the drawings of children who were known to me personally. Having the relationship between the children whose work would be researched,

the families and myself already in place allowed for easy conversation with parents around issues and aspects of the study. It also allowed me to assess whether a child and his circumstances would fit the limitations of the study without undue invasion of family privacy.

Emergent Methodology. Aspects of the organization of the data were emergent as the data was analysed. Mainly, this involved the examination of themes in the boys' work. To understand the themes explored by the boys in their drawings, the 165 drawings were each described in detail (see Appendix 3-1), then sorted according to type of theme and type of narrative presented. The thematic categories chosen emerged from the children's drawings rather than from a pre-set coding.

There was, however, a system of analysis which was chosen at the onset of the study. In an effort to establish credibility in the choice of certain drawings as being narrative, a system of classification of narrative drawings developed by Kellman (1995) was chosen. Kellman's classification system was quite broad. I was also prepared to extend this system if needed as the study progressed. Kellman's system was also used to sort data (see Appendix 3-2).

Inductive Analysis. From the outset of this study, I was determined to examine the boys' drawings holistically to understand the ways the boys used drawing both as a form of meaning-making and as a form of communication. To facilitate holistic analysis, each drawing was described before the drawings were compared in any way. The drawings were then sorted according to emergent themes and according to Kellman's categories with an eye to extending these categories if needed. Although I anticipated that the boys would be interested in narrative drawing, I had no pre-conceptions of what form this interest would take other than an expectation that some relationships might emerge between the drawings and the visual experiences to which the boys had been subjected through school and visual culture, specifically through exposure to television and computer games.

In the analysis of the data, the reader may be surprised to find percentages quoted and compared. The use of percentages allows readers an easy comparison of the numbers of drawings and the relative amounts of each type of drawing produced by each of the boys. These percentages are used in an illustrative manner to make comparisons easier for the reader. They are not, however, indications of statistical analysis. The analysis of the work in this study is qualitative, relying on observation and discussion rather than statistics and proofs (Creswell, 1994, p. 5).

**Validity.** The main qualitative method of ensuring validity is through re-checking written data with those being studied and incorporating their analysis back into the study (Creswell, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks were incorporated through written submissions from the parents of the boys whose drawings were studied. The complete data on each child, including sorted data from three external researchers along with the draft of the findings and analysis of the study was sent to each parent. Parents were asked to look for the following:

- a) evaluative comments on their child's work, as these comments were not to be included in the study;
- b) any comments which they felt were inaccurate;
- c) any additional information which they could provide on the source and nature of the images being discussed.

The parents were asked to provide member checks rather than the children because two of the six families involved felt strongly that their children were too young to be involved in this discussion. They indicated that they felt there was a possibility of harm in relation to too much attention being drawn to the product of their children's art work at a stage when the process was still the most important aspect of the child's drawing. I suggested to the other four families involved that parents

read the information first and share it with their children as they felt comfortable. An optional child's signature was also included for these families (see Appendix 3-3).

The second qualitative validity check is triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It may be applied by collecting several types of data, or as in this study, by involving analysis of external researchers whose observations are then compared with those of the primary researcher for similarities and discrepancies.

### Naturalistic Methodology

The research methodology was also considered to be Naturalistic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), although again, the classification is not a perfect fit with this study. In order to be Naturalistic, a study should involve:

- a) a natural setting;
- b) a human instrument;
- c) purposive sampling;
- d) emergent design;
- e) inductive analysis;
- f) interpretation which is both ideographically interpreted and tentatively applied.

Each of these criteria will now be examined in relation to the study.

Natural Setting. To extend any supposition beyond the boundaries of the current study requires an understanding that the setting influences the results of the study. In the current study, the goal was to understand the spontaneous desire of the boys to draw. Because of this, a home environment was chosen rather than a school environment on the assumption that children have more choice of activity and more free time at home than they do at school and that their choice to draw while at home more

accurately reflected the interest they had in drawing as a form of play. The results of the data analysis were extended beyond the home setting in theory only, to examine ways of bringing the educational possibilities of this study into primary classrooms. To examine these possibilities beyond a theoretical level would require a further study in a school setting.

Human instrument. This area has been discussed in relationship to Qualitative Methodology.

Purposive Sampling. Of course, the sample chosen for a study greatly influences its outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the sampling was done to attempt to obtain typical cases; however, there were many criterion placed on the similarities between these boys which may limit the generalizability of its findings. The children were all boys and were all between seven and nine years. All lived within a 30 km. radius of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, in order to ease accessibility of data collection. There was no screening for socio-economic class, education of parents or nationality. They were screened to be as alike as possible in certain aspects, for reasons noted below, and allowed great divergence in others. The boys were chosen to be alike in the following ways:

- 1) emotionally and physically healthy and without notable developmental or physical delay;
- 2) from intact families;
- 3) from families known to the researcher so that these factors may be assessed by the researcher without the need for establishing formal criterion for 1 and 2 above<sup>1</sup>.

The boys were allowed to be widely divergent in:

- 1) exposure to visual stimuli, particularly television, movies, Nintendo and computer games;
- 2) exposure to storytelling, story reading<sup>2</sup> and educational setting.

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<sup>1</sup> From the literature, 1 and 2 above have been shown to effect the drawings of children and are important considerations in understanding the narratives they express; however, these topics lie outside the boundaries of the present discussion.

Although the drawings of only six boys were studied, I was willing to extend the data collection further if no patterns emerged from the data.

**Assumptions.** The assumptions inherent in this examination of children's drawn narrative were as follows:

- 1) that narrative would appear in the drawings of boys ages seven to nine years;
- 2) that the boys would spontaneously employ metaphor and meaning-making strategies which would be evident in their narrative drawing;
- 3) that there would be some relationship between their experience with contemporary visual culture, with storytelling and other forms of literature with the drawings which the boys would produce.

**Limitations.** Generalizability of this study is limited to the boys involved; however, since all of the boys demonstrated an interest in narrative drawing, some hypotheses have been generated related to the nature of children's drawing which were then re-related to the literature, generating further theories for potential future study.

**Emergent Design.** This aspect has been discussed in *Qualitative Methodology*, #2.

**Inductive Analysis Leading to Grounded Theory.** The inductive process has been described in *Qualitative Methodology* #4.

### **Methodology Employed**

The methodology used in this study will be examined in regards to the following categories:

- A. the research question;
- B. assumptions;

- C. limitations;
- D. preparation;
- E. sample;
- F. data collection;
- G. analysis: description; coding; analysis; interpretation;
- H. triangulation and member checks.

**The Research Question.** To obtain the data to study the three areas explained above, the research question read: “What evidence is there, if any, that the spontaneous drawings of seven to nine year old boys could be viewed as tools to understanding individual search for narrative meaning and if this evidence exists, what are its possible educational implications?”

Specifically, these objectives may be broken-down into three areas of investigation:

- 1) I have counted the number of works produced by the boys for information about the boys’ desire to draw.
- 2) Secondly, I have attempted to determine what volume of the work produced could be called *narrative* using the definition described by Kellman (1995),(elaborated below).
- 3) Thirdly and a more minor consideration, is an examination of the types of themes and approaches which were depicted by the boys and discussed in relation to information supplied by their parents regarding the educational, visual and narrative experiences to which they are exposed.

**Assumptions.** (addressed in Naturalistic Design)

**Limitations.** (also addressed in Naturalistic Design)

Preparation. In preparation for conducting this study, a proposal was submitted and ethical review permission was received from OISE/UT. At this time a review of the relevant literature was started, and a pre-screening of the number of works produced by one seven year old over a two month period was examined. These works were not collected, but the number of works produced (40) was indicative of the sample size which could be expected from the study. At this time I also began to screen possible contributors to the study through conversation with their parents.

Sample. Case study personality descriptions resulting from telephone surveys with parents (appendix 1-3) have been compiled to create a more detailed description of the students involved in this study. All quotes used in this section are direct quotes from the parents resulting from the telephone surveys. The sampling of boys includes differing temperaments and attitudes towards drawing, differing types of school experiences and differing exposure to television and computer games. The students were chosen to be from intact families, to be physically healthy and coping at grade level at school. Parents ages ranged from early thirties to mid fifties. They were not screened for educational and socioeconomic levels.

#### Child A

Child A was 8 years, 4 months at the time of this study. He was described by his parents as an active child, who, although he was “at least of average intelligence”, found school a trial made bearable by the physical and play activities of recess and the richness of the stories (both told and read) at the Waldorf school where he was a student. Drawing from these stories presented wonderful opportunities which he described enthusiastically at home. At times however, he found sticking to the desired subject matter “tired him and cramped his sense of humour”. For example, he gleefully described how Saint George from the legend of that name just “turned himself into a fat yellow

penguin and hailed a taxi on his cell-phone” in one accidental drawing. Creativity, imagination and sense of humour were major character traits.

Child A had a sister 3 ½ years his senior. Although she had drawn a great deal between 4 and 8 years of age, Child A had been too active to take a real interest in drawing with her in his early years. He had, however, experienced some frustration in his own abilities in using drawing tools when at age 2 ½ he threw down his crayon exclaiming in frustration that the crayon wouldn't print his name. Subsequently, he had shown somewhat less interest in drawing as a form of play than his sister had.

Both of Child A's parents were in their early forties. Both held University degrees and both had taken visual arts studio courses at the University level. His mother was a practicing visual artist. Rather than his background being a benefit to Child A, he seemed at times to be self-critical in relation to his own work, despite the encouragement and opportunities available both at home and at school. His preferred mode of expression was sculpture and he often created functional shoe-boats and other vehicles for his favorite stuffed animals.

#### Child B

Child B was the youngest child in this study. His parents described him as “eager, enthusiastic and responsible”. He felt “comfortable within structures and liked to work within structure” in his art work and in his life as a whole.

Child B had one brother who was two years younger. His mother had “actively worked “ to assist Child B and his younger brother to support each other's art efforts, and they often worked together on the same drawing. If asked who liked to draw more, however, his mother felt he would have said that it was his brother who drew more often. One of Child B's drawing frustrations was

his interest in abstract thinking was difficult to express at this age in the form of drawing. One of his continuing interests was in creating a perpetual motion machine.

Child B's mother was in her forties and father in his fifties. Both were University educated at the post-graduate level. His mother had stayed at home with the children and had introduced many creative hands-on activities including painting to the children. Child B's father was musically talented and his mother was talented with handwork and painting.

Child B's mother had been very involved in his education, and had been instrumental in the development of a Community Co-operative school within the Public Board of Education, which Child B had attended. His teachers had been particularly talented and professionally trained in the visual arts and had provided many avenues for involvement. At the regular public school in grade two, Child B had also had good experiences with his art education.

Child B's preferred mode of expression was verbal. He was a very able student at school, with excellent focus. Of all of the boys in this study, I felt that Child B's drawings revealed the least about him and his abilities.

#### Child C

Child C was 8 years 6 months at the time of the study. His parents described him as "friendly, responsible, competitive, but supportive and naturally well co-ordinated". His general attitude towards drawing was "that it was boring" and it was not his natural approach to creativity. He much preferred working with Lego, or creating forts. His school up to this point had been a French Immersion class with a moderate class size of up to twenty-five students. At least one of his teachers had been particularly interested in art.

Child C had two younger siblings. His brother was 3 years 5 months younger and his sister was 7 years 8 months younger. Since his brother had turned 2 ½ years old, Child C could be drawn

into drawing activities with his younger brother who enjoyed this type of play. These sessions seldom lasted more than 5 or ten minutes, other than for the production of birthday cards, which Child C enjoyed producing with techniques learned by watching the TVO television program Art-Attacks.

Child C's parents were both in their thirties. Both were University educated. His father was an Engineer and his mother had completed a Masters degree in Rural Planning. His father had taken art classes at the high school and University level. Child C had spent time with his mother at home involved in creative and play activities. He had also attended day care on a part-time basis and his mother felt that the artistic activities at day care had been beneficial for him.

#### Child D

At 7 years 10 months, Child D was the second-youngest child in this study. A quiet and deep-thinking child, drawing was one of his most loved activities. At school, Child D had encountered resistance to his use of fine tipped felt-pens and tiny paint brushes in Kindergarten and had refused to draw with the stubby crayons provided. Even at that time his fine-motor co-ordination far outstripped that of most of his class-mates. Child D had been in French Immersion, and at the time of the study had entered the English stream.

Child D had 2 siblings. His brother was five years older and his sister was 2 1/2 years older than he was. Both his brother and sister enjoyed art, and had received support and encouragement at school and home for their efforts. Their parents often supplemented the school's art classes with extra curricular art classes for his older brother and sister through the community centre and the art gallery.

Child D's father had a PhD in Chemistry. His mother worked as an interior designer and was very interested in colour, design and the visual creative process. Child D and his siblings seemed to feel supported by both parents in their creative explorations.

## **Child E**

Child E was a quietly centered boy with a hidden deep intensity. At 8 years 8 months, he was one of the older boys in the study. A generally focused child, he was interested in drawing as a type of play alone and with friends.

At school, Child E was focused and serious. He had many friends and enjoyed drawing with them as a form of play. His narrative series included here was a spin off from an idea presented by Child A during one such play session.

Child E was the eldest with siblings 2 years, 4 years and 6 years younger than he. In their house, parents did not allow the children to draw with markers or pencils. The children were provided with Waldorf-style bees-wax block crayons and large sheets of paper. Consequently, Child E had become very adept with this medium.

Child E's parents were in their later 40's. His father was a lawyer and his mother was home with their children. Her interests included home decorating and matching colour to personality. She had played an active role in encouraging Child E's artistic development. In child E's family the children did not watch television or play computer games. His mother felt that this allowed Child E more time to draw, to play outside, and to develop their own images to draw. Child E attended a Waldorf School.

## **Child F**

Child F was also one of the older children in this study at 8 years 8 months. At the time of this study, Child F enjoyed learning through kinesthetic channels. In fact, he might have been described as a study in constant motion. Although cheerful and with good resolve each day on his way to school, both he and his teachers sometimes despaired at the difficulties which he experienced in containing his exuberance and excitement. In his attendance at a Waldorf School, Child F

experienced similar difficulties to Child A in monitoring the humour of his creative outpourings as required in a Waldorf setting.

Child F had one sibling, a sister eighteen months younger. They both enjoyed drawing and received support and encouragement from their parents for their efforts. Child F's parents were in their early forties at the time of the study. Both held University degrees. His father was involved in ergonomic design and his mother was a physiotherapist. His father was very involved in home renovations and the children had been involved in his efforts. At the time of this study, Child F was already accomplished with saws and hammers. Child F's mother encouraged her children's creativity. She had framed the children's art work to hang on the walls of their home. Her gentle British humour and love of literature came through strongly in Child F's drawings.

Collection Methods. Written consent was received from parents prior to the collection of work (see Appendix 1-1). Parents were surveyed by telephone to ensure that their child would fit within the parameters of the study (see Appendix 1-2). They were then surveyed by telephone in order to develop a picture of each child's interests, activities and relationships within his family (Appendix 1-3). Through initial discussion with parents, I left the decision to discuss this study with the children involved (after data collection was concluded) as a choice made by each family. Several parents expressed strong reservations about their own experiences as children when attention was drawn to the product of their art work at a young age. These parents requested that their children's permission not be sought.

Parents were notified in writing of the intent and expectations of this study (See Appendix 1-1). Work was collected with assistance of parents over a two-month period. Parents were given verbal instructions outlining procedures which would ensure that work was spontaneously created, catalogued and collected. Through these verbal instructions, parents were requested to allow children

to choose to draw spontaneously, without suggestions from parents which might influence this choice of activity. They were also requested to discuss the nature of the study and their participation in it after they had collected the work if they chose to discuss this with their child.

As the primary researcher, I have had the only access to the raw data. It has been coded, photographed, catalogued, and the original art work returned to the families. Coded data will be maintained on computer file for five years.

Analysis. The analysis of data collected was conducted in a qualitative, and partially emergent paradigm; however, the classification system developed by Julia Kellman (1995) was used as a standard by which to determine which drawings were narrative. The decision to use Kellman's classification was made in an effort to strengthen the rationale for deciding which drawings were to be considered narrative in nature. The organization of drawings according to themes was emergent according to the themes which appeared in the boys' drawings, with no pre-conceived structure to guide thematic organization. A final questionnaire was sent to each family with the collated data and findings sections for their child as a check of validity (see Appendix 3-3).

I wished to concentrate in this study on the language of the drawings and what could be *read* visually without the need for further explanation, however, a description of each child's home and school lives as told through the eyes of his parents can be found in Appendix 1-4). The naturalistic methodology permitted examination of the drawings of each child and led to a series of in-depth observations about these drawings which were coded and sorted as secondary data. The observations of three external researchers were added to the coded data at this stage.

#### Coding Systems.

- 1) Drawing frequency: the frequency of choice to draw subject has been rated as follows: boys who chose to draw more than once a day, averaged over the 60 days of the study were

considered to have a high desire to draw. Boys who drew once a week were considered to have a moderate desire since this number of incidents of drawings is similar to the once-per-week art period many children experience in a school setting. Less than one spontaneous drawing per week has been considered to be a lower interest in spontaneous drawing for the purposes of this study (see Chart 6 Appendix 2).

2) Themes: (see analysis on Chart 2 Appendix 2), this thematic organization was created through examination.

3) Kellman's Classification System: in her article, *Narrative in Children's Art*, Kellman (1995) divided children's narrative drawing into three types of narrative: Narrative as Invention; Narrative as Description; and Narrative as Negotiation. These three categories were defined as follows:

Narrative as Description is described as: "Art making and its narrative description of the here and now allows children to share the day-to-day details of their lives with others"(Kellman, 1995, p. 19) "Other children's art provides a similar opportunity - a chance to share in the life of the child artist in the images of his or her particular daily experience." (Kellman, 1995, p. 20). Drawings which describe day to day realities of the child's life have been described as Narrative as Description.

"Children and adults alike use narrative as a means of constructing their interior, psychological worlds." (Kellman, 1995, p. 18) "Art making [is] a means of inventing, a method of thinking, a way of giving life to hopes and dreams" (Kellman, 1995, p. 19). This type of drawings which invent new circumstances have been classified by Kellman, and consequently in this study as Narrative as Invention.

Narrative as Negotiation has been defined as follows: "Stories as records of the development of meaning or as ways to come to terms, can be seen as narrative of negotiation" (Kellman, 1995, p. 21). In Kellman's study, Narrative as Negotiation also appeared when the "children involve

themselves in the complex issues of spatial location and community structure” (Kellman, 1995, p. 22). Drawings which describe the child’s attempts to map a physical or psychological space have been described as Narrative of Negotiation.

Using Kellman’s classification of children’s narrative drawings assisted the description and understanding of the visual narratives in the drawings of the six boys.

Internal Validity. In this study, triangulation was achieved through the assistance of three external researchers, each considered by the primary researcher to be experts in their field. Two were retired art consultants from different school boards in southern Ontario and the third an exhibiting artist with over 20 years of experience working with children inside and outside of the school setting. The three all knew of each other, but did not share discussion about the work in this study. Permission was received from parents to have external researchers examine the work (see Appendix 1-3).

After initial photographing and description of each child’s work by the primary researcher, the photographs, coded for anonymity, were then sent on to the three external researchers with directions as to how they should proceed (see Appendix 1-5). The comments of the external researchers were then combined and compared with those of the primary researcher and all of the comments were then coded and sorted to develop the findings of the study.

The data on each child’s narrative drawings along with the draft of the findings related to that child was made available to families of each child. This information did not evaluate therapeutic difficulties or compare artistic or cognitive development but concentrated instead, on the child’s interest in narrative drawing and the themes and approaches which he appeared to have been exploring. Parents were asked to contribute to the study by providing checks to the validity of the initial observations made by the researcher, and by the three external experts and on the findings relating to their child’s work. As the intent of this study was not evaluative of a child’s drawing skills

or development, or mental health, conflicts with parents were not expected to emerge and minor adjustments to the researchers' observations were made at parents' suggestion.

Interpretation. Since a section of the analysis involved counting the total number of images, the narrative images and the themes represented, some of the analysis involved numbers. It is difficult to discuss numbers without verging on quantitative territory. I have taken this risk since discussing numbers appeared at times to be the only way to provide a clear picture of the data to the reader. Instead of numbers, I had groups of lively drawings spread out before me and the relationships between themes and volumes of drawings were observed at a glance. The numbers quoted, then, are supplied for the benefit of the reader, in an attempt to provide a clear picture of what I had the privilege of seeing as living drawings. Charts which represent this part of the analysis appear in the Appendix.

The rest of the analysis is descriptive and relates to comments initially recorded and backed up or negated by the comments of the external researchers.

### Findings

The boys in this study each had their own reasons for choosing to draw. Their reasons for drawing are at least partially seen in the frequency of drawing, materials, drawing style and themes which they chose. In the 60 day collection period, 165 drawings were produced by the six boys (see Chart 1, Appendix 2). In order to determine which drawings were narrative, each drawing was examined carefully in relation to Kellman's (1995) description of three narrative categories. Those drawings which did not fit into this classification system were then re-examined for emergent narrative categories which had not been represented by Kellman's system. No further categories emerged in the drawings of the six boys in this study. The additional drawings appeared to be practice drawings where a skill of rendition was the goal rather than the narrative approach.

In the interest of clarity for the reader, I chose to translate the relationships which I observed in the boys' drawings into comparative percentages. These numbers are not to be mistaken as statistical evidence or *proof* in the quantitative sense. They are, rather, an attempt to convey to the reader, some picture of what I was privileged to observe when the boys' drawings were spread out before me.

### Coding

Classifying narrative drawings. By dividing the drawings into three major narrative categories and comparing the numbers of drawings which each child produced, falling into at least one of these narrative categories, I was able to describe what I was seeing as emerging patterns in the 165 drawings collected. This examination was also facilitated through written descriptions of the drawings, including the narrative category within which they appeared to fit. I will now describe

more fully the three narrative categories as described by Kellman (1995). Her own words are used here as they describe the categories seen in the boys' drawings so well.

*Narrative as Description* (Kellman, 1995) was the most commonly observed form of narrative in the boys' work. Kellman described this form of narrative as: "Art making and its narrative description of the here and now [which] allows children to share day-to-day details of their lives with others" (Kellman, 1995, p. 19). Four of the six boys studied had more than five drawings which I classified as *Narrative as Description*.

*Narrative as Invention* (Kellman, 1995) was used by two of the boys in more than five drawings. In Kellman's description of *Narrative as Invention* she suggests: "Children and adults alike use narrative as a means of constructing their interior, psychological world." (Kellman, 1995, p. 18) "Art making [is] a means of inventing, a method of thinking, a way of giving life to hopes and dreams" (Kellman, 1995, p. 19).

*Narrative as Negotiation* (Kellman, 1995) was also used in more than five drawings by two boys, and was defined by Kellman as: "Stories as records of the development of meaning or as ways to come to terms, can be seen as narrative of negotiation" (Kellman, 1995, p. 21) and also, "When children involve themselves in the complex issues of spatial location and community structure". In other words, these drawings describe the child's attempts to map a physical or psychological space.

According to my analysis using the three categories described above, the narrative content in each boy's work varied from 37% to 61% of the total number of drawings. Fifty three percent of the drawings were classified as being narrative in content. One of the six boys used all three types of narrative almost equally in his drawing. Another employed two types of narrative and two more had one type of narrative which they each concentrated on in their drawings. The sixth child created a

smaller number of drawings and no category predominated, although narrative drawing still made up 37% of his drawings.

Frequency of drawing. The frequency of drawing was also considered an important part of this study. If the children chose to draw purely for their own pleasure, I saw this as an indication of a personal need to communicate about, or further the understanding of their own aesthetic world. I counted the drawings based on a comparison to a weekly art class in school (see Chart 6, Appendix 2) Any child who spontaneously drew one drawing per week was considered to have a moderate frequency of drawing. In other words, without any adult stimulation, he drew as often as some children would be drawing at school at this age. Any child who created more than one drawing per week (eight in total) was considered to have a high frequency of interest in drawing. In this data collection, five of the six boys created a total of drawings in the high frequency range and one in the moderate range. None of the boys created less than one drawing per week (see Chart 1, Appendix 2). Two of the three external researchers, both of whom have been involved in art education for many years, commented that they did not realize that children of this age would spontaneously create such a large number of drawings.

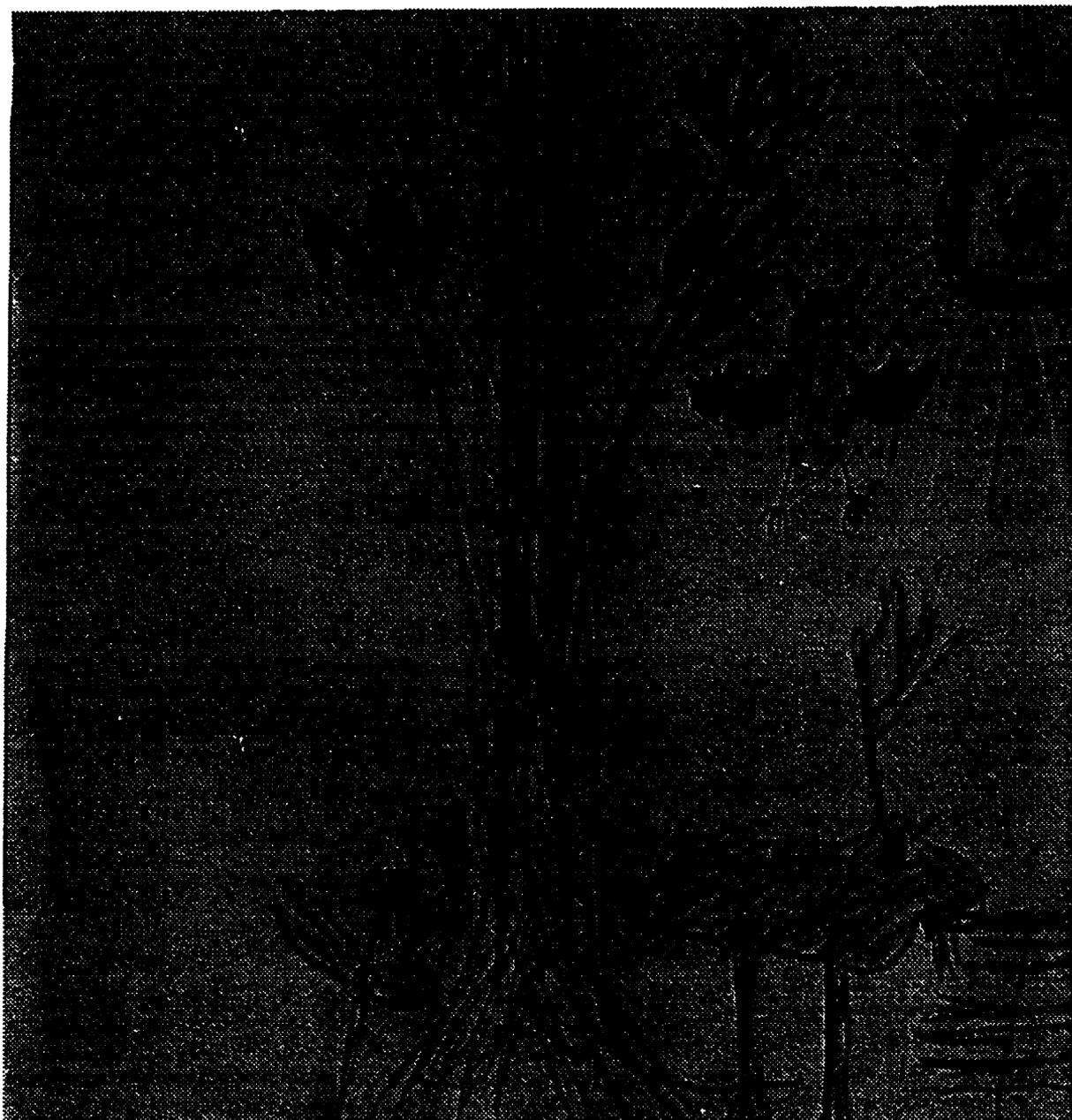
Themes. A discussion of choice of themes was also an aspect of this study. The categories for analysis of themes were not pre-determined, but were emergent from the drawings which were created (see Chart 2, Appendix 2). Surprisingly, from all of the 165 drawings, there were no images which concentrated on violent details although there were many battle scenes. For the purposes of this study, *violent details* were equated to drawings involving blood, maiming (as in distorted or removed body parts), imbedded weapons, teeth or nails. Many of the boys' drawings involved battles, but most appeared to be observations of strategy rather than opportunities to depict violence.

Many of the boys' drawings were animal and nature themes, human subjects in action or relationship and machines. Mythological/historical images appeared in all three of the boys' drawings who attend a Waldorf school and no drawings on this theme appeared in the other boys' work. Cartoon/media images also appeared to a minor degree in the boys' drawings, although one external researcher commented that "Disney did not make much of an appearance" (SL, p.1). Both the lack of violent images and the lack of television images related to the purpose which drawing plays in the schematic stage of children's development and this relationship will be explored in the Analysis. The drawings will now be examined and discussed child by child.

### The Drawings

Child A. The drawings created by Child A at 8 years 4 months typify what Lowenfeld (1947) described as the symbolic stage of artistic development. During this phase of development, Lowenfeld described children as drawing what they can think of rather than drawing what they see directly. Figure 1 could serve as a good example.

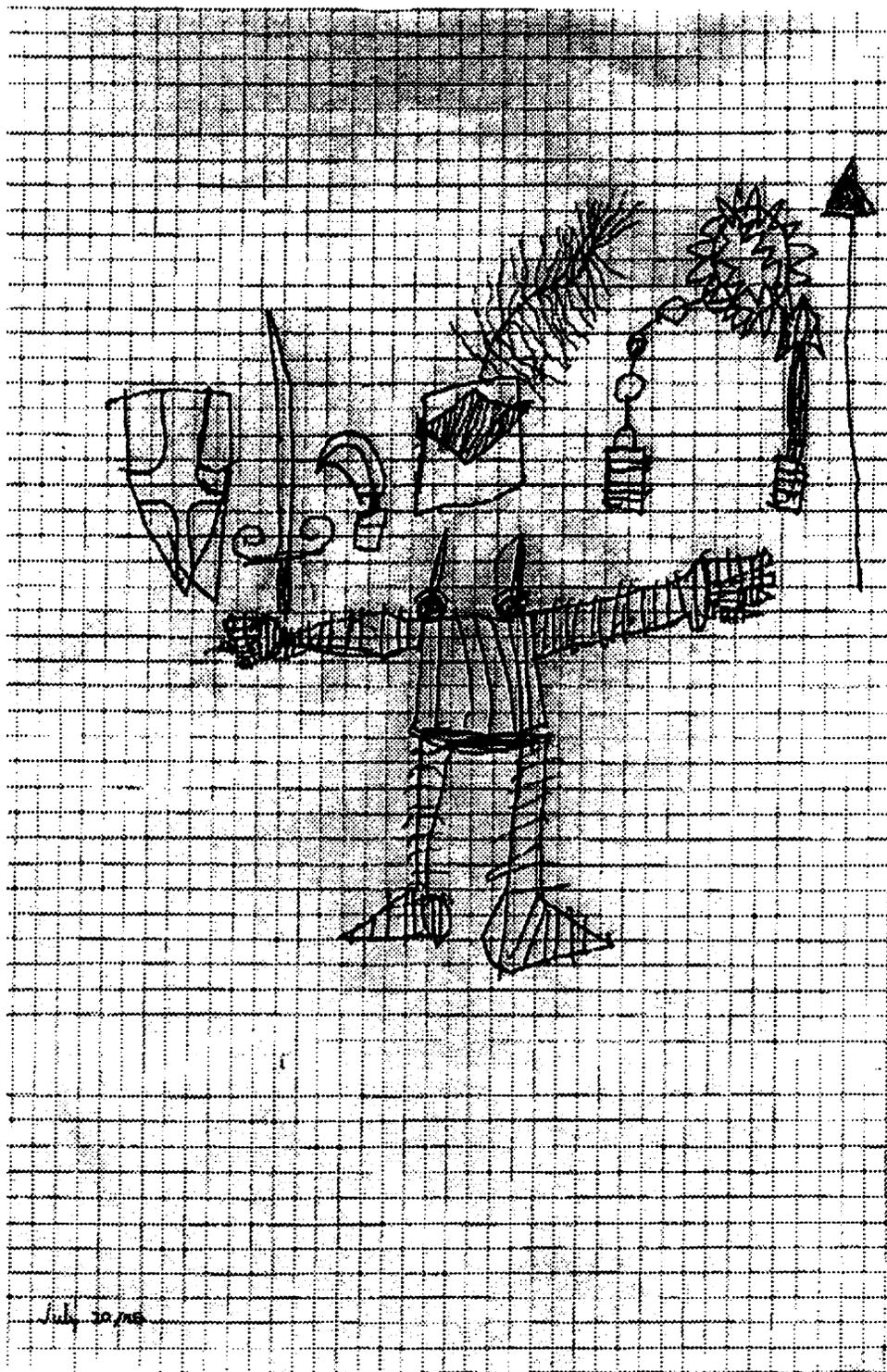
Child A created 21 drawings in 60 days, about one drawing every three days and was considered to have a high frequency of choosing to draw although among the boys in this study, he had a moderate out-put and a lower percentage of narrative images than some of the other boys (see Chart 6, Appendix 2). For child A, drawing was a process of describing the nature of *things*, both mythological and natural, with an emphasis on living things. He had little interest in using drawing to express emotional experiences, negotiation, or battles. Drawing for him was more of an experience in description.



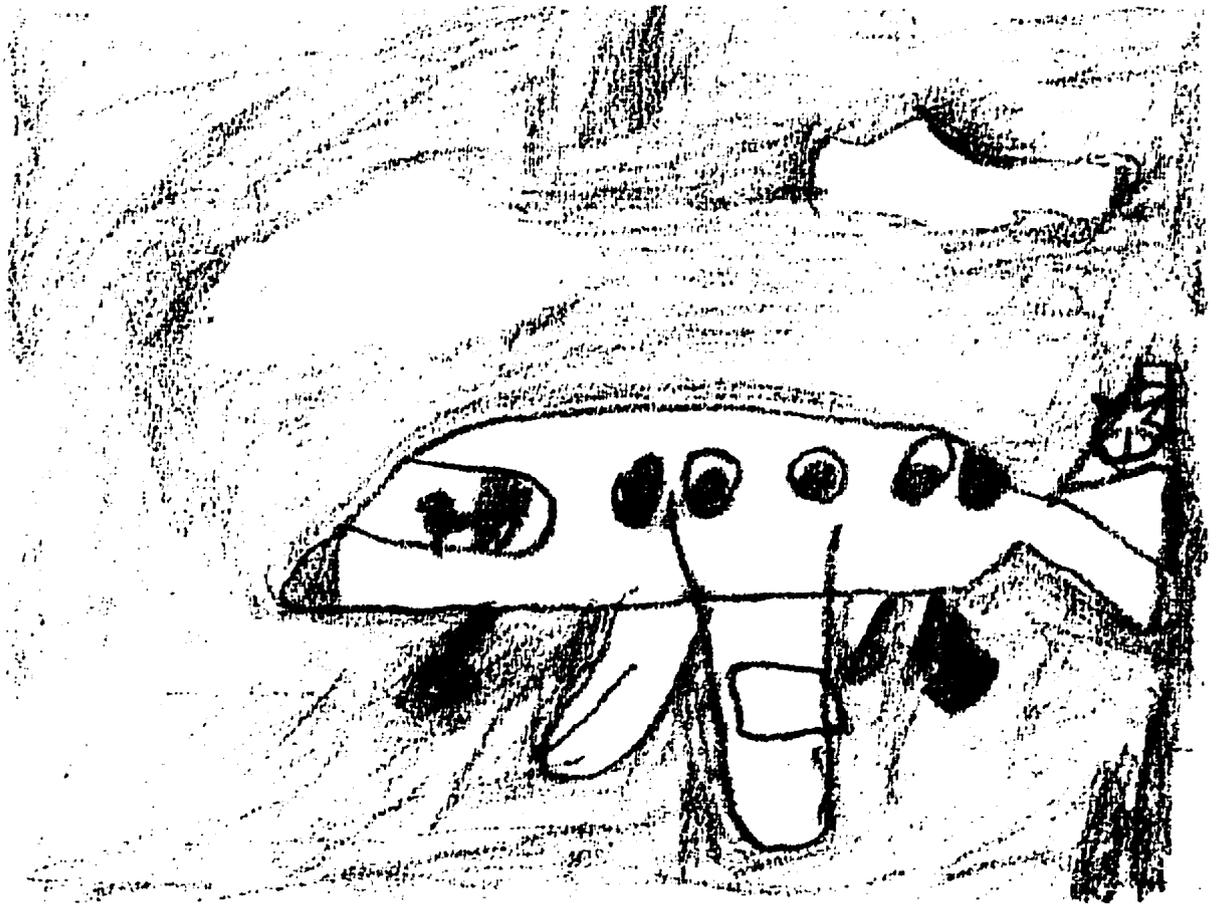
**Figure 1.** This drawing by Child A showed the balanced composition typical of this age group.

Eight out of the 21 images created by Child A are complete narratives with story elements spread over the page (38%). The remainder of his images were quick sketches or practice drawing with ideas and materials. The largest category of themes in his work was mythological/historical images, which included a cyclops, a symbolic monkey and frog story and two suits of armor. His interest in creating this type of image may have a relationship to his exposure at a Waldorf school to story telling of folk and fairy tales and mythology. His most detailed drawings of knights' armor, Figure 2, were drawn with three friends who were drawing and discussing the same topic. Wilson & Wilson (1977) examined the phenomena of children learning to draw from each other which can be observed in Child A's knight drawings. The tools which Child A chose had a strong kinesthetic effect on the work produced. Notice the careful colouring in Figure 3 which appears to have been created with a brand new box of crayons (notice the crisp lines) and the experimentation in Figure 4 where a small tool was traced as a starting point for a drawing. He also used line as an inspiration for a drawing. In several drawings, a decorative line appeared to have been the starting point as in Figure 5.

For Child A, drawing appeared to be a process which both described the way he thought things looked or could look and the imaginative potential of the tools which he choose. When Child A used drawing as narrative, it was most often used as a story about a story - Narrative as Description.



**Figure 2.** This is the most developed drawing done by Child A and was created with the influence of a group of friends.

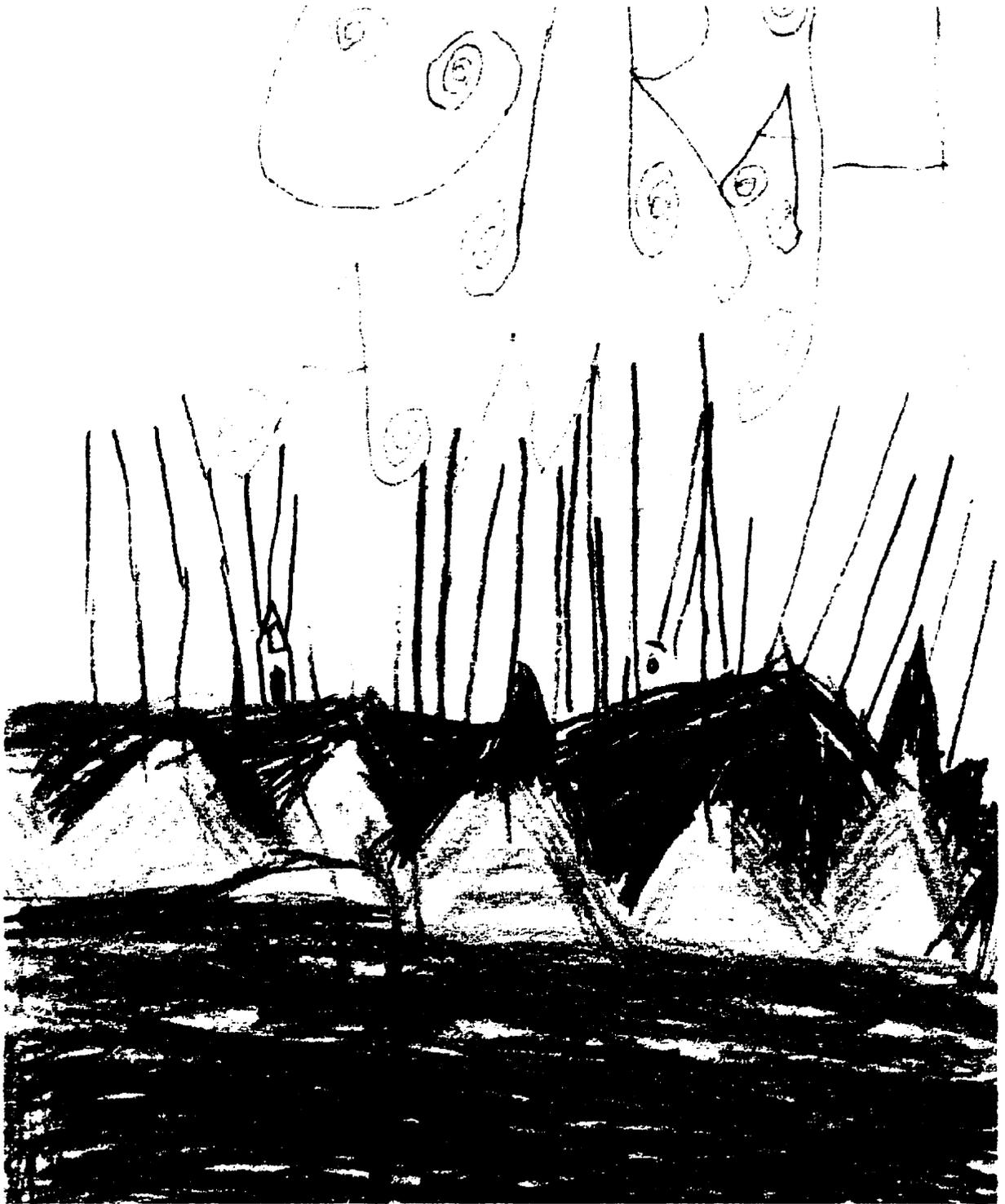


**Figure 3.** The kinesthetic effects of materials on Child A can be seen in this carefully coloured drawing



**Figure 4.** The sword-like shape which Child A traced to create three of the claws on this machine may have been the starting point for the drawing.

**Child B.** The drawings of Child B represented another view of the purpose of drawing. Child B's



**Figure 5.** The decorative lines used by Child A in this drawing also served as evidence of strong kinesthetic involvement.

drawings are also in Lowenfeld's (1957) symbolic stage of drawing, but his drawings were records of personal stories - active and involved. How things *look* appeared to be much less important than *what happened* in his visual stories and the active strokes attested to his kinesthetic involvement. Forty-four percent of his drawings were narrative in content, with six of the eight narrative drawings being Inventions, all of which were space-related. One of the external researchers suggested: "This boy probably gets asked 'What is this? or 'What is happening here?'" (GK, p. 14).

The drawings of student B tend to be created with simple strokes of the pencil or felt pen which sometimes leave the viewer trying to decipher their meaning, however, the artist himself had a strong story intent. Only 4 out of the 19 drawings were non-narrative in quality, despite the fact that this student also chooses to tell his stories mainly with machines rather than with humans or animals. GK, p. 17

I interpret this researcher to be pointing out the strongly narrative intent of Child B's work. At times the narrative appeared to have been a stronger interest than even the "readability". When provided with GK's comments, one parent of Child B indicated that this child would never be asked "what is it?" at home, and has received continued support for all his artistic ventures. Despite this, the parent felt that it was Child B's own exacting standards which prevent him from creating drawings of people, with which he was often displeased.

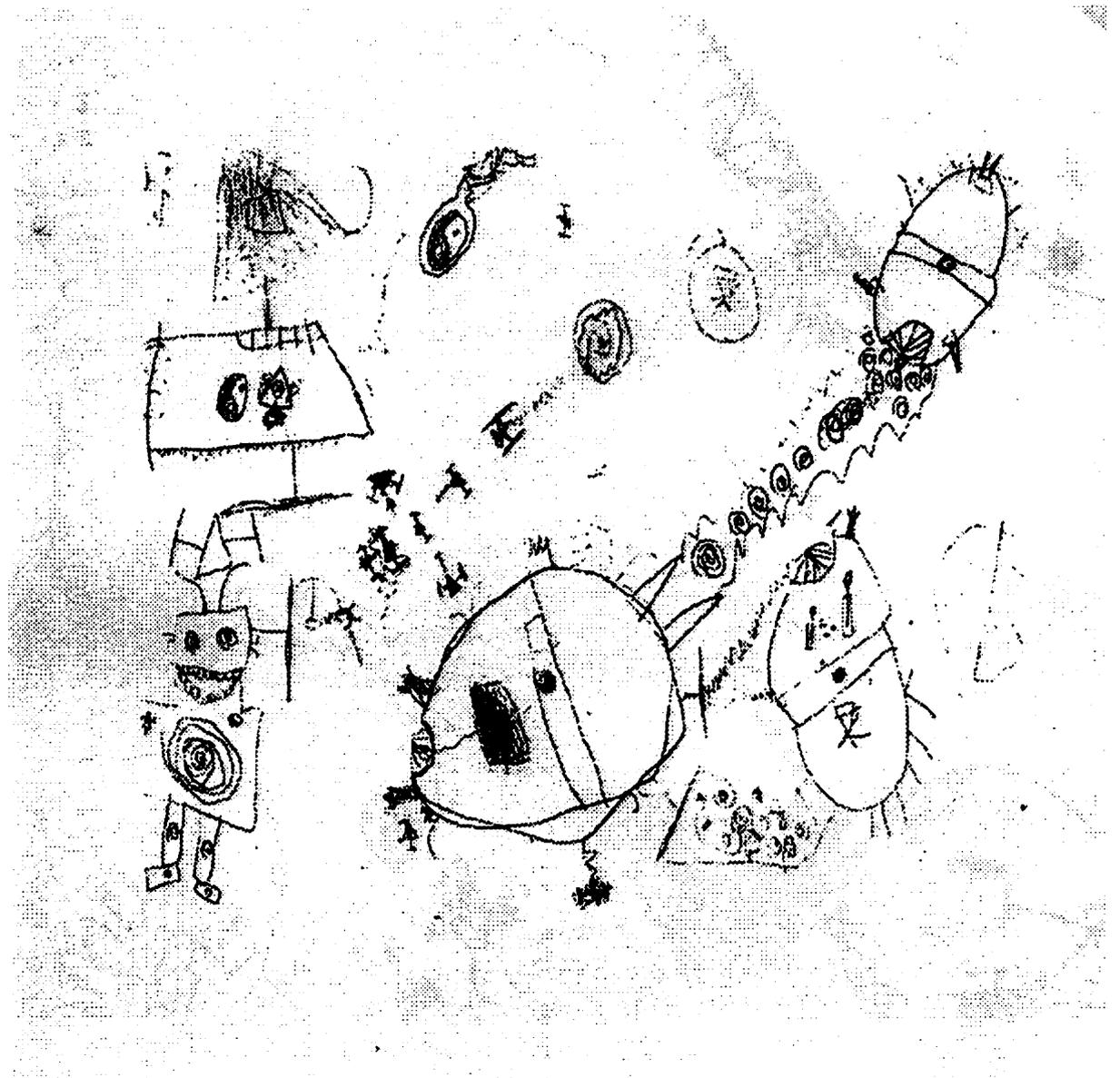
Few of Child B's drawings related to human beings, and in those which did, the human beings were much less developed than the machines:

Rockets, rockets. . . primary interest with a story telling basis. . . these rockets are all part of a visual story with #13 being the most complex - storytelling is more important than illustration here. . . it is notable that the rocket symbols are much more complex and detailed and varied than the people symbols. At this child's age, this becomes the vehicle to tell it as his writing wouldn't be at this level (SL, p. 17).

Child B concentrated on inventing machines in space. Figure 6 was a typical example of his work. It was an 18 x 24" pencil drawing of a space story with planets, rockets, a space monster and a space battle in progress. One of the external researchers said of this drawing "I think the [written] 'story' would cover more paper than the drawing". (SL, p.14). Another said:

Use of symbols for identification: years ago the swastika was commonly used in a similar fashion. This drawing is student B's most detailed piece of drawing. It shows a space war, with four space-ships engaged in battle. Small battle ships are emerging in Star-Trek-like fashion and a humanoid robot is also drawn. The smoke from the spaceships is created with snail-like designs and the ships are decorated with yin/yang symbols and other design. The drawing fills the whole surface of the paper (GK, p. 15).

I interpreted Child B's drawing interests differently from the external researcher (SL) who indicated that Child B's interests may be more literary than visual and may at some later date be translated into writing interests. The overlap between visual and verbal story telling will be discussed in both the Review of Relevant Literature and in the Analysis. Story telling ability, visual, verbal and written, contributes to the fullest development of each child's Aesthetic consciousness and all are equally important. Child B may indeed go on to be a writer of stories, but equally, he may find that as his hand co-ordination develops and as his purposes for drawing grow and change, that the visually communicative quality of his drawing increases and he may continue to use drawing as a primary source of communication as he grows.



Child B: Narrative and Structural

**Figure 6.** Many of Child B's drawings were narratives of invention, many space-related, with strong story telling intent.

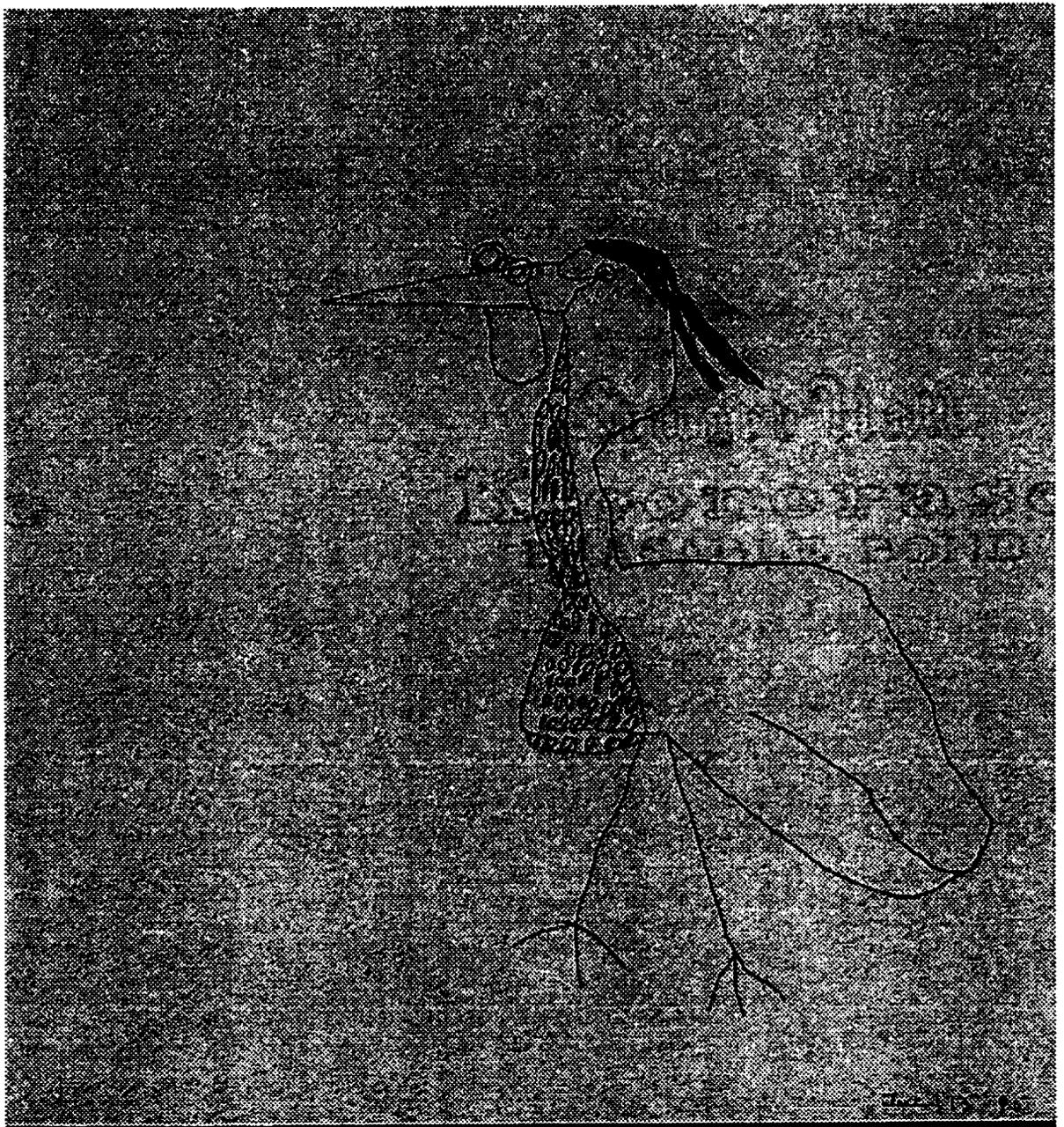
Child C. Child C's drawings appeared to be moving from the Schematic stage to the stage of Dawning Realism (Lowenfeld, 1947). This is the stage where many children stop progressing in drawing ability (Lindstrom, 1957). Having mastered the development of our own set of symbols for *face, lips, trees*, children lose interest in drawing their mental pictures of objects and events and become dissatisfied with their symbols (Lowenfeld, 1947). They wish to draw things as they are seen rather than what they envision. At this point of change, some children will begin to look closely at things around them and try to draw what they see (compare with Figure 7 of Child D, drawn from a real object in his home). Others will copy or trace adult drawings in an attempt to achieve the effects they desire, as Child C has done in the majority of his drawings (Figures 8 and 9). As two of the external researchers commented:

Three of this student's eight drawings were fully narrative. He appears to have been going through a stage of interest in other people's art work, i.e. book covers and cartoons, more than using drawing to tell his own stories. (GK, p. 21)

and:

Interesting in that every drawing comes from comic type source except #1. His ability to see detail in these sources allows him to go beyond the schematic symbols as opposed to drawing #1. In these drawings I suspect the student enjoys his ability to create "real" drawings (approaching the adult images he is using as source material). (SL, p. 21)

Although many art educators are unhappy with children's interest in copying or tracing adult work, some learning can occur in this way as will be discussed in relation to Child F's birds, both traced and drawn. This process of learned symbol-making was documented by Wilson & Wilson, (1977) as one of the ways children, particularly over the age of eight years, learn to draw.



**Figure 7.** This drawing by Child D is an example of the interest in more adult-like realism which is also exhibited in the drawings of Child C.



**Figure 8.** A traced image by Child C



**Figure 9.** This drawing by Child C shows the interest in adult detail which children around 8 years old often begin to exhibit.

As will be documented in the Review of Relevant Literature and the Analysis, many subtle messages are received by children both through school and home which tell them that drawing is a childish activity. These subtle messages further complicate the difficulties faced by children as they attempt to move from their own earlier delight in their ability to create visual symbols to their desire to draw things as they really look. Unfortunately, at this stage, many children give up on the drawing process, believing it to be a skill intended for a talented few.

Child C's relatively smaller volume of work as compared with the other boys (equal to one drawing per week), slightly lower volume of narrative drawing (37%), and higher incidence of copied and or traced work is indicative of the changes which occur as children move from the schematic to the stage of dawning realism. The children's interest in narrative declines at least temporarily as their interest in realism increases.

## Child D

Child D created the highest number of drawings (46) of the boys in this study. As well, 58% of his images were fully narrative. More than half of the narrative images were Narrative as Description. Another 1/3 were Narrative as Negotiation and only one other of the six (E) had a group of images in this category. The Negotiation images did not relate to working through personal emotional experiences, but instead, documented small moments of relationships such as the child and dog image (see Figure 10), where the child appears to be trying to coax something out of the dog's mouth. These negotiations often involve humor of a gentle and delightful variety.

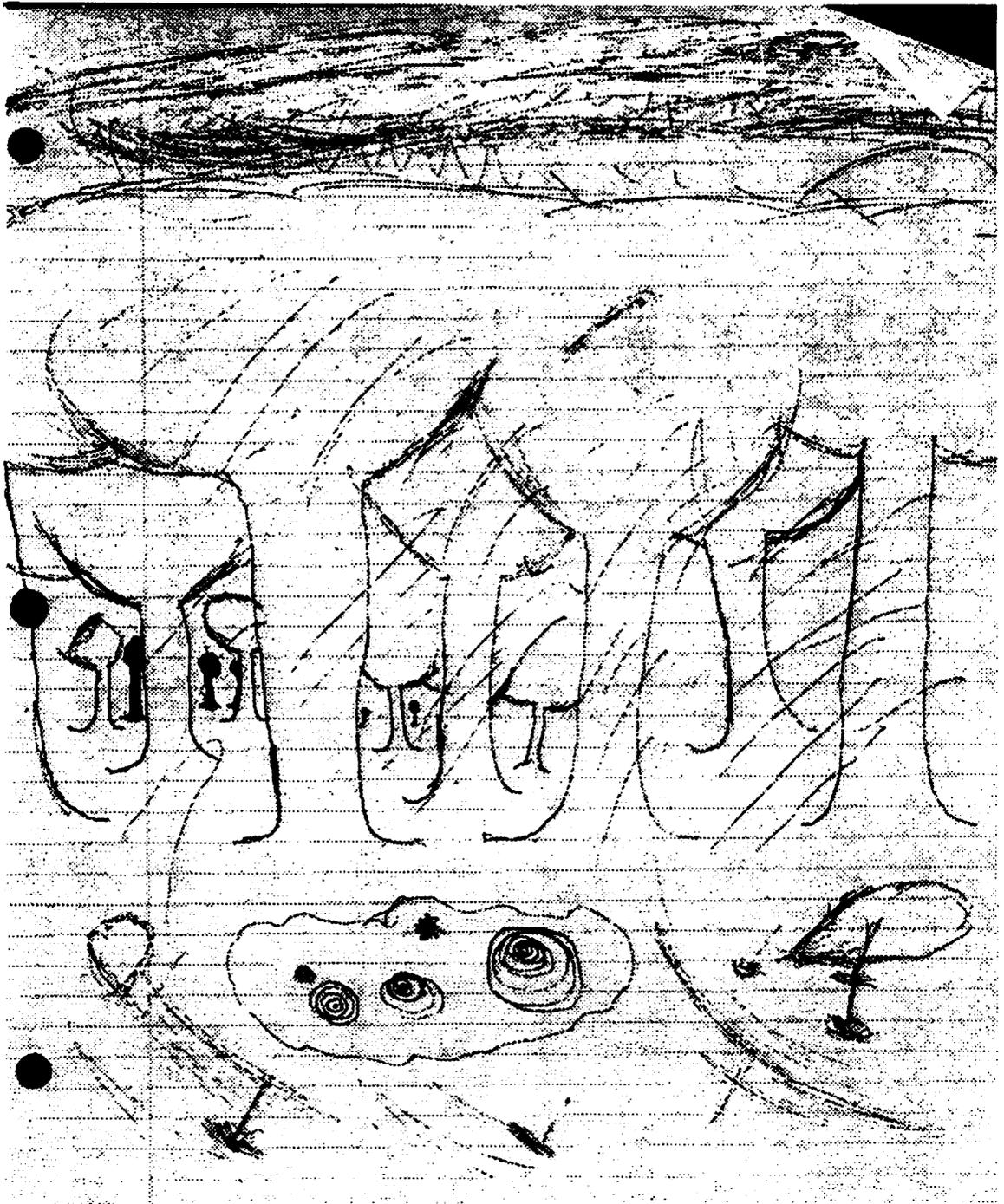
Child D's themes were varied with over five drawings from each of: human subjects; animals and nature; machines; cartoon/media and fantasy images. The 46 drawings were mainly done in pencil with some pencil crayon on 8 1/2 x 11" paper. Child D demonstrated a light touch, very mature fine motor control and advanced drawing skills for a child less than eight years old. Colour was used sparingly and at times with dramatic effect.

This student confidently presented schematic images such as smiling stars while concurrently stretching into the stage of dawning realism (see Figure 11) where perspective was attempted in the overlapping trees, and realism in the rain falling into the puddles.

For this student, however, the shift from symbols to realism appeared to create little concern. The high volume of drawings created indicated a continuing interest in drawing when compared with the lower number of drawings created by Child C. It is interesting to note that three drawings were from direct observation of real objects (Figure 7 on p.35). Drawing from real objects may be the method that Child D was using to gradually learn more about drawing as he moved from one drawing stage to another.



**Figure 10** This image of the relationship between the child and his dog is typical of the relationship which Child D explored extensively in his drawings, an example of Narrative as Negotiation.



**Figure 11** Child D's landscapes exhibits qualities of mature drawing which begin to emerge usually around 8 or 9 years old. Note the perspective in the trees and realism of the rain hitting the puddles.

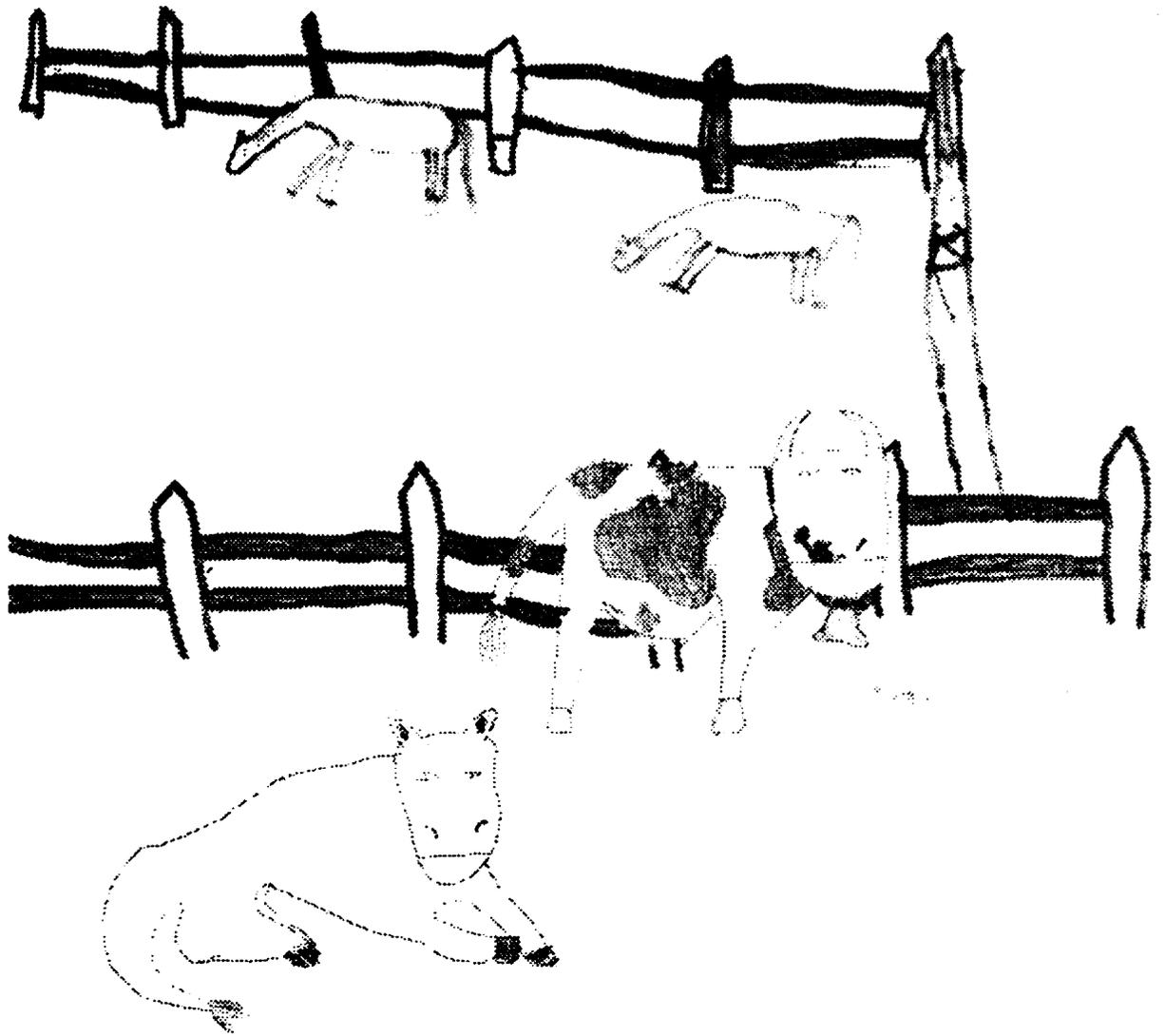
Besides Child D's abilities with the pencil, sensitivity to negotiations in relationships and interest in real life objects, his drawings were also notable for the tenacity with which he approached and re-approached problems in his work. The problem-solving he attempted often related to perspective problems which he seemed willing to attempt over and over, often rewarded with a successful solution. One of the external researchers added this comment: "One foot in the schematic stage, with his head trying to solve realism problems, the 'fence perspective' keeps turning up with various solutions, showing he is not trying to avoid the problem." (SL p. 5) (see Figure 12).

#### Child E

Child E created 36 drawings, the second largest volume of work among the six boys. Sixty one percent of these drawings were narrative, the highest in the study. Child E's drawings were remarkable for several reasons. First, all 36 were created using the same medium - wax crayon on white paper. As one external researcher commented on E1 (see Figure 13):

This full-colour page with five fish biting at fishing lines is a beautiful rendition of the natural world as well as a lovely study in the use of colour and an excellent example of crayon used well as a manageable tool for students this age. Compared with felt pen which many students use, it is spread over the surface of this drawing almost like paint. The details of the fishes' gills, fins, eyes and tails as well as the fishing bobs show a keen observer and story teller (SL, p. 35).

This child's drawings completely covered the page (often 18 x 24") with solid bright colour. As well, this student's work was totally original: no images appeared copied or traced, or media imitations. His style was consistent throughout the 36 pieces. As well, his work was spread almost equally t.he



**Figure 12** Child D's patience in problem-solving is exhibited in attempted perspective in the fence on right hand side of the drawing.



**Figure 13.** This drawing is an example of Child E's masterful use of wax crayon used almost as a form of paint to flood the paper with colour.

between the three narrative categories.

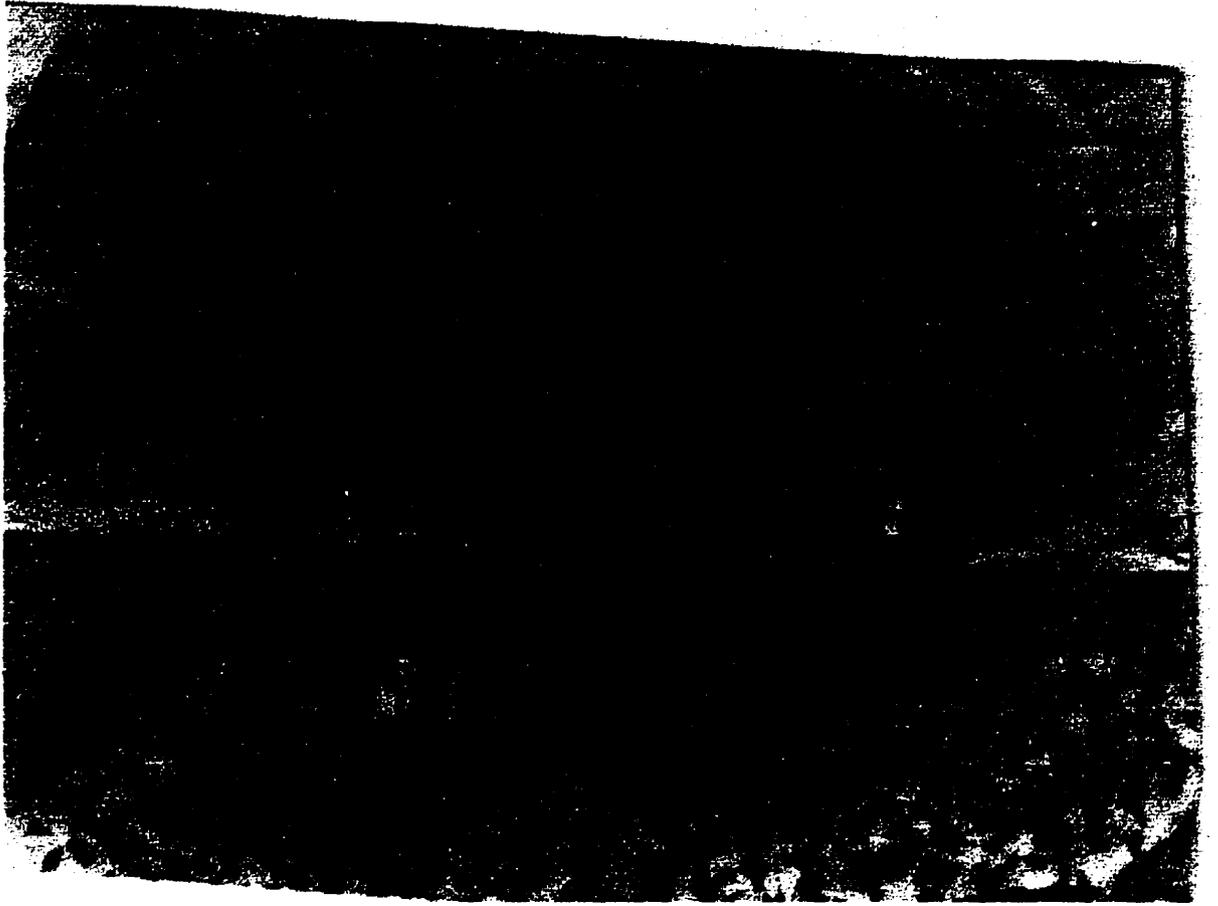
Child E's work also contained one extraordinary narrative sequence which carried over 11 drawings, and over a period of several weeks (see Figures 14 and 15). Each new drawing was like a new chapter of the story of the battle of the fruits and vegetables which had triumphs on both sides, defeats and humorous outcomes. It serves as a strong illustration of a child's interest in visual story telling.

In the data describing this sequence, I commented:

This amazing narrative sequence which carried on over a month of drawing, chronicles the war of the vegetables and fruits. The actual drawing of each 'character' is abbreviated compared to his other drawings, but the action, humor and desire to carry through with a visual story are all stunning. Although the entire sheet is not always completely filled with colour each time, the compositions spread all over the page in every drawing. (KS p. 42)

One of the external researchers said this narrative sequence demonstrated a "strong ability to develop a theme and stay focused." (GK p. 42)

Machines were Child E's most used theme and portraying action seemed to inspire his desire to draw. Thirteen out of the 36 drawings involved battles and most of the rest involved action and movement. Despite the high number of battles, there was only one drawing which involved blood, and then only as an apparent after-thought. Colour was used to separate story elements and foreground and background. He was also the only child artist in this study to experiment with using colour to deliberately portray light, see Figure 16, where beams of some kind are emanating from the machine represented by stripes of colour.



**Figure14.** This drawing is an example of part of the long narrative sequence which Child E was engaged in over a period of several weeks.



**Figure 15.** Another chapter in the war of the vegetables by Child E.



**Figure 16.** Child E utilized stripes of colour to indicate light or movement emanating from this machine.

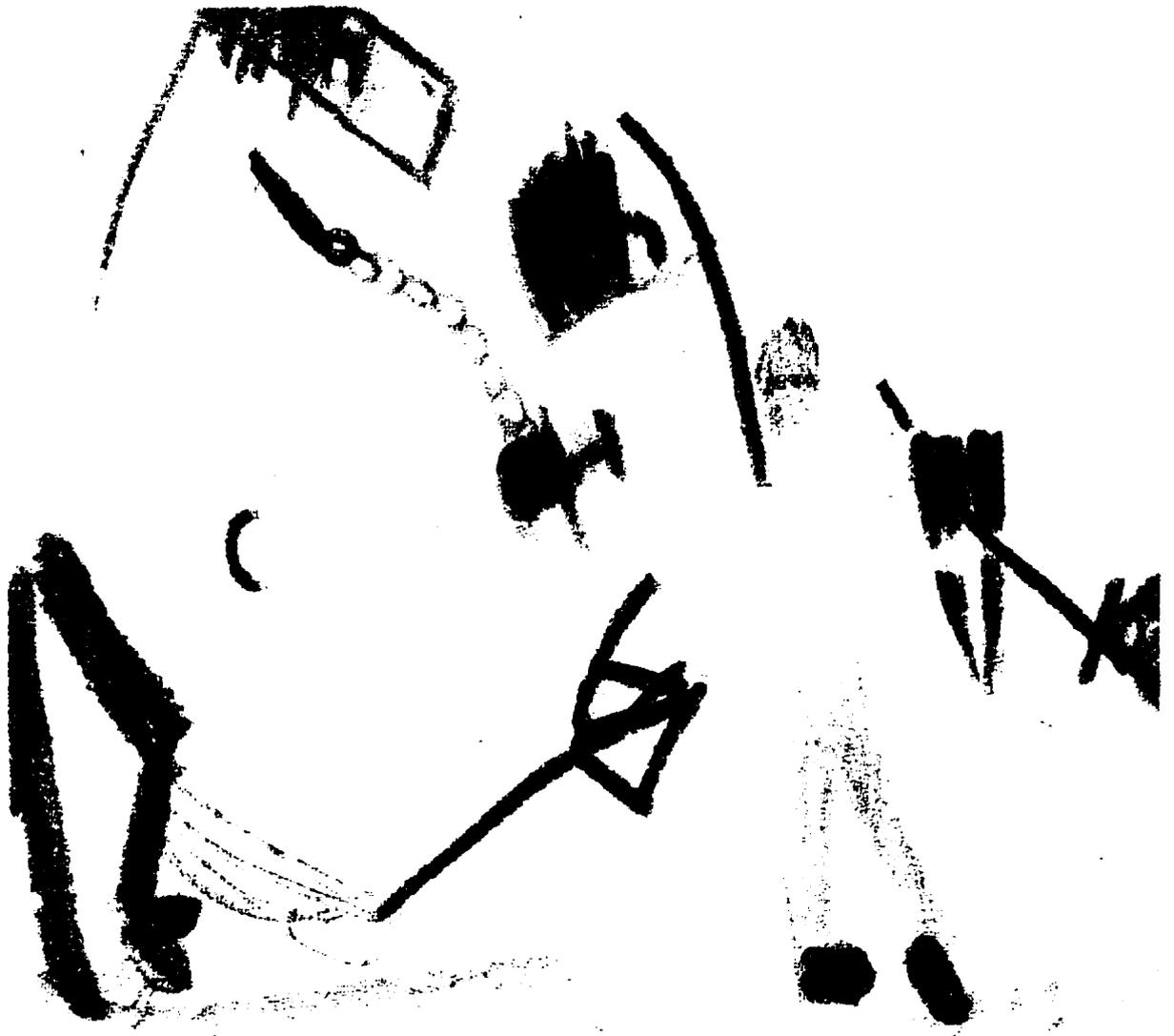
In summary, from the data description of Child E's work, I commented:

Colour, action and composition are trademarks of this child's interest in drawing (see Figure 17). Added to this is an amazingly strong desire to explore a story through his drawings. The extent of the war of the vegetables sequence is amazing and the interest in working to tell the next story in the sequence is so much more pronounced than the usual childhood interest of repeating a drawing to perfect it (KS, p. 44).

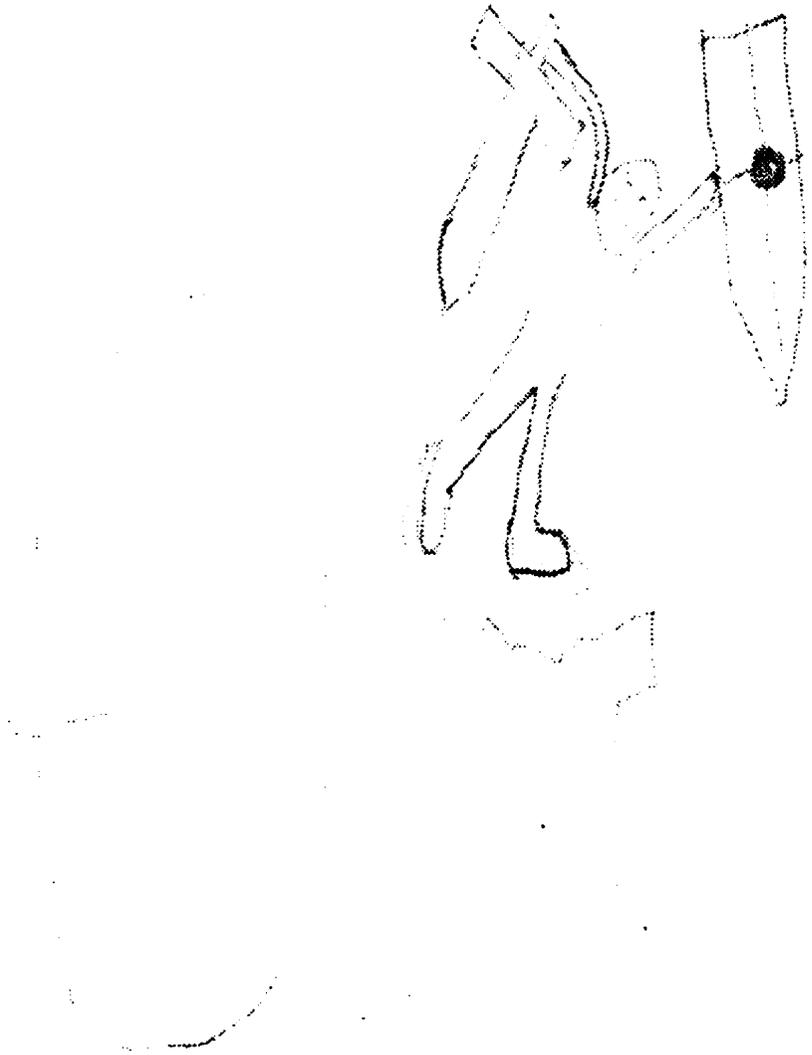
The presence of historical/mythological images and the use of block crayons may have resulted from Child E's attendance at a Waldorf School. He was also one of two children in this study who did not watch television. I can only hypothesize that perhaps the combination of a sensitive, visual and narrative imagination; nurtured through storytelling and uncomplicated by visual over-load from television; limited to a tool (block crayon) which quickly deposits large areas of colour onto the paper - has fostered the development of this narrative out-pouring.

#### Child F

Child F's drawings were typified by the use of line rather than form, a light touch and an overriding interest in the details of movement in humans and animals. Most of his story telling was done through the use of the bodies in his drawings in a very visual-kinesthetic manner. Many of Child F's drawings demonstrated a love of movement and action through the moving limbs of figures of animals and humans. Figure 18 which was described as "A great little figure in action with a huge sword and shield and jumping feet plus a big smile" (KS, p. 55) typified this sense of the importance of movement.



**Figure 17.** An action battle scene by Child E.



**Figure 18.** The happy movements of this small figure indicates this Child F's interest in motion.

Child F created 37 drawings in 60 days, more than one drawing every two days. Fifty-seven percent of his drawings were also narrative in content and he concentrated on Narrative as Description. Unlike Child B who was interested in 'what happened', Child F looked at the way things *work*, structurally, operationally, and in relationship to other animals or humans. His relationship drawings reveal similar sensitivity to Child D's drawings, for example Figure 19, of which one external researcher commented:

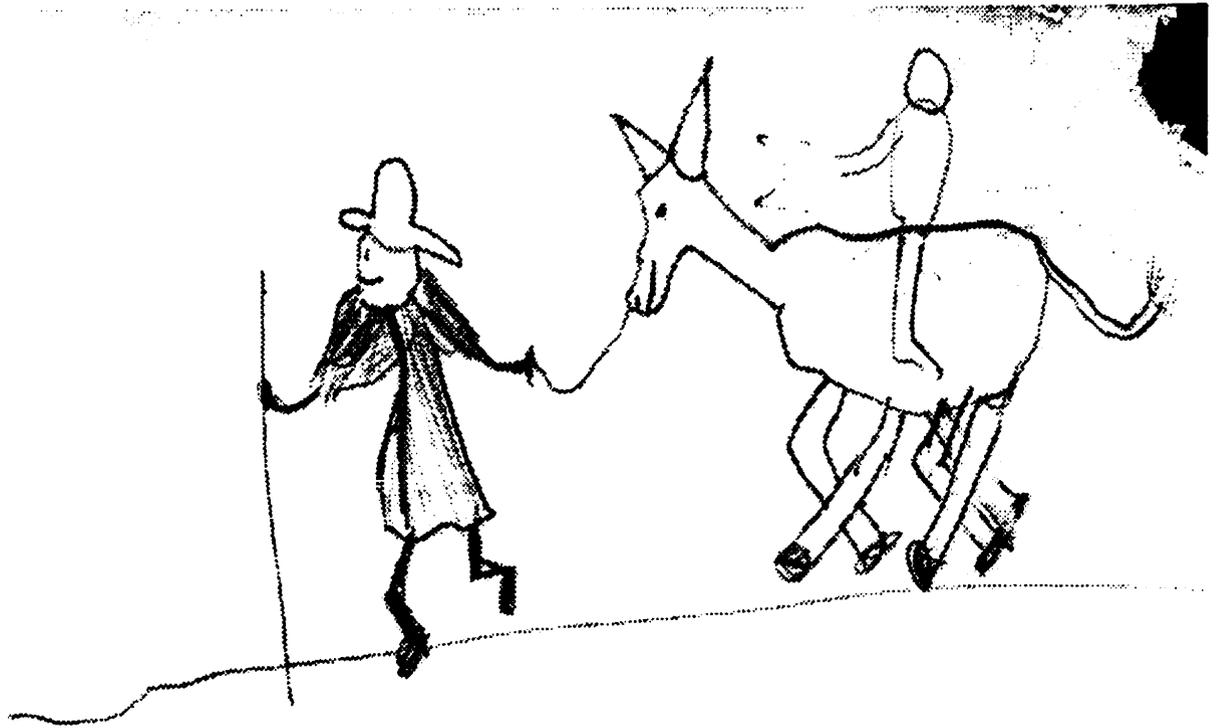
Warrior, two birds - humor! First time I've noticed something intended to be a funny incident. Even the dragon looks happy. Realistic figure - helmet, sword, shield and fur coat look so matched for a certain historical period (SL p. 47).

This drawing is an example of the historical, mythological or story illustration often created by Child F.

As one of the external researchers put it: "A fair amount of attention is given to illustrating stories" (GK, p. 47). Out of 37 drawings, nine drawings were of this nature. Figure 20 is an example. This drawing showed an attempt to re-tell a traditional story in drawing. Child F also added words to this drawing. Visual problem-solving appeared with the legs on the donkey and the movement of the farmer's body.



**Figure 19.** Child D's historical images were numerous and imbued with delicate humour and personal relationships (note the small birds).



THE MILLER, HIS SON  
AND THEIR ASS

A miller and hi

**Figure 20.** Note the movement in the legs of the donkey in child F's drawing.

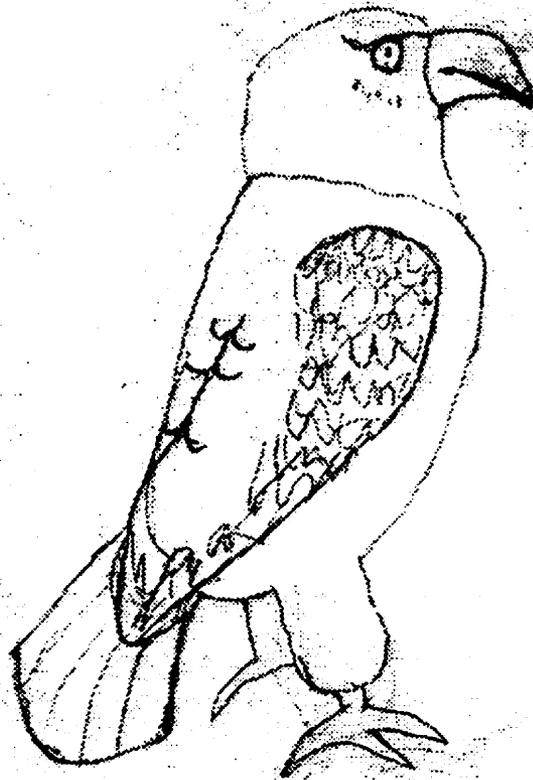
Like Child C who appeared to be trying to sort out his relationship with drawing realism, Child F included many traced images in his work. Most of these were birds but a few others are sports logos. The birds were particularly interesting. He was tracing birds (see Figure 21), but he was also working on his own drawings of birds as in Figure 22.

Interestingly, his own drawings of birds increased in detail over the 60 day period of this study. Figure 23 was described as follows:

The cat approaches, the bird flies away, but something is left behind (?) which the cat is looking at. The bird is quite well developed with feathers, a beak and one foot shown in profile. There is a second wing over-lapped with the first. A lovely little drawing (KS p. 47).

The other interest demonstrated in Child F's drawings related to structure of man-made objects. These drawings often involved the use of a ruler (unusual in drawings of children this age) and explorations of line, space and sometimes three-dimensionality. A good example of this type of drawing is the sail boat (see Figure 24).

The drawing showed a small sail boat with three dimensionality and careful detail, very much towards the realism stage. The detail on the rudder seemed to indicate personal knowledge as well as interest.



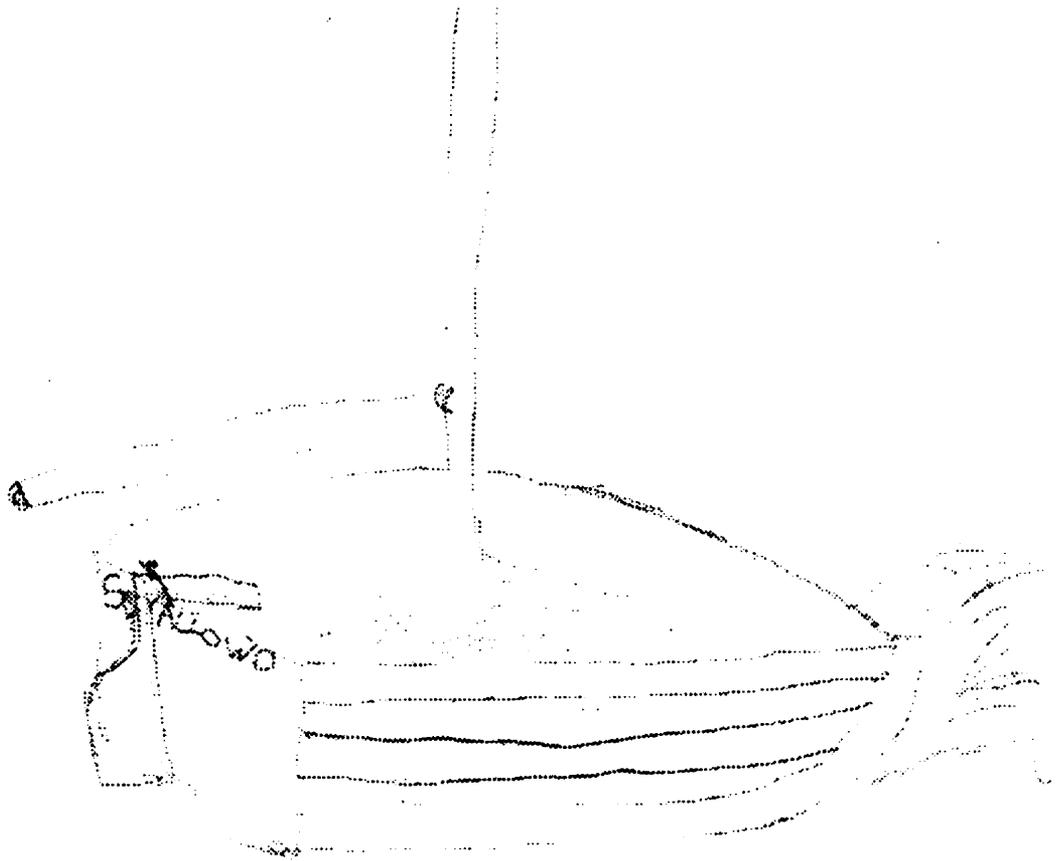
**Figure 21.** This bird image of Child F appears to have been traced, but learning about the anatomy of birds was carried into improvements in some of his other bird drawings.



**Figure 23.** Child F's relationship drawing is evocatively narrative. He shows improved understanding of the structure and three-dimensionality of the bird perhaps as a result of his previous tracing efforts.



**Figure 23.** Child F's drawing of the relationship between the bird and cat, and something which remains on the ground. Note the developing complexity in the rendition of the bird.



**Figure 24.** The structure of man made objects interested Child F.

Review of the Relevant Literature (in Reference to Observations of the Boys' Drawings)

This chapter looks to the literature to provide points of reference for analysis of the findings section of this study. I will begin with three topics relating to comments about the boys' drawings made by me and the external researchers in the findings section and mentioned in the introduction.

The three topics are:

- 1) Aesthetics - the search for personal meaning,
- 2) Drawing as narrative,
- 3) Theories of children's artistic development.

Each of these topics relates directly to one of the three areas of investigation elaborated in the Methodology.

In relation to aesthetics, the boys' drawings have been counted to determine the importance they each placed on drawing as a tool in the search for personal meaning (see 1 above and 1 in the Methodology Section). The review of literature for this area focuses on the study of aesthetics, the study of the search for personal meaning and its relationship with children's drawing.

To understand Drawing as Narrative, the connections between narrative and children's drawings have been examined by classifying the children's drawings using a system developed by Julia Kellman (1995) (see 2 above and 2 in the Methodology Section). Literature in this area will focus on understanding the term *Narrative* and its contemporary usage and develop linkages between narrative and children's drawing.

Theories of artistic development tie into the third area of investigation, examining the themes which the boys chose for their drawings (see 3 above and 3 in the Methodology Section.) The review of the literature for this area is elucidated through an examination of several topics including

differing usage of drawing and painting; possible differences between the drawings of boys and girls; implications of exposure to television and theories of children's artistic development useful to the examination of the boys' drawings.

### Aesthetics - the Search for Personal Meaning

Defining aesthetics. When discussing the literature related to aesthetics, it is important to differentiate *Aesthetics* - as we usually think of it: as the judgement of visual quality, from *Aesthetics* as it is used by philosophers, to mean the study of the search for personal meaning (Witkin, 1974). It is the philosophical definition of Aesthetics which has been used in this study. That is to say, I have tried to understand the ways in which the boys have used drawing to develop their own view of the world. Art Educator Herbert Read (1944) commented that even the earliest drawings of a child are telling signs of the development of the individual self. Drawing and actually all forms of art constitute a distinct way of knowing about the world. (Arnheim, 1969; Gardner, 1982, Erikson, 1977) and contribute to the development of Aesthetics, in its philosophical definition, as informs our interpretations of everything we do, think and make.

Historical usage. The philosophical definition of Aesthetics used in this paper states that the aesthetic value of anything is determined by each individual. This view originated in the views of philosophers like David Hume who noted more than two hundred and forty years ago that there were flaws in the then-current mechanistic systems of knowledge. Hume claimed nothing existed except perception and mental states. In his view, cause and effect were based on associations of sensory impressions, reinforced by habit or custom. His work went so far as to deny objective knowledge (Courtney, 1987).

Immanuel Kant then described a process through which reason was transformed into human judgement using the aesthetic as a mediator of human feelings. Working two centuries ago, Kant

placed importance on the realm of feeling and tried to relate it to the process of human judgement. His work on Aesthetics was important to the Existentialists (Courtney, 1987).

For the Existential philosophers who followed, knowledge was best revealed through self-presentation in play and art. The ideas of the Existential philosophers are particularly important to a discussion of Aesthetics, since they contributed to a new understanding of Aesthetics as an active vehicle for the search for meaning in life. The Existentialists, developed a concept of *play fictions* or *aesthetic fictions* as the essence of human operation (Courtney, 1987). Each human being was an actor using his/her performance as a symbol of the meaning which the acting helped to create. (Courtney, 1987) To the Existentialists, play and art were the most whole and natural forms of being. Play and art were thought to lead to the development of the aesthetic fictions. They both resulted from, and led to the creation of individual meaning.

For Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Martin Buber and other Existentialists both play and art were thought to be non-mediated responses, and thus totally pure and whole (Courtney, 1987). Play and art helped to define basic values as tools in the creation of each person's vision of events and objects in the world. Since the time of the Existentialists' writings, discussion of the importance of internal or symbolic judgement in personal meaning-making has shaped many fields, particularly philosophy, literature and art education, including the aesthetic component (Kaelin, 1989).

Later, Robert W. Witkin (1974) combined Aesthetics in terms of symbols as *forms of feeling* or ideas about feelings, with a contemporary Piagetian concept of psychology (Courtney, 1987). For Witkin, aesthetic thought involved two poles of behavior, one sensing the feelings within, and the other of corresponding actions in the world. Witkin's understanding is important to this discussion since his view of aesthetics defines the importance of both feelings and actions.

Aesthetics and learning. Another movement known as Poststructuralism refined the Existentialists' concept of aesthetic fictions as developed through metaphor. The importance of metaphor was discussed as fundamental to all thought. (Courtney, 1987). In Frames of Mind, (1983), Howard Gardner mused over the concept of the *metaphorical ability*:

My own belief is that these various early forms of metaphORIZING represent a universal phenomenon, one that lies somewhat apart from the development of specific intelligences, but constitutes a natural development process (p. 292).

This *natural development* appears, according to Gardner's description to be a generalized human quality. Creating metaphor - the ability to make connections, lies at the heart of a contemporary outlook on education. The Common Curriculum for Ontario (Ministry of Education and Training for Ontario, Feb. 1993) aims to be "holistic in its view of an increasingly complex and interdependent world; that is, it places emphasis on connections and relationships among ideas, among people, among phenomena", stressing assisting students to make connections. In school and in society, we are coming to realize the implications of the arts in society of which this examination of children's spontaneous narrative drawing is one small part.

Aesthetics and education. Generally, aesthetics has experienced a lack of recognition in public education, both in the training of teachers and in the practice of education for children. Beck, (1990) noted that the aesthetic aspect of children's education is overlooked with emphasis on functional literacy rather than literature study and curriculum specialization which relegates the arts to incidental status. However, in the latter part of this century, there have been several movements to develop the concept of Aesthetics in teacher education in North America.

Aesthetics was examined in conjunction with the visual or performing arts in teacher education at the University of Wisconsin in the 1950s, including the study of aesthetics with art history and criticism in the art education curriculum of graduate students. In 1966, one of that

program's original students served as director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Art Appreciation, which included seminars in art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. "This was the true beginning of the multi-disciplined approach to art education" (Kaelin, 1989 p. xvi).

Ohio State University began a program of aesthetic education including curriculum development in the visual arts, music, drama, dance and literature, and developed guidelines for an Aesthetic curriculum. Laura Chapman another figure in the movement to include aesthetics in teacher education was also influenced by involvement with this group. Stanley Madeja of North Illinois University who has written extensively about aesthetics and art education was also involved. The development of a multi disciplined approach to art education was important since it included the formal study of aesthetics with the visual arts. (Kaelin, 1989). The multi-disciplined approach was a formal one, and an objective approach to aesthetics as beauty which did not involve the treatment of Aesthetics as metaphor-building and meaning-making. However, the inclusion of aesthetics in art education at the university level in the training of teachers at least encouraged its inclusion in high school art programs.

The Getty Center for Education in the Arts, a privately sponsored organization which supports the development of the arts in the United States, continued the early beginnings from the University of Wisconsin in the 1950s and formalized, added to and publicized their findings. The Getty Center developed an arts curriculum based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983) called *Discipline-Based Art Education* or DBAE which combined ideas, skills, knowledge and creative activity in four disciplines: art production, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics (National Endowment for the Arts, 1994).

*Arts Propel*, a program developed through collaboration between The Educational Testing Service, Harvard Project Zero, and the Pittsburgh Public Schools and emphasized production (i.e.,

painting, or composing), perception (being able to discriminate within an art form) and reflection (thinking about how and why works of art are made) in the curriculum which they developed. This project had a reputation of being inclusive to diverse student cultural and achievement backgrounds:

They believe that exposing students to a range of artistic experiences may enhance their understanding of philosophies or belief systems of a variety of cultures. As works of art result, criteria used in considering and making judgements about the quality of works of art can vary. In this way, arts education may improve students' self-knowledge and knowledge of others. (Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future, 1994, p. 9)

Arts Propel's presentation of aesthetics, although still relatively formal, was more individualized than previous approaches to aesthetic education had been.

In the 1970s and 1980s school administrators argued against devoting time to both the understanding of aesthetic experience and to arts programs (Madeja, 1978), so aesthetics did not gain much general curriculum acceptance. In the 1990s, aesthetics, still is commonly tied to the visual or performing arts curriculum (as demonstrated by The Getty Center Program) and has tried to compete for valuable classroom time with a plethora of other art curriculum areas. Art education programs themselves compete for space in generally crowded school curricula both in the United States (Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future, 1994) and also in Canada. As the 1990s draw to a close, a renewed interest in integration has introduced overlapping in curriculum topics, allowing for the possibility of deeper understanding in areas like aesthetic education. Formal aesthetic education with older students may be given more exposure as a part of this integrated approach.

Aesthetic education, however, is not well understood by the field of art education. It can be as Madeja argued, "the most powerful idea for organizing the art curriculum." (In Kaelin, 1989, p. x). He suggested that the substance of aesthetics can be the starting point for the teaching of art since it defines its content, rationale for existence and its structure by asking questions about the nature of the creative process, and the qualities which are chosen by particular groups of people to define the

value of art work. Madeja's explanation of aesthetics education was closer again to the way aesthetics is understood in relation to the boys' drawings in this study. It did not however, address the Existentialist approach to aesthetics as meaning-making through non-structured art and play and towards which this study leans.

### Drawing as Narrative

In her description of art as both a product and an instrument of human insight, Susanne Langer (1957) suggested that art helps us to see the world and to portray what we see as a form of communication, continually learning more about ourselves and the topic of our art at the same time. Nowhere is Langer's concept more easily observed than in the narrative drawings of primary school age children like those discussed in the findings section of this study. Although art is generally accepted for its creative exploratory potential and as an outlet for emotional expression, a full understanding of the importance of drawing as a form of narrative is still in its infancy in education. Narrative, whether verbal, written, or in this case, drawn can be seen as a form of aesthetics, as recorded evidence of the active search to create personal meaning.

Viktor Lowenfeld (1947) one of the most important art educators of this century is described by Eisner (1972) as being "interested in the creative and mental growth of the child and [he] saw art as a vehicle for facilitating this growth" (p. 23). To produce a drawing, a child enters into a symbol-making function as I will elaborate in the next section on children's artistic development. To produce a narrative drawing, a child produces a co-ordinated group of symbols which work together to represent an event or a story. Jean Piaget (1951) said: "The symbol is essentially an expression of the child's present reality." (p. 155) Philosopher Susanne Langer (1948) suggested:

The symbol-making function is one of man's primary activities, like eating, looking or moving about. It is the fundamental process of his mind, and goes on all the time. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes we merely find its results and realize that certain experiences have passed through our brains and have been digested there (pp. 32-33).

Narrative as research. Written narrative has been accepted in research circles as one way of mapping the process of personal meaning-making (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994). Narrative drawing has been seen as a way of mapping emotions for therapeutic purposes in counselling psychology for many years (Jung, 1968) and understood as a form of aesthetic narrative in the field of sociology (Bettleheim, 1976) but its acceptance as a complete form of recorded narrative in research has been minimal. Two notable exceptions occur in Kellman, (1995) and Stokrocki, (1994) who examined children's drawing as forms of narrative. In all of the varied ways art has assisted in the understanding of another's point of view, the art of children is seldom viewed holistically as a form of narrative equally important to written or verbal narrative as it has been viewed in this study. To understand drawing as narrative, I will first examine the literature on the development of verbal narrative in children and describe its importance in the development of aesthetic consciousness. I will then describe the literature on story telling as a form of inspiration for the development of verbal narrative and as a link to understanding children's use of narrative in drawing. Written, verbal and drawn narratives have been viewed in this study as over-lapping aspects of the same process, the development of narrative thought.

Influencing the development of verbal narrative in children. During the Primary years children's rapid development of verbal story schemata (verbal narrative) indicates a strong story-telling interest (Eisner, 1972; Kellman, 1995; Pitcher & Prelinger, 1963). It is notable that many children attain near adult levels of understanding of verbal story schemata by the age of six years (Mikkelsen, 1983; Young, 1986) and earlier (Wilkinson, 1993).

In a Toronto-based study of economically at-risk kindergarten students (Young, 1986), researchers experimented with the format of the traditional "bed-time story" and used it in the classroom setting. Since young children were presumed to learn about the story schema through listening to and/or reading stories, Young expected that giving them additional experiences with stories would lead to an increase in their knowledge of the story schema and their ability to use it. The results of the study were consistent with this prediction (Young, 1986).

According to Bettelheim (1979), the type of story presented to the children can be significant in their development. Bettelheim advocated the use of traditional fairy tales with children and commented that mythology can also play a part in the development of children's aesthetic and narrative understanding. By misunderstanding children's narrative needs, educators of Primary aged children may be missing opportunities to develop their narrative and Aesthetic potential through traditional literature enhanced with narrative drawing.

Connections between storytelling and the development of visual narrative. Traditional stories create the dependable story schemata which help children to find and recreate an ordered universe. As Nancy Mellon (1992) described in her book, Storytelling and the art of the imagination, "Every storyteller collects and arranges vital inner pictures, behind these live universal ordering principles." (p. 1)

Oral and narrative traditions are characterized by certain qualities which have been typically disregarded by current education:

The oral style has an aesthetic aspect to it that renders it in some ways quite autonomous from the literate style, and closer, perhaps, to the "literary" style of literature. After all, the oral style was the basis of both *Homer* and the *Bible*, and probably even the classical Greek stage – and these were some of the high points of the human attempt to communicate (Gee, 1984, p.78 ).

Oral cultures are characterized by warmer interpersonal relationships:

In fact, Givon (1979), has suggested that literate styles of speaking are characteristic of a 'society of strangers', while oral styles are more characteristic of a 'society of intimates' (Gee, 1991, p. 78).

For a story to become one of a child's experiences, it must become part of the way a child views the world. When a story teller makes eye contact with a child, developing the personal rapport which encourages language acquisition and uses language to help the child to create his/her own pictures, the narrative development occurs (Young, 1986).

In an educational setting, elementary social studies teachers in New Brunswick examined the connections between narrative, literary style and the acquisition of concepts in social studies. They found that the literary style more closely resembled history as the children understand it.

Traditional stories create the dependable story schema which help children to find and recreate an ordered universe.

Connections between drawing and narrative. The storyteller's involvement in learning the story to be told rather than read may lead to an intensification of the aesthetic and visual involvement of the children. The richness of vocabulary needed to hold children's attention to the story provides nourishment for the child's developing visual narrative thinking:

At the appropriate time and place the right words stimulate the brain to create a corresponding flow of images. This creative act is an enormous challenge to the brain and involves virtually every neural field; this is why young children seem "catatonic" while listening. The entrainment needed for this flow of images is so total that no energy is left over for anything else. (Chilton-Pearce, 1992, p.154)

Children's ability to create inner pictures, re-enforced through storytelling can be seen in their narrative drawings. In some children this ability is very strong, sometimes allowing a child to extend a narrative sequence, as seen in this study, over a period of several weeks.

Storytelling can encourage development of visual narrative capacities in children since it offers opportunities for the child to practice inner picture making. In George and Schaer's (1986) words:

One of the advantages of story telling is that children's imaginations are stimulated when there are no illustrations to show exactly what setting, objects and characters look like, thus giving listeners an opportunity to create mentally the pictures that make the story meaningful (George & Schaer, 1986, p. 2).

The development of what George & Schaer called the *imagination* has educational implications which extend into all areas of learning. This form of imagination involved the ability to create and manipulate one's inner images with flexibility and focus, and is a skill which appears to be needed for extended concentration in any field, whether recreational or educational.

Inner imagery acts metaphorically to bridge our sensory-motor and creative intelligence systems and transfers the production of each to the other. Recent research suggests that all thinking involves imagery (Chilton-Pierce, 1992). Story telling, then, acts on the child's interest and imagination to encourage the child to develop his/her own mental images. If the images are very much alive for the child and if the child is encouraged to draw in response, the images will be further strengthened through drawing and become part of that child's aesthetic understanding of the world.

Eisner (1972) described the process by which a child chooses topics for his/her drawings:

What the child draws is his subjective experience of what is important to him during the act of drawing. Therefore, the child only draws what is actively in his mind. Thus in such a drawing of a 'man' we get only a report of the active knowledge the child has of a man while he was drawing. In other words, the drawing gives us an excellent record of the things which are of especial mental or emotional importance to the child (p. 61).

An active image both stimulates the mind and encourages expression of the child's uniqueness.

We could look to the traditional child rearing of our indigenous population, to the Carribean and African storytelling traditions and to the Waldorf or Rudolf Steiner schools around the world

which include traditional mythology and storytelling as an active part of early education, for inspiration in this regard. In "Narrativization of Experience," Gee (1984) strongly stated the need for a new relationship between narrative and education: "We are all given this (narrative) gift in virtue of our humanness, though in some of us it may be atrophying under the avalanche of analytical nonsense" (p.79).

In advanced problem-solving and analytical thinking, scientists and mathematicians report seeing images which guide investigation. Robert Scott Root-Bernstein, the scientist, professor and writer of *Discovering*, a book about the process of scientific discovery made the following comment on a 1995 CBC radio *Ideas* interview:

We also found that [scientific genius] correlated with an unusual set of mental tools, which is something I'm interested in. Some of them I think can be taught, but we ignore them in our standard educational system. To give you an example: probably partly because a lot of these people are very good painters - good at drawing, drafting, sketching, things like that - they tend to use a lot of visualization. They can see a movie of all the atomic reactions that are occurring - in 3D visualizations, colour visualization, two-dimensional - they can see equations, see words in their heads, hear sounds (p. 5).

Strengthening the ability to visualize and to seize upon those visualizations through drawing rewards the child with the inner satisfaction of being supported in his/her own drive for visual narrative.

The acquisition of literacy in schools may be approached as a purely functional and practical task involving definable objectives and measurable indicators concentrating on the acquisition of written language, or it may be approached holistically, reinforcing the value of narrative thinking and the development of personal aesthetic through story telling, play and narrative drawing. Author Joseph Chilton-Pierce suggested:

Since each new story requires an entirely new sequence of neural field interactions, children want to hear the story over and over again, not to "learn" it - most children remember the a story after one hearing - but because repetition causes the interweaving neural fields involved in the image-flow of each story to be myelinated (p. 157).

The child becomes more than a better student through the strengthening of narrative processes. It becomes a satisfying process which develops his/her holistic thinking capacities. The success which the Waldorf Schools have experienced in using storytelling and narrative drawing in tandem has been described:

Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, observed that. . . Everything that is presented in Grade 1, for example, is endowed with the mood and feeling of the fairy tale. This is because the world of the "true" fairy tale and the world of the six-year-old are essentially the same. They share an imaginative, pictorial consciousness in which everything has life and feeling (Hughes, 1994, p. 31).

While aiming to be holistic, but maintaining a focus on objectives which can be tested, our public schools are missing an opportunity to develop their aesthetic and narrative skills to achieve their human potential, both individually and collectively, as Richards (1980) described:

We will become educated to the extent that we combine our personal inner discipline and development with our practical knowledge. If we are greedy for knowledge and techniques without undertaking at the same time a personal growth and purification, results will be shallow ( p.78).

Through teaching which incorporates storytelling, traditional mythology and fairy tales, along with the child's other oral traditions, a school system need not become less academic, just more open to the needs of children as distinct from the needs of adults.

Drawing in Schools. In schools, primary aged children are typically encouraged to draw in response to school learning until they are able to respond in writing (Calkins, 1986; Olshansky, 1995). For the remainder of their school life, drawing is often considered in one of the following ways: as an illustration of written work, as a teachable skill and as a therapeutic outlet (Eisner, 1972). Personal use of narrative drawing as a form of meaning making and communication continues on a spontaneous level, however, through to nine years of age and often beyond (Feldman, 1981; Olshansky, 1995; Wolf & Perry, 1988). Vygotsky (1962) claimed that children's drawings are a

prominent feature of the prehistory of their ability to write and that they capitalize on the children's tendency to create stories in their representational drawings. The desire to continue spontaneous drawing beyond the onset of literacy is documented through the large volume of drawing produced by the seven to nine year olds in this study.

Drawing has usually been viewed and used in primary education to stimulate the writing process. Baghban (1992) suggested instead that drawing should be viewed as a complete and complimentary form of communication:

. . . teachers must value drawing and convince parents of its importance. Children see drawing as a 'baby' skill, which helps explain the loss of freshness and spontaneity in their art when they learn to write (p. 1).

Young's previously mentioned study of 92 kindergarten and first grade children also found that 84% of kindergartens and 86% of first graders selected writing as more important than drawing.

Thompson (1995) suggested the use of sketch books to correct the lack of importance which children placed on drawing. Her study on kindergarten, nursery and primary students indicated that sketch books could provide a forum for spontaneous drawing, emphasizing its importance to students:

Sketch books provide a bounded area available for exploration of images and ideas, a format for the pursuit of personal projects and an occasion for sharing theories about the world and its representation through symbol. When time and space are devoted to their use, sketchbooks emphasize drawing as a central activity for young children, one that helps them to make sense of their experiences as they recreate and present them in tangible and permanent form (p. 11).

Children are much more able to see their natural drive to draw as important in a school setting if the teachers in that setting understand its importance, and demonstrate their understanding through the organization of their classroom.

## Children's Artistic Development

Some background in theories of children's artistic development will be helpful for the thorough discussion of the drawings included in this study. It should be noted however, that these theories are just that, no more and no less. Theories about children's art are ideas which have aided in understanding the purposes, ideals and methods used by children of certain ages and will provide a background frame for the Analysis to follow.

In this section I will examine the following topics: how children treat painting and drawing differently; there differences between the drawings of boys and girls; effects of exposure of young children to television; children's artistic development in general.

Uses of drawing and painting. According to Alschuler and Hattwick (1943) drawing and painting are often used differently by young children. Painting is often used to express feelings where as drawing is used to express ideas. In the current study of narrative meaning in children's art, the chosen medium of study is drawing. This medium is most often chosen by children to tell their stories on paper.

Similarities and differences between the drawings of primary aged boys and girls. Drawings of elementary aged boys and girls suggest similar skill level and frequency of drawing ( Barnes, 1892; Eisner, 1972 ; Lewis, 1963) although there is some difference between the subject matter which boys and girls draw. Conversely, however, in Baker's 1992 study on pre-school and primary drawing, he concluded that "females were found to be consistent with the reasoning and research that claims they are apt to be more advanced both in academics and in drawing" (p. 124). According to Baker, whether or not there is an appreciable skill level difference between the drawings of primary boys and girls, there would be differences in the experiences which boys and girls encounter which lead to differentiation between the boys and girls by the age of nine to twelve years.

Despite our current emphasis on equality between the sexes in education as well as in society, there is evidence to suggest that young boys and girls learn differently and that by not making allowance for these differences in the Primary grades, education methods have caused school failure in boys:

Girls appear to learn through left brain tasks (verbal) and boys right (visual, spatial, motor). Restack's (1979) summary of brain research suggests by ignoring the different ways boys process information and learn, we are causing school failure. (Kerr-Rike, in Wilkinson, 1993, p. 45)

In Wilkinson's 1993 edited book on symbolic dramatic play, the following information was cited: boys are considered to be 95% more hyperactive than girls, according to Restak's 1979 work and the experiences which boys encounter in primary classrooms when their efforts are compared with the often much more developed small muscle co-ordination of the girls may create educational injustice for boys (Wilkinson, 1993). Boys are four to one labeled disruptive by teachers according to Hull and Stollack from the same volume and John noted that 99% of all school drop-outs learn kinesthetically (Wilkinson, 1993).

There are also differences in the peer and societal pressures which affect boys and girls, particularly in the period immediately following the Primary years. For nine to twelve year old boys there is pressure to create the drawn images which will give them status with the other boys. (Lindstrom, 1957). At this time boys will often abandon their individual quest for personal expression and resort instead to copying images, often images from cartoons or of super-heroes which express kinesthetic action and prowess. The narrative and expressive nature of the work of boys aged nine to twelve often declines (Lindstrom, 1957). In Eisner's (1966) study on the attitudes of grade seven students towards art, the girls were consistently more interested than the boys. These factors focus

the importance of the examination of the drawing of young boys as a window into their developing sense of themselves in our society.

Children and television. The case against children's television consumption is polarized, emotional and inconclusive. I will begin with some thoughts from Howard Gardner (1983), who wrote in favor of children's television viewing:

In my view, the charge that television destroys or reduces imaginative powers is largely unfounded. In fact, rather than undermining the child's active creative and problem-solving tendencies, television during the early years of childhood can be a major simulator of imaginative capacities (p. 256).

Jane Healy (1990) wrote on the other side of the television debate. She surmised that the modern world of noise and constant visual stimulation interferes with children's attention span and motivation. In her book, *Endangered Minds*, Healy postulated that the present generation of children have led impoverished pre-school lives where busy parents have spoken less with their children and where passive television watching has replaced interactive learning. She suggested that children are bored not because we spoil them by interacting with them too much, but because we deprive them of the early learning which allows them to imagine inwardly, think deeply, and motivate themselves through play. Without this learning they are educationally deprived, and unable to make best advantage of future educational opportunities presented to them ( Healy, 1990). Other researchers have postulated that children today lack the early learning of imaginative play and real life experiences, and enter school predisposed to learning difficulties (Wilkinson, 1993).

According to Chilton-Pearce (1992), the damage of television watching is created when multiple stimuli are provided for the child, leaving no room for active neurological participation:

". . . television floods the infant-child brain with images at the very time his or her brain is

supposed to learn to make images from within" ( p. 165). Children are entering school without the grounding for inner visualization and connections to story telling narrative and with educational burdens which will be very difficult to overcome. "The major damage of television has little to do with the content, it's damage is neurological, and it has indeed damaged us, perhaps beyond repair" (p. 164). As has been mentioned in regards to differences between boys and girls in drawing, the other pressure which television imposes on children is a social one. This appears to be particularly true of the boys, especially at ages nine to twelve years where interest in peer pressure often leads boys away from their own quest for aesthetic meaning through drawing to achieve praise from peers for recreating cartoon and television super-hero images.

#### Development of children's drawing

The 1950s and 1960s saw a blossoming of discussion, theory and interest in the field of art education. Interconnections between the psychological stages of Jean Piaget (1951) and the theories of the stages of development of children's art were elaborated by Witkin (1974) in aesthetics, Viktor Lowenfeld (1947) in art education, and many others. The plethora of materials on art education written in the 1960s demonstrated societal interest in the topic which has not been seen since that time. Literature searches on the combined topics of primary education and spontaneous drawing, primary education and narrative drawing and primary education and artistic development brought up little literature written in the past five years on these topics. Articles and research papers have been written on these topics, but the volume of current research is very small. The most voluminous source of information on children's drawing development comes, surprisingly, from the field of Artificial Intelligence, where

researchers have made intensive observations about children's drawings in an effort to develop the complexity of computer processing.

The stage theory of development, originating in the writing of Jean Piaget (1951), and still widely accepted by art educators, suggested that children's development is marked by characteristic periods of development which are common to most children at a similar age. Since the developmental stage theories, Constructivism (Bates & Elman, 1992) and Self Organization theory (Kegan, 1982; Lewis, in press) have been elaborated. Although many connections could be drawn between the concepts of Self Organizational theory and spontaneous narrative drawing, these connections both lie outside the scope of this study and outside the understanding and experience of most art educators who still examine children's art in relation to defined stages of development.

The stages of children's development in drawing which Lowenfeld (1947) described as follows:

**Scribbling Stage: 2-4 years.** At this stage the primary motivation for mark-making is kinesthetic in nature. The marks very young children make are records of the movements which were involved in their creation.

**Schematic Stage: 5-8 years.** These drawings are primarily about the child's concept of how something is. Whatever can be thought of can be pictured. Children of this age group carefully set up objects on the paper. They are often unconcerned with spacial representation and other aspects of accurate representation. They are also more interested in what is thought about than what is right in front of them. They create stories in picture form of the things which are important to them.

The Stage of Dawning Realism: 9-12 years. Children at this age often become dissatisfied with the limitations of the schematic mode. They crave to create images which show the way things really look. They are often hampered by self-criticism and many stop progressing artistically at this age. (Lindstrom, 1957) The social pressures facing boys at this age often encourage reproduction of television and cartoon super-heros which detract from their real need to understand the way things look, but provide social status with the other boys.

The following additional points from Eisner's 1972 analysis of children's development are pertinent to the drawings of the six boys in this study:

- 1 The level of complexity of children's drawing increases as they mature (Goodenough and Harris, 1926).
- 2 The sense of cohesiveness increases as children mature.
- 3 Children tend to exaggerate those aspects of a drawing which are most meaningful to them.
- 4 "Scribbles" of pre-schoolers are motivated by both kinesthetic and visual satisfaction from their actions. (In two boys in the study this kinesthetic pleasure is still visible at seven and eight years old) (Eisner, 1972).
- 5 The human figure is the most common subject matter drawn by school aged children.
- 6 The image in the mind's eye is more important to the child than the object before him/her (Originally discussed by Barnes, 1892).
- 7 Children living in different cultures create visual forms having remarkable degrees of similarity, especially at the preschool level (Eisner, 1972).

Whether one ascribes to the stage theory or not, the generalities contained in the quoted literature serve as a screen through which to view and consequently understand the drawings of the boys in this study. The developmental stages referred to in the findings section will

continue to be utilized throughout the rest of this study as will other aspects of this review of the relevant literature.

### Summary of the Literature

The drawings of each primary school aged child will reveal a wealth of information about childhood in general, the influences to which that child has been subjected and his developing sense of self in the world. To interpret the information described in the findings section of this study, I have examined literature related to the development of narrative in children; the relationship of story telling to drawing; possible effects of gender on the drawings of children; ideas related to the effects of television watching on children's development and general theories of the development of children's drawings. This literature will be cited in the analysis of the findings which follows.

### Analysis

The analysis of the findings explores the three major areas of investigation both in light of the 165 drawings and the review of the relevant literature, to suggest interpretations of the research question which read: “What evidence is there, if any, that the spontaneous drawings of seven to nine year old boys could be viewed as tools to understanding individual search for narrative meaning and if this evidence exists, what are its possible educational implications?” Throughout this study, the three areas of investigation have been:

- 1 Aesthetics: the importance which the boys placed on drawing as a tool in the search for personal meaning,
- 2 drawing as narrative: the connections between narrative and children’s drawings examined through classifying the boy’s drawings using Kellman’s (1995) classification of narrative drawing,
- 3 themes and approaches: as they relate to theories of children’s artistic development, including exposure to contemporary media.

A summary of my comments on the boys’ drawings as well as those of the three external researchers has been described in the Findings of this study. I believe that the data explored in the findings answered the research question affirmatively. The volume of drawing which the boys produced for their own pleasure, the number of complete narrative drawings, the themes explored and approaches used by the boys in their drawings could all be interpreted as evidence of individual search for narrative meaning. Each of these areas will be discussed as they relate to the three areas of investigation above. Following the analysis, an additional discussion of these topics will be found in the implications.

At the onset of this study I had anticipated several findings. Some of my presuppositions were confirmed, some negated, and some new observations which I had not anticipated developed. Although I expected to find narrative content in the boys' drawings (see Methodology, Assumption, 1) the strength of the Narrative sequence developed by Child E encompassing 11 sequential narrative drawings was not expected (explored in section II, to follow). I had anticipated possible strengthening of narrative qualities in the drawings of those children who attend Waldorf Schools (Child E, A and F, see Appendix 2, chart 4) since the strengthening of narrative imagery is a specific educational goal of that school system (see Methodology: Assumption 3) but I had not expected the differences in imagery which emerged. All three Waldorf students included mythological/ historical imagery in their drawings. This type of theme only appeared in a small number of dragon drawings from Child D, outside of the drawings of the Waldorf students, and these appeared to have a computer-game source.

The sheer volume of drawings was also unexpected (explored in section 1, see Methodology, Assumptions-2). The themes of family life, nature and machines were expected, but I had also anticipated seeing many violent images, particularly from those children who were exposed to a more aggressive style of television viewing (see Methodology, Assumptions 3). However, no violent images appeared in the 165 drawings so that this supposition was completely negated (explored in section III).

I was also surprised to find some children in this study (Child C, D and F, see Appendix 2, chart 3 for ages of the boys) appeared to be making the transition from a symbolic interest to a realistic interest. At the onset of the study, the youngest of the three (Child D) was only seven years eight months old, far short of the nine to 12 years suggested as an estimate of the age of students often engaging in what Lowenfeld (1947) described as dawning realism. The kinesthetic approach

which four out of the six boys expressed in different ways through their drawing was another unexpected outcome of this study. Although Eisner (1972) suggested that there is a kinesthetic component to the scribbles of preschoolers, the kinesthetic involvement of older students was unexpected. This kinesthetic nature suggests that drawing was utilized as a way to translate the physical experience of motion as well as a tool for the development of visual symbols and a method of visual story telling (explored in section 3). Each of these Findings will now be analyzed in relation to the three areas of investigation for this study.

### Volume of Drawings Created

As discussed in the findings, 165 drawings were created by the six boys over the 60 day period of the study. When examined in comparison with the frequency of exposure to drawing in a weekly school art period, all of the boys drew spontaneously at least this often and five chose to draw more frequently; in fact, one child (Child D) created the equivalent of one drawing every day and a half, for the two months of the study. The spontaneous nature of their desire to draw indicated that drawing was viewed by the boys as a form of play. The connection between art and play is consistent with the theories of the Existentialist philosophers discussed in the review of the literature, who united art and play as the primary tools through which personal meaning is constructed from daily experience.

The boys in this study demonstrated their natural involvement with Aesthetics when they spontaneously chose to draw. However, their interest in drawing is unlikely to be regarded as a form of aesthetics at the public primary school level (Kaelin, 1989). Aesthetics, when it is studied at all, is usually included in the art curriculum of high school students (Kaelin, 1989). My premises resulting from the review of the literature and the findings of this study regarding the untapped connections between primary school drawing, aesthetics and play will be discussed in the Implications.

The one child in this study who drew the least (Child C) and averaged one drawing per week for the period of the study has been assessed in the findings section as experiencing the transition between the symbolic interests of a younger child and the realistic interests of the middle years (Lowenfeld, 1947). Much of his work demonstrated his interest in copying and tracing the work of adults to achieve the drawings he desired. Tracing was also seen in Child F's work although he then appeared to use the ideas from his tracings to improve his own symbolic drawings of birds as was explored by Wilson & Wilson (1977). Child D also expressed interest in realism through three drawings created from direct observation. As discussed in the Findings, the pleasure in drawing indicated by the extensive volume of work created by most of the boys may be the final vestige of the playful pleasure they experience with their own narrative drawings. As they age they may come to regard their own work with a much more critical eye (Eisner, 1972; Lindstrom, 1957; Lowenfeld, 1947) as may be seen in the lower volume of drawings from Child C.

#### Drawing as Narrative

Narrative, whether verbal, written or drawn can be seen as a form of Aesthetics, as recorded evidence of the active search to create personal meaning. According to Mikkelsen (1983) and Young (1986), children at the age of six years and earlier (Wilkinson, 1993) have already attained near adult levels of understanding of story schemata, of the way a narrative is put together. The narrative drawings examined in the findings of this study indicated that at age seven to nine years the boys were still in developing their own visual narratives. The narrative content of the drawings ranged from a low of 37% of one child's drawings to a high of 61% in another (see Appendix 2, chart 1). Since children at this age have practiced producing visual symbols since about the age of four years their drawings were well developed and the visual narratives were often easy to *read* and could be understood by an observer without any need for a spoken or written explanation.

The six boys used different forms of narrative drawing to meet their needs. In order to understand the individuality of their outlook, their drawings were sorted and classified according to the classification for narrative drawings developed by Kellman (1995). No pattern was found to explain which forms of narrative drawing a child would choose to use; however, the child with the most intense narrative sequence had drawings which represented almost equally the three narrative categories (see Appendix 2, chart 1).

As described in the findings section, *Narrative as Description* (Kellman, 1995) was the most commonly used form of narrative in the boys' work. Kellman described this form of narrative as: "Art making and its narrative description of the here and now [which] allows children to share day-to-day details of their lives with others" (p. 19). Four of the six boys studied had more than five drawings each, which I classified as *Narrative as Description*.

*Narrative as Invention* (Kellman, 1995) was used by two of the boys in more than five drawings. In Kellman's description of Narrative as Invention she suggests: "Children and adults alike use narrative as a means of constructing their interior, psychological world" (p. 18). "Art making [is] a means of inventing, a method of thinking, a way of giving life to hopes and dreams" (p. 19).

*Narrative as Negotiation* (Kellman, 1995) was also used in more than five drawings by two boys, and was defined by Kellman as: "Stories as records of the development of meaning or as ways to come to terms, can be seen as narrative of negotiation" (p. 21) and also, "When children involve themselves in the complex issues of spatial location and community structure". In other words, these are drawings which describe the child's attempts to map a physical or psychological space.

As mentioned, one of the six boys used all three types of narrative almost equally in his drawing. Another employed two types of narrative and three more had one type of narrative which they each concentrated on in their drawings. The sixth child created a smaller number of drawings

and no category predominated, although narrative drawing still made up 37% of his drawings. Child E's highly developed narrative sequences, one sequence stretching over a span of several weeks and including 11 drawings did not watch television and had been exposed to mythology at a Waldorf School. Because of the sample size of this study it is not possible to draw inferences between his educational experiences, his lack of television watching, and his ability and interest in creating prolonged narrative sequences. Rather it is interesting to note and a point for possible future study.

### Themes and Approaches

The effects of television watching on images produced. Strongly negative aspects of television viewing were not observed in the drawings of the six boys and none of the 165 images concentrated on violent portrayals. For an over-view of the television habits of the boys obtained through verbal questionnaire, see Appendix 2, chart 5. The non-violent nature of the images produced was at least partially due to the developmentally related purpose for drawing which both boys and girls of this age often adopt. For the most part, the boys in this study used drawing as a tool to portray those things which they were able to visualize. This ability to visualize often related back to either their own personal experiences, or their own imaginative story-related creations. Since none of the boys in this study appeared to have first-hand experience with violent situations, their drawings were records of those things which they had experienced. They drew about the natural world, about people in their lives and about machines in their lives such as cars. They also drew about things which they could imagine. The boundaries of their imaginations seemed to be created by narrative experience, relating back to their real experiences. With the exception of the space drawings of Child B, the two images from the Lion King (Child D and F), several images from Sesame Street from Child A and the traced drawings of two of the children progressing into realism (C and F), the imaginative drawings appeared to have their basis in either extensions of real experience, (see the detail on Figure

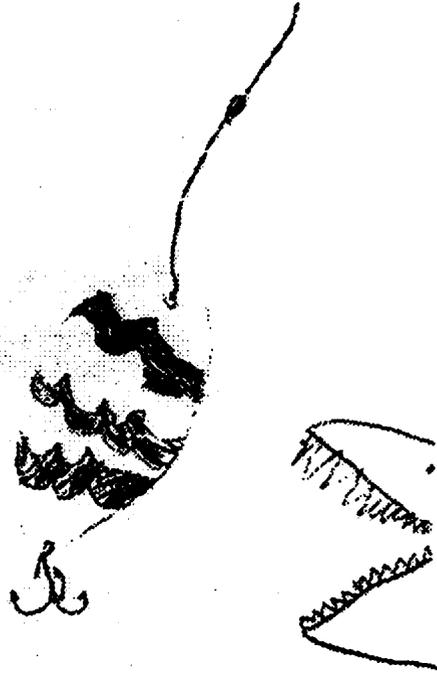
25), or in stories which they had been told or read to, like Figure 26. The only other images which appeared to have come from television, computer games or movie viewing were the space drawings of Child B, the dragon drawings of Child D (see Figure 27), a small percentage of the 165 total drawings.

Effects of viewing media violence would be more easily observed in the drawings of children in the next phase of drawing development: dawning realism. During this phase which usually occurs between nine and twelve years of age (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 36) children often concentrate on drawing what they see rather than what they are able to visualize or imagine. Even those children who have little actual experience with violent situations may choose to draw violent drawings at this age if this is what they see (even on television) (Lindstrom, 1957). Added to the desire to draw what they see, is the growing need for approval from children's same-sex peers. Even in 1957, Lindstrom commented that boys create cartoon images in the stage of dawning realism which would supply them with status among their peers and soften the disappointment many feel when the drawings they produce do not match the awareness of the world they see.

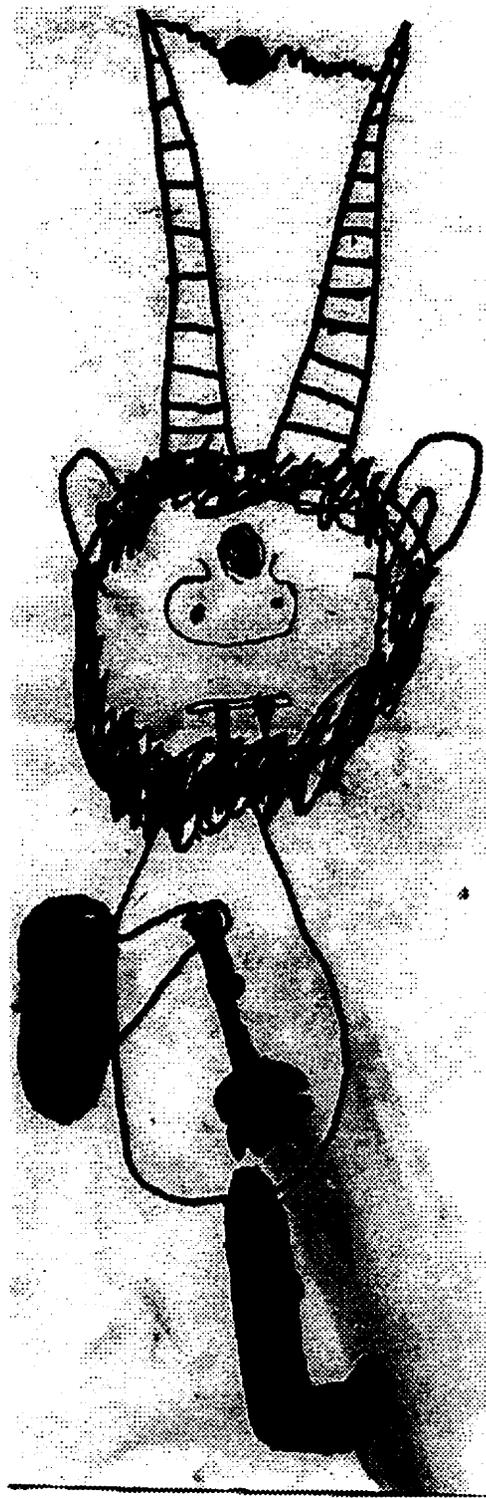
Mythological images. I had not expected the differences in imagery between those children who attended Waldorf schools and those who did not; however, all three Waldorf students included mythological/ historical imagery in their drawings. Children A, E, and F showed imaginative mythological/ historical images such as cyclops (Figure 27), ancient sailing vessels (Figure 28) and battles (Figure 29) and knights' armor in their work which did not appear in the drawings of the other children with the exception of the dragons in the drawings of Child D.

Kinesthetic Involvement. As has been discussed in the findings, four of the six boys, exploring movement was a major interest which expressed itself in different ways in their developing styles. For Child A, movement was expressed through his relationship with materials which dictated the hand

Child P. Narrative



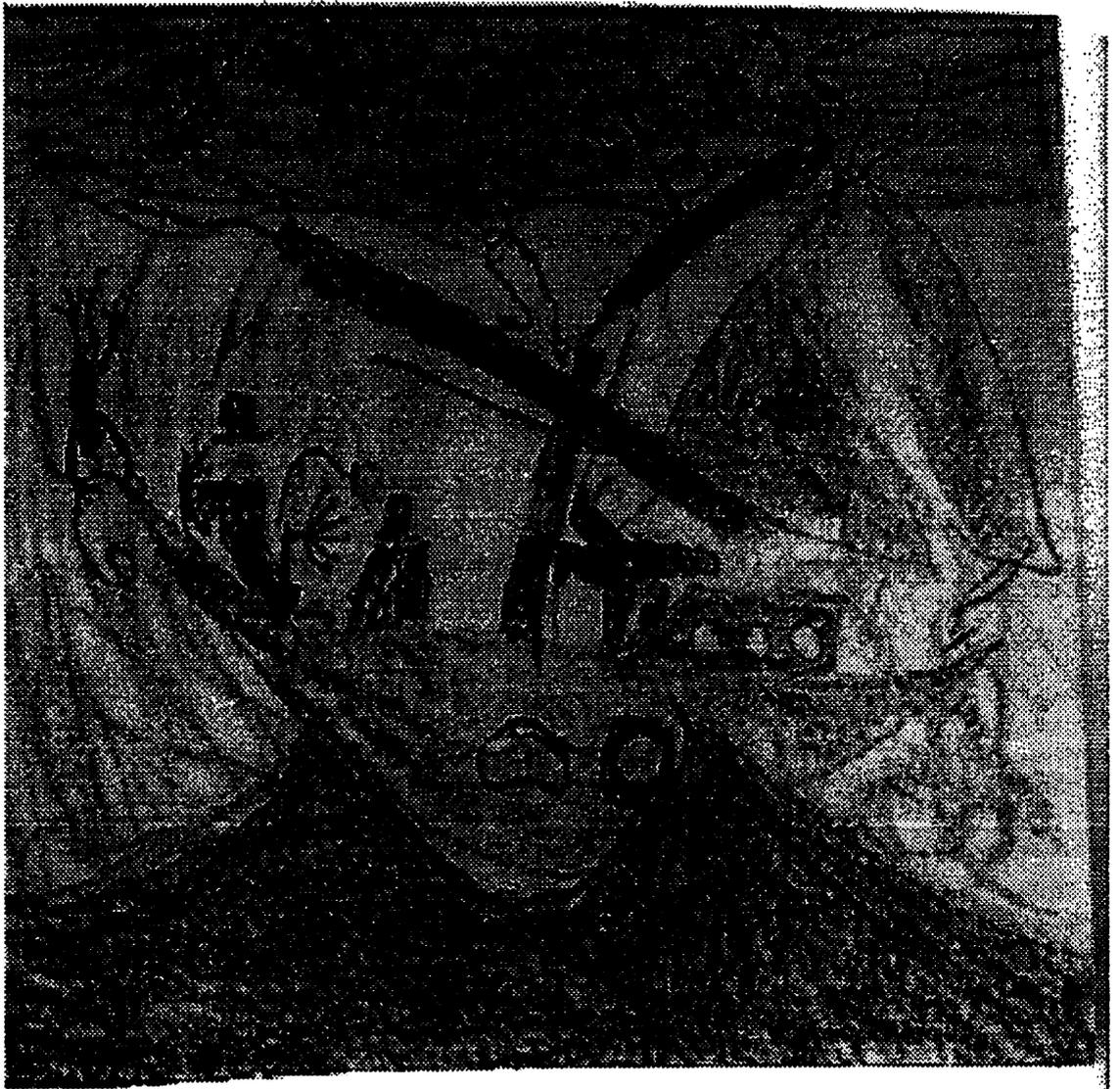
**Figure 25.** Details on the hook in this drawing may signal first hand knowledge of the subject matter.



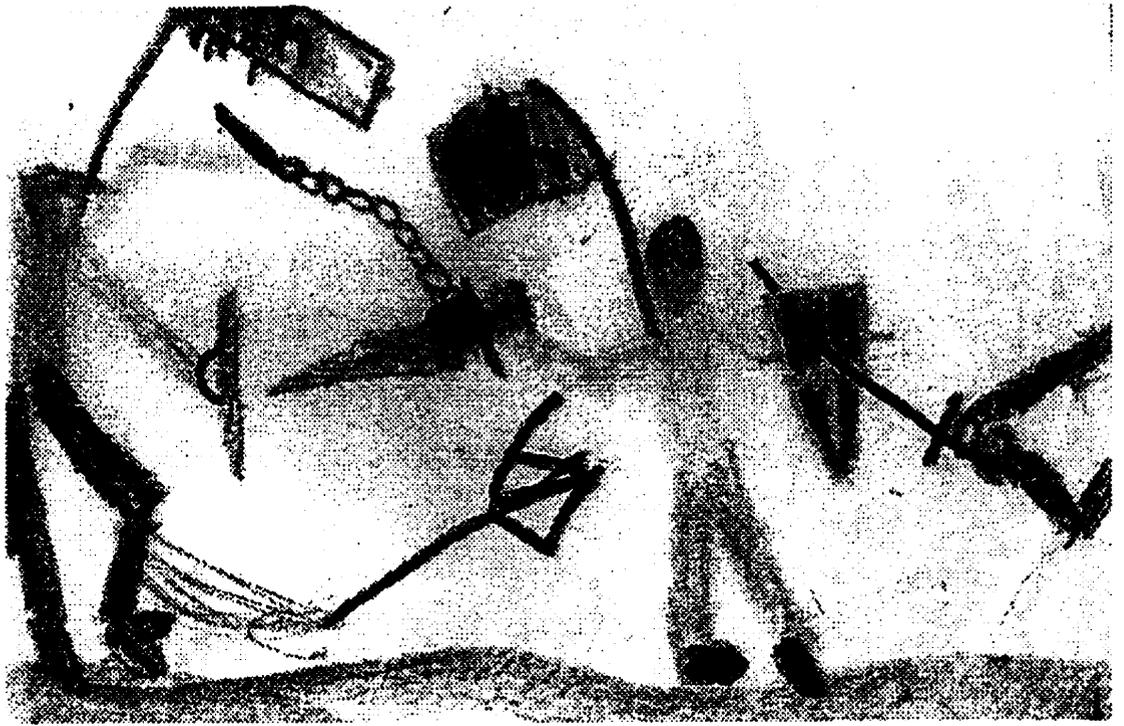
**Figure 26.** Child A's mythological cyclops - a personal image from a historical tale.



**Figure 27.** Child D's dragon drawings appear to be from a computer game source.



**Figure 28.** Child E drew an action-packed sailing vessel.



**Figure 29.** Child E enjoyed the action of a good battle.

and arm movements which he used and sometimes gave him ideas for the images which he explored. For Child B, drawing was a kinesthetic activity which involved his whole arm in active movements. For Child E, the movement of people and machines in his drawings were the primary focus and Child F concentrated on understanding the positions of the bodies of animals and people in motion. This kinesthetic involvement solidifies the supposition that the boys in this study used drawing as a form of play. Interestingly, Kerr-Rike (in Wilkinson, 1993) indicated that boys of this age group learn primarily through their bodies.

### Concluding Analysis

The findings of this study demonstrated the boys' interest in utilizing drawing as a form of play. United with physical play experiences, playful drawing helped to develop the real experiences which translated into the subject matter as well as the style of their drawings. These drawings, which were both maps of active movement and stories in visual form, told of those things which the boys were able to, and interested in visualizing. Through drawing, the boys were able to both work on establishing their own aesthetic consciousness and to practice their growing understanding of narrative in a visual form, unique from and equally important as verbal or written narrative. Their drawn narratives serve as complete forms of communication which tell of their developing individuality.

Implications and Summary

Since this study served as a qualitative validation or application study of Kellman's classification system, I will first comment on the classification system itself. The three types of children's narrative drawing defined by Kellman were very useful in the organization of the boys' drawings. No further areas were identified and all of the categories were utilized.

The drawings in this study demonstrated the spontaneous desire of primary aged students to draw for their own pleasure. The stories which were told through these drawings showed the ways each child chose to use drawing to explore stories, ideas, creative imagination and aspects of the visual world around them.

Spontaneous Narrative Drawing

When the drawings of the boys were compared for frequency with a weekly art lesson, all of the boys drew spontaneously, for their own pleasure at least as often as the weekly period. With the exception of one who drew at this rate, the rest of the boys drew much more often, with two children drawing almost every day. This finding was interpreted as an indication that spontaneous drawing is an important part of a child's natural activities at this age and is sought out by children independent of adult suggestion or school interaction.

Analysis of the findings also revealed that for all six boys, complete narrative images occurred in many of their drawings. The narrative content ranged from 37 to 61%, revealing a strong interest in visual storytelling at this age. As was discussed in the literature review, articles and studies about art education in Canada and the United States at the primary level written between 1991 and 1996 revealed that although drawing has generally been included in Primary classrooms, its most common use has been as a tool to further the acquisition of writing (Baghban, 1992; Baker, 1992). As has been

demonstrated in this study by the large volume of work (165 images produced by six boys in 60 days) and intensely narrative nature of the drawings produced (varying from 37 to 61% of the boys' drawings) drawing has potential functions for this age of student beyond the current use as a stimulus for reading. As well, when drawing is continually defined by words, the message children may internalize is that drawing is useful only until a child can write (Baghban, 1992). The drawings created by the six boys in this study demonstrated interest in spontaneous narrative drawing as a form of meaning-making operating independently from the meaning-making expressed in words and equally legitimate to, rather than as a pre-cursor for, or an illustration of written communication.

### Play

Assuming the development of aesthetics originates in the world of play (Courtney, 1987, Wilkinson, 1993) energy expended on the creation of formal Aesthetics rooted in curriculum design and aimed towards older students may be better directed. Up to the age of nine years old, the child's world is largely a world of play. "Children are full of fantasy, and artists are too. Any field of artistic endeavor has preserved much of the spontaneous productivity which all healthy children are equipped" (Carlgren, 1972, p. 40). The most important time for the education of aesthetics in schools is in these early childhood years when the child's world revolves around creative play and spontaneous drawing. If, as the Existentialists concluded (Courtney, 1987), life is made up of a series of metaphorical decisions made between a human actor and the reality s/he wishes to symbolize, children need time and more opportunities to play creatively and draw spontaneously in order to develop their own understanding of these relationships. As Mendelowitz (1953) suggested:

The more fully the child comes to know the world about him, the more prepared will the adult be to live in this world. In our day of cosmic ideas and atomic machines, we are apt to forget the intimate world of materials and sensations that forms our immediate environment. (p. 21)

The child needs intimate association with the tools of play and art which s/he will some day use to understand abstract concepts. The tools of drawing were also tools of play for the six boys in this study.

Strong kinesthetic involvement has typified the work of four of the boys in this study, each in very different ways. Child A has been effected by the materials he chose to create lines and movements inspired by the materials. Child B demonstrated his kinesthetic sense through large bold hand movements in his drawings and his exploration of what happened. Child E chose themes of battles which involved intense action and Child F examined movement through the body movements of his human and animal subjects. This bodily involvement also reveals the play-motive which underlies its existence.

### Story Telling

Along with the need to provide rich play and free art experiences for young children, connections may be drawn between their world of play and the metaphorical world of mythology (Mellon, 1992). The lack of mythology has been connected with lack of a sense of personal values. Miller, Cassie and Drake (1990) commented on the lack of over-riding mythology in contemporary life, which could be regarded as underdeveloped aesthetic identity. The quest for precocious intellectualism may be distracting educators from the needed task of helping children build metaphorical connections and personal Aesthetics using story telling as one of their keys. Three of the boys in this study attended a Waldorf School where story telling of traditional folk and fairy tales made up the basis of their literature in the early grades (Richards, 1980). Interestingly, mythological/historical images appeared in all three boys' work and only in the work of one other child in this study. Although it is only a point of interest in this study, the strength of one of the boy's narrative

sequences may also attest to the narrative attention he is receiving through his Waldorf school classroom.

Strongly negative aspects of television viewing were not observed in the drawings of the six boys and none of the 165 images concentrated on violent portrayals. The non-violent nature of the images produced was at least partially due to the developmentally related purpose for drawing which both boys and girls of this age often adopt at this age. For the most part, the boys in this study used drawing as a tool to portray those things which they were able to visualize. This ability to visualize often related back to either their own personal experiences, or their own imaginative story-related creations. Since none of the boys in this study appeared to have first-hand experience with violent situations, their drawings were records of those things which they had experienced. They drew about the natural world, about people in their lives and about machines which they had experienced like cars. They also drew about things which they could imagine. The boundaries of their imaginations seemed to be created by narrative experience, relating back to their real experiences.

### Summary

The drawings of the six young boys in this study demonstrated the spontaneous desire of primary aged students to draw for their own pleasure and interest. The drawings they produced showed a strong tendency towards creating finished narrative drawings which tell stories. The stories which were told in these narrative drawings revealed the ways each child chose to use drawing to explore stories, ideas, creative imagination and aspects of the visual world around them.

Examination of the drawings of the boys in this study and the literature which preceded it suggest forging a new and different relationship between drawing and the language arts. Rather than the current limited use of drawing as a precursor to or illustration for writing, the use of storytelling and traditional folk tales to expand children's ability to express their own visual images offers a

different approach. When combined with opportunities for creative play, primary educators could maximize children's natural educational interest in the interconnected nature of their world.

The 165 drawings in this study contain narratives which told about the people these six boys are becoming. They contained many complete narratives which can function independent of any spoken or written explanation, a language unto themselves and affirmatively supported the research question. Evidence existed in the drawings of the six boys in this study which implies a need to examine further, the establishment of new holistic relationships between visual, oral and written narrative through the addition of opportunities for spontaneous drawing, play and story telling in the primary classroom. Through the addition of these three important areas, children may come to see that teachers and parents value the skills required to strengthen visualization of story schemata and detail through drawing and play and that drawn, spoken and written narratives are equally valid forms of communication, important in the fullest development of the human being.

As Baghban (1992) suggested:

. . . drawing has inherent value and deserves to grow, live and contribute to every aspect of our lives. If we continue to see drawing only in its ability to acquire writing, we limit children's ability to make a totality out of the aspects of their worlds. To diminish value and to limit cohesion have no place in learning. (p. 12)

The 165 drawings in this study contain narratives which tell about the people these six boys are becoming. They contain many complete narratives which can function independent of any spoken or written explanation. They are a language unto themselves.

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Appendix 1-1

K. Schmalz  
209 King Street  
Guelph, Ont., N1E-4R3

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this study on the effects of cultural influences on the imagination and drawings of young boys. With your help, art work will be collected from six young boys aged seven to nine years. The work will be collected by the parents over a two month period, photographed and catalogued, and then returned to your child. Each child will be represented by a coded name from the collection date forward. If at any time you become uncomfortable with your involvement in this project, you are free to withdraw. An ethical review will be conducted on this study by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and all research techniques will be executed in a professional manner.

You will also be asked to fill out a short questionnaire about your child's recreational preferences. As this study will examine art work for the stories children tell about their world, the cultural influences from books, games, television, computer use, and other sources are important in understanding the images the children draw. The emphasis will not be on comparing the boys' artistic skills, but rather to learn about the images which are important to them and the relationship of these images to other factors in their lives. Parents will be supplied with the draft of the chapter dealing with their child's work for comment, and are also welcome to view the entire thesis upon its completion.

If you have any questions of concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 519-836-6112.

Thank you again,

Kathleen Schmalz

M.A. Student,  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Parents' signature: (permission to collect children's work, and receiving information on purposes, involvement, and methods of study)

Date:

**Appendix 1-2**

**Oral Questionnaire to Parents, with answers recorded**

**1) Would you say the following applies to your child:**

**a) emotionally and physically healthy, without noticeable delays?**

**Child A: Yes            D: Yes**

**B: Yes            E: Yes**

**C: Yes            F: Yes**

**b) from an intact family:**

**Child A: Yes            D: Yes**

**B: Yes            E: Yes**

**C: Yes            F: Yes**

**c) from a family known to the researcher:**

**Child A: Yes            D: Yes**

**B: Yes            E: Yes**

**C: Yes            F: Yes**

**2) If asked to rate your child's exposure at the time of the study to television, computer games, movies and nintendo, it would be:**

**Child A: less than 7 hr./wk.**

**Child B: less than 7 hr./wk.**

**Child C: less than 7 hr./wk.**

**Child D: less than 7 hr./wk.**

**Child E: none**

**Child F: none**

**3) Rate the type of programs your child was exposed to:**

**Child A: commercial free and young children's**

**Child B: same**

**Child C: same**

**Child D: same**

**Child E: none**

**Child F: none**

**4) Describe your child's educational experiences and art education experiences:**

**Child A: Waldorf school - lots of exposure and profile for art education**

**Child B: Co-operative school and Public school: lots of exposure**

**Child C: French Immersion: moderate exposure to art education**

**Child D: Public School, good exposure at school**

**Child E: Waldorf School - same**

**Child F: Waldorf School - same**

**5) Would you say that your child chooses to draw as often as others his age, more often, or less often?**

**Child A: same as**

**Child D: more than**

**Child B: same as**

**Child E: more than**

**Child C: same as**

**Child F: more than others**

## Appendix 1-3

### Oral Questionnaire

- 1) Describe your child's:
  - a) general character;
  - b) aptitudes;
  - c) attitudes towards art at school (provide an example if possible).
  
- 2) Describe your child's relationship to siblings:
  - a) in age
  - b) in relation to art - (what do they do together and what effect does this have?)
  
- 3) Describe yourselves:
  - a) age;
  - b) educational background;
  - c) artistic experience;
  - d) art opportunities you feel you have provided to children.

Appendix 1-4

K. Schmalz  
209 King Street  
Guelph, Ontario, N1E-4R3

Dear

Thank you for helping in the collection of your child's art work. I am presently cataloguing and photographing the work, and plan to return it to you by October 15. At this time, I would also like to ask your permission to show the coded photographed art work to three external 'experts' who will assist in examining the art work from their own perspective. They will be asked to comment on the cultural symbols, common themes, and to make other per tenant observations regarding the cultural storytelling which they see in the children's work. Their observations will be used in comparison to the researcher's own observations and comments. They will be instructed not to make any comments which compare relative artistic abilities or which relate to mental health issues. The goal is to gain insight into the visual interests and ideas, not to single out particular individuals. You will be supplied with a copy of the draft chapter dealing with your child's work and your comments will be considered for the finished version. The three consultants are a retired Elementary Art Education consultant from a public board of education, a Waldorf teacher, and an Art Therapist. Each will have a unique perspective on the symbols and modes of expression which the children use to tell their visual stories.

If you feel comfortable with this process, please sign below to signify this. If not, please feel free to call me at 519-836-6112 , or note your reservations below. Your child's work can still be included in the main body of the thesis, even if you wish to be excluded from this section.

I.....grant permission for the three experts mentioned above to view my child's work (identified by code only), and to provide comments which I may comment before they are added to the final thesis.

Date:.....

Or: I have the following concerns.....

Sincerely

Kathleen Schmalz

Appendix 1-5

COVER SHEET

NARRATIVE IN THE SPONTANEOUS DRAWINGS OF SEVEN TO NINE YEAR OLD BOYS

Kathleen Schmalz

M.A. Program, O. I. S. E.

home: 519-836-6112 work: 519-579-0780

Dear

Please write your comments about the work directly beside the four pieces you have chosen for each child. Use the back of the sheet if you need it. Typing is not necessary if you think I can read your printing. The type of comments which would be particularly useful to me are comments about specific images which you think typify boys' art work of this age in general, or images which contradict generalizations. If you have references in mind, please jot them down, even if they are general like: "According to Lowenfeld..." Of course, the intent is not to compare drawing abilities of the boys, or to analyze them from their work. Their parents will be able to respond to your comments before they are included in the thesis.

I will send the colour images in about a week's time, and would appreciate receiving the entire package back with your comments by November 15, (call with any concerns). A stamped, self-addressed envelope is included here.

Thank you in advance.

Kathleen Schmalz

Appendix 2-1

Chart 1  
Number of Drawings and Comparative Narrative Content

Child	# of Drawings	% of Narrative	Type of Narrative:		
			Invention	Description	Negotiation
A	21	8/21= 38%	1	6	1
B	19	8/19= 44%	6	1	1
C	8	3/8= 37%	1	2	
D	46	27/46= 58%	1	16	9
E	36	22/36= 61%	9	6	7
F	35	20/35=57%	3	14	3

Total number of drawings: 165

Narrative range: 37% to 61%

Narrative Interests: (over 5 drawings by that child in the particular Narrative Category)

Narrative as Invention: B and E

Narrative as Description: A, D, E, F.

Narrative as Negotiation: D and E

Chart 2  
Drawing Themes

Child: Subject:	A	B	C	D	E	F
human subjects	3	4	1	12		2
animals or nature	4	1	1	14	4	13
history mythology	6				3	12
machines space	3	11	1	5	17	
cartoon or media	3	1	4	7		8

symbols	1	5				
fantasy creatures	1			8	11	
maps				1		11
observational				2		

Chart 3  
Ages at onset of study

Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D	Child E	Child F
8 yr. 4 mo.	7 yr. 8 mo.	8 yr. 6 mo.	7 yr. 10 mo.	8 yr. 8 mo.	8 yr. 8 mo.

Chart 4  
School experiences

Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D	Child E	Child F
Waldorf school	Community Co-operative school and Public	Public school: French Immersion	Public school: French Immersion and English	Waldorf school	Waldorf school

Chart 5  
Television experiences

Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D	Child E	Child F
Less than 7 hr. per week	Less than 7 hr. per week	Less than 7 hr.	Less than 7 hr.	None	None
young children's programming	young	young	young children's programming	none	none
commercial-free	commercial-free	mixture	mixture	none	none

Chart 6  
Frequency of Drawing

Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D	Child E	Child F
high	high	moderate	high	high	high

**Appendix 3-1**

**COMMENTS ON BOYS NARRATIVE DRAWINGS FOR THESIS : External observer, LP  
April, 1997**

**STUDENT A  
IMAGE A-1  
COMMENTS BY L.P.  
IMAGE CATEGORY: NARRATIVE**

**Complete visual communication (a story)**

**Movement of water flowing down page is unusual for age**

**Perspective of water on an angle is quite advanced**

**Action of fish adds to story**

**Details of eyes and mouth give life to figures**

**Scribbled sky is typical of this level (markers have contributed to this type of background)**

**STUDENT A  
IMAGE A-2  
COMMENTS BY L.P.  
IMAGE CATEGORY: NATURE**

**Good observation e.g. antlers shape and placement**

**Tree running off the page is advanced**

**Typical sun decoration**

**STUDENT A  
IMAGE A-5  
COMMENTS BY L.P.  
IMAGE CATEGORY: STRUCTURAL**

**Solves problem of object flying by drawing wings down similar to a bird flying (typical of age)**

**STUDENT A**

**IMAGE A-7**  
**COMMENTS BY L.P.**  
**IMAGE CATEGORY: CARTOON IMAGES**

**Children enjoy drawing imaginative creatures**

**Develops characters through facial features**  
**Background is not included (typical of age)**

**STUDENT B**  
**IMAGE B-3**  
**COMMENTS BY L.P.**  
**IMAGE CATEGORY: NATURE**

**Full visual communication (a story)**

**Artist makes it a happy picture by placing a smile on the tree and the person (typical of age to give human characteristics to non human things)**

**Leaves added to tree more from knowledge as opposed to observation**

**STUDENT B**  
**IMAGES 17, 18, 19**  
**COMMENTS BY L.P.**  
**IMAGE CATEGORY: CARTOON IMAGES**

**Human figures are not well developed but importance is placed on certain features e.g. hair, hands or arm.**

**Elephant is wonderful (large, round, trunk, heavy legs, large ears) Could Bateman do better?**

**STUDENT C**  
**IMAGE C-1**  
**COMMENTS BY L.P.**  
**IMAGE CATEGORY: NARRATIVE**

**Figure symbols for human are typical (short, one piece legs and arms)**

**Bicycle is a strong drawing demonstrating knowledge and observation**

**The line around the bicycle gives a reason for it to stand (good problem solving)**

## Appendix 3-2

**COMMENTS WILL BE MADE ABOUT EACH IMAGE BY THE PRIMARY RESEARCHER**

**WORK WILL BE CATEGORIZED IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES: NARRATIVE, SYMBOLIC, STRUCTURAL, OBSERVATIONAL, NATURE IMAGES, MEDIA IMAGES: CARTOON, SPORTS, COMPUTER, OTHER, AND ALSO MOVEMENT**

Work will also be categorized in terms of Kellman's (1995) categories for narrative drawing. All finished drawings other than those specified below will be put into one of Kellman's three categories which are:

- 1) Narrative as Invention
- 2) Narrative as Description
- 3) Narrative as Negotiation

The drawings which will not be categorized according to Kellman's system are those which are obviously traced or copied. Those which are which are partial or practice drawings will be described as p.c. or partially completed if there is no back-ground, or spacial reference which indicate a fully finished narrative. (KS)

**GENERAL:** "As for changes over time: I don't really see anything new except that spaceship now have more details than what I would have expected 20 years ago...monsters, cars, ships, animals are still around and not looking too much different. . . In fact the only thing that really surprised me was the lack of cartoon characters . . . especially Disney type ones. . . I was very impressed with student artist E - it shows that if you keep drawing . . . especially with the same media that you can gain control and more ideas and skills. (SL)

**STUDENT: A**

**IMAGE: A-1**

**COMMENTS BY K. S.**

**IMAGE CATEGORY: Narrative**

**NARRATIVE CATEGORY: 2**

**Comments: image is held back by materials used ( felt pen) necessitating scribbling to fill in space)**

**Description of water moving (slanted down on page) and fish jumping add a feeling of lively movement and story-telling )**

**STUDENT A**

**IMAGE A-1**

**COMMENTS BY L.P.**

**IMAGE CATEGORY: NARRATIVE**

**Complete visual communication (a story)**

**Movement of water flowing down page is unusual for age**

**Perspective of water on an angle is quite advanced**

**Action of fish adds to story**

**Details of eyes and mouth give life to figures**

**Scribbled sky is typical of this level (markers have contributed to this type of background)**

**CHILD A**

**IMAGE A-1**

**COMMENTS SL**

**By Lowenfeld's stages this drawing would be a schematic - dawning realism stage. Ground lines exact, water sky show attention to spatial organization; figure, boat; fish are symbols; shadow of fish is beyond the basic schematic stage; child beginning to focus on perspective; water profile, grass texture more realistic than a geodetic base line**

**STUDENT A**

**IMAGE A-1**

**COMMENTS BY G. K.**

**IMAGE CATEGORY Animals**

**NARRATIVE CATEGORY**

**Fish and boat: a common theme for children of this age, animals are important - stories of the natural world**

**STUDENT: A**

**MAGE: A-2**

**COMMENTS BY K. S.**

**IMAGE CATEGORY: Nature**

**NARRATIVE CATEGORY: 2**

**Sun in sky is typical for this age. Observation of antlers in moose and beard on moose show descriptive interest. Parts of drawing show finished story with all parts relating, grass, flower, tree, moose, squirrel, bat, sun.**

**CHILD A**

**IMAGE A-2**

**COMMENTS SL**

**Lowenfeld's schematic characteristics: sun, flowers, tree, omission of unimportant background; attention to spacial organization. Piaget's symbolic representation: nature theme - relating groups of objects**

Appendix 3-3

Send to:  
Kathleen Schmalz,  
209 King Street,  
Guelph, Ontario, N1E-4R3

Dear Parents,

As the study involving your child's drawings is coming to a successful conclusion, I would like to provide the opportunity for you to check the data and the draft of the Findings section. Re-checking allows you to have input into what has been written about your child's work and provides researchers with a check of validity. The changes you suggest will be incorporated into the final draft.

Please fill out the information below after reading the information provided. I will be contacting you within the next ten days to answer any questions and retrieve this sheet. You are encouraged to share this information with your child as you see fit and your child is invited to sign the authorization along with you if you wish. Access to the entire thesis can be arranged at your request. At this time I wish to thank you and your child for your involvement in this study. The boys' work has been a shining example of the power of drawing in children's lives and I have enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in this study with your family.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Schmalz,  
MA program, OISE/UT

**NARRATIVE IN THE SPONTANEOUS DRAWINGS OF SEVEN TO NINE YEAR OLD BOYS**

**A study conducted through the Master of Arts Program, OISE/UT,**

**Concluding August 31, 1997.**

**Validation approval form:**

- 1) **Please comment on any changes you wish to have made in the recorded data which contains observations on your child's drawings made by the three external researchers and I during the course of this study.....**  
.....  
.....
- 2) **Please comment on any part of the data or Findings section which you feel is inappropriately evaluative of your child in terms of their artistic ability, or emotional health.....**  
.....  
.....
- 3) **Please comment on any other part of this material which you are not completely comfortable with.....**  
.....  
.....
- 4) **Is there any information you can add to this study on the early influences which may have contributed to your child's drawing style and interests?.....**  
.....

5) Although the influence of television and computer images did not exhibit itself strongly in the boys' drawings, could you comment on your child's exposure to television (ie hours per day, types of limitations; exposure to commercials) and computer games prior to and during the collection of his art work. Do you see any images which directly relate to television and computer images in your child's work?.....

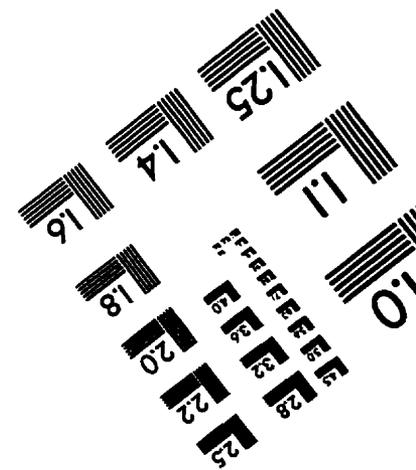
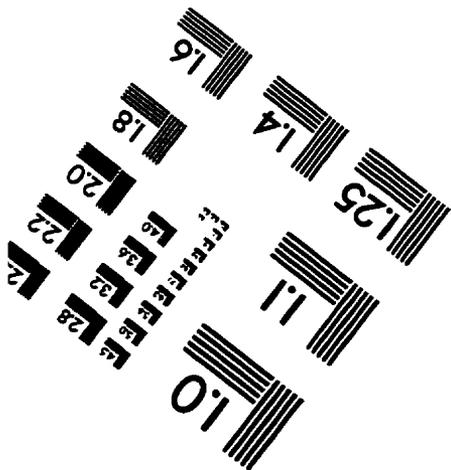
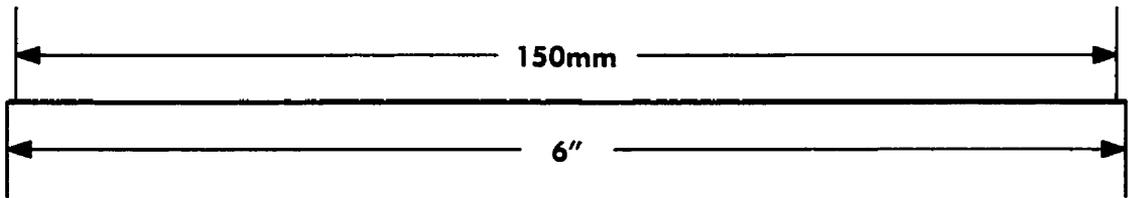
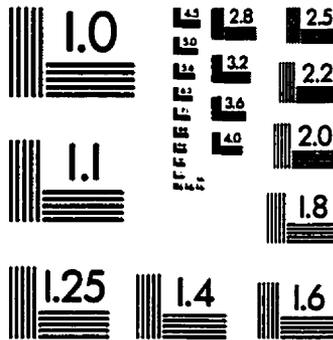
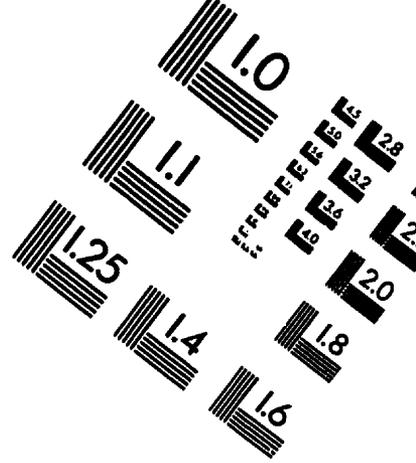
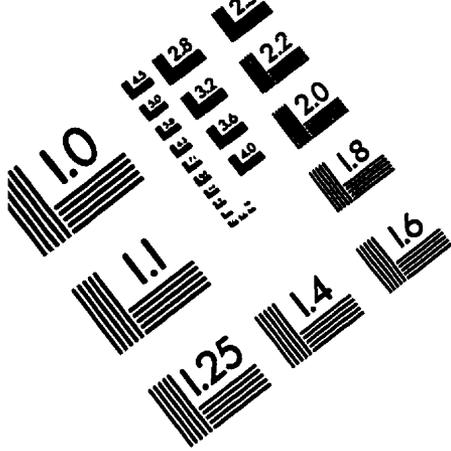
.....  
.....

Parent's signature.....Date .....

Child's signature (if desired).....

If you have any questions or comments, please call me at 519-836-6112, and thank you once again for your assistance.

# TEST TARGET (QA-3)



**APPLIED IMAGE, Inc**  
1653 East Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14609 USA  
Phone: 716/482-0300  
Fax: 716/288-5989

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