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A Comparison of Analytic Group Art Therapy
and
Interactional Media-Oriented Group Art Therapy
Through the Examination of Group Metaphor
as Indicative of
Dynamic Group Processes/Phases

Kimberly Cooney

A Research Paper

in

The Department

of

Art Therapy

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 1995

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ABSTRACT

Master of Arts (Art Therapy)

Concordia University, 1995

A Comparison of Analytic Group Art Therapy
and Interactional Media-Oriented Group Art Therapy
Through the Examination of Group Metaphor As
Indicative of Group Processes/Phases

Kimberly Cooney

This study is a descriptive analysis and exploration of the processes of two very distinct styles of group art therapy: Analytically - Oriented Group Art Therapy and Interactional Media - Oriented Group Art Therapy. A brief overview of the history of the often "opposing" approaches lies the foundation for the investigation and comparison of these two individual techniques.

While exploring the personal therapeutic styles of the group art therapist, as well as the inherent group processes that exist within each group setting, the use of spontaneous group metaphor is examined in terms of reflecting the stage or phase that the group is treading. These findings are further supported by the postulations of a selection of certain group theorists such as Yalom, Bion, Schutz, and Srivastva & Barrett.

This research paper is dedicated to my family,
the "original group from which I emerged",
and to Derek Kotar and Margaret Graham.

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A basic note on groups...

A company of porcupines crowded themselves very close together one cold winter's day to profit from one another's warmth, and to save themselves from being frozen to death. But soon they felt one another's quills which induced them to separate again. And now, when the need for warmth brought them nearer together again, the second evil arose once more. So that they were driven backwards and forwards from one trouble to the other, until they had discovered a mean distance at which they could most tolerably exist. (Parerga und Paralipomena, Part II 'Gleichnisse und Parabeln': Freud quotes in 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,' 1921:33).

The basic philosophy underlying all group therapy is that man is a social being. Humans live predominantly in familial or social groups. It has been proved that infants cannot survive without a primary care-giver that encompasses touch, care, attention, and interaction with the child (Spitz, 1930). However, a human does not only require this. Social networks such as extended families, nuclear families or states, are also integral to an individual's personal development (Case & Dalley, 1992). Adler saw context and environment as essential, as a human was not primarily an instinctual being, but a social, purposeful being, motivated not by drives but by goals (Adler, 1929).

Throughout life, we as humans pass through a series of social networks and institutions that have small group and institutional dynamics that affect our lives. Some examples of these are schools, workplaces, peer groups, social clubs etc... With this notion in mind, it is safe to say that group/social dynamics are essential to one's existence, and a general knowledge of such significant dynamics would be essential for all therapeutic work that is to be done within a group setting. Therefore, I intend to look further into the theoretical and practical concepts of two types of art therapy groups in an effort to clarify their functions,

their advantages and disadvantages, and the basic understanding of the roles that the art therapist must play, in terms of which approach she uses.

I have chosen the area of two, often oppositional styles of conducting art therapy groups as the area of my research: analytic-oriented and media-oriented art therapy groups. This is a subject that appealed to me academically as well as personally. Both styles of working with groups in art therapy are equally fascinating and beneficial to the clients involved. Within the research of this topic, I intend to use case examples taken from my internship site where I have had the opportunity to experience both approaches in working with groups. Having had the chance to work analytically as a co-therapist, as well also having had the opportunity to conduct my own media-oriented art therapy group, I will cite from these experiences to further illustrate the thesis of this research.

Researching this topic and using it as a learning tool in my progressive development as a training art therapist, not only suits my needs academically, but addresses a personal necessity as well. Simultaneously, this area of research will cover a fair ground of investigation into the methods of conducting art therapy groups that correspond to the technique and style of the art therapist. At this stage in my training, I am searching for my own identity as an art therapist. Attempting to appreciate the various methods of working by means of exploring the theoretical constructs in the realm of practice in groups, is therefore extremely relevant to me. Personally, through research and the application of my practical experiences, I hope to obtain a better

grasp of what framework, or style of working seems to fit with me and my personality as a training art therapist, and how that applies to groups.

A brief overview of the historical developments of group psychotherapy, and recent developments in group art therapy may be useful at this point.

BRIEF BACKGROUND ON GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY & ART THERAPY

The theory and practice of group psychotherapy in its many forms are well documented, dating from the Second World War. Events following the Second World War led to group psychotherapy and art therapy being integrated into rehabilitation movements - mostly rehabilitation of war-traumatized victims. Bion and Rickman, and Foulkes and Main employed group methods to run the army psychiatric units along group lines (Case & Dalley, 1992). From these group experiences came the "impetus for social therapy through the therapeutic community movement and the use of small groups for the treatment of neurotic and personality disorders" (Foulkes, 1964).

Simultaneously in the U.S.A., advances deriving from social psychology by Kurt Lewin were being made. Lewin, a psychologist termed the expression 'group dynamics' and proposed that "an individual's personal dynamics are bound up with the social forces that surround him or her" (Lewin, 1951).

Early developments of group psychotherapy have contributed to influencing different styles of analytic art therapy groups. Freud and Adler were among the first people to apply psychoanalytic thoughts to social groups (Adler, 1929).

RECENT GROUP ART THERAPY RESEARCH

The recent research on art therapy groups seems to have divided into a split between 'analytic group art therapy' and the 'theme-oriented group art therapy'. This split is viewed as somewhat of a debate between the two. A general overview of the common arguments between the two "opposing" groups will be covered further along in the research, but will be touched upon presently to give light to this controversy.

McNeilly (1984) has written about the process he describes as 'group analytic art therapy'. The time for art and discussion is roughly divided in half and no theme is given, nor are verbal interventions made during the art-making time. The group is to find its own direction and treat itself. When a group intervention is made, it is understood as a 'group interpretation', as comments to individual members may be seen to encourage dependency and concede the power to the conductor. The applied use of the art materials is intended to lead to the understanding of the 'collective image' or possibly the expression of the group metaphor of its present state of reality (McNeilly, 1984). Other art therapists may also work from a group analytic base but choose to explore the individual image in more depth. This follows Foulkes' original premise of the 'deep respect for individuality' (Foulkes, 1964).

McNeilly criticized group art therapy practice where the therapist provides group emotive themes to work on. These criticisms were partially based on findings from Liebmann's research on 'A Study of Structured Art Therapy Groups' (Liebmann, 1979). The argument contends that while using the theme-oriented art therapy group (or media-oriented art therapy group as it too provides a structure), there may be 'a tendency to uncover,

possibly too rapidly, powerful feelings that may be difficult for the individual in the group and the art therapist to contain'. Yalom backed up this criticism by claiming that members are often pressured into premature self-disclosure by being required to work on a theme that for some, may be too highly emotive to work on at that time (Yalom, 1985).

Thornton (1985) argued that themes can be used with careful thought for clinically-based purposes. Thornton is critical of the 'slowness' of McNeilly's approach and the drop-out rate, holding that the use of a non-directive role in interpretation and lack of theme is provocative and hostile to people who are needy. Wadeson had the following to contribute about the use of structured art therapy groups: "If an art therapist trusts the power of imagery and the healing forces within her client, she will allow her groups to flow naturally and organically. She will trust herself to be sensitive to their emergence so that she can foster their exploration and encourage the growth potential of the art therapy group and its individual members" (Wadeson, 1980).

It is clear that the research on various methods of working with groups in art therapy, either analytically-oriented or thematically-oriented, presents a debate that materializes as if there will never be a solid right or wrong answer as to which approach is "better". However, one useful aspect of this polarization is that each "camp" has had to reflect on their working practices in order to defend their theoretical position. This has been useful to the profession as a whole in developing ideas (Case & Dalley, 1992).

Looking at each counter-argument made clear the undesirability of a blanket approach in art therapy for all client groups. Perhaps a simple

definition of the difference between group art therapy and verbal group therapy, as well as a definition of the two styles of group orientation, is presently in order.

According to Case & Dalley, it should be stated at the outset that the difference between all forms of group art therapy and all forms of group verbal therapy is that at some point in group art therapy, each member "becomes separated" from the group to work individually on their own process through the medium of art. This has a profound shaping on the group dynamics. Concurrently, Case & Dalley hold that all groups experience tension between dependence and separation. But art therapy groups provide a unique experience as they offer both aspects of this tension to be explored (Case & Dalley, 1992).

The 'analytic' art therapy group functions under a direct influence of verbal group therapy. The therapist focuses on the group process, though she may choose to work with the individual in the group, and the individual and group processes. Much emphasis is placed upon transference and countertransference issues. The analytic art therapy group remains non-directive in terms of the content of the art work, often working with the unconscious themes that arise from within the group discussion and art work produced. Using two clearly differing modes of communication, (verbal and non-verbal), may encourage the group dynamics to become very complex, and may also encourage these dynamics to "stand out" at times. If for example, the group is avoiding an issue that they do not feel safe or strong enough to confront, they could either talk to avoid painting, or paint to avoid talking (Case & Dalley, 1992).

The 'theme-oriented' art therapy group functions primarily in a

structured manner, where either the therapist chooses a particular issue/experience, or a creative medium to explore, focusing on the art process, the group may talk until a group theme arises from free-floating discussion. This particular way of working does not specifically address group dynamics as it focuses on the individual process. However this does not negate the fact that group dynamics will continue to present themselves despite the approach of the group therapist. This type of group may often run for a short period of time (10 weeks for example). The emphasis is placed on social factors as well as the art healing process. The group and the therapist act as the container for its group members. The art work may be acknowledged, explored, and related to the artist with reference to previous art work, as well as to the group. Or it may be kept as an individual process where the opportunity to share with the group is optional.

Empirically, both approaches to group art therapy are useful and advantageous to the clients that are engaged in this therapeutic context. Acknowledging the "debate" between the two popular approaches to group art therapy, it seems both approaches provide some very firm and valid points in countering the other as an effective practice of therapy. Although these two methods come from very distinctive backgrounds, they do seem to possess some apparent similarities.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF RESEARCH

There leaves much to be covered and explored on this intriguing subject, therefore I will attempt to present an outline of the concepts and issues that I intend to further examine:

BASIC CONCEPTS/METHODS OF EACH APPROACH

- phases and developments in groups
- practical issues in group work
- "life processes" in small groups
- therapeutic factors in group therapy (Yalom's 11 primary factors)
- group cohesiveness and its effects
- curative factors central to group art therapy

THE TECHNIQUES OF EACH APPROACH

- conducting an interactive art therapy group
- conducting a thematic art therapy group
- working in the here-and-now: analytically and thematically
- conscious and unconscious themes
- images on the group art work

PROFILE OF THE ART THERAPIST

- the therapist as a person: style and personality
- awareness and use of transference and countertransference
- conducting analytic or thematic art therapy groups as a growth experience

THE DEBATE BETWEEN ANALYTIC & THEMATIC GROUPS

- issues of the debate: which is "better"?
- case examples, personal opinions, findings

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the intentions for this research are multiple. I intend to produce an overview exploration of the two most common approaches to art therapy groups, which in turn will address the techniques and styles of the art therapist, as such group experiences can become a potential aid in the search for personal identity as an art therapist. Simultaneously, an examination of the use of group metaphor by means of comparing the spontaneous group theme as indicative of the stage the group encounters, will be presented through a descriptive analysis of my two practical group experiences. It is my goal, that through further exploration and understanding of the disparity between the applications of these two types of group art therapy, that the styles of the art therapist will become clearer and better comprehended, and that perhaps similarities between the two "camps" can be found within the group dynamics that inevitably occurred.

Reviewing the vast literature available on the study of group therapy, I found a wealth of common hypotheses that seem to hold true of the fundamental theories on the practice of group therapy. As explored previously, there are several types of group therapy methods and various styles of leading groups that seem to incur specific techniques of leadership, processing, and experiencing of group mechanisms. Although there are several types of group therapy techniques for the various settings, populations, sizes, goals etc... there seems to be a broad, basic knowledge available on the general theoretical concepts on the processes, phases, and factors involved in group therapy.

THEORIES ON GROUP DYNAMICS

The abundant research findings entail that the basic aim of treatment in group therapy seems to be viewed as a road to personal growth and awareness via the group dynamics. Focus is on each group member learning how to trust, to disclose, to develop intimacy without fear and guilt, to express one's self courageously, and to respond honestly and freely to others. The members of the group seem to need to learn how to establish a network of communication between each other as a means to further personal development and growth (Grotjahn, 1977).

In group therapy both patient-patient interactions and patient-therapist interactions, as they occur in the group setting, are means used to effect changes in the maladaptive behaviour of each of the group members (Vinogradov & Yalom, 1989).

Group therapy is an unparalleled mode of psychotherapy because it

relies upon a very powerful tool: the group setting, which recapitulates the original group out of which the individual emerged - the family. This power derives from the importance of interpersonal interactions and their effect on the individual's psychological development. The goal of group treatment is specific: to enable the individual to participate collaboratively with others in order to obtain interpersonal satisfactions in the context of realistic, mutually gratifying relationships. In sum, the goal is to lead to a more abundant and rewarding life with others (Yalom, 1985). Parallel to this, as Harry Stack Sullivan once stated, "One achieves mental health to the extent that one becomes aware of one's interpersonal relationships" (Sullivan, 1940).

In the group setting, individuals are provided with an array of relationships where they must learn to deal with their likes and dislikes, similarities and dissimilarities, envy, timidity, aggression, fear, attraction, and competitiveness. All of this takes place under the scrutiny of the group where, with careful therapeutic leadership, members give and obtain feedback about their behaviours and interactions with each other. In this way, the group itself becomes an immensely specific therapeutic tool for its members (Vinogradov & Yalom, 1986).

WHAT MAKES GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY WORK?

YALOM'S 11 PRIMARY THERAPEUTIC FACTORS:

Yalom (1985) suggests that therapeutic change within the group setting involves an intricate interplay of various guided human experiences which he refers to as "therapeutic factors". Yalom divided the therapeutic group experience into 11 primary therapeutic factors:

1. Instillation of hope
2. Universality
3. Imparting of information
4. Altruism
5. The corrective recapitulation of the primary family group
6. Development of socializing techniques
7. Imitative behaviour
8. Interpersonal learning
9. Group cohesiveness
10. Catharsis
11. Existential factors

I believe these factors play an significant role in almost all types of group therapy, and therefore will be presented and elaborated upon in as succinct a form as possible.

INSTILLATION OF HOPE: Faith in a treatment mode is itself therapeutically effective, both when the patient has a high expectation of help and the therapist believes in the efficacy of the treatment (Bloch et al. 1976).

UNIVERSALITY: In the group therapy setting, many individuals experience a tremendous sense of relief when they recognize that others in the group have similar difficulties. They soon realize they are not as isolated as they once thought.

IMPARTING OF INFORMATION: Although long-term analytic groups generally do not value the use of didactic education or advice, other types of groups rely more heavily on advice or instruction. Advice-giving invariably is part of the early life of most groups.

ALTRUISM: The therapeutic factor of altruism is almost unique to group therapy. The experience of being helpful to others can be rewarding and is one of the

reasons that group therapy often boosts self-esteem. **DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALIZING TECHNIQUES:** In groups that are more interactionally-based, individuals may learn about maladaptive social behaviour from the honest feedback they give each other. **IMITATIVE BEHAVIOUR:** In group therapy, members benefit from observing the therapy of another member with similar problems, a phenomenon referred to as vicarious learning. **CATHARSIS:** The affective sharing of the individual's inner world, then the acceptance by others in the group is where the paramount importance of catharsis lies in group therapy. **CORRECTIVE RECAPITULATION OF THE PRIMARY FAMILY GROUP:** Because group therapy offers such a vast array of recapitulative experiences, individuals may begin to interact with leaders or other members as they once interacted with parents and siblings. What is of importance is not only that these kinds of early familial conflicts are re-enacted, but that they are recapitulated correctively through the guidance of the therapist. **EXISTENTIAL FACTORS:** In the course of therapy, members begin to realize that there is a limit to the guidance and support that they receive from others. They learn that, although they can be close to others, there is nonetheless a basic aloneness to existence that cannot be avoided (Vinogradov & Yalom, 1989).

Vinogradov & Yalom (1989) summarize other factors in the efficacy of group therapy, one integral factor being group cohesiveness. Cohesiveness in a group favours self-disclosure, risk-taking, and the constructive expression of confrontation and conflict, all phenomena that facilitate successful group psychotherapy. Research has indicated that cohesive groups achieve better therapeutic outcomes as rated by the group members (Budman et al., 1989). The concept of interpersonal learning, which heads

4 underlying concepts:

- 1) the importance of interpersonal relationships
- 2) the necessity of corrective emotional experiences for successful psychotherapy
- 3) the group as a social microcosm
- 4) learning from behavioral patterns in the social microcosm, reveals a potent therapeutic factor that is available in group therapy both to understand and treat psychological disturbances.

This belief relies on the premise that psychopathology arises when interpersonal interactions with significant others have resulted in fixed distortions that persist into life beyond the period of primary shaping (Alexander & Franck, 1946).

STAGES/PHASES OF GROUP THERAPY

Individual needs and goals vary during the course of group psychotherapy; therefore so do the therapeutic factors which are most helpful to them. The nature and manner in which these therapeutic factors are manifested, change dramatically with the stage of the group.

A study conducted by Srivastva & Barrett (1988) suggested the use of group metaphor as a reflection of the stage the group is currently navigating. They hold that group metaphors are clues to the group's reality, and can function to generate new, complex understanding for the individual members, as well as for the group as a whole. Through the analysis of group metaphors by use of laboratory groups, Srivastva & Barrett identified 4 stages or phases deriving from "key words and expressions" established by the members themselves (Black, 1962):

- 1) the group is in battle
- 2) the group is moving

- 3) members want to be connected but not swallowed
- 4) members want to impact each other and help each other grow.

Other theorists such as Tuckman, Bennis & Sheppard, and Bion for example, have offered some of their findings on basic group phases.

Tuckman (1965) reviewed research on group development and concluded that groups go through the following stages of development:

- 1) forming
- 2) storming
- 3) norming
- 4) performing.

He continued that as roles become more clearly differentiated, hindrances to communication are overcome and interdependence is possible. Bennis and Sheppard (1956) postulated a theory of group development centring on two primary issues:

- 1) authority relations
- 2) interpersonal relations

The group first works through its ambivalent feelings towards the leader, which then allows a growing contact and valid communication to occur between members.

Bion (1959) holds three basic assumptions of group life, which are not seen as explicitly developmental, but which function as unconscious defenses against anxiety stirred by the group. These basic assumptions are:

- 1) dependency
- 2) fight-flight
- 3) pairing

When these basic assumption behaviours are predominant in a group's life, members are seen to be acting out of fantasy. The more the basic assumption life of the group becomes conscious, the more the work group can emerge and complete the "group task" (Bion, 1959).

It seems that personal development through group therapy involves an increasing sense of identity, self-awareness, autonomy, an ability to appreciate others' autonomy, and in establishing corrective interpersonal relationships in a safe environment, where valid communication can occur. It is a unique and unparalleled psychotherapeutic experience where the use of the group setting and other individual members play a paramount role in facilitating the therapeutic factors in the group therapy process.

Group therapy then, is a forum for change whose form, content, and process varies considerably across groups in different settings and/or the personal styles and beliefs of the group therapist.

THEORIES ON ART THERAPY GROUPS

CURATIVE FACTORS IN THE USE OF ART

Liebmann (1986) proposes several reasons for using art with groups that puts such a practice in a very simple and positive light. Through the use of art, everyone can participate in the process at the same time. Art provides a separate and important avenue of expression that is non-verbal. Art provides much insight into working with fantasy and the unconscious. Art products are tangible and can be examined at a later time.

There are several ways in which introducing art materials into a group may alter the dynamics of the setting. MacLagan (1985) comments

that Art Therapy represents a potentially dangerous encounter with the irrational and the uncontainable. It involves a shift of competence, from the verbal domain that is to some extent an instrument of rationalization and control, to a non-verbal area that is unfamiliar. Waller (1993) suggests some of the advantages involved in the use of art in group therapy. Image-making within a group is rather akin to "free association" or "dreaming onto paper". Art objects are full of symbolic meaning both to the individual who made them as well as to the group who receives them. The art work reflects the here-and-now of the group as in the function of group metaphor according to Srivastva & Barrett (1988). Wadeson (1987) pointed out that the process of the art therapy group may become illuminated through the images as well as words and additionally through the group reflection on the images. The art work is a focus for projection, as well as a focus for interaction. The therapist's task in such groups, through the means of the art media, is to encourage interaction between members, and to make comments to the group as a whole.

The practical nature of the art therapy group provides a structure which is for many individuals less threatening than a verbal group, as they can if they choose to, preoccupy themselves with the materials and feel less exposed as in a verbal therapy group. Because using art materials always maintains an element of play, the group can have "fun" as well as being serious. Engaging in the art-making process is for most, challenging, rewarding and stimulating. Quite often greater flexibility in using materials goes hand in hand with a willingness to experiment with relationships in the group (Waller, 1993).

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

While examining the literature on analytic and thematic group art therapy, it would be wise to presently introduce the chosen basic foundations of working in these two groups that I intend to focus on.

Research on literature and case examples to be provided further on in this paper, will focus on two adult out-patient art therapy groups ranging in size from 4-8 members. The groups discussed consisted of one "closed" group where the members were previously evaluated and selected based upon specific goals, as in the analytic art therapy group, or have signed up independently, awaiting the commencement of the group sessions, as in the media exploration art therapy group. Individuals selected for the analytic group usually have deep-rooted issues they wish to work on. Individual candidates for the media exploration group may include anyone interested in fostering and developing their own creativity by means of initiated explorative art activities. Although they may too possess deep-rooted issues, they are aware that this type of group will not offer analysis of their particular issues.

The analytic group's time constraints followed a minimum of 12 sessions. The thematic group's time constraints followed a proposed length of 10 sessions each. Each supposed group met once a week for 1 1/2 - 2 hours.

ANALYTIC GROUP ART THERAPY

According to Case & Dalley (1992), it is a complex process of working with both art therapy and verbal group therapy. The mode of communication may change from free-floating verbal interaction to art-

making to verbal discussion. While making art, individuals withdraw internally to express themselves in the space of their choice. Clients are more able to control how much they participate in the art therapy group and to which part they will actively involve themselves. When art is discussed, there is an immediate "here-and-now" reaction to the art work that receives the focus of attention. Each person in the group interacts not only interpersonally, but inter pictorally. Members may often project into their own art work as well as into others. The images may develop both as personal expression and as a concrete reflection of the history of the group (Waller, 1993). Each image may hold meanings of the past, present, and future for the individual, as well as including members of the group. Meanings gradually unravel within the matrix of the group process which the analytic therapist interprets in regards to the dynamics of the group and also how the images contain these dynamics; both in terms of the individual and the group as whole.

Skaife (1990) states that the art activity adds a new dimension to the "work materials" of the analytic group, as it allows feelings to be expressed in an alternate way. She adds that the group members are encouraged to use the art materials to express themselves freely. This work is then looked at as both belonging to the history of the individual and as an expression of the dynamics of the group. By allowing the group to decide when and how long to work on art-making or discussion, Skaife believes that members develop a greater understanding of their own ways of negotiating social relations.

Azima et al. (1957) contend that applying psychoanalytic principles to the art images will reveal underlying conflicts, and will serve as

indicators of change in the personality structure. Due regard should be given by the analytic therapist to the unconscious need systems of the patients, to defenses against them, to unconscious fantasised object relations, to group dynamics and to common group tension. Azima et al. (1957) state that analytic group therapy aims to uncover and work through drives, to uncover conflicts and encourage derivation of insight, as well as the unveiling and working through of transferences.

In light of these premises it seems safe to say that free creativity within the group therapy structure and the methodology described, accelerates the uncovering of unconscious conflicts to a depth similar to individual analysis.

THEMATIC GROUP ART THERAPY

On the other hand, thematic groups frequently offer a different direction for the group which is either suggested by the therapist or arises out of initial group discussion by the group members themselves. This type of group may be more beneficial for short-stay clients who want to explore specific issues, or for those not able to benefit from working with the anxiety that attends an analytically oriented group (Case & Dalley, 1992). This style of group is more likely to be used in day and community centres with staff groups and members of the public, or for general social purposes and widening of experiences of those in longer term care (Liebman, 1986). In terms of my research purposes, I intend to look at a type of structured art therapy group where the therapist initiates various media exploration activities as a starting point for fostering the individual creative process, rather than providing a

specific theme to work upon (ex: draw your family). In other words, exercises suggested are generally designed to facilitate self-exploration rather than prescribe specific areas to explore.

Suitable creative experiences for the group allow members to learn about their own process in a fairly controlled way, enabling the individual to "see things happen" in a minimally guided session. There is the possibility that some individuals may work intensely and some more superficially within the same group, but still feel part of the process.

This style of working with groups usually involves a short discussion or "warm-up" activity at the beginning of the session, where the initiated explorative activity is introduced. The group would then separate to work on their own creative images. Discussion of personal images may arise spontaneously by group members, and not by initiation of the therapist.

According to Case & Dalley (1992), thematic groups have a strong "social function" that helps the members to contact each other and themselves in the here-and-now by acknowledging each member's art work - whether it is discussed or not.

The emphasis of this type of group is planted firmly upon the "growth arena" rather than in long-term analytically-oriented therapy (Case & Dalley, 1992). Ratigan and Aveline (1988) hold 5 basic beliefs of the interactive or thematic group therapy technique:

- 1) Human actions are not pre-determined: freedom of choice is part of the human condition
- 2) The corollary of this is the importance of choice in human life
- 3) It is essential to take responsibility for one's actions
- 4) Death is inevitable: but the fact that we shall die can paradoxically

give meaning to life, as mirrored in the termination of the group

- 5) We are engaged in a creative search for individual patterns that will give meaning to our existence.

In this light, it is safe to assume that the concepts of responsibility, freedom and personal choice are central to the interactive model.

THERAPIST'S ROLE

Grotjahn (1977) firmly believes that a therapist ought to have the courage for "unlimited communication" (Carl Jaspers), which includes the conscious and unconscious. She must be a master in what Franz Alexander called "dynamic reasoning". She must learn how to see people in the here-and now, in their relationship to her, and also in their long-term psychological development from the beginning to the present - with an awareness of tomorrow.

There is a distinct difference between analytical and interactional schools, although some therapists are able to use elements of both schools in their work with groups. The main difference seems to be that the group analyst encourages the patient to acquire insight through the examination of transference within the framework of emotional and creative interaction. The interactional therapist places emphasis on reciprocal action or influence between group members as well as the therapist, and argues that interaction is the chief agent for change (Waller, 1993). The sort of leader one chooses to be depends on such factors as the type of client population, size of group, treatment goals, length of treatment, setting, structure of sessions, and of course of personal style.

Aveline and Dryden (1988) discuss personality characteristics of effective leaders of the two approaches: the analytic leader they hold, demonstrates her "analytic love of truth even when unpalatable". The interpersonal and gestalt leader "acts as a model of good membership: she tries to be open, shows willingness to change, takes risks and is relatively undefended..."

Thompson & Kahn (1988) point out that the group therapist in general must remain sufficiently detached from the group to be aware of what is going on by recognising group processes, and the way in which they as leaders, as well as other members are contributing to the process. Therefore either model that is selected (analytic or interactional) requires degrees of detachment from the group in order for the therapist to remain in her role as the group leader/therapist, as to be able to refrain from obscuring this distinct role from the group members.

INTERACTIVE ROLE

The facilitating interpersonal leader is neither passive nor claims the centre stage, but is often both observer and reflector of what is going on in the group (Waller, 1993).

Nowell Hall (1987) described her role as conductor following this style of working as:

"As the art therapist in groups, I aspired, as Champerowne (1969) said 'to provide the protective conditions to let things happen', and to enable the ideal that Carl Rogers (1957) claims as the 'necessary therapeutic climate'. This would be one that allows both psychological safety and freedom - through unconditional positive regard, warmth, genuineness and accurate empathy, thereby maximising the chance of openness to play, to experiment, and to change and for constructive creativity and growth to emerge."

The therapist's interaction in this type of art therapy group is

mainly between the therapist as conductor and the individual members, yet still addresses the members and their art work, and the interaction between members. There tends to be a more didactic role played by the interactional therapist regarding the discussion portion of the group session. The discussion (if it is included), is more likely to be "led" by her, but may also follow the lead of the group members, when the therapist acts as a facilitative guide for the group. Because such interactive models are often short-term groups, there is often less likely to be a full exchange between members in this type of group as this particular group dynamic takes time develop (Case & Dalley, 1992).

ANALYTIC ROLE

The analytic therapist seems to focus on resonance in the group process. According to psychoanalytic theory, a deep, unconscious frame of reference is laid down in the first 5 years of life and predetermines associative responses from then on (Waller, 1993). Therefore each member of the group may show a tendency to reverberate or resonate to any group event according to the level at which he is set. In this light, the therapist must possess the capabilities to recognize such unconscious motives and be able to work with them.

Group members are encouraged to use the art materials to express themselves freely. The work is then looked at as both belonging to the history of the individual and as a dynamic of the group (Skafte, 1990).

The analytic therapist eventually remains fairly neutral, allowing the group members decide when they want to talk, to do art work, and to discuss the art. However at the commencement of group therapy she may

take somewhat of a lead in order to establish the framework for the group processes. The process that influences these independent group decisions is then subject to analysis in the same way as other aspects of the group are analyzed.

The analytic therapist trusts the art process, allowing it to be non-directive concerning the content. She works with the unconscious themes that arise from the group each week. Group processes are seen to reflect the common motives, anxieties and defenses of the individuals in the group and as a group. Ezriel (1950) invented the term "common group tension" to describe the group conflict resulting from a shared wish for, but "avoided" relationship with the therapist. In this way of working, the therapist has an impassive exterior, actively encouraging transference to herself. The transferences that arise are often included in the exploration of the group and its processes, looking at the therapist's roles in its relation to the fantasies of the group members.

CONCLUSION

It seems after reviewing some of the literature, it is clear that the roles of the group art therapist can be quite diverse depending on the mode of group therapy she chooses to work with. There is a wealth of material to be explored. The vast literature available on the subject of group dynamics, group art therapy, and specific therapist roles would be impossible to condense into a concise formation in the framework of short research. Therefore I intend to elaborate and expand upon the facets presented in this section of the research by means of case examples including further investigation of the two distinct styles of group

therapy, by means of comparing and contrasting the spontaneous group theme or metaphor that arises within the group process. As a result, hopefully the variant styles of these two distinct systems of group therapy will become clearer and more appreciated, in terms of better enabling one to select a technique that best suits one's acceptable way of working, and best suits the group's specific needs in a developmental perspective.

INHERENT GROUP DYNAMICS

Every group naturally develops its own unique character, yet all groups present to the observer/therapist common features that suggest the universal dynamics of groups. Regardless of what position the therapist adopts, virtually the therapist has little control over the group forces that will inevitably evolve. Therefore she must observe carefully what is taking place in order for her to sensitively guide the group along its therapeutic path. Beginning to trust in, share with, and eventually internalise the group experience so that there is a healing formed via such an experience, is in short, the facilitative functioning the therapist must adopt to assist the group to move ahead in a constructive fashion.

Ways of working as a group therapist will often vary depending on the personality of the therapist, her past experiences and preferences, her likes and dislikes, her level of expertise, whether she has had the opportunity to work out her own issues in therapy, and basically the overall style of the individual as a therapist which is a combination of a myriad of features each individual therapist brings with her.

In an effort for a beginning therapist to know what style of working with groups would best suit herself and her clients, it would be quite difficult for her to know this without having had the experience of participating in the various practices of conducting group art therapy. Experiencing something is the beginning to "knowing" something, absorbing it so that it may become part of the individual and her experiences.

FUNCTION OF THE GROUP THERAPIST

As a training art therapist, the yearn to absorb everything is quite powerful. Fortunately, taking from an opportune experience at my practicum site, I have had the chance to experience two very different methods of working with groups in art therapy. Functioning as a co-therapist in an analytically-based art therapy group called "Expressive Group Art Therapy", as well as conducting my own media-exploration group called the "Creativity Group", I was able to benefit greatly from these two such distinct learning experiences in terms of searching for my own style of working as a group art therapist. Although in actuality it can take years for one to find one's own personal style of working as a therapist, each opportunity experienced adds to the growing awareness of group processes, group leadership styles, and most importantly one's self.

As a group leader, the therapist must learn to recognize and use the major features of the group dynamics. These characteristics of group life enable the therapist to decide when, and if how to make interventions in the group process.

Benjamin (1978), suggests that there are five major features of the dynamics of groups. They include:

- 1) Group Reality: the group defines its reality for itself, consciously or unconsciously
- 2) Group Norms: the group will set its own norms of behaviour and will enforce these on its members
- 3) Membership: the group exercises a strong influence on its members from the outset, casting members in specific roles
- 4) Group Leadership: from within the group itself an informal leadership will emerge

5) Group Climate: finally the group will offer members a climate in which to learn, be it warm, cold, friendly, hostile or simply neutral

Any style of group therapy, be it analytic, media-explorative, or verbal, will most likely encompass these or other dynamics as postulated by Bion (1959) , Yalom (1985), Srivastva & Barrett (1988) and Schutz (1978) (mentioned previously), within their process, regardless of the group's design. It is the therapist's responsibility to recognize these phases and use them to demonstrate a sensitivity to the individual members and the group as a whole.

GROUP METAPHOR

One way of identifying such group phases or stages is to look at the group theme or group metaphor that spontaneously arises from the group's interactive reality. Central to group art therapy is the capacity of the artistic process, the release of unconscious material which when consciously assimilated, can lead to the release of creative potential for the individual (Case & Dalley, 1992).

According to Waller (1993), spontaneous images of the group are often linked to preoccupations of the group at the time - with the conductor, with their lives outside, and with their interpersonal relationships within the group and elsewhere. The art work provides a record of the group's journey together and also forms the basis of the group's culture in the way the group chooses to explore them.

Foulkes (1964), contends that there is one level of interaction within groups that roughly corresponds to Jung's collective unconscious. This phenomenon called resonance is observed when members work on similar

themes apparently coincidentally. This can be viewed as an unconscious response to an incident in the group's life and shows the universality of human experience at a deeper level.

Metaphor may transfer meaning from one domain to another. In this way, metaphor enhances the domain, encouraging it to be looked at in a new way. Metaphor is more capable of capturing the continuing flow of experience than literal language. Sometimes one can say through metaphor what one cannot say in words. In this sense, metaphor can communicate an "emotional reality that lies just beyond our conscious awareness" (Srivastva & Barrett, 1988:36).

Metaphor may also function as a "midpoint" for an individual to approach working through material on a more personal level. It is therefore the therapist's responsibility to ascertain when and if metaphor and image cease to be a bridge, and serve as a form of resistance. An example of this would be inflexible and repetitious use of that style of communication (Robbins, 1987). At times, the group discussions may become too anxiety-provoking for some members to absorb. It is at such times that the individual group member may use their art work as a shield, choosing to focus highly on the metaphorical expression, therefore avoiding confrontation, dealings with others, and/or the conflict at hand. It is the therapist's responsibility to be able to recognize these defensive manouvers, and be able to gently guide the group member into becoming aware of his or her behaviour.

For the purpose of this research, the use of group metaphor or group theme was examined as obtaining a glimpse at an awareness beyond what was given, following the model employed by Srivastva & Barrett

and Schutz (1978).

Images that are created by individual group members reveal the unique differences of each individual as they come together for discussion. However, the images work on each other as well, as they can reveal the unconscious theme of the group. The art objects themselves provide the concrete product for discussion. But most importantly, the art work also contributes to the group tangible, expressive evidence of the stage the group is navigating.

METHODOLOGY

This portion of the research is dedicated to following the model of Srivastva & Barrett (1988), and the work of Schutz (1978), in exploring the group metaphor as indicative of the group phases by means of comparing and contrasting two art therapy group experiences via the art work and the spontaneous discussion that arose within the group. Keeping in mind the distinct differences of each group.

Using only the first four sessions of the Expressive Therapy Group and the Creativity Group, I intend to examine the similarities and/or differences in the beginning phases of group processes as they emanate, by means of observation of the art work produced and spontaneous discussion recorded between members.

DESCRIPTION OF GROUPS

The analytic art therapy group consisted of five adult members, three males and two females, along with two female co-therapists, ranging in age from the early twenties to the early fifties. Pathologies included manic depression, adaptive difficulties, social phobia, suicidal tendencies, affective disorders with obsessive-compulsive traits, and experiences of psychotic episodes. The group was a closed group that met once a week for one and a half hours. The first forty-five minutes was dedicated to art-making and the individual process. The last forty-five minutes was devoted to group discussion.

The focus of this group was to work with both the verbal and non-verbal modes of expression, as a tool for exploration of any underlying psychic conflict that manifested itself either consciously or unconsciously within the individual's behaviour and/or art work.

The neutral stance of the therapists was used to encourage the transference of the group members onto the therapists. Transference and countertransference issues were examined, interpreted and reflected back to the group for discussion. The examination of transference issues in the context of this group was easier to recognize and address as compared to the Creativity Group. Encouraging the transference through the use of a neutral stance made for a more difficult and trying experience for the therapists in working with this group. In the context of the analytical group, the anxiety level remained fairly high throughout the sessions presented. The group members were encouraged to look at behavioural/emotional patterns that may have originated early in life,

although the emphasis remained on the here-and-now and the interactions between members, and between members and the therapists. Both therapists initially adopted a facilitative role in terms of keeping time for example, in order to encourage members to establish and take control of a sense of routine for themselves. The aim of the therapists was to eventually "pull back" and become less facilitative, in an effort to support the group's endeavours to establish its own routines, roles, and reality.

The media exploration group consisted of four members, three males and one female, as well as one female leader, ranging in ages from the early twenties to the late forties. Pathologies included manic depression, schizophrenia, suicidal tendencies and behavioral disorders.

This open group met once a week for one and a half hours. The first ten minutes of the group consisted of a general, social discussion then a demonstration of a particular technique presented as initiative for further free personal exploration of the creative process. The group was also provided with the freedom to choose any materials in the art supply cabinet if they felt their creative spirit would be better achieved using their own ideas. The group concluded with a collective clean up. Discussion of the art work produced was not obligatory, however, if members wished to talk about their work with the group, they were free to do so. The focus of the group was primarily individual. The therapist functioned clearly as a facilitator, providing materials, and suggestive techniques to help encourage each member to find and develop their own personalized creative potential.

The focus of the group leaned toward the individual creative process

and the interpersonal experience. Having presented the group with an idea or technique to explore, it was left up to the individual members how they would choose to interpret it and how they would subsequently use the material. The way any given patient used colour, form, space, and the like was looked at by the therapist as making a psychodynamic statement. This information was simply used as a tool for planning further group sessions, following the arising needs of the group members.

Transference and countertransference issues were not interpreted or examined within the group setting, however, they proved useful for the therapist to further understand individual members and the role she played as the group leader/facilitator. Functioning as a facilitator, the dynamics of the group differed greatly from the Expressive Therapy Group. As the therapist did not take a neutral stance, contributions by the therapist to the group dynamics were more evident. The anxiety level in this group was much lower as compared to the Expressive Therapy Group. The Creativity Group members remained mostly dependent on the facilitator to provide the structure, as they then took it from there.

Unconscious material that arose within the artistic process was not addressed. Spontaneous group discussion often focused on the conscious, concrete material that presented itself, as well as social topics such as movies, music, and hobbies. Following this, and similar to the analytic art therapy group, the focus remained on the here-and-now.

Black, as quoted in Srivastva & Barrett (1988), suggested that to discover root metaphor would require detecting a list of key words and expressions within the statement of their meanings in the field from which they were literally drawn. In an attempt to illustrate this phenomena,

Srivastva & Barrett (1988) discovered 4 main stages their group encountered that emerged via their analysis of the metaphor that surfaced naturally. They are:

- 1) The Group Is Stuck In Battle
- 2) The Group Is Moving
- 3) Members Want To Be Connected But Not Swallowed
- 4) Members Want To Impact Each Other And Help Each Other Grow

And following the examination of developmental group stages, Schutz (1978) outlined three formative group phases as

- 1) Inclusion
- 2) Control
- 3) Affection

Srivastva & Barrett's stage of The Group Is Stuck In Battle describes the feeling that group members are battling among themselves for either the attention of the therapists, or to protect their individuality, or battling within themselves as a result of struggling between wanting to be included, yet fearing being included. The Group Is Moving describes the sense that the group is beginning to make attempts to establish connections between members. Members Want To Be Connected But Not Swallowed describes the resulting fear that arises as the group has begun to move closer together, as members fear they may lose their identity through enmeshment within the group. And Members Want To Impact Each Other And Help Each Other Grow describes the full, facilitative working stage of the group where members help each other to develop awareness and understanding of their personal and collective behaviours and emotions. Schutz's phase of Inclusion is similar to Srivastva & Barrett's first

stage in terms of the present desire to connect with other members and the pervading fear that one may not be accepted. The phase of control describes the members' wish to establish a sense of power over themselves as well as other members in the group. And finally the phase of Affection describes the resulting connection and empathy that is developed and fostered within the group, as members work together to help each other to grow

These suggested stages, along with those of Bion, Benjamin, and Yalom, will be used as points of reference involving the phases in which the Expressive Therapy Group and the Creativity Group were engaged. The description of the sessions are personal, interpretative observations of the interactions and experiences of each group session.

DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS

Week 1: Expressive Therapy Group

Four new members present and one member absent, each member was most likely feeling quite anxious to be a part of a new and curious group of strangers; therefore they remained fairly silent. Relying mainly on the direction of the primary therapist, the members silently invested themselves in the individual art process, creating a charge of energy in the room that became quite powerful. After inviting the group to use the art media to create a free personal expression, both therapists remained silent but present, in an effort to allow the group members' artistic process to develop.

After forty-five minutes of art-making time, the discussion of the individual art pieces involved expressions of feeling "sad, lost, dark, no

end, and feelings that will go on forever" (Figure 1). In further support of these sentiments, another member discussed his piece as reflective of a "dark road block and a road that goes on forever, surrounded by dead trees" (Figure 2). Wishful thinking was also included as one member revealed his desire to be "protected by the king with his shelter of a castle and his riches". (Figure 3). In an effort to "please herself", one member stated she drew a "vase of flowers" (Figure 4) because she liked flowers and wanted to "do what she likes". Significant to note is that the number of flowers in the delicate vase corresponded to the number of members in the group that day.

Judging from the verbally and non-verbally expressed thoughts, feelings, wishes, and fears of the group, Srivastva & Barrett's stage of "The Group Is In Battle" was initially questioned. The language and the art expressions seemed to be being used as an effort to understand a possibly frightening experience. Reflecting the stage of a battle, it seemed that the group members were individually and collectively lost in a "search expedition" or a battle within themselves, feeling stuck at a dark road block that felt as if it would "go on forever". Feeling anxious, insecure and likely disappointed the group therapists were not responding to their dependency needs (Bion as quoted in Rioch, 1970), group members expressed their fears and concerns metaphorically. Feeling at a block, surrounded by dead trees, feeling hopeless and lost without direction, wondering how to get on the road, fearing that these feelings would go on forever, and the wish to be protected by an omnipresent individual, all may be reflective of the uncomfortable stage this new group was encountering.

In following Benjamin (1978), the group appeared to be establishing its Group Reality. Beginning to define the reality for itself, it seems the group was attempting to clarify what was real for it and how it would deal with that reality. The expressions and root metaphors seemed to reflect the context that the group created for itself in its earliest stages.

In following Schutz's group phase of Inclusion (Schutz, 1978), it seemed that the issue of commitment arose as the initial testing of the establishment of a group relationship. Concerns about whether one wished to be a part of the group or not, and to what degree one should commit oneself appeared to be being considered. Members seemed to metaphorically question such group concerns by pondering how to "get on the road", or in other words, join in the group. Feeling at a "road block" perhaps represented the fear of not being accepted hence, the resistance of investing in the group. Wishing to "please oneself", therefore remaining separate, as well as the wish to feel protected and sheltered by the king (or the therapist) may have been reflective of the group's ambivalence about sharing themselves with each other.

Week 1: Creativity Group

With only three individuals present, the group members began talking to each other in an effort to establish whether or not they had met earlier in other groups. Two members recognized each other, and one member who was unfamiliar with anyone, chatted superficially with the others for a few moments before the introduction of the technique to be presented for that session.

Asked to work on large wall scribble drawings, each member was invited to discover an image or images within their scribble. From there they were to develop this impression working within the scribble, and were then to take that particular image and create an environment for it on a separate piece of paper. Working at a slow pace, the group produced their art pieces and discussion topics as follows:

One member discovered a "large bowling ball in the process of knocking over two bowling pins" (Figure 5). Another member discussed his findings of a "dead end road surrounded by trees" along with a "sharp pair of scissors" (Figure 6). Finding a "brightly coloured clown and three balloons" (Figure 7), this group member developed the image further only to discover that the three balloons were not attached to the clown's hand.

Somewhat similar to the Expressive Therapy Group, this particular group seemed to be navigating similar waters by means of expressing the "dead end road surrounded by trees", "being bowled over" and not feeling "connected/attached" as in the clown with balloons. The impression that the Group Is In Battle may have presented itself in terms of coming to the "the confrontation of a dead end" and the sensation of "being bowled over and knocked down". The manifestation of "sharp scissors" which may have represented the need for weapons as a form of protection in a potentially distressful situation, is perhaps one more example of the possibly initial Battle stage the individual group members encountered in terms of their fears related to confronting the group. Perhaps a sense of "no control" was being expressed in the depiction of the clown without a grip on the balloons. Losing grip of the balloons would allow them to float away, therefore forfeiting the "connection between the self and

other members".

The phase of Schutz's Inclusion also fits the group metaphor expressed through the visual images and discussion. The fear that if one commits to a group there lies the chance that one may be "bowled over". The ambivalence one may face in regards to investing in a group may often feel like a "dead end" or "road block". And the fear that one may not be accepted in the group context may have been mirrored in the clown's inability to grasp the balloons.

Taking into account the "small talk" that occurred at the beginning of the session, perhaps this can be viewed as the individual members feeling isolated and anxious among strangers. As an alternative it seemed they form a contact in an effort to break through the separation. Attempts to bridge the isolation may take the form of exchanges of superficial data about themselves. All attempts can be looked at in terms of managing the unconscious battle that is occurring simultaneously (Srivastva & Barrett, 1988) as a result the new group encounter presents. Schutz (1978) refers to this group characteristic as the "goblet issue". Goblet issues are those which function as vehicles for getting to know one another. Schutz holds that although discussions of this sort are often pointless in content, through them member usually learn about one another. Therefore they serve an important function.

Week 2: Expressive Therapy Group

A new member joined the group and brought the total number of members to five this session. After a brief introduction of each individual's reasons for coming to the group, everyone began working

immediately. Discussion concerning the art work involved "skating on thin ice" (Figure 8), and the worry that one may "slip and fall down on the hard surface". Sharing feelings of not knowing each other well enough, one member stated feeling he was "able to relate to some members comments", as he too felt similarly at times. Another member depicted a "bleeding sun" (Figure 9), as representative of "not knowing what step to take next". One member depicted a "family tree being cut down" (Figure 10), representative of his fear and mourning due to the loss of his family as a result of his illness. The issue "getting away from it all, to have a break, to escape problems, and to have peace" (Figures 11 & 12), were presented by means of one members's art work and input into the group discussion.

It seems as though the group was continuing to establish its own sense of Group Reality as according to Benjamin (1978), as well as lingering in the struggle of Inclusion phase of group formation as according to Schutz (1978). Deciding what is real, what is present, and what is available to the group members, is reflective of the stage of the Group Is In Battle, as it struggles to establish its own truth and identity. Feeling unsure as to what step to take next for fear that one might slip and fall on the hard surface, may have been indicative of the sense of fear each member experienced in relation to sharing with other group members. Although most members were still feeling isolated and unsure about revealing deeper, personal issues with each other, it seems, however, that Yalom's therapeutic mechanism of Universality may have also been occurring (Vinogradov & Yalom, 1989). Expressing the ability to be able to relate to some members, perhaps some group members may have

experienced a sense of relief when they realized they were not alone with their problems.

Conceivably the wish to come together "as a family" and the fear that the family will be "cut down" or disintegrated, exemplified the uncertainty about the group as a whole, and the fear that one could be hurt as a result of the group, ie: "falling down" or being "cut down". Hence, the wish to escape and run away from such conflict. The reality of the introduction of a new member may have also instigated such fears in the group, as new members may potentially disrupt the fragile development of the group as a "family". Bion's basic assumption group of Fight vs. Flight might also be used to describe the group's need to preserve itself by either fighting someone or something, or by running away from someone or something (Rioch, 1970). In this instance it seemed that the group may have been playing with the idea of Flight from the work the group was beginning to elicit within them.

Week 2: Creativity Group

With the addition of one more member, the group was presented with the technique of monoprinting with acrylic paints. The group was asked to use this technique to explore the media in as many ways as possible. Talking about television programs and recent movies while working, the group experimented with colour, line and texture. After exploring several colours that "made a mess, as they got all mixed up", the group took a turn and followed the unplanned theme of "paradise". The group discussed one member's upcoming southern trip, and spontaneously worked on images of "pineapples, palm trees, sailboats, islands, the sun, and the ocean"

(Figures 13, 14 & 15). Following this, one member worked on creating a "wrestling match" where one opponent "is about to jump down on the other" (Figure 16). As well, this member depicted a football scene where the players were "all piled up on top of each other" (Figure 17). Another member discussed his new found urge to "get back into working out again", and used a separate piece of paper to draw a track field and a pool.

The concept of "wrestling and jumping onto one another", "piling up on top of each other" and "the need to get back into shape" again emerged as indicative that there remained a fear of being injured and the need to protect oneself. The fear of becoming enmeshed with others and thereby losing privacy often instills the need to maintain distance between the self and others (Schutz, 1978). Feeling the need to "stay on track", perhaps the group members expressed a sense of dis-ease as the group moved slightly, causing members to feel insecure.

The theme of paradise may indicate something vital is lacking which needs to be integrated (Chetwynd, 1982). As paradise reflects only one side of life, leaving out the reality of the negative, there may be a sense of ambivalence being expressed. Looking at this in terms the stage the group was encountering at that point, may be indicative of the wish to escape or to remain distanced (island). Although there was perhaps a latent wish to be "mixed up" or "huddled" together with the group, it seems there remained the fear that it may "become a mess", or one "will be jumped upon" or "piled up upon", which mostly likely created a sense of unconscious anxiety in most of the members. Therefore it would be safe to say that the group remains involved in dealing with the issue of inclusion.

Conceivably, the group may be concurrently experiencing another of Yalom's therapeutic mechanisms called the Existential Factor. This posits that members may find that the ultimate responsibility for the autonomy of the group is their own. They may learn that, although one can learn to be close to others, there is nonetheless a basic aloneness to existence that cannot be avoided (Vinogradov & Yalom, 1989).

Similar to the Expressive Group, the Creativity Group seemed to also be engaged in what Bion calls the Fight vs. Flight stage. This group appeared to feel secure enough on its own so that it did not feel the need to be protected by one individual or by the leader. The role of facilitating and providing materials and suggestive techniques, conceivably played a part in this response by the group. Providing support and feedback to individual members, it seemed the group members were able to do some work on their own, feeling secure enough to do so. According to Robbins (1987), group members can and do receive a sense of mastery in completing their own pieces of work. Some individuals may flower under instruction and praise. Others, however, may become enmeshed with their wish to please the therapist and may not be aided by direct, facilitative help. Therefore, he suggests, it is a good idea to understand the possibilities of the use of this particular style of working with certain group members, and to learn to use it when it can help the individual to obtain the courage and resources that might help them in their outside life situation (Robbins, 1987).

Week 3: Expressive Therapy Group

In this particular session it seemed as if one member was beginning

to take on the role of the "co-therapist" or "task leader" by offering advice and cliches to other members as they began to express themselves verbally and non-verbally. Discussion around the art work this third session included "being surrounded by fears" (Figure 18) and concerns whether or not they would be able to "re-integrate" back into the old way of life. The wish to "escape to an isolated country home with no phones" (Figure 19) was reinforced by another member's wish to "go sailing away". Another member depicted a "fashion show" and an "exercise group" (Figures 20 & 21) as things she enjoyed taking part in. One member created a bright "underwater scene" where a "volcano lies underneath" (Figure 22). To add to the diverse creations of this session, one last member portrayed a "double image tree where one tree is bleeding" (Figure 23).

Again it seemed clear that this group, still in its early stages, continued to struggle with its decision to be included and committed. The feeling of "being surrounded" by fears, and the worry that one will "not be able to re-integrate back to the old way of life", perhaps demonstrated the lingering sense of unrest within group. The wish to escape presented itself once more by means of "sailing away" or "escaping to a country home with no phones". Perhaps the absence of phones signified the fear of communicating with the group, and the wish to remain isolated, as communication was still too anxiety-provoking at this point. The "underwater scene" may have signified the unconscious beginning to manifest itself within the group. Perhaps the anticipation of the volcano erupting seemed frightening for the member that created it, as well as for the group, that it remained underwater, reducing its power to destroy. The exercise group may have represented the group's wish for the

ideal group situation where all members participate fully and similarly as in an aerobic routine. The fashion show may have represented the sense that group members felt they were being paraded in front of others, therefore resulting in the wish to retreat and remain solitary. The "double tree " imagery may have reflected the self and the group, as the group may have been beginning to resonate with itself.

Bion's emotional group state involving the basic assumption of Dependency, may be perpetuating itself here as the group still wished to attain security through one protective individual. Manifesting a childlike dependency, there may often become a conflict between the desire to express feelings irresponsibly and the desire to be mature and consider the consequences (Rioch, 1970). According to Benjamin (1978), the group dynamic of Group Leadership emerges from within the group itself in an effort to create a leader that the members can look to for direction. Because the anxiety, uncertainty and disappointment that may have resulted from the therapists not protecting the group members by providing the leadership for them, may have become too great, the group seemed to search for another "leader" to rescue them.

Week 3: Creativity Group

Presenting a variety of collage materials, it was suggested to the group members that they use the materials to recount a story, a dream, a vision, a poem, a cartoon etc... by means of the visual materials rather than through the traditional use of words. One member stated she did not wish to participate with collage materials as they reminded her too much of her recent hospitalization. Other members agreed. They were told

they had the option to work with any of the materials in the art supply cabinet as they wished, following the suggestions if they chose to. However, all members, except the original individual who protested to the idea, chose to try the suggested task.

Discussion followed the theme of hospitalization, where members shared their negative experiences of being "all drugged up", "sleeping all day", being "made fun of" by the orderlies while being "tied down" to the bed. Talk about how the hospital was "supposed to help, but didn't" pervaded the room as the group members worked on their own pieces. Discussion then turned to "pets" where it was shared that the pets have been "neglected" lately, how the pet "never gets out" anymore and is "confined" only to the small back yard area to play. Expression of the wish to be "a part of" of a large and famous football team, to "take a flight and bring along all of my favourite things about me", (Figure 24), and the desire to be "famous and well-liked" summarizes the themes of the group this session.

It seems at this point the group may have been confronting the phase according to Srivastva & Barrett (1988), called Members Want To Be Connected But Not Swallowed, as well as continuing with Schutz's phase of Inclusion. Members independently began engaging each other in dialogue and seemed to begin to initiate more risks in expressing support. It appeared as if the group was being discussed metaphorically as somewhat of a container, being "confined", "being a part of", and wanting to "bring my favourite things with me". Perhaps the members were sensing that they would like to be connected, but there remains a fear that they will be "made fun of", "tied down", "be neglected", feel "drugged up", or

realize that "although it is supposed to help, it didn't". The wish to be "famous and well-liked" may have reflected this desire to be connected, as perchance the members wanted themselves and others to be open. Yet the "confines of the small back yard" were still present. As well, and not unlikely, the group metaphor may have also reflected transference issues occurring in terms of the therapist functioning dually as a therapist and a staff member.

Week 4: Expressive Therapy Group

It seemed the group was expressing the ever present fears of sharing once more, as the discussion centred around the art work concerned "skating on thin ice" and the fear that one "may fall through". Will one be "laughed at" or will the others "help you out"? (Figure 25). One member depicted a "time for introspection" through the creation of a hollowed out clay figure. She verbally expressed her occasional need to be alone to relax and re-energize. However her clay piece depicted a very empty and fragile state. Another group member discussed "losing hope" as his image was "surrounded in black" encompassing "rows and rows of crosses" (Figure 26). One member expressed his "sense of loss" in selling his house. And finally another group member depicted a sense of "loneliness and confusion" in her collage (Figure 27). Together the group concurred that all were experiencing a "lack of energy and a great sense of anxiety".

One week "behind" the Creativity Group, it seemed as if the Expressive Therapy Group was encountering the Members Want To Be Connected But Not Swallowed stage (Srivastva & Barrett, 1988). The sense that there

was a desire to reveal personal issues, yet a strong fear that one "will be laughed at" continued to pervade. There remained a feeling of isolation and loneliness as in "losing" the house and family and being left with "nothing". Lacking energy yet feeling anxious, the sense of pervading death or that one may be swallowed reflected itself in one members depiction of the "rows and rows of similar crosses". If one were to be swallowed, one would become one of the masses, and therefore lose their identity as an individual. Or, alternatively, swallowing is also a metaphor of the wish to be transformed. The root metaphors in this phase seemed to have reflected the group's yearning to possibly establish deeper relationships without losing their identity. Yet there was still concern that the group may "overwhelm and swallow members in".

Week 4: Creativity Group

Using the technique of printing melted wax on sandpaper, the group experimented with variations of amounts of pressure, texture, and colour using the media available. One member stated he was "up all night" thinking. Discussion touched upon hospital stays once more, then changed quickly into questioning one member who had just returned from his southern trip, asking if he saw any "women in bikinis". Working on an "island scene" (Figure 28) and an empty sailboat, this particular member expressed his wish to have a companion to share his life with; "then everything would be better". Experimenting with trial and error, in the printing technique, one member practiced with the reversal of the words "Nike - Just Do It". Depicting a burdensome, large barbell being lifted, this member shared with the group his favourite pastime of "lifting

weights" (Figure 29). Another group member worked quietly on his own depicting "solitary sport activities" (Figure 30). A large "cherry" print that topped off the session, was created by one member who stated all he needed was a "large sundae for it to go on top of" (Figure 31).

Sensing that there was still the conflict between inclusion or isolation, there also seemed to be the feeling that the Group Is Moving according to Srivastva & Barrett (1988). Expressing the desire metaphorically to share or connect with one another, yet in this instance beginning to abandon the fear of being swallowed, statements such as "just do it", "trial and error", "having a companion then everything would be better", and "all this cherry needs is a sundae to go on top of", seemed to be descriptive of the group's possible wish to begin to share with each other, and commence the more intimate working stages of group processes. Conceivably sensing the need to establish a stronger connection with other members, the concept of "trial and error", as well as the "burdensome task" of lifting "heavy weights" may have echoed the group's wishes and fears concerning their battle with the issue of Inclusion, as the group navigated its still early stages in the group process.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Although the above observations of group metaphor as indicative of the group stage/phase currently being explored are limited, as only four of the initial sessions of group development were able to be examined, the findings obtained were still able to provide a fruitful realm of observations to consider.

In reviewing the overall findings taken from the spontaneous group

metaphor that arose within group discussion and/or art work, it would be safe to state that both distinct group styles functioned fairly similarly in terms of encountering specific group phases that have been established within the widespread study of group dynamics. Both groups were conducted differently with regard to technique, goals, style, therapeutic roles eliciting different types of transferences, and structure of the time available. However, despite the differences in group goals, it seemed as though both groups were concurrently passing through the beginning phases of the group processes as postulated by Srivastva & Barrett (1988) and Schutz (1978).

In following Case & Dalley (1992), all groups progress through a series of development from inception to termination. Groups often start off in an unusually passive role, relying on the leader to take control. They suggest that the group therapist should then encourage the group to develop their own skills and should remain somewhat "separate" in order for the group members to begin to work with each other. Anxiety and withdrawal is often next seen in the phases of development in groups, as members begin to feel more anxious and satisfied with the group as a result of its "pressure" to begin to "work" on delicate issues. Finally, report Case & Dalley, ambivalent feelings are acknowledged and the group is able to contain itself, and facilitates members' understanding and growth. As this was not exactly the goal of the Creativity Group, as the therapist remained active throughout the process, therefore producing a varied transference response, the inherent group dynamics of both groups involved proved that different types of groups do indeed possess their own unique character, yet also seem to confront pervasive common group forces

as well.

It seemed as if the groups were on their way to discovering that they were the creators of their own social reality, a sometimes slow process indeed. Since social reality is continually in flux, it should be kept in mind that the group's metaphors can create a "picture" of the group's sense of its own development.

After researching the abundant information on the "debate" between two almost oppositional approaches to group art therapy, I have come to recognize the very inherent and unique differences between the two styles, yet surprisingly, found some very parallel features between the two as well.

In an effort to discover a style of working that would best suit my own comfort level, I was able to discover reflections of myself within my behaviour, interactions, choices, mistakes, and successes in working with both groups. Any clinical interaction we as therapists engage in, be it individual or group, ultimately serve as a learning tool or stepping stone in our progressive development as therapists, as well as individual beings.

Looking at art expression metaphorically served as a transition from the world of words for its group members, making sense of the group's reality. For myself as a training therapist the metaphor clearly served as a poetic transition to my better understanding the functioning of groups as a whole, while at the same time enabling me to learn more about myself as a therapist and as a person searching for my own style. Working with both groups gave me the chance to experience what felt right for me. Not liking one better than the other, I have taken from both experiences

elements of the two styles that I felt most comfortable with. I preferred the discussion portion of the Expressive Group as compared to the open-endedness of the Creativity Group. I enjoyed the exploration of personal issues by means of the this approach. However I favoured the interactive, more social aspect of the Creativity Group as opposed to the neutrality of the Expressive Therapy Group's therapeutic role. I often felt the wish to encourage the Creativity Group members to further explore their own issues, however that was not the proposed mandate of that group. In any respect, I have greatly learned from both groups a tremendous amount about the various styles of group therapy and the inherent dynamics that lie within any group setting.

Robbins (1987) makes an extremely important point when he wrote:

"In therapy, patients and therapist alike are engaged in finding the artists within themselves. The therapeutic process for patients is an ongoing struggle to discover true inner representations and symbols and then give them form in terms of developing richer, more congruent living realities. Therapists tap the artist within in the ongoing process of maintaining the individual holding environments that will provide the space, energy, and impetus for patients to change"

(Robbins, 1987:21)

If we as therapists make attempts to examine or comprehend what is happening within the therapeutic relationship, we can be of help to the group members in providing the courage and resources they need. By responding to what they as clients need, as well as to what we as their therapists need in terms of being comfortable in our approach, I believe will benefit the process as a whole. Not only must the clients as group members be provided with the optimum group experience where they can

successfully explore their own space and establish a sense of reality for themselves, but we as therapists must also be provided with the optimum group experience where we feel most comfortable and suited to in regards to our technique and chosen approach in working in this truly intriguing area of psychotherapy. These necessities of both the clients and the therapist are of equal and utmost importance. This is probably the most significant thing that I have discovered during my research and practical experience in working with groups.

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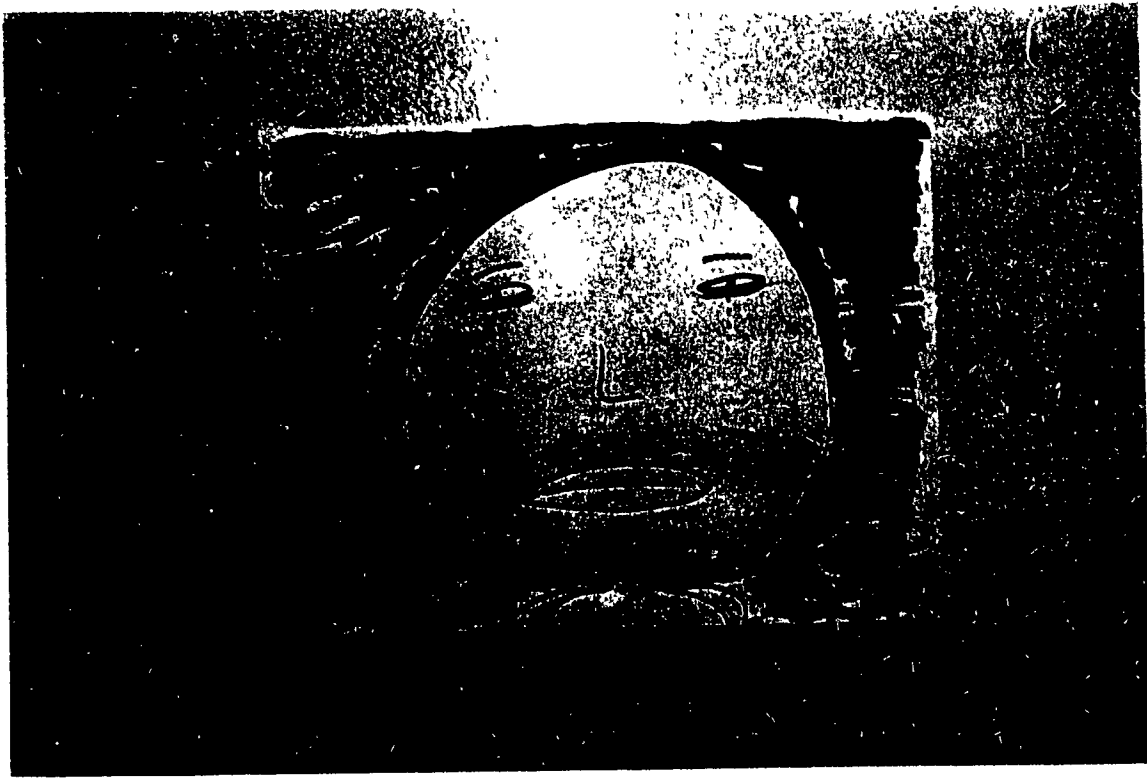


FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

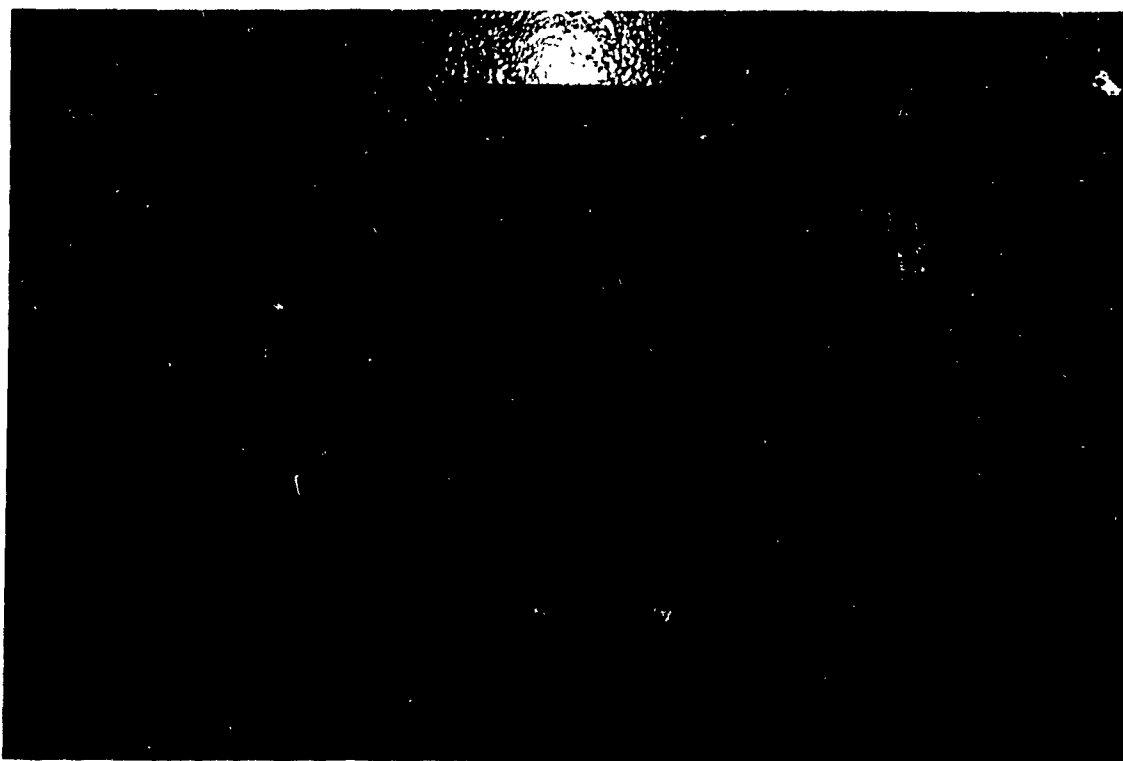


FIGURE 3

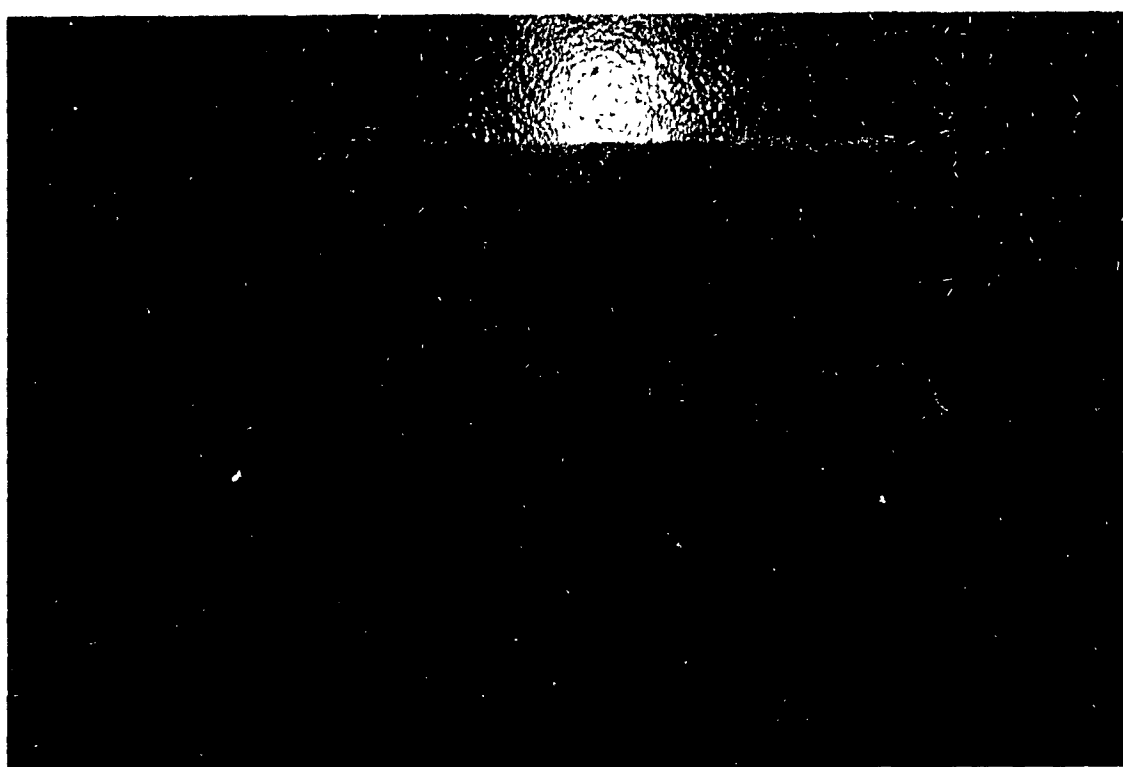


FIGURE 4

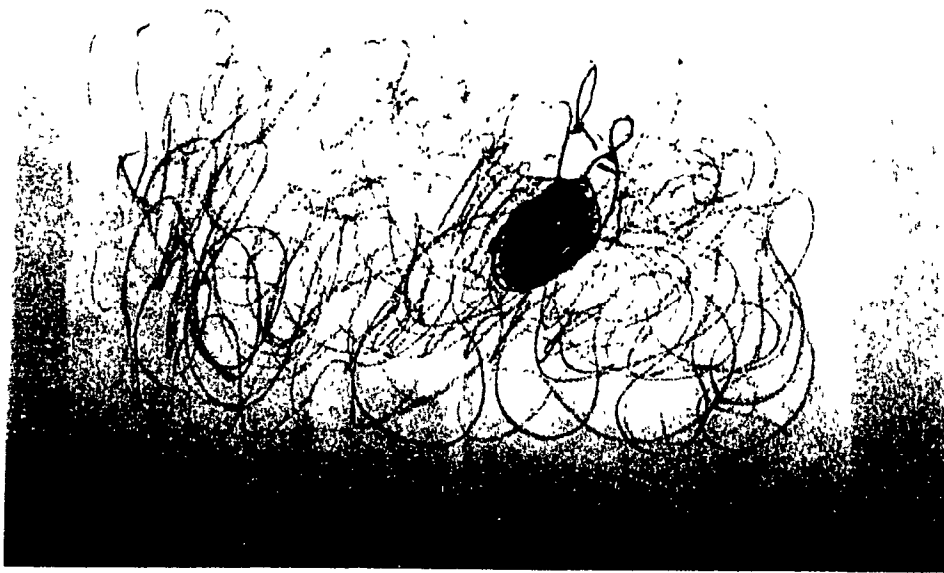


FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

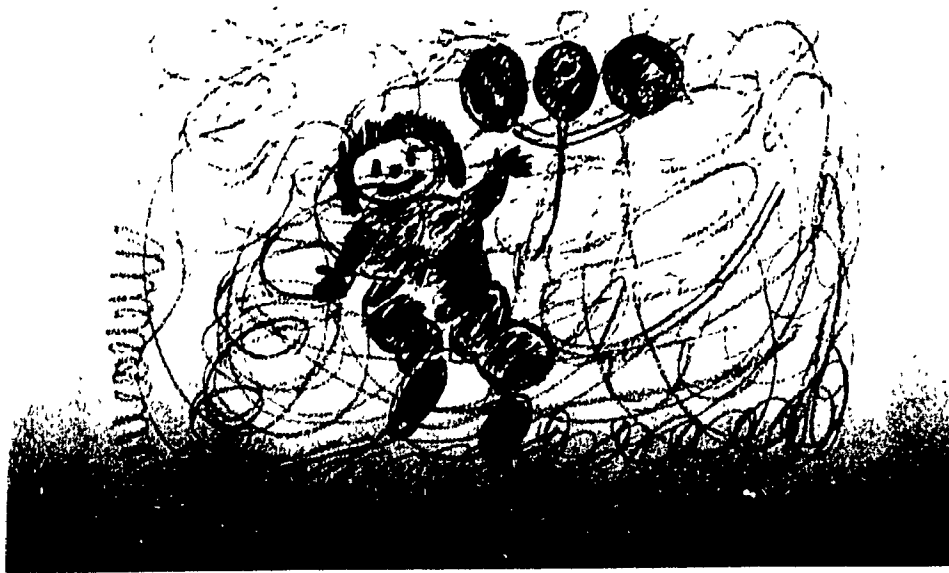


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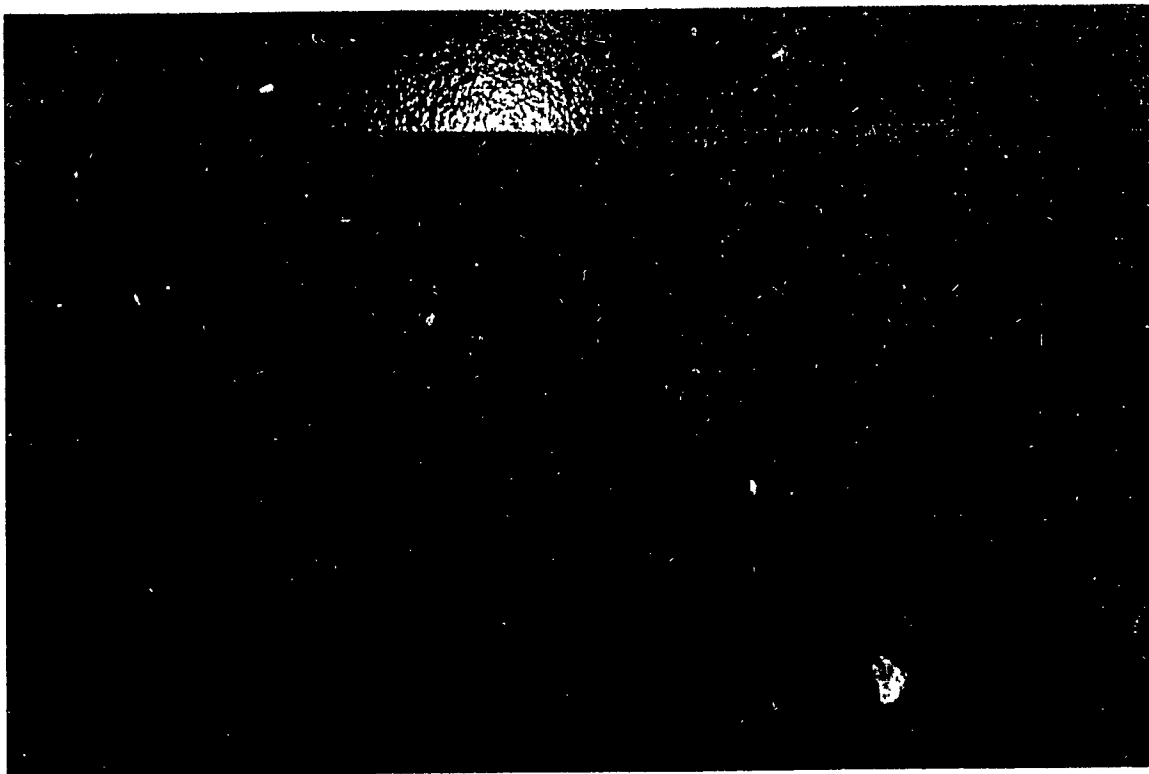


FIGURE 8

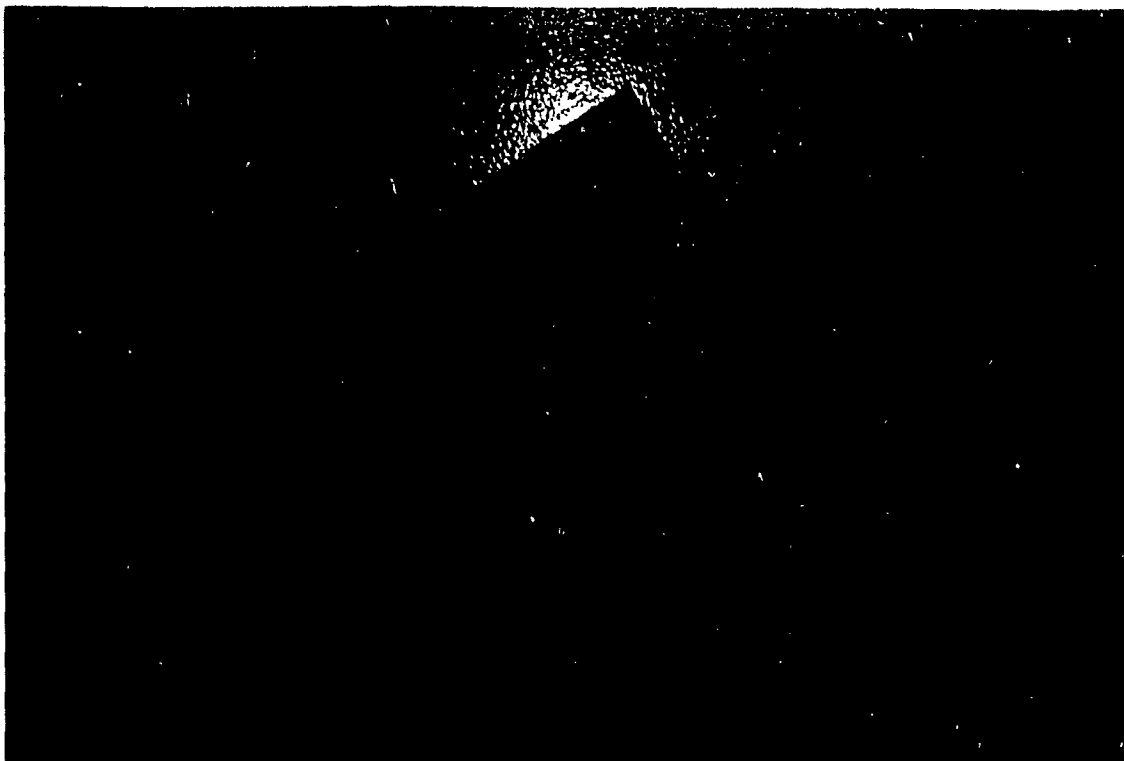


FIGURE 9



FIGURE 10

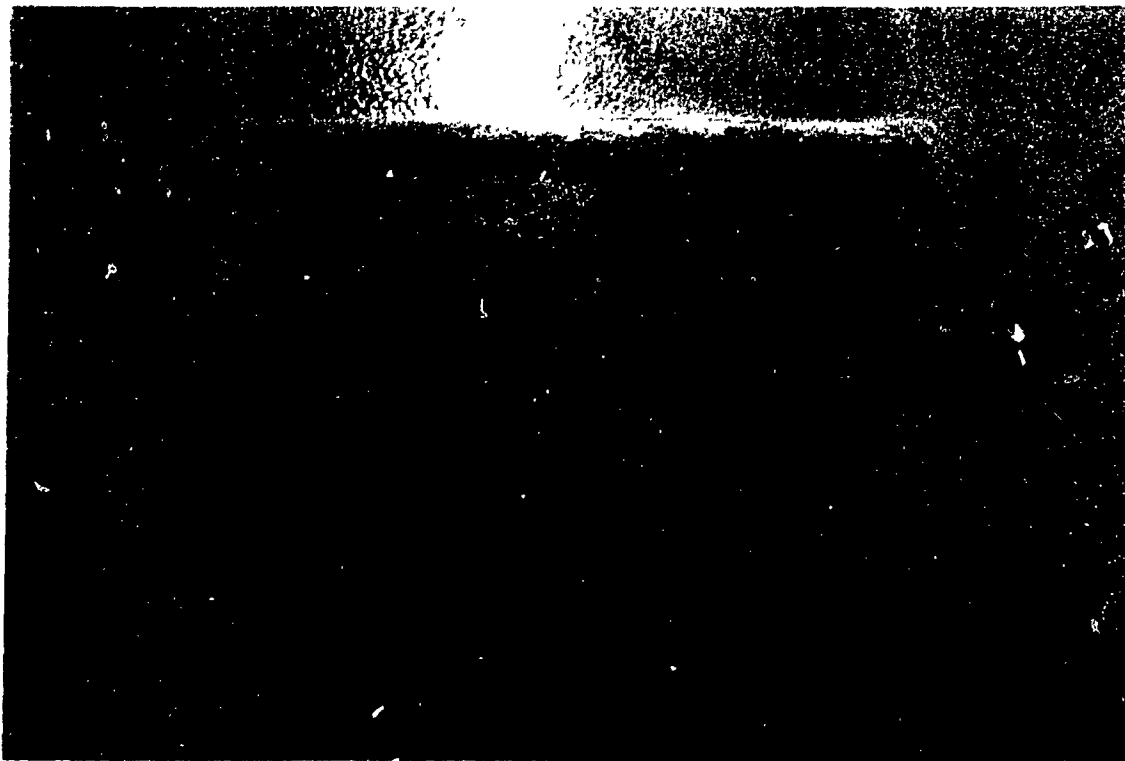


FIGURE 11

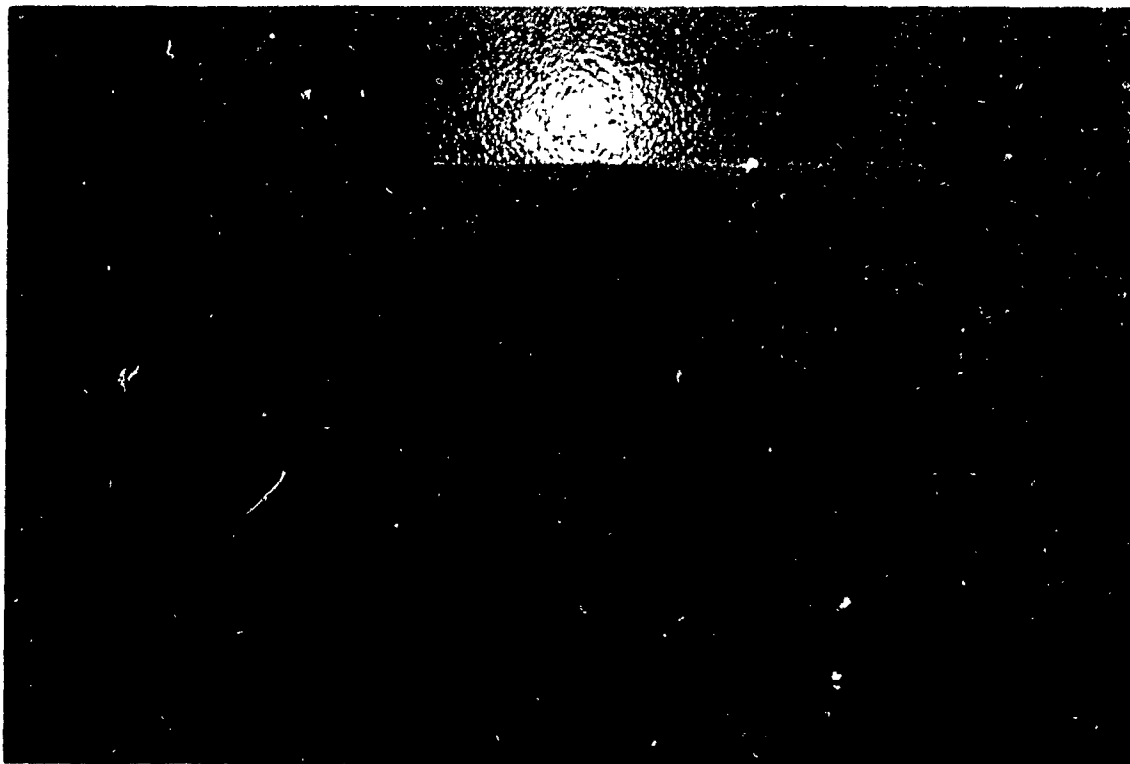


FIGURE 12



FIGURE 13



FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15

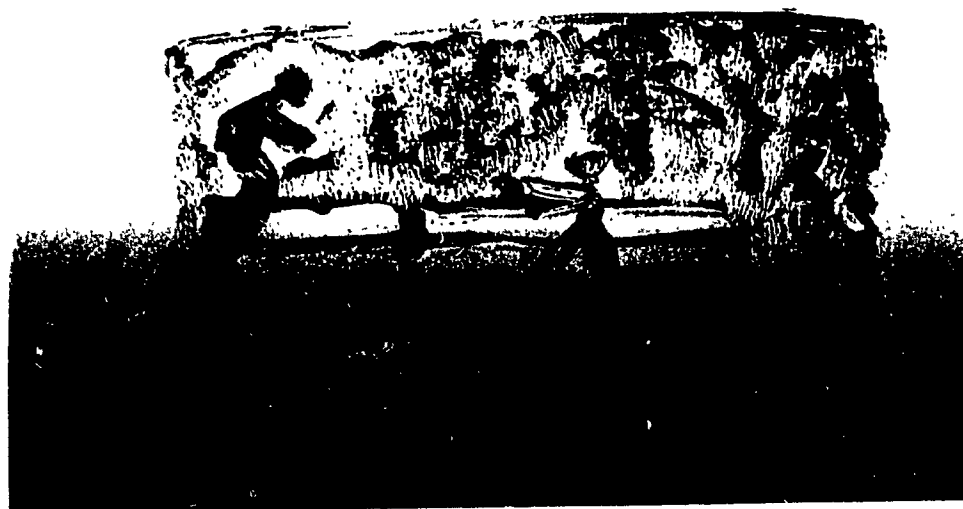


FIGURE 16

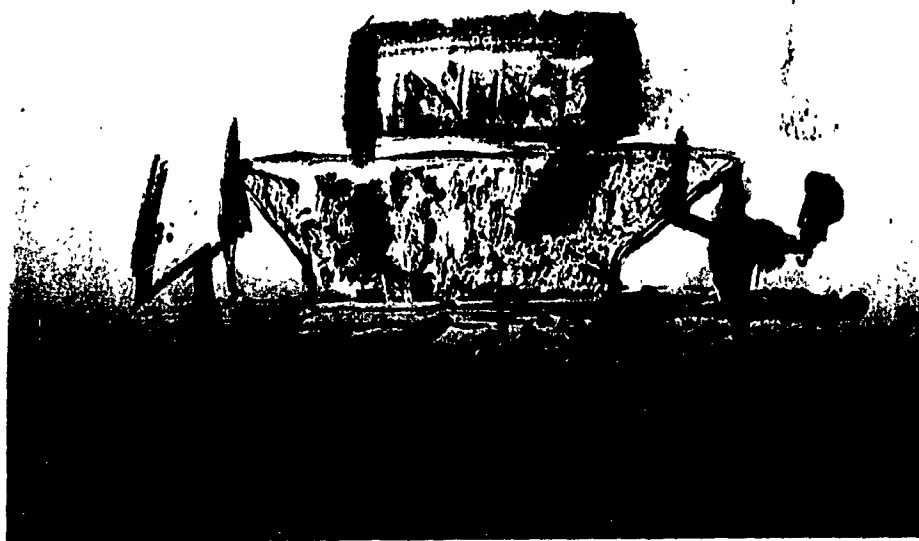


FIGURE 17

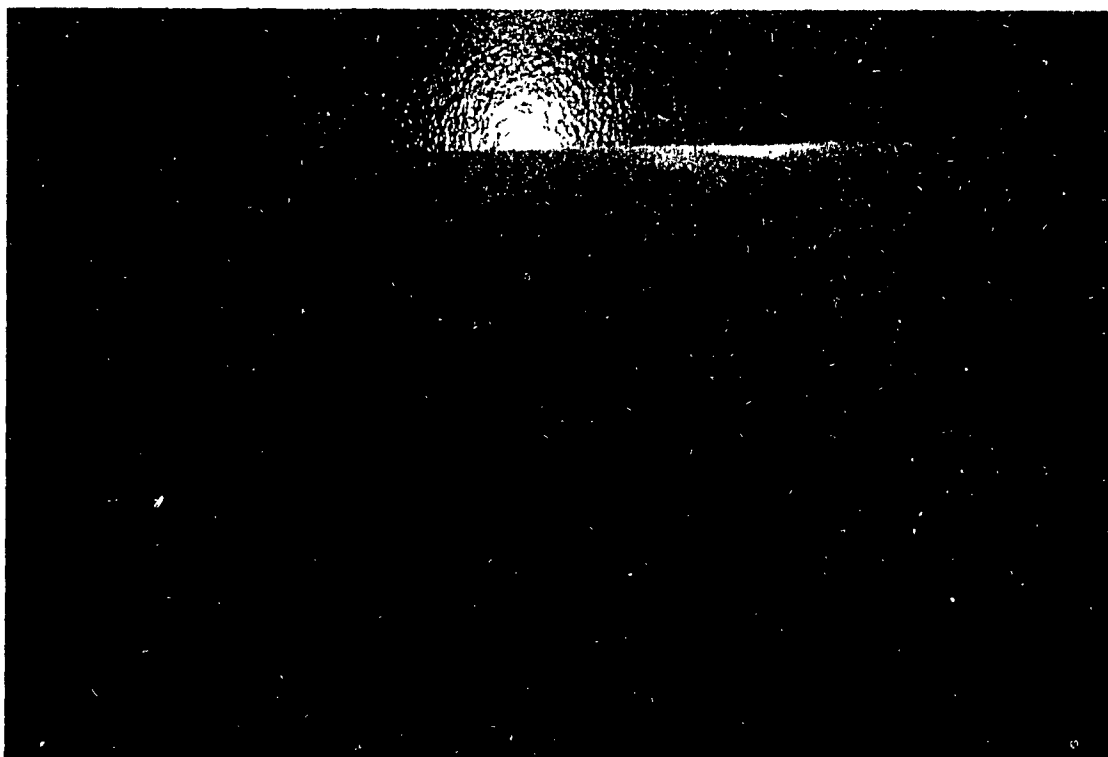


FIGURE 18

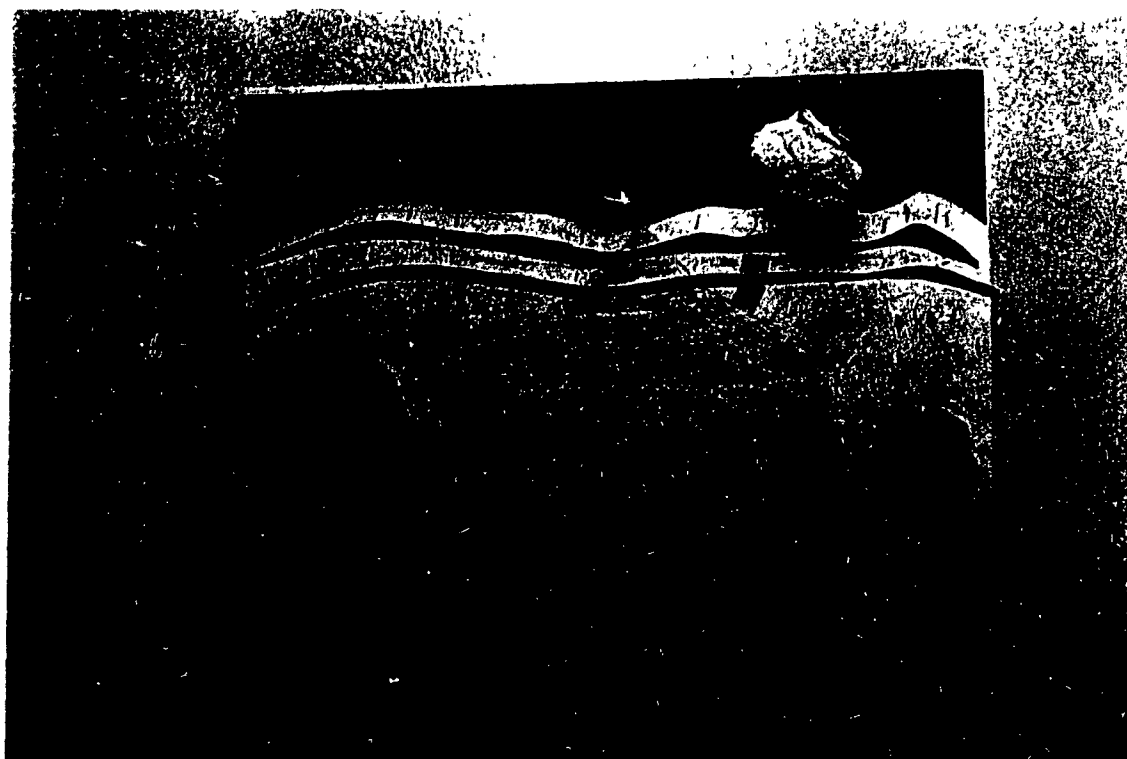


FIGURE 19

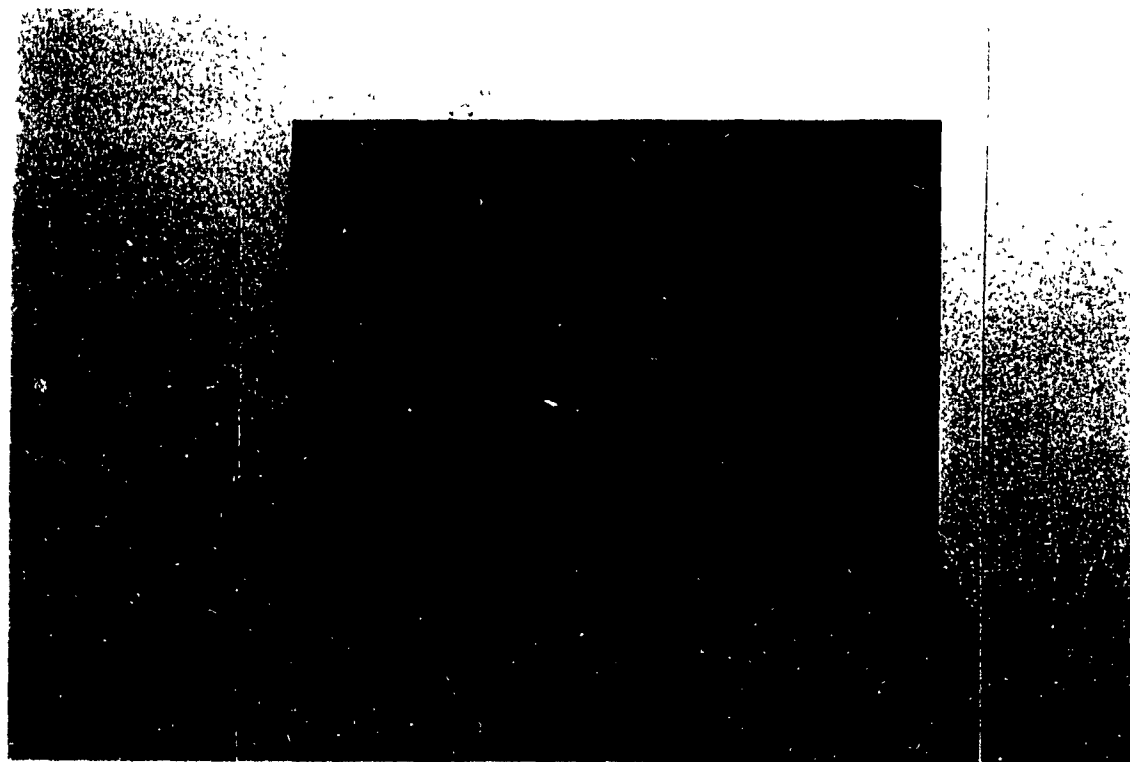


FIGURE 20

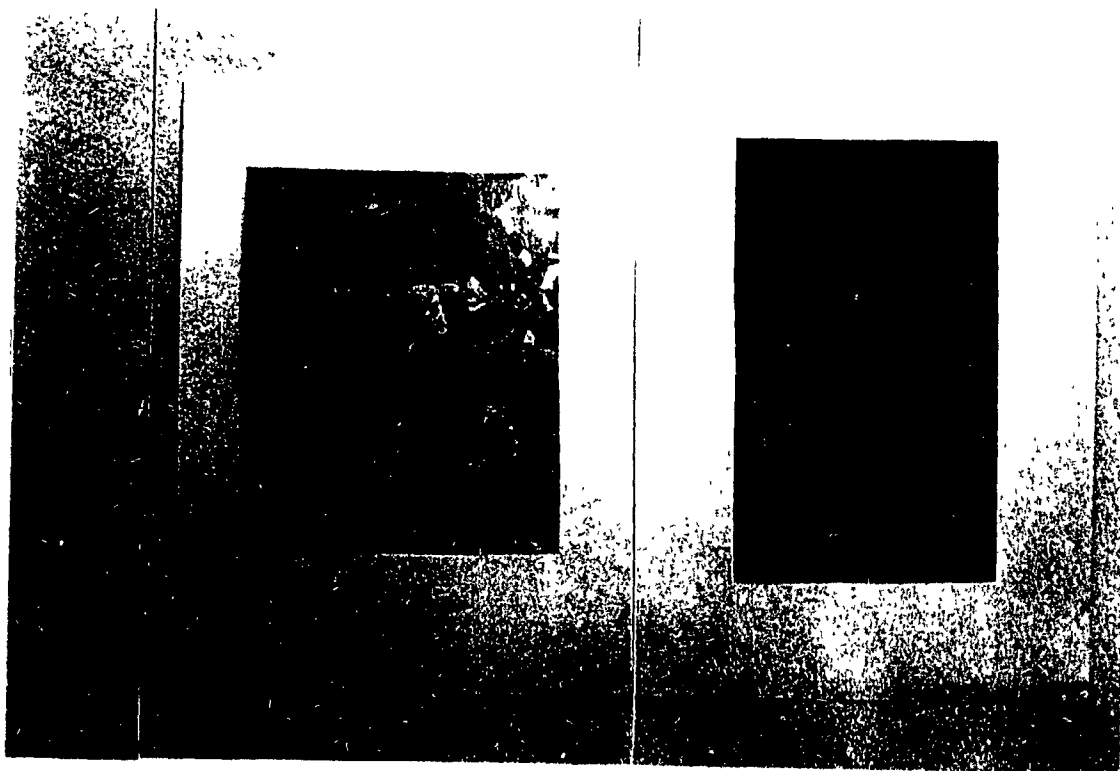


FIGURE 21

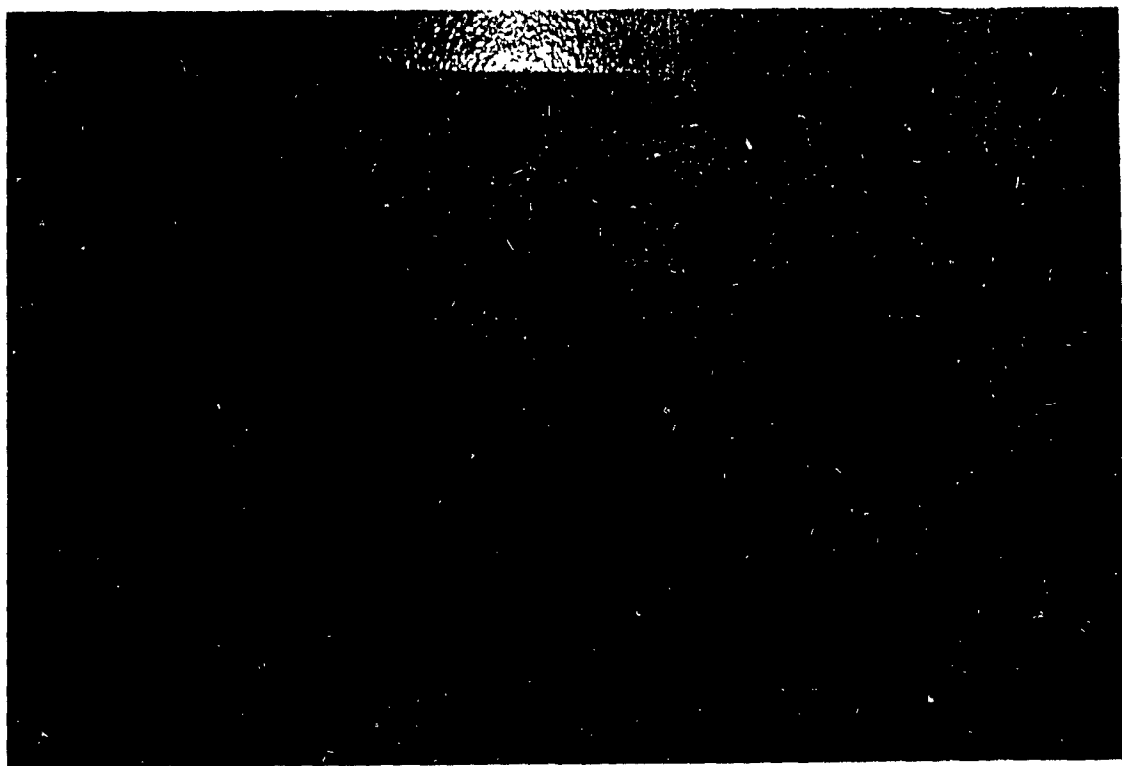


FIGURE 22

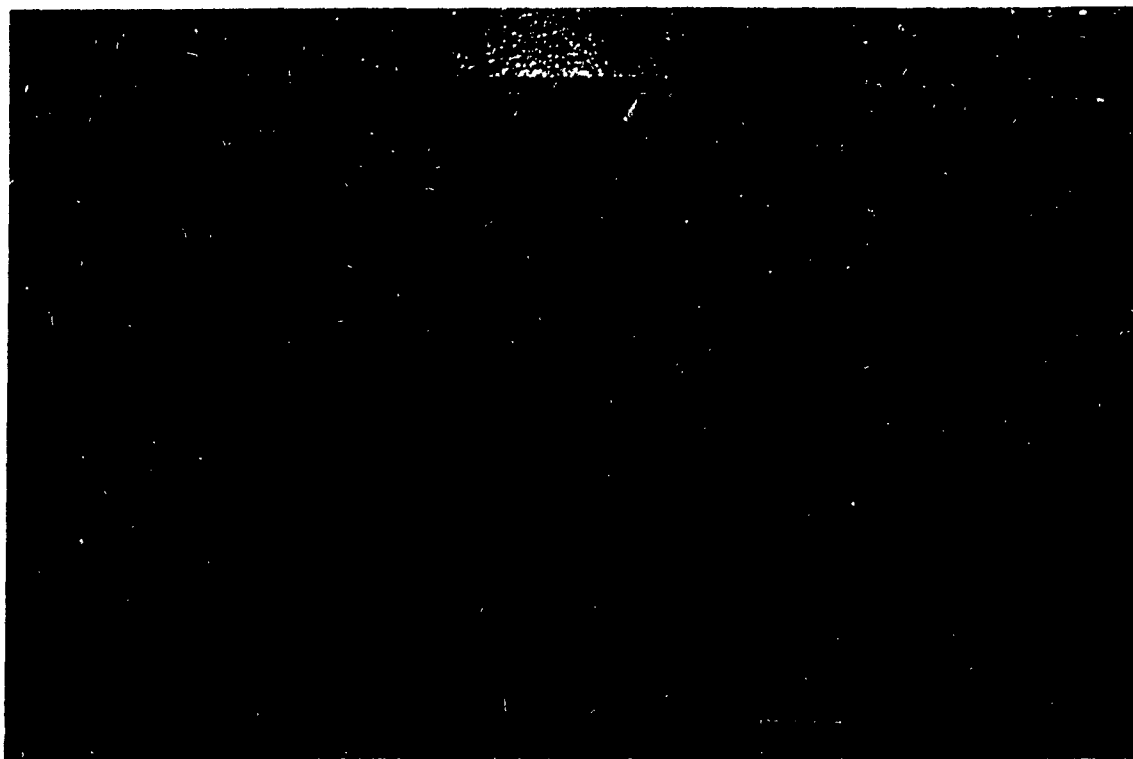


FIGURE 23

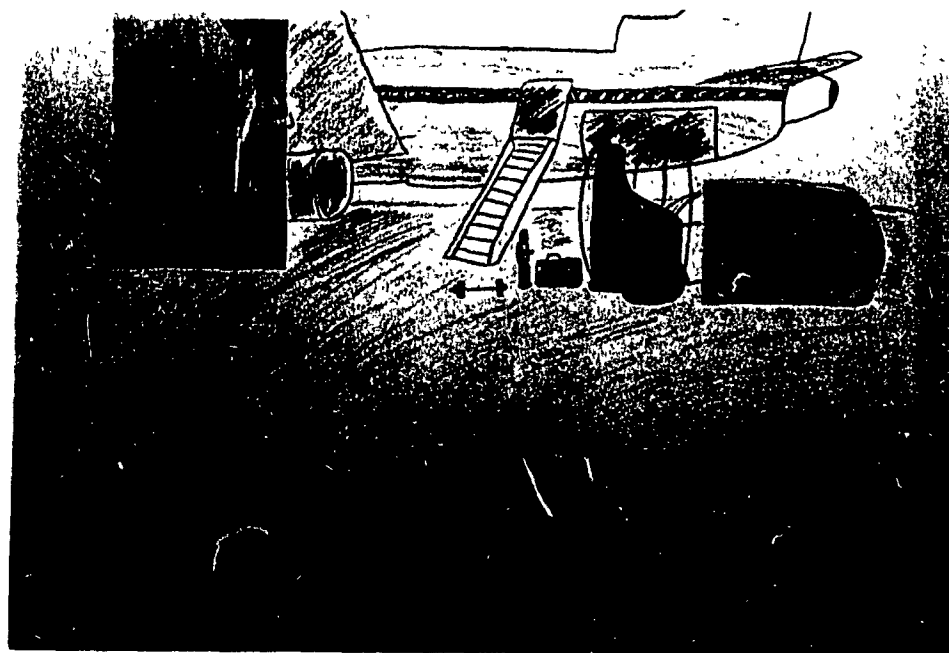


FIGURE 24

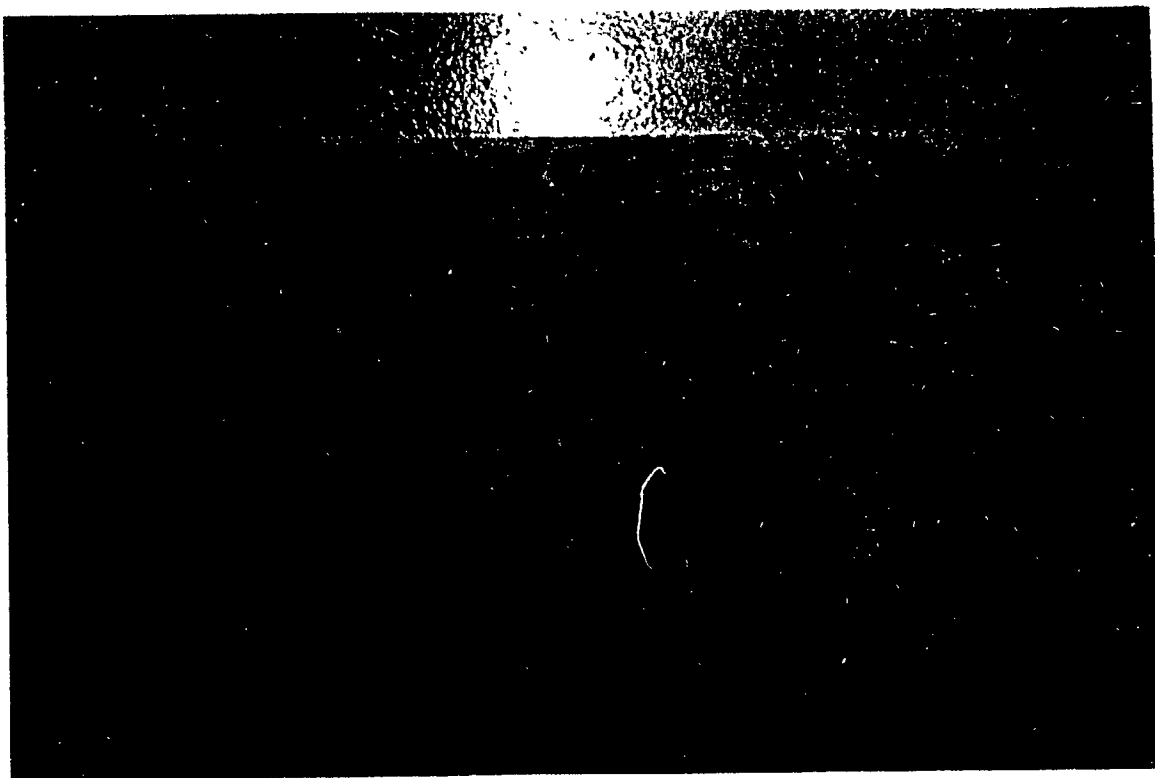


FIGURE 25

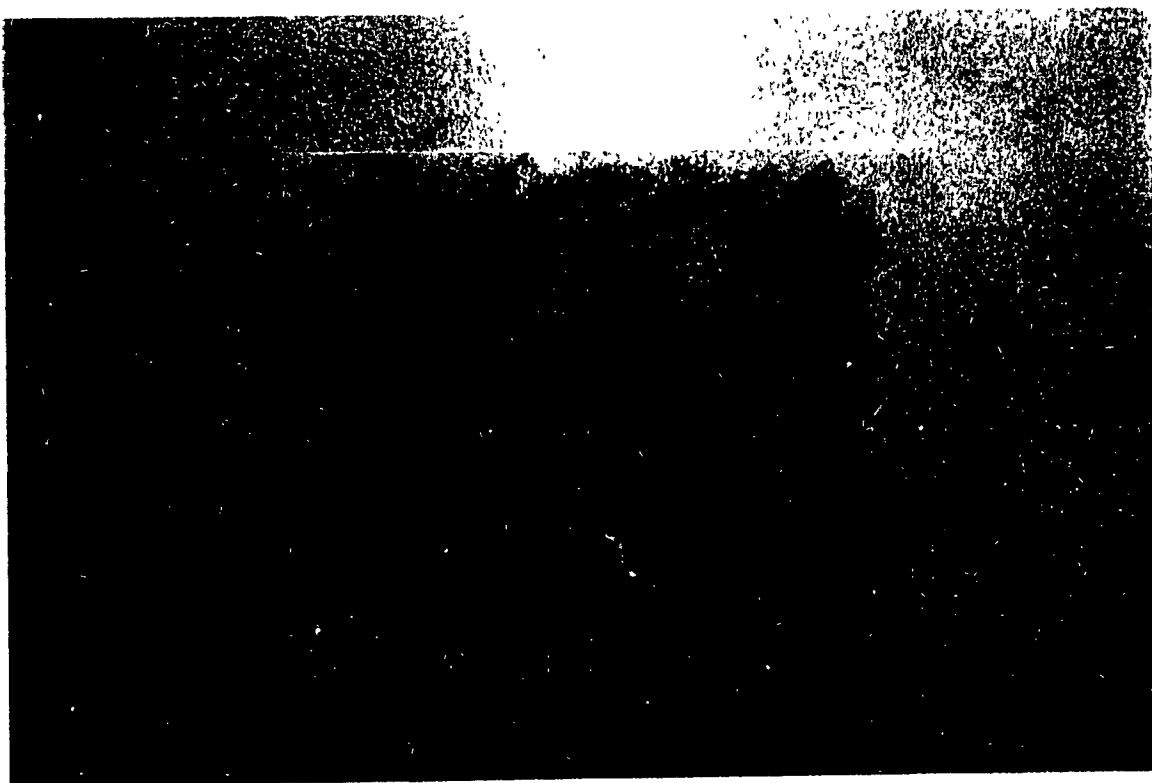


FIGURE 26

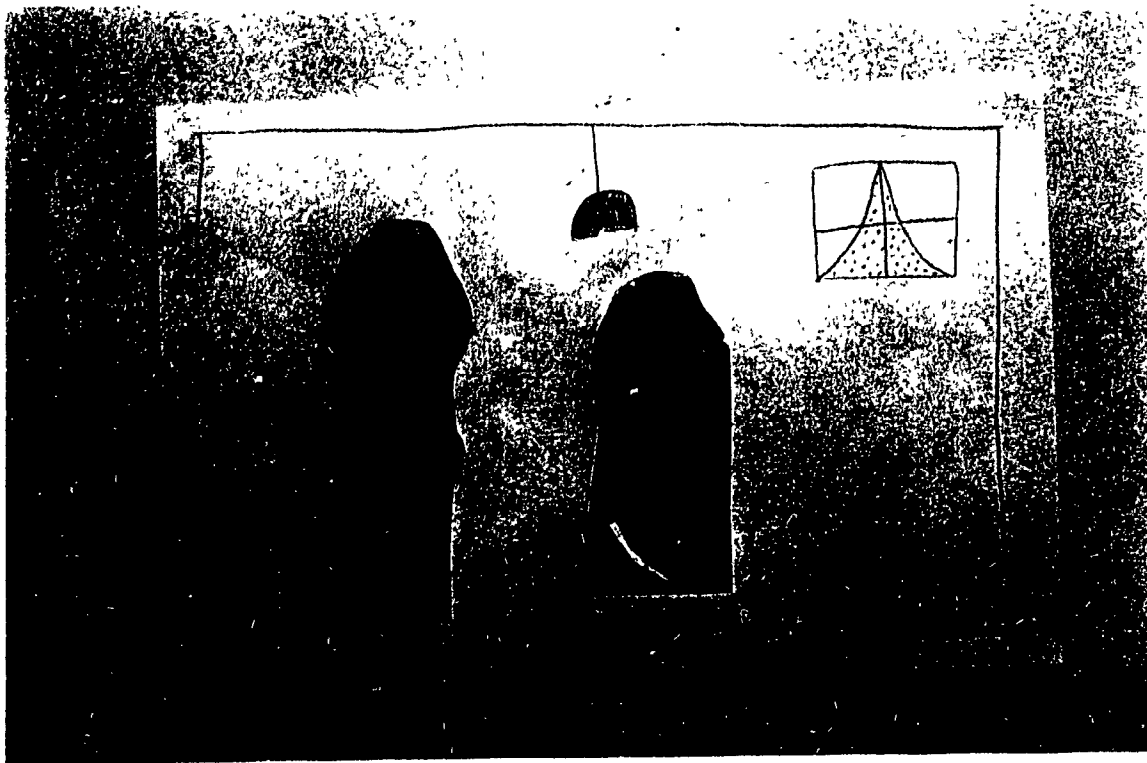


FIGURE 27



FIGURE 28



FIGURE 29

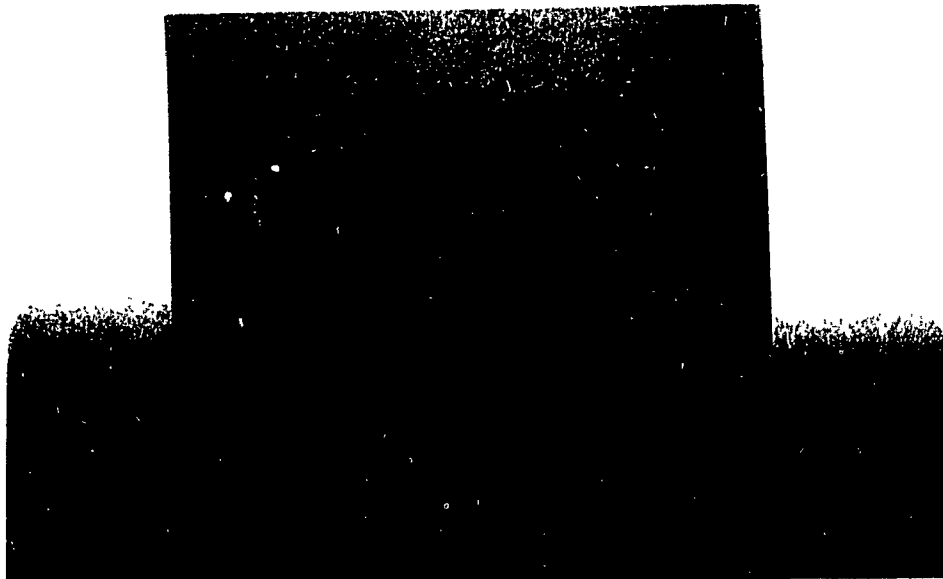


FIGURE 30



FIGURE 30

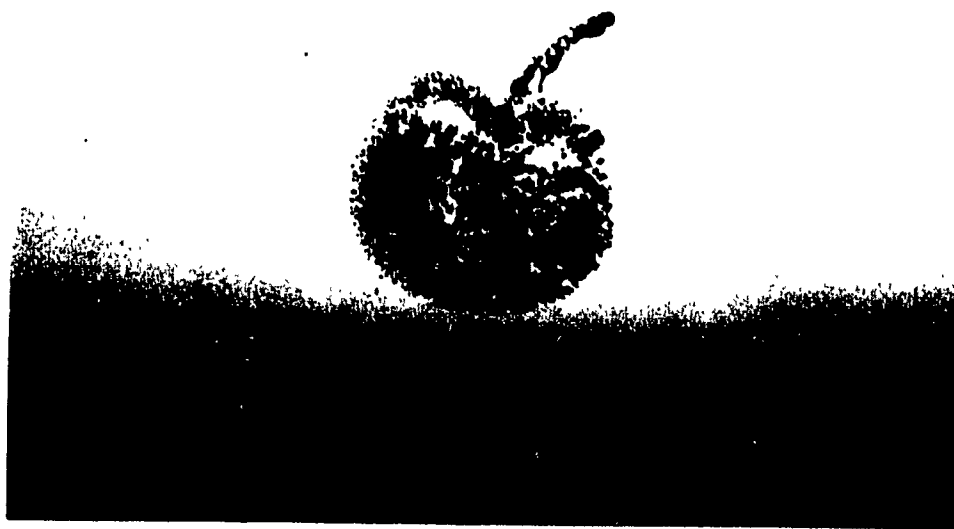


FIGURE 31