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A Documentation and Interpretation of Four
Children's Art Serials
Within the Lived Experience of
a Pedagogical Dialogue

Nancy Retallack-Lambert

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

January 1988

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ABSTRACT

A Documentation and Interpretation of Four Children's Art
Serials Within the Lived Experience of a Pedagogical Dialogue

Nancy Retallack-Lambert, Ph.D.
Concordia University, 1988.

This study is motivated by two questions: (1) a question about child art style--- what variety of child art style can be identified and (2) how to research rigorously and productively an activity as complex and contextually-grounded as early childhood artistic development. The methodology adopted is called documentation. This is defined as direct observation of a limited number of cases over a long period of time in their life-world situations. Four children were chosen on the basis of their diversity from the larger group of kindergarten children who had been observed weekly for three and a half years. Description and interpretation of their art making is informed by the art teacher's understanding of the teaching situations. The data is presented in nine accounts describing the lived experiences of art making for a teacher who wants to understand each of four children.

Key dimensions of each child's work are then distilled out of the accounts providing a matrix for tentative definitions of the four individual art styles. The researcher concludes by re-addressing theoretical and ideological concerns raised at the outset and proposing some implications of this thesis and its findings for further inquiry into children's art processes.

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Some studies are part of one's life for many years before they become public. This is such a piece of work, and its slow steady growth was helped by my family, my friends and the teachers at Concordia University. I owe special debts to Professor Cathy Mullen, who has given generously of her time during the last few years of the study, to Professor Elizabeth Sacca whose sustained interest in my project was important to me and to Robert Witkin whose humour and patience I appreciated. My colleagues, particularly Astrid Lagounaris, discussed ideas, read chapters and over the years, have proven themselves to be invaluable to the progress of my work.

Before the study took the present form as a thesis, I received help from many participants in our school system. Jean Pycock, Henry Horner, Clement Thibert as well as the teaching staff at the school where I carried out the inquiry, were all welcoming and helpful. The 21 children, particularly Philippe, Dawn, Christina and Scott, as well as their families, became my co-workers and for this I thank them one and all!

Finally, to my Mother, an artist devoted to the poetics of life, and to my Father whose social vision and pragmatism have long stood me in good stead, I say, your presences are in this work.

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PREFACE

This investigation began inconspicuously. It was nudged into fruition by some questions that haunted me in 1979. These questions related to my work in art education and they eluded easy explanation.

At that time, my tasks as an art educator called for me to work in two different functions within our educational system. As an employee of the provincial government, I was responsible for the evaluation and the follow-up of a programme of research proposals initiated by the Ministry of Education of the province of Quebec. A budget had been made available to the school boards to encourage them to improve the teaching of the arts in their elementary schools by doing school-based arts education research. My role was to oversee the evaluation of the research proposals and also the attribution of portions of the research budget to the school boards according to what was thought would lead to better teaching of the arts. In the process of analyzing the proposals and then working with the teams of people who were associated with the projects, I found myself asking these questions: Why were there no examples in the art education literature of what individual early childhood development in the arts looked like? Where were the contemporary expressions of art teachers who had worked with children over long periods of time and who had an understanding of the arts education situation? What would happen if the many projects which implied that arts education was a matter of teaching and

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learning specific techniques were modified so that the child was considered to be more important than the techniques which were being taught? How could child-centred research in arts education be carried out in the setting of schools?

In my second function, I worked as an instructor in a teacher education programme and often observed and helped students during their practice teaching. I spent time in many different classrooms and could see that in spite of the absence of structured art teaching, quite a lot of art making was going on. One day, for example, while helping a student teacher and the classroom teacher tidy up after the last of a group of kindergarten children had left, I found myself smoothing out crumpled scraps of paper rescued from the wastebasket. They showed unfinished drawings of people, animals, trees and vehicles and they had all been done outside the scheduled classroom activities. I was interested in these rejected graphic renderings, for in them I saw an eloquent testimony to focused attempts at translating the invisible into the visible. The abandoned drawings seemed to me to reflect struggles to achieve satisfactory images and the efforts I saw here were of the same quality as that which is generally associated with the creative processes of mature artists. I was touched by the children's intense processes of trial and error as they tried to obtain the correct curves in their lines, as they seemed to be trying to resolve formal problems such as the relationships between shapes on surfaces and as they tried to arrive at satisfactory relationships between pencils, hands, eyes and paper.

The learning which was evident in the scraps of paper was of a different kind than the learning which was evident in the carefully coloured stencils displayed around the classroom. It was less conventional and I saw in it focused mental and emotional energy. The quality of the children's intention was evident to me in the way the children emphasized particular aspects and used lines of varying intensity, in their overlaying and crossing out of details while trying to render complex ideas and in their frequent choices of themes which dealt with love, hate, death, fear and courage.

That evening at home I was still thinking about the scraps of paper. I wondered about the children's ongoing way of coming to grips with the world by making marks which represent their relationships with the world. Why was this aspect of the artistic process, that is, the struggle, the working and the reworking of ideas, not found in the art education literature? Why had no one ever undertaken the long-term study of individual style in child art? How could this be included in a body of literature which has traditionally centred upon finished products?

These questions were preoccupying me as I methodically sorted, dated and placed the scribbles and simple artwork that my own young children had done that day into individual portfolios. The chronologically-organized portfolios were important to me, because I knew that the main artistic choices had been made by the children and therefore I could think of each of my children as being a beginning artist. My long-term collecting of their work had given me an understanding of the

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quality of individual variation in the serials and of the relative importance of different themes, materials, techniques and also of different cognitive attitudes such as playfulness, reverie and logic for each of the children. The cumulative portfolios suddenly seemed to provide a good way to collect material in a classroom to show others what had always been of such interest to me.

The outline of a project to deal with both the questions related to research and the questions related to style in child art began to emerge. The project was to study the early individual artistic development of a group of school children in a setting organized for art making. I would act as both art teacher and inquirer and in this way could be sure that the teaching was sufficiently child-centred and oriented toward personal artistic expression. The children's serials would be gathered over an extended length of time and then analyzed to determine the unique and coherent style of each child.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Central Themes of the Thesis

The idea to document the phenomenon of child art as a process has grown and evolved into the present study. Two basic questions motivated the investigation. The first was, what stylistic differences will be noticed in the ways that children make art if they are encouraged to make their own choices and if they are followed over an extended period of time? I wanted to better understand the quality of diversity in children's art processes as these indicated individual identities.

The second was, what is the best approach for researching rigorously and productively an activity as complex, intractable and multi-dimensional as art making, an activity composed of interrelated affective, cognitive, social and physical factors? Thus, it was also the search for a method by which I could disclose that stylistic distinctiveness, so that it would be accessible to art teachers.

While the purpose of the study was to investigate the quality of the young child's art making, in order to accomplish this, it was necessary to simultaneously tackle the larger concern of how to research the creative development of children. An important sub-theme of the thesis thus became the consideration of the choices which I, as art teacher and researcher, made in the process of documenting the child art.

Preparing the Study

Traditionally in a dissertation, the first chapter, which sets forth the overall scope and direction of the particular investigation, also includes a literature review of the research and theory that have generated and culminated in the current study. In the area of early childhood artistic development, there are two problems in fulfilling this task.

One, as is often mentioned in discussions in research journals (Erickson, (Note 1); DiBlasio, (Note 2); Lachapelle, (Note 3)), many researchers and theorists consider that the field of art education is in a pre-paradigmatic state. For example, Wieder (Note 4) pointed out that style in childhood art has "not yet been traced to its developmental origins". In such a preparadigmatic field, researchers do not create studies or derive hypotheses in a cumulative way, because the problems they face have yet to be transformed into normal-science puzzles. A literature review would therefore be comprised of bits and pieces from this and that research project, rather arbitrarily linked one to the other. The problem of synthesizing such material is that there are many methodological disagreements, the areas under study are unclearly delimited and the small body of research which focuses on developmental issues has not been found relevant by curriculum designers. However, later in this chapter I will examine the work of some art educators who represent exceptions and who therefore provided me with models upon which to build my research approach.

Secondly, and as Clifford Geertz says of cultural anthropology, to a large extent research in childhood art-making

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is not an experimental field in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication (Note 5). Thus, studies do not build on other studies in the sense of trying to complete what the previous study left out, but rather "better informed and better conceptualized, they plunge more deeply into the same things". In child art style and development, it is accurate to speak of current work as such re-entering of the same territory. Just as Geertz further claims that preliminary progress in such research is marked less by "a perfection in consensus" than by a "refinement of the debate", ("What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other"), my reading of the literature pointed to the ideological distinctions among researchers of the phenomenon of child art.

The field of art education has begun to take the notion of the creative process seriously and is only now on the threshold of applying the notion of process to its own research enterprise. Indeed, Beittel's 1973 manifesto in favour of a new approach to art education research marked the first systematic effort to point out the dangers to the field in maintaining a rigidly positivistic attitude (Note 6). My consideration of the literature will thus take the form of a closer look at those in the field who have been remarkable for their conviction that art in education is process and who have, by their examples as teachers and researchers, provided me with images of practice grounded in theory. I will analyze their studies from the perspective of how I look at art education and how I conceive of the important questions facing the field and informing my research.

Since I believe that the requisite of good teaching is responsiveness to the child and that this is the basis upon which art education, as an ideology, exists, the examples I have chosen to focus upon all represent different ways of perceiving, conceiving of and responding to the child.

Three Bodies of Work

Which have Bridged the Gap Between Theory and Practice

Central to the process of this inquiry is the notion that the teacher's responsiveness to the child is an important factor in the child's artistic development and in the teacher's ability to identify the child's artistic style. While the early literature in the field of art education implied that there should be a qualitative exchange between the child and the art teacher in order to avoid stereotyped art making (Cane (Note 7); Cole, (Note 8); De Francesco, (Note 9); Johnstone, (Note 10); Richardson, (Note 11)), the nature of a pedagogical dialogue which could achieve this was not explained. I will examine here three well-known art educators who discuss and exemplify the issue of responsiveness: Henry Schaefer-Simmern, Victor Lowenfeld and Kenneth Beittel. I will point to both the contributions and the limitations of each person's work, as understood in terms of what an art teacher can know about the student's art process. Each of these art educators had a distinct point of view on art education and each discussed the student artist and the teaching of art in a personal way.

Henry Schaefer-Simmern

Schaefer-Simmern (Note 12) emphasized the importance of the

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teacher being immersed in the on-going art processes of his/her students. He said that only by developing an empathetic identification with an individual way of making art can the teacher teach adequately. Since his groups of students were very small (seldom more than five or six at a time), he cultivated a method of nurturance which concentrated upon reading the direction of his student's image-making, proposing an expansion of that person's theme in personally appealing art materials and insisting that whenever subject matter was changed, the new subject be derived from the previous one. He believed so strongly in the necessary unfolding of artistic tendencies that he apparently was not dismayed that his samples looked amazingly alike. Apart from the choice of theme which, according to Schaefer-Simmern, must always be figurative, the art serials are, in terms of expression and form, very predictable (Note 13). What is most clearly seen is a certain historically-situated, West-European attitude toward art and craft.

Schaefer-Simmern upheld a theory of art education which was drawn from the ideas of his teacher Gustaf Britsch. He saw the actual structure of drawings as being determined, invariant and universal. He believed that whether one begins drawing at two or at twenty, the same steps in the growth of the image-making ability will be evident, provided that one has access to drawing materials and is not pushed into the activity of drawing (Note 14).

While there is general support for the idea of a somewhat invariant drawing process (at least at the very beginning of

artistic development) (Note 15), as well as for the idea that an art-making situation which has the ambition of being pedagogical must systematically support the expressive needs of both the teacher and the student in the situation, Schaefer-Simmern's art education theory presents a problem. Not only is there an ambiguity of intention (that of teaching art according to a certain understanding of how this happens naturally), but also a contradiction between the objectives (art making) and the means (teaching). That is, art making is essentially a private engagement with culture which is complex and constantly changing while Schaefer-Simmern's teaching was built upon the idea that there are laws which govern progress in art and by which he could teach. I believe, therefore, that the unfolding of artistic activity as, Schaefer-Simmern demonstrated it, was highly determined by the protected nature of the art-making situations, by the intimacy of the small groups and also by the relatively mature ages of the participants in his workshops (Note 16).

When we consider that Schaefer-Simmern's book contains what may well be the first published documentation of individual art education serials (as opposed to art therapy serials) it is helpful to remember that he was teaching small groups of highly-motivated adults at a time when the social importance of art was well accepted. His work provided one unique narrative of personal experience in the art room and was important because it opened the way for other practitioners to overcome the theory-practice dichotomy. It provided a timely and much appreciated documentation of art education work.

Viktor Lowenfeld

Lowenfeld's writing also included some indications as to how he thought the teacher could guide the artistic development of the child. Unlike Schaefer-Simmern, who illustrated his books with examples of naive adult art, Lowenfeld's popular teacher textbook, Creative and Mental Growth, which was published in seven editions between 1948 and 1982 (Note 16), addressed the classroom situation and included examples of children's art which demonstrated developmental stages and also perceptual types. These categorizations were obviously important to Lowenfeld's understanding of childhood artistic growth. They informed the suggestions he gave teachers as to how to become more responsive to children making art.

In Lowenfeld's words, "the teacher must behave in a warm friendly way; must provide an atmosphere conducive to inventiveness and exploration as well as production in art. A poor art teacher might be worse than no art teacher at all" (Note 17). He wrote at length about the necessity of the teacher identifying with the children and he insisted that teachers who know how to support and encourage children in their individual modes of expression and who learn to extend the frame of reference sufficiently so that each child has to stretch slightly, make better art teachers than do competent artists. Lowenfeld puts forth an idyllic human relationship where response is just enough and not too much since (in Lowenfeld's words) "every drawing or painting becomes a natural means of the youngster's extending his own frame of reference" (Note 18). The

problem with this view is that teaching art is not as easy as that and Lowenfeld had not taken into consideration the basic asymmetry of the teacher-child relationship. Since his vision of the function of art in general education included the making of art as a means to happy, self-directed social integration, the message that teachers received was that with little active participation from them, by their simply responding to a need on the part of the child, good art teaching in the classroom could be accomplished. All emphasis was placed on the child, the child's emotions and motivations, and this corresponded to what many teachers wanted to know about. The implication that the child's meaning would be evident to the teacher was an enormous presumption, considering that Lowenfeld placed little importance on the artistic preparation of the teacher, preferring instead to have faith in the humanistic qualities of the teacher.

Lowenfeld, in accordance with the educational needs of the time within which he was working, was trying to change the authoritarian tradition of teaching by encouraging teachers to simply provide children with art materials and follow them in their individual quests. This was demanding a great deal of non-specialized teachers and one can wonder about the motivations and the desires of the classroom teachers (upon whom fell most of the responsibility for applying Lowenfeld's ideas), unprepared as they were to enter the art dialogue themselves. His theory required that classroom teachers, who were expected to be directive and controlling in other teaching tasks, suddenly become, during the art period, patient, sensitive and responsive to the child.

Based upon my experience working with classroom teachers, I believe that teachers understand that the quality of their workaday life is largely determined by the quality of their relationship with the children in their group. As I see it, Lowenfeld's book gave them some hope that indeed they could be in a sincere and rewarding way. That is, most classroom teachers want to include art in their teaching since art in our society is held to be of intrinsic value and they recognize its educative value.

Although Lowenfeld's laissez-fairism, which he always defended on the grounds of democracy, was roundly criticized by the Brunerian curriculum planners on the grounds of its ambivalence regarding curriculum planning and evaluation, the fact that his book is still, after forty years, the most popular textbook for teachers (Note 19) I view as an affirmation of the classroom teacher's indomitable belief that qualitative co-existence between teacher and children is possible. However, Lowenfeld's plea for responsiveness was easy prey for the hard-minded curriculum planners who had no trouble showing that the vague age-stage guide to understanding graphic development and the rule-of-thumb haptic and visual typologies which were intended as general guides to practice would become a set of hard and fast rules when placed in the institutional setting (Note 20).

With Lowenfeld, we are again confronted with one person's experience and one person's vision. Unfortunately, his work was interpreted as a definitive argument instead of what it was, an application of one talented and impassioned art educator's

experience onto the complex reality of general education.

Lowenfeld's stages and types were intended to be devices by which a teacher would have access to the individual art process, but they ended up interfering in the child-teacher dialogue. They interfered because general rules about child art, which were intended to help teachers identify artistic behaviour, posited behaviour as separate from the teacher and at a distance from the teacher. Such remarks in the literature as

Art teachers and others interested in the education and well-being of young people must take more seriously than they have, what I shall call the structure of affect...the dynamic forms of feeling expressed by youth today. Feelings activate behaviors that result in the making of works of art and in turn arouse feelings (Note 21).

evoke a kind of cause and effect chain and put teachers in the position of trying to understand how the mechanism works, then attempting to apply a rational solution to a rational problem. From my experience working with student teachers and classroom teachers I have learned that teachers faced with such proposals are at first intimidated, then baffled; they then become indifferent or worse. Such proposals imply distance of the teacher from the child as well as of the child from the educational material and of the art educator from the teacher. Behaviours are conceived as being somehow separate from the person; they are observable, analyzable, usable. From my point of view, such a focus is the antithesis of the pedagogical meeting.

Kenneth Beittel

Kenneth Beittel, in many ways, continued the projects of

both Schaefer-Simmern and Lowenfeld. All three inquirers approached art teaching as a metaphor for being itself, as a profound and living dialogue with otherness. The distinction between the two just discussed and Beittel is that Lowenfeld and Schaefer-Simmern accepted certain universal characteristics of art-making, such as perceptual types (visual and haptic), cognitive types (synthetic and analytic) and the necessary phases of learning to draw during the initial stages of their investigations while Beittel didn't. The presumption of all three, however, is that art making is as basic an activity as is language and that a nurturing environment is necessary for artists to develop beyond primitive image making.

Another difference in Beittel's approach is that he was much more aware of his own intrusion in the art making situation and went to great lengths to make himself as invisible as possible. He did this, first, by adopting methodologies such as taking time-lapse photographs of art student's drawing processes to avoid unnecessary "contamination", and later, by accepting the influence of the artist-student by the artist-teacher. At that point, he elaborated a process within the tradition of phenomenology which would permit him to remain close to the flow of consciousness of his artist-students. He believed that art education has nothing to teach because it knows nothing about the intentions of children while they make art. Thus, his project, which was worked out with adult artists within the confines of a specially designed drawing laboratory (Note 22) was an attempt to come to an understanding of artistic intentionality. Key words in his inquiry were artistic

causality, (that is, the necessary impetus in psychic structure which leads people to make aesthetic objects), idiosyncratic meaning, (that is, the understanding that the process of art is determined by private feelings and thoughts), intentional symbolization, (that is, the process of embodying the initial impulse which is done in an ongoing dialogue between the artist and the work, giving continuous feedback to the artist as to the degree of success of the work). Such focus underlines the importance of the artist for Beittel (Note 23).

The sincerity behind a teacher's values matters little, for the projection of his own tacit criteria on others, by our experience in the drawing lab, would predictively almost never match the subjective sense of rightness of the student. As such, it cannot help but sap self confidence and motivation.

As a researcher, Beittel was the first to treat art production in terms of serials. He also insisted that it was important for art educators to provide for the opportunity to reflect upon their own thinking within the investigation setting as well as to provide the means for the artist to carry on an autonomous art process. His research was considerably different from that of Lowenfeld and Schaefer-Simmern, both of whom focused upon the student and were influenced by sketchy notions of developmental theory in that he did not posit universal laws. Beittel's contribution to the field of art education was significant because it recognized the importance of explicitly including the various human meanings which were making themselves visible.

In Beittel's 1973 elaboration of how he thought the artist-teacher's responsiveness should be represented, he showed

how a cautious, questioning process could allow the teacher to dwell within the ongoing artistic serial. This was known as the formative hermeneutic mode of inquiry, and as carried out with individual art series, entailed the gradual building up of interpretation over a period of time and through discourse about the immediate experience. As was demonstrated by Patricia A. Smith (Note 24), the formative hermeneutic mode could also serve as a teaching approach which allows the teacher to come to what she considers to be a universal grasp of a particular artist's artistic intention. This is possible because the process is attended to from many points of view and is carried on over a considerable period of time.

The problems that Beittel's research has left us are all, in one way or another, related to curriculum (Note 25). Since education implies intervention, it is hard to reconcile the one-to-one encounter exemplified within his approach with the demands made on the teacher by a group of children. Also, the world of the classroom imposes an existential reality on the child which cannot be considered separate from the child, and thus, any inquiry into child art making which would attempt to isolate the artist from outside interference would, in many ways, be a contradiction for the child and for the teacher with the child. However, Beittel's attempt to convince art educators that the idiosyncratic nature of the art process had to be given more attention has been an important contribution. He has shown that the teacher can take steps to understand the meaning of the student's art work and to ensure that the student gains access to his/her own art process.

Point of View of the Inquirer

My interest is in art education as a living process. My specific concern is with curriculum development and with the difficulty which seems to exist in making the child-teacher encounter a more humane, aesthetic and ultimately, a more educative event.

In my belief, art education most clearly attends to the subjective aspects of the child's growth. Although it is impossible to definitively separate the subjective from the objective in education, the subjective (or that which is peculiar to a particular individual), can and should be our main focus of interest. Thus, what I am considering is the child's art as an expression of the child's vision of the world. Based upon this, I conducted the present study with the expectation that the eventual documentation would result in a clearer understanding of what the child is doing while making art and that this knowledge would be of use to other people working in art education.

My focus on the artifact made by the child as this is an emblem of the child's vision of the world, clearly places me within the field of art education and in many ways determines my line of discourse. That is, this art educator's perspective can be distinguished from the points of view of others who could conceive of the child's artwork as being about quite different things.

Let me look briefly at the ways children's art has been considered.

1. The perspective of traditional teaching sees the child's artwork as being a completed assignment, a response to a teacher. The focus is the teacher's instructions which are to be satisfied in the teaching situation. The problem with this focus is that it encourages the child to become centered away from the personal locus of evaluation. The child is placed in the position of having to continually wonder how the teacher will evaluate the artwork.

2. The child's artwork can also be seen as an indication of something rather than as a physical object made of art materials and having sensuous qualities. Two examples of research which sees child art in this light come to mind.

a) Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas (Note 26) developed data-gathering techniques which permitted them to observe behaviours and to classify them as indicators of temperament. From this perspective, the focus is the discrete aspect of temperament as revealed through the child's artwork.

b) Both Howard Gardner (Note 27) and Victor Lowenfeld (Note 28) used child-made artwork as indicators of the child's place in a structure of developmental growth. For Gardner, the artifact provided a means for gauging psychic development and locating children in terms of one of a number of alternative "intelligences". Lowenfeld used the artifact as an indicator of normalcy versus pathology and of the child's predisposition to be either "visually" or "haptically" inclined.

3. The artifact could be seen as a product, not of the child, but of forces outside the child. Art, from this perspective, originates in the milieu rather than with the creator. Roland

Barthes (Note 29) considers all art to be a manifestation of cultural incorporation. According to this, the underlying premise of semiotics, the child-made artifact is a heavily codified cultural "thing" which is open to semiotic interpretation. Within art education, those whom I consider the current exponents of this view, such as Broudy (Note 30), Lanier (Note 31) and Smith (Note 32), are trying to find a different basis for the practice of art education than that which has traditionally held sway.

4. The artifact can be seen as a product of the child's artistic creating activity. The focus here is upon the child as maker. This has in the past been the preferred point of view for art educators since the child is conceived of as an artist and the artifact can be taken seriously as a work of art. Exponents of this perspective have been Rhoda Kellogg (Note 33), Charles Wieder (Note 34) and Brent Wilson (Note 35). The problem with such a perspective is that the meaning of the artifact is inaccessible since it has no context. Contrary to adult art, which art theorists can attempt to explain and which can be communicated to an audience by its maker (older people being conscious of themselves in a world of many others and being generally skilled in the use of verbal language), children simply make things and although they always have reasons for working with materials, in terms of "art making" they depend upon adults for their recognition. Thus, such a perspective must be ultimately considered theoretically interesting but practically utopic because children are not free artists but rather situated artists.

By contrast, the approach taken in this study was to view child art from the perspective of the context and include the researcher as part of the study. This approach directly addressed the problem of adequately understanding, that is, describing and interpreting, the unique process of childhood art making from within the classroom and was intended to lessen the gap between the ideals of art education and the practice of teaching art. The study was designed to contribute an account of one experience to the body of shared understanding within the field of art education.

Helpful in shaping the philosophical underpinnings of my approach was the thought of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Note 36). Using insights about psychology and human action which came out of his own inquiry The Structure of Behaviour (1942) (Note 37), Merleau-Ponty outlined a project whereby lived experience would be the basis for describing human activities in a more and more complete and accurate way. He showed that the important role of sense data lay in the form of the object as perceived, however erroneously, by the individual, and not in the object itself nor in material or traditional scientific descriptions of the object. Merleau-Ponty's ideas were important influences because they were not based upon how we experience the world as theory or ideology, but were rather the result of a careful and a prolonged consideration of the way the human body, as a sensing mechanism, actually behaves in the world.

Two aspects of Merleau-Ponty's position are important to this study. First, the nature of perception as it is understood within his framework of existential phenomenology; second, the

way the individual is understood within the same framework.

According to Merleau-Ponty's line of thought, perception cannot definitively be distinguished from thinking, valuing or feeling. All these are involved in each way of attending to an art object. We are thus led to the determinedly ambiguous nature of experience, which corresponds to my understanding of the art education phenomenon.

Just as perception cannot be considered in isolation, so too, individual experience is, according to Merleau-Ponty, inextricably linked with the experience of countless others, making the individual life project synonymous with the collective project. This articulation of the extreme situatedness of human experience helped me to construct a framework within which to build my descriptions of children's authentic artistic expression according to a logic with which I was familiar. That is, as an artist and as an art educator, I know that what one is only becomes reality in action and when this is shared. I also know that genuine existence is not thinking about fearing, loving, hating, desiring, but rather about performing these inner perceptions in social situations and in relation to a tangible world. Thus, in taking on the project to understand the child's art style I accepted the irreducible situatedness of the child making art, while at the same time participating in the child's ongoing process.

Although a description of human experience can never be adequate, that is, equated with and equal to the experience, it can, according to Merleau-Ponty's thought, convey something essential about that experience as long as it is rendered from

the first level of language, the bodily level. Thus, to the extent that I would be able to remain close to the actual gesturing of each of the children, to remember through their individual experiences of paint, clay, crayon and pencil my own experiences of mediating the world through my hand, eye and thought, I would be able to find the right words to describe each child's art process. In phenomenological inquiry, the researcher's relationship to what is being investigated is acknowledged as personal and particular. There is no objective position; it is assumed that we are all thoroughly and inextricably grounded in the world and the events we study. "All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from some particular point of view, or from some experience of the world" (Note 38); we are "through and through compounded of relationships with the world" (Note 39). My relationship to what is being studied is one of unity and participation rather than separation and distance.

I decided to work with one group of children for an extended length of time in order to gather samples of what children make with art materials when they are given some guidance. The group would be a kindergarten class in a school where the authorities agreed with the objectives of the project and where the kindergarten teacher, as well as the teachers likely to be responsible for this group in later years, all welcomed my presence as an art teacher-researcher in their classrooms.

I would organize and animate art-making sessions which would take place once every week during the school year. All the

artwork which the children made each time I worked with them would be photographed and conserved in the form of slides. The individual children's art serials could thus be collected for later analysis.

Structure of the Forthcoming Discussion

This thesis is composed of five interdependent chapters of equal importance. Chapter One sets the scene for an art education inquiry into the phenomenon of child art.

Chapter Two will describe the social, cultural and pedagogical background of the inquiry and will show how the research choices made by the inquirer were contingent upon aspects of that particular situation. Method and procedure will be outlined.

Chapter Three will describe this one specific art teaching situation by showing the work done by the children and by placing the children's work within the framework of the intentionality and reflection of the teacher-inquirer. The children's work will be described in nine accounts of art teaching encounters which reflect nine chronologically-ordered moments spread over the three-and-a-half-year duration of the study. The accounts will consist of narrative, explication and argument, presenting in detail the preferences, expressive needs, composing strategies and formal styles of each child. The particular qualities of this one art-teaching situation will become evident through my descriptions of the children's art work, illustrations of the children's work which accompany the descriptions and excerpts from my journals. Once the overall

meaning of the art-teaching sessions has been established, I will determine whether or not a general framework existed through which I, the teacher, viewed the children. That is, the description of the pedagogical dialogue will conclude with the question, was there a consistent strategy being used on the part of the teacher-researcher?

Chapter Four will focus upon individual art serials, which will be viewed as phenomena in a particular cultural situation, but which will also be distinct in themselves by virtue of their specific aesthetic qualities. Rather than attending to the children's work in sequential order, as in Chapter Three, I will analyze each of the children's accumulated art work as a separate body of work. Since four children were chosen to represent the group, four interpretive analyses will be done. In the earlier part of the work, I focused on individuals in context; now I will distill from the nine accounts some key dimensions of artistic style. This will provide a tentative matrix for a definition of style in child art and will indicate several possible research orientations. This matrix will both pull together a final interpretation of the four artists as well as provide a framework for initiating more delimited observation.

The fifth and final chapter will critically reflect upon several pedagogical issues which have been raised within the study. The conclusions will include an evaluation of the relative success of the study and will also include suggestions for research which would extend the present inquiry.

NOTES

Chapter I

1 Mary Erickson, "An Historical Explanation of the Schism Between Research and Practice in Art Education," in Studies in Art Education, (20(2), 1979), pp. 5-13.

2 Margaret DiBlasio, "Child Art: A Troublesome Concept," in Essays in Philosophy in Art Education, Ross Norris (ed), (The Ohio State University, 1980), pp. 23-32.

3 Joseph R. LaChapelle, "The Sociology of Art and Art Education: A Relationship Reconsidered," in Studies in Art Education, (26(1) 1984), pp. 34-41.

4 Charles Wieder, "Alternative Approaches to Problems in Art Education," in Studies in Art Education, (17(1), 1975), pp. 15-31. Another analysis is given in "Three Decades of Research on Child Art: A Survey and a Critique," in Art Education, The Journal of the National Art Education Association, (February, 1977), pp. 5-10. Wieder ascribed the lack of systematic study of the most elemental factors that influence artistic development to the "immense difficulties entailed in studying younger children (p. 6).

5 Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books Inc. 1973), p. 29.

6 Kenneth Beittel, Alternatives for Art Education Research (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1973), p. 85.

7 Florence Cane, The Artist in Each of Us (New York: Pantheon Books, 1951), pp. 110-239.

8 Nathalie Cole, Children's Art From Deep Down Inside (New York: John Day Company, 1966), pp. 39-43.

9 Italo DeFrancesco, Art Education: Its Means and Ends (New

York: Harper, 1958), pp.269-270.

10 William Johnstone, Child Art to Man Art (London: McMillan Publishing, 1941), p.123.

11 Marion Richardson, Art and the Child (Illinois: Chas. A. Bennett, 1946), p.8.

12 Henry Schaefer-Simmern, The Unfolding of Artistic Activity: Its Basis, Processes, and Implications (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948).

13 The artwork is figurative (i.e. portraiture, landscape, still-life and representation of human and animal forms), is often rendered in tactile materials such as fabric, yarn, wood or mosaic and (when it is two-dimensional) is organized to fill the entire surface with clearly defined boundaries.

14 The steps are a progression from scribbling to representative drawing and include between the two extremes such characteristics as mixed profiles, confusion of plan and elevation, transparency and turning over.

15 This is discussed in the chapter entitled "Development in Children's Art" by Margaret A. Hagen, Varieties of Realism: Geometries of Representational Art (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 271-278.

16 All editions of Creative and Mental Growth after the 1957 edition were influenced by the ideas of W. Lambert Brittain.

17 Lowenfeld, Creative and Mental Growth, 1957, p. 58.

18 Ibid., p. 67.

19 This is discussed by Elliot Eisner in an article called "Alternative Approaches to Curriculum Development in Art Education," Studies in Art Education (25(4), 1984), pp. 260-266.

20 An example of such criticism is apparent in Ralph A.

Smith's book review of the 4th Edition of Victor Lowenfeld's and W. Lambert Brittain's Creative and Mental Growth (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1964), in Studies in Art Education (6(2) 1965), pp.64-69.

21 David Ecker, "The Structure of Affect," in Art Education, The Journal of the National Art Education Association, (24(1), 1971), pp. 16-19.

22 Kenneth Beittel, Alternatives for Art Education Research, p.85.

23 -----, Mind and Context in the Art of Drawing: An Empirical and Speculative Account of the Drawing Processes and the Drawing Series and of the Contexts in Which They Occur (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1972), p. 133.

24 Patricia A. Smith, Formative Hermeneutics: The Art of Teaching Art (Pennsylvania State University, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1984), pp. 3-33. Beittel's "drawing lab tradition", which defines the art teacher's role as that of witness and explains the nature of the artistic serial in terms of reconstructive dialogues, is outlined.

25 As Charles Wieder pointed out, "Perhaps if Beittel had studied the art of younger children, as did his predecessors, refinement of our understanding of childart would have resulted. Instead, there is a conspicuous and quite puzzling absence of any such integration." (1977), p. 7.

26 Stella Chess & Alexander Thomas, Temperament and Development (New York: Doubleday, 1977), p.37.

27 Howard Gardner, Artful Scribbles: The Significance of Children's Drawings (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1980), p.69-92. This focus is also evident in Frames of Mind: The Theory of

Multiple Intelligences (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1983), p.viii.

28 Victor Lowenfeld, The Nature of Creative Activity (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1939), p.12 and also Creative and Mental Growth (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), p.18.

29 Roland Barthes, Mythologies (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1972), pp. 109-137.

30 Harold Broudy, Enlightened Cherishing: An Essay on Aesthetic Education (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1972).

31 Vincent Lanier, "Eight Guidelines for Selecting Art Curriculum Content," in Studies in Art Education, (25(4), 1984), p.232-238.

32 Ralph A. Smith, "From Aesthetic Criticism to Humanistic Understanding: A Practical Illustration," in Studies in Art Education, (25(3), 1984), pp.238-242.

33 Rhoda Kellogg, Analyzing Children's Art (Palo Alto: National Press Books, 1969), p.19.

34 Charles Wieder, "Alternative Approaches to Problems in Art Education," in Studies in Art Education, (17(1), 1975), p.15-31.

35 Brent Wilson, "Little Julien's Impure Drawings: Why Children Make Art," in Studies in Art Education, (17(2), 1976), p.45-61.

36 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962).

37 -----, The Structure of Behavior (London: Beacon Publishing, 1942; trans.1963).

38 -----, Phenomenology of Perception p. viii.

39 Ibid., p. xiii.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter I will present a brief history of my study. Four discernible stages characterized the project. Each stage marked a change in the way I conceived of the project and the way I thought about the ideas underlying it. The outline of my original idea, which is contained in Chapter One, situated the question can the child art process be satisfactorily described? within a personal horizon of motivation and daily work. Later, this same question became the force behind a systematic research program. Within the frame of each of the four stages of the project, I developed and explored different research methods and techniques to help me answer this question. I call the four stages:

1. A Year in a Kindergarten Class.
2. Grades One & Two with This Class: The Artroom.
3. Consultation and a Dialogue with Teachers at The Prospect Center for the Study of Meaning.
4. In My Studio: The Recording is Complete.

I have chosen to present the history of the project in a personal narrative form, based largely upon extracts from the journals I kept throughout the entire study. Following the description of each of the four research phases, a synthesis of the methodology will be given. Altogether, this charting of the way an existential world imposed itself upon a research objective will provide entry into the more delimited sphere of

one art-teaching situation.

The First Stage: A Year in a Kindergarten Class

The school was a long, low, red brick structure surrounded by asphalt and framed by a tall "Frost" fence. It was on the very fringe of a suburb, beside a busy railway track.

The amiable principal welcomed me to the school and mentioned, in passing, the "French immersion" status of the school (Note 1). "Immersion schooling" is a pedagogical alternative which is offered in many communities where two linguistic traditions compete and is comprised essentially of providing a classroom situation which excludes the mother tongue and instead immerses the children during the early years of their schooling in an environment of instruction and pedagogical dialogue in the second language.

The immediate community of this school was mainly French-speaking and French still is the official language of this province. Thus, despite the English-speaking and multi-ethnic nature of the school's population, French-language instruction was the policy. Aware of the importance of these choices for the educators in the school and for the parents of the children who went there, I assured the principal that if need be I could teach in French. However, I added that in my view, a certain spontaneity of verbal communication was important to the art-teaching environment. The principal's reply was that for many of the children, French was a third language and thus that I should teach in English. Since he appreciated my project, the

principal offered to speak on my behalf to the parents and members of the school board in order to assure them that an hour or two of English-language instruction a week would not be detrimental to the quality of the children's education.

It had not occurred to me to consider the linguistic aspects of the children's school setting as being of particular importance to the project of documenting some child art processes. Once I was in the school, it appeared to be more important. I knew that being able to make oneself understood was of central importance to everyone and that there in that school, the five-year-olds with whom I was to work were probably experiencing quite a bit of confusion.

As well as having been confronted by the importance of language as a factor in the research, I was suddenly acutely aware of the specific characteristics of this school. I looked about me at the bare walls and realized how far we were from the museums and the art galleries of the city where I usually worked. The exposure that these children have had to art as a cultural element was doubtless minimal. It became evident that if I wished to pursue the idea of documenting the children's art processes, I would first have to present the children with an image of what art was. Based upon my experience as an art teacher, I thought that this could be accomplished only by enabling the children to behave as artists. That is, while I had at first conceived of the study as being simply the documenting of what children do when they are not being taught to behave in restrictive and conventional ways, I now concluded that the idea that I could simply allow the children

to "be artists" was both presumptuous and, within this setting, contradictory. What had been left out of my original idea was the role which the adult plays in the world of the school. This role of educator became my persona and though I had wished to be only a participant-observer of the child art phenomenon, from this moment onward I felt myself to be an art teacher who was focused upon seeing as much as possible of the originality of each of the children.

The paradox is interesting. In this setting, art, as I understood it, was available for me only by way of the originality of each of the children. But the children, in their originality, could be perceived by me only when they participated in my horizon of making things out of art materials. The project had changed because I no longer conceived of the children as being artists whom I could observe, but rather as people whom I would meet and with whom I would spend time in the collective project of recording their art-making processes. My participation was defined as being that of the person who prepared the art-making setting within the larger setting of the school for a particular group of children. The research was defined by many considerations, not the least of which was the nature of this particular school and its specific relationship with the premises upon which the field of art education is based.

In a Classroom with a Teacher and a Group of Children

The kindergarten classroom was the largest and best-organized teaching space in the school. It had its own entrance, double sinks, set-in cupboards at the children's

level, a boy's and a girl's toilet, a walk-in storage closet, a sandbox, a piano, as well as the mandatory doll corner, block area, reading area and groupings of low tables and chairs. For my part, I had purchased and organized art supplies during the summer months.

The teacher, who was friendly and efficient, had been teaching in the school for several years. She was happy that I would take over the teaching of art because she neither enjoyed it nor thought that she taught it well, although she told me that she was convinced of its importance.

On the day that I met the children, they came in from the playground with the lunch monitor. It was the first week of school and they were, for the most part, shy, careful, watchful. Everyone seemed to be in agreement that this place and time required a special kind of very careful behaviour. I was caught up in the solemnity of everyone's attitude and found myself to be behaving as if a script had been prepared for me.

The teacher introduced me in French. I greeted the children in English trying to strike a note somewhere between her firm friendliness and the children's shy watchfulness. She said that unless I objected, she would remain to work at her desk and give a hand if necessary.

As the afternoon wore on, filled with blue, yellow and red paintings, the glimmerings of a very different kind of project than that which I had presumed I had undertaken, began to take shape. It was obvious that the teacher was working toward a modus vivendi with the children with which she could

be comfortable, but which was as yet far from achieved. This was essentially a structure of permitted and forbidden behaviours and meant that everything in the kindergarten classroom had a function which had to be respected. There was a major contradiction between that which I considered worth doing in the situation and the objectives determined by the teacher. I had believed that it would be worthwhile to establish free workshops, where each person could choose the materials, tools and themes, as well as the time and space he/she needed in the classroom. Such an approach was not realistic and I began to conceive of my endeavour as a search for the evidence of art in spite of the situation, rather than conceiving of it as a simple disclosure of the sources of childhood art "because that is what children do".

With a few exceptions, the children were trying very hard to meet the expectations of their teacher. It was the exceptions that caught my attention at that time. Two children especially, Robert (a tiny vivacious francophone) and Danielle (a winsome black child) appeared often in my journal notes during those first few months. Their work interested me. Neither child became part of the final inquiry group in this study since both were sent to another school, where children with learning difficulties could be helped.

The twenty-one individuals who made up this kindergarten group became familiar to me as I photographed and labelled their work each week and as I jotted down notes to myself to help decide what should be prepared for the following week. I required meticulous recording to deal with the incredible

quantity of artifacts which resulted from each encounter, since at this point, few of the children could write their names. Those who could would, obligingly have spent the entire art class time painstakingly painting their names across the sheets of paper had I asked them to include their names. This would have been of no value to my project to record the child art process.

After the art-making sessions, I organized each child's daily production into the sequence in which the child had produced it. I next labelled and photographed the works and then either displayed them on the classroom bulletin boards, or stored them chronologically in each child's portfolio, just as I was accustomed to doing with the artwork of my own children at home. I also developed a simple recording system to help me follow each child's process. This included reference to how involved the child seemed to have become, how satisfied the child seemed to be at the end of the class, what the child's chosen subject matter or form had been and how this differed from or resembled previous work.

I arranged the slides of the children's work in individual files in chronological order, classifying them according to the art-teaching session and the sequence within that particular session. I filed transparent plastic protective pages, each holding twenty slides, into ring-binders. These mobile pages enabled me to very easily view sections of the children's serials on my light table, either individually, when I wished to see particular aspects of a child's development, or collectively, on the occasions

when I wanted to compare different children's work.

As the year unfolded, I found myself becoming a part of the children's school lives. Try as I might, I was unable to keep my research preoccupations separate from the teeming mass of life which was the school. For example, although my thoughts as I drove to the school each week were on clearly visualizing all the organizational details which had to be tended to in order to adequately prepare the materials and the environment for the art class, on arriving at the school and crossing the school yard at noon hour, I was immediately surrounded by a swarm of chattering, smiling children pleased that they were "having Nancy" today. Their energy engulfed me and the many "what-are-we-doing-in-art?" queries reminded me of my identity as their art teacher. Later, as I helped them out of their snowsuits and overshoes, or, again, after class, as they helped me in lining up their artifacts for photographing, their spontaneous intensity absorbed me and left me with a feeling of reassurance about things in general, but with a certain perplexity about the meaning of my project.

The reassurance was in response to the dismay I had experienced at the beginning of the year, when I had realized that in order to collect the records of childhood art making I would be obliged to teach art. It became evident at that time that I would have to achieve the right balance between providing sequential lessons in how to use materials and tools, and encouraging the children to make their own choices. From the enthusiasm and the warmth of the children, I now concluded that I was neither abusing their natural generosity

nor reneging on my responsibilities as an adult in their midst.

The perplexity was related to my dissatisfaction with the kind of art that was being produced within the context of the project. Whereas I had imagined at the beginning that it would be possible to introduce the children to the rudiments of art and then allow them to each choose their own ways of going about making art objects, I never, from the moment I began working with them until the end of the teaching, had the impression that a free studio situation would be either, in the short term, appreciated by the children or, in the long term, beneficial to their education. There was a uniformity to the artwork which surprised me and forced me to question the premises upon which I had based my research. The problem was entirely resolved in later years, when the children began initiating their own projects, but while working with the children in the kindergarten, I had the impression that I should be doing something to heighten the level of individual expression.

Throughout my questioning of the underpinnings of my research idea, I was also aware of my accountability to the families of the children in my group. At the end of every school year, I sent a letter to the families, outlining what had been accomplished in terms of the objectives I had set at the beginning and inviting each family to participate in a slide presentation and discussion about their child's complete art serial. In this way, I wanted to find out how each of us perceived the artistic development of the child. In the

kindergarten year, all twenty-one families came to the discussions-presentations. These exchanges, each of which lasted more than an hour, were spread out over the last two weeks of June.

Conclusion of the First Stage

In terms of the methods available to an educational researcher, which can be conceived of on a continuum between testing and pure observation, I, at this stage, assumed that I was working within a particular kind of experimental framework. Knowing that testing neglects the spontaneous interests of the child and that observation entails the systematic difficulty of interpretation, my situation as an art teacher was, from a research point of view, compatible with my objectives, since it permitted me to structure my material in a sequential way that related to what I thought was important -- art education. I was thinking of myself as someone with a problem -- that of not having adequate evidence of the inner-directedness of the child art process to carry on with my work in art education the way I wanted to. I also believed that children naturally made art if art materials were available. The hypothesis that children are artists could be verified by testing it against the behaviour of the children and the art serials resulting from their behaviour would furnish adequate evidence to enable me to validate my belief.

I was aware that my method of proceeding was not a mechanical process of inquiry, but was dependent upon direct observation in the sense that the good practitioner allows him

40
or herself to be led, although always remaining in control. I thus viewed my method as a variation of what Piaget (whose inductive method of research had been a source of inspiration to me in my educational practice) called the clinical examination. But it was clear that an art teacher who is responsible for a whole classroom of children is not the same as a focused psychologist interviewing-observing one child in a closed interview. In my mind, the problems that arose from this difference were compensated for by the kinds of data I was collecting. The artifacts made by the children had to contain a certain reflection of who these children were within a world of people, the classroom being simply a contained world. I considered that such materials would be more valuable as evidence and that they would be more reliable as indications of the children's artistic styles than would be the results of an individually-focused study.

Throughout the study I found the following related to the problems I faced: Gaston Bachelard, (Note 2); Ernst Cassirer, (Note 3); Anton Ehrenzweig, (Note 4); Carl Jung, (Note 5); Suzanne Langer, (Note 6); and Herbert Read, (Note 7). I returned also to Viktor Lowenfeld, whose work had been analyzed by many critics (Note 8). The criticisms of Lowenfeld interested me as much as had his writing, since each critic explored the relationship between Lowenfeld's theory and the practice of art education. In the works of all these writers I found confirmation for my project, in that theorists and practitioners alike expressed the need for a clearer notion of the child art phenomenon. However, I did not find any

was a way of following art processes that would permit me to render them in unambiguous language.

The Second Stage: Grades One and Two

It was a new school year. I had spent the greater part of the summer holidays poring over the gathered materials. These included about 1200 artifacts, about 2000 slides (Note 9), about 150 pages of journal notes, and four progress charts each of which contained 875 bits of information.

I had been looking for signs of the unique artistic styles of the children. The materials showed me that the children varied in terms of their competence with art materials and their preferences for certain forms and themes. However, since the children had been following my prescribed sequence of art-making activities, I was unable to understand what the signs of diversity meant. I could not see among the children's work the clearly defined distinctiveness which I had presumed would be apparent. Their styles were more subtle than I had expected them to be, and for this reason I decided to be more attentive to the children's personal choices during our weekly encounters. Thus, it was very important that I be able to continue my work with the same children and I was eagerly looking forward to seeing them again.

When I arrived at the school, I faced the only institutionally-provoked disappointment which was to occur during the inquiry. It had been tentatively decided the previous June that the group of children I had been working with would remain together in grade one and their kindergarten.

teacher would stay with them as their grade one teacher. Since this kind of continuity was central to what I was trying to do, I was counting on it more than I had realized. I was thus very disappointed when, in September, the decision was reversed and, for the sake of "balance", the children were split up and distributed between two grade one groups. Immediately, I envisioned the difficulty of trying each week to reconstitute the atmosphere of support and familiarity that I considered necessary for my art teaching.

However, there was a beneficial side-effect to this change in plans: the principal offered me an artroom of my own. It was a sunny, pale-green room with a highly-polished, glistening tile floor. The clusters of low tables and chairs were nice reminders of the luxurious kindergarten room of the previous year. It was a pleasant contrast to the more spartan grade one classrooms the children occupied now. This artroom was quite adequate for my purposes. It had shelves and display boards at the back of the room, a storage closet with a sink and running water, long blackboards along two walls and windows the whole length of the other wall, a cart on wheels and several easels. It was situated near the two grade one classrooms and also near the audio-visual storage area.

I appreciated being near the audio-visual cupboard for several reasons. First, I had decided to tape-record the classes in order to be able to hear what both I and the children said in the situation, and thus gain a different perspective on the proceedings than was possible for me while in the role of art teacher. Second, I had found that the

children enjoyed seeing how they looked while they worked. Thus, I occasionally showed them slides taken while the class was in session. Third, for various reasons, the children were interested in their past art production, and they enjoyed looking at it when it was shown in the form of slides. Thus, the slide projector and the tape-recorder became important elements in the project.

In the new artroom, I found it easier than before to pursue my objectives of convincing the children that they were able to make personal choices and to carry these forward in images that they liked. I had a better understanding of the approximate balance between teaching techniques and encouraging imaginative engagement with materials that seemed to sit well with this particular group. I also knew which children needed special guidance and which ones were best left on their own.

In spite of this, however, and although the children seemed to appreciate the weekly sessions, my feelings concerning the quality of the art that was being made was not improving. In our hours together, there seemed always to be a lack of time and a lack of privacy, which I noticed some of the children actively sought. Several factors contributed to making the sessions more of a social event than the art-making event I had in mind. My outsider status made my weekly comings and goings somewhat of a special occurrence. Also, the weekly pulling together of all the children who had spent their kindergarten year together made our sessions rather exceptional. Then, there was the nature of the group art

activity itself. Art cannot be dissociated from personal expression, and since the situation which I had prepared was intended to encourage the children to explore and develop certain expressive skills, it was hardly surprising that some of them played energetically but rarely achieved the rapport with art-making processes that artistic development requires.

I realized how crucial a year the grade one year is within our educational system. Many demands are made of the children. Every one of them is expected to know how to read and write and do elementary arithmetic by the end of the year and toward this goal a great deal of pressure is put on the children. My agenda, I realized, was at odds with most of the schooling of these children. By encouraging them to choose their own materials, themes and formal elements, by telling them, in effect, to develop their own interests within the area of art making, I was defining the disciplinary priority of art in a radically different way from that of other disciplines. This was demanding, because it required of the children that they change their relation with the world in an important way. They came into the artroom from classes in which they were accustomed to listening to an external authority. My intention, in contrast, was to enable them to determine what they wanted to do and how they wanted to do it. I wanted them to listen to their own desires, wants and needs, and to encourage that I invoked as few rules as possible. The only rules which I rigorously kept to from day one were that everyone must respect the work of others (i.e. no marking of the neighbour's drawing unless invited to) and that any

project undertaken must be completed before another was started (although this rule came to be loosely interpreted by some children).

My project was to document various child art processes. Obviously, I was interested in gathering material which would, so to speak, prove my point, that being that children have individual preferences for materials, themes and techniques and that these can be recognized and described by the teacher in the interest of the educational project of the child and also in the interest of the understanding of the teacher. My problem was how to make it explicit to the children that while they could choose the tools, materials and themes, they were also expected to do something. In the experience of the children, there existed either play or work, and unless the reason for doing something was very explicit (for example, because that was what the teacher said everyone would do that day) some children would just as soon scribble on the blackboards, rummage through art folders to see what was there, or chat endlessly about television programs, baseball clubs or the latest toy, as paint, draw or construct. I knew that a statement like "if you don't want to make anything today, you can always stay in your classroom" was not giving those ~~difficult-to-motivate~~ children any choice at all, because the artroom was the place where they wanted to be. Our collective problem was, how could all of us be as we were, in that time and place?

The solution was, as usual, worked out over time. I came to accept that there would inevitably be some children each

day who remained on the fringes of the planned activities and I also took more seriously the children's need for an understanding of the purpose of our sessions. It became evident to me that the teaching situation was inextricably a collective situation. So, as the two years passed, I organized more and more group activities, including mural making, puppet making and puppet shows, environment building, kite making and flying, outdoor expeditions with cameras and pencils and paper, and picnics. I continued to consciously record what each child did although what I perceived seemed to be more the limits of the school setting than the personal style of the child.

In order to verify the varieties of behaviours that were present in the group, I attempted a coding method by borrowing the descriptive categories which Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas developed within their long-term studies of personality development (Note 10). Their most important publication dealt with the research conclusions gleaned from having followed hundreds of subjects from birth to maturity to find out about behavioral individuality in early childhood. Since I could not bring myself to impose the questionnaires on the other teachers in the school and the children's parents (the method required a three-perspective synthesis) and also since the descriptive categories, when applied to art making, were so open to interpretation as to be useless when describing each child, this attempt to bring objective order to my project proved futile.

Had it not been for the relentless nature of the art-teaching project in the school (Note 11), I would have found it difficult to justify continuing what was becoming an

incredibly preoccupying and time-consuming activity. I felt deeply dissatisfied, because it seemed that despite my best intentions and best efforts, despite the fact that the children were happy and that the school authorities were pleased with my art-making research project, the children were not making the quality art that I had expected. This was later resolved as I gradually changed my attitude regarding how the children's work should look, and the children began initiating their own projects.

Conclusion of the Second Stage

At this moment in the project, my research method had subtly changed to allow me to come to terms with the reasons for my dissatisfaction. Consistent with the overall research methodology, that of clinical examination whereby the examiner organizes the situation in order to put the subjects in contact with his/her thoughts and then evaluates the way they meet his/her expectations, I had been collecting and tracing each of the children's art-making processes. But I was looking at this collected material in a very critical way. I found that it was no simple task to deal with the materials I had collected. In fact, all the problems which I thought I had avoided when I agreed to intervene and use a teaching approach, instead of simply observing, had become compounded. I was excruciatingly aware of all the nuances and subtleties of my interpretations as I tried to separate significant art-making moments from those of simple play or of unengaged response to one of my questions.

All of this made me realize how different was the nature of my questioning from that of Piaget, who was interested in

finding out about the spontaneous convictions and conceptions of the child about the world. My preoccupations were with the way the child exists in the world as a unique being. I had thought that the research methodology would permit me to identify some inalienable traits in the children's art and that these would permit me to talk about the child-artists with some authority. Instead, I was constantly finding myself to be an important element in the situation, and since until this time I had placed a great deal of value on the authenticity of the children's work, in accord with my research method, I was constantly underestimating (or at the very least, de-emphasizing) my own participation in the research.

In an effort to become more methodical in my recording of the children's art processes, I was reading accounts written by people interested in human development. As well as the above-mentioned research of Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas and the impressive body of research of Piaget, other writers who were important for me at that time were Sylvia Ashton-Warner (Note 12), Célestin Freinet (Note 13), Howard Gardner (Note 14), Rhoda Kellogg (Note 15), Edith Kramer (Note 16), Henry Schaefer-Simmern (Note 17) and Arno Stern (Note 18).

It was only now that I fully appreciated the long-term nature of my study. It had proven impossible to monitor the relative quality of each week's art productions based upon the scale I had invented (Note 19). The aim of the scale had been to enable me to identify the degree of engagement of each child: Had the child been doing a given art project in a random way, without making any true investment of him/herself? Or had he/she

been working with a superficial engagement, which may have looked vigorous, but which lacked consistency? Was the child enjoying going through the motions of following instructions, without going any farther in private image-making? Or did he/she appear to be really involved in what he/she was doing and did this involvement bring something new to the artroom?

Trying to apply this scale brought the conflict I was experiencing to a head. I had, I now realized, been juggling two separate notions of child art. The first was of child art as the manifestation of the innateness of each child; the second was of child art as something one teaches. It became apparent that the Piagetian scale could accommodate only the first of these ideas and that the only way I could truly interpret what the children were doing was by facing up to the fact that my study was in the nature of a dialogue. My way of thinking about what I was doing underwent a change and I began to see the children's art as expressing the relationship between myself and each of them. The question which now faced me was, how could I characterize that which existed between us?

The Third Stage:

A Dialogue with Teachers at the Prospect Center

This stage in my study differed from the previous stages in two ways. First, it did not fit a strict time frame, because it happened over the course of two summers. Second, it did not occur while I was working with the children. Nevertheless, it represented a stage in the study because it caused a change in my way of thinking about what I was doing and a shift in my

research method.

The determining factor that brought about these changes was time spent at The Prospect Archive and Center for Education and Research in North Bennington, Vermont, which revolves around the Prospect School founded by Patricia Carini. Carini has invested a life's work in creating a school and observing and documenting what children do there. Her motivation is that of a philosopher intrigued by the variety of meanings which people bring into being through their lives. Since her work resembles what I had been awkwardly groping toward throughout my project as I searched for ways to articulate what I saw the children to be doing, I got in touch with Pat Carini. At her suggestion, I gathered my notebooks and several of the slide serials I had made of the children's art, and attended two consecutive Prospect Summer Institutes. During the time I spent there, I came to realize that many practicing teachers were experiencing exactly the same kind of malaise as I was, and that by collectively confronting this discomfort, they were able to formulate an approach to children's work which was respectful of both the child and the teaching situation. This approach, termed documentation, involves an active appreciation of individual key pieces and requires of the teacher a prolonged engagement with the world of the child he/she seeks to understand. This is done through direct observation over an extended period of time of a small number of cases within their natural settings. It is a method of both description and analysis. Carini's process of

understanding children by attending to their work consists of three steps: reflection on the medium, reflection on motif and description of the work. Procedurally, it depends upon immersion in the focus of interest and continuous and regular recording and collecting. Since these are processes rather than set techniques, the exact procedures are open to interpretation. They also require practice and careful thought and application (Note 20).

Every summer, a group of educators meets at Prospect to look at children's work within the analytical framework provided by Carini. The three-week sessions involve continuous seminars, discussion groups and production groups which work to understand individual projects by recognizing recurring themes and expressed preferences. The Prospect approach includes methodological devices for attending to aspects of behaviour which can help teachers understand what children are doing and enable them to deal respectfully with complex situations. Carini's monographs (1975, 1979, 1982), which are published by the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, explain the philosophical and epistemological premises from which the documentation approach emerges, describe in detail the methodology, and illustrate the productiveness of the approach by giving portrayals of seven children's different modes of learning (Note 21).

During my time at Prospect, I came to realize that in many ways my experience as a maker of art objects coloured my

ability to make sense of what children do with art materials and also explained why it seemed so important to me that children's image-making activity be taken seriously. Being the only art teacher in the group, I was able to sift out the biases of my field from the more general prejudices of educators. Furthermore, in the course of the on-going dialogues with the teachers and educators which have continued since my time there, I came to a more precise definition of the boundaries of my project. For example, one participant described how she experienced my evaluation of some drawings done by a child she was studying (Note 22). As she outlined how my perspective changed hers, I was better able to understand my own thinking.

I realized that the situation in which I had been collecting examples of children's artistic processes was very limited compared with that in which most of the Prospect teachers and educators worked. They were accustomed to working year in, year out with the same group of professional educators, and each year, with a single group of children. For these people, a support system within the teaching staff, as well as a long-term continuous relationship with any child they were trying to understand, were essential starting points of their work. From their point of view, my one hour a week was not sufficient time to do the kind of art teaching I wanted to do. I realized now how fragmented my relationship with the children was, how difficult a situation I had

invented for myself in my project to gather child art serials. However, although the teachers at Prospect were aware of all the shortcomings of my situation, they also admitted that as they viewed each of my serials, they could see clear and sharp examples of unique artistic processes. They felt that the artwork stood well on its own and that my recordings of the children's work were in some ways more adequate than those in the Prospect files, since my continuity as the teacher, my role as inquirer and my inclusion of tape-recording in the observation process, permitted more precise interpretation. With regard to the quality of my records, I was convinced of their value, in spite of the fact that my tentative forays into the realm of interpretation had, until now, proved unsatisfactory.

Conclusion of Stage Three

Documentation, as a research methodology developed at The Prospect Centre, became my research method. Although even before coming to Prospect, I had already been gradually and intuitively accentuating recording, by writing fuller descriptions of the sessions, tape-recording sessions whenever possible and interviewing the children, I now began to focus on capturing what coming to the artroom meant for the children. Thus, I began to include as precious parts of my records observations such as hearing two children say that the clay smelled..."like dirt"..."no, like when my Dad dug the hole for the tree"... or noticing how even the most.

rambunctious children of the group huddled together and whispered in awe as we walked through a particularly dark part of the woods on a sketching outing... or becoming aware of my anger (and of the fact that I was concealing it) when someone refused to let me photograph (or even see!) what I felt sure must be a masterpiece of self-revelation, on the grounds that it was (as he said) "private".

Since it had now become important for me to achieve the kind of distance from my subject of study that the Prospect method considered essential for understanding, and since I could not get away from my role as teacher, I began taking an extra step to compensate for the fact that I was directly involved in the study. Every day, as I photographed the children's work, I listened to the tape-recording of that day's session. I thus came to realize that how I, as the teacher, was in the situation (as perceived from any perspective other than my own) was considerably different from the way I had experienced it. Hearing evidence of the happiness and liveliness in the artroom, the amount of laughter (mine and the children's), and the number and the complexity of individual exchanges between us, rather than just focusing on the disorderliness of the classes, gave me a different view on the project. I began to realize that whether individual parts of the art serials met my expectations was relatively unimportant. To all appearances, continuity, familiarity and fellow-feeling were present and thus it appeared possible that overall, I would be able to do justice to the artistic styles of the children. I now became less

concerned with what the children were doing and more aware of how they individually and collectively were.

Like the people at Prospect, I had come to realize that development and instruction were not separate, incommensurate processes, that the function of instruction was not merely to introduce adult ways of behaving, which would conflict with those of the child, and eventually supplant them. Clarifying the relationship between the two processes became central to my investigation of the child art process.

My reading at this stage included Carini's 1982 monograph and the works listed in her bibliography (Barfield, Scheler, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Husserl, Jung, Froebel, Whitehead), as well as some art theorists (Panofsky, Gombrich, Malraux, Kubler, Finch). I was working to refine my descriptive competencies and reassure myself that no stone remained unturned in my search for an interpretive mode.

The Fourth Stage: A Change of Setting

The two summers spent among the teachers at Prospect, sharing samples of my records with them and taking part in the formally-organized group discussions, helped me to see my project from a certain distance. I came to see that the small archive of child art that I had collected was more than ample material to enable me to say something about the child art process. It seemed to me that the gathering stage of the project may now have been complete. The next step would logically be to describe the work I had collected.

I was under no obligation to the school authorities to

continue the project any longer than I considered necessary; however, I did feel obliged to keep a promise I had made to the children and their parents. During the end-of-June interviews, I had said that the weekly art classes would continue during the children's grade three year. Since I was not only loath to break my promise, but also had become used to working with the children and was enjoying seeing the particular way that each of them was an artist, I decided that I would ~~continue~~ the class for another year. Although my collection may have been sufficient for the purposes of the study, certain questions remained unanswered. I wondered whether the children's art processes would become more distinctive (or perhaps, change) in a setting that was clearly an art-making environment. For that reason, I decided to invite the group to take its Grade 3 art classes in my home studio on Saturday mornings.

This setting was very different from what we had become used to at the school. My home studio has next to it a large playroom containing a dress-up corner, a makeshift puppet theatre and stage, as well as some simple musical instruments, a tape deck and a record player. The playroom leads into a carpentry workshop equipped with materials and tools. In this setting, the form possibilities for non-verbal expression would be multiplied.

Most of the children who came to the Saturday morning classes brought their brothers and sisters with them, and after the first few sessions, my own three children also participated regularly.

I added a new element to my recording procedure, in order to help the children to remember what they intended to do with each project, so that later both they and I would be able to trace the path of choices that were made. This was a notebook, placed near the coatrack where the burgeoning portfolios of the children's work were also stored. Every day when they arrived, the children decided individually, in pairs, or in groups, what they wanted to do. Before starting their art making, they noted their intentions in their notebooks. At the end of the two hours, the children wrote down what they would need for the following week, and jotted down something about what they had accomplished that morning. These notes enabled me to keep track of the many projects which were going on and allowed me to prepare the materials the children said they would need for the following workshop.

In this series of sessions, the recording of each event became less simple than before, and the camera, tape-recorder and journals became as much expressive media as tools of documentation. Since the children tended to spread out into the corners of the studio to work on separate projects, there was no point trying to tape record the ambient sounds. So, instead, the tape recorder was put to use by the children, who brought their cassettes of Michael Jackson and other popular pre-adolescent music. The microphone, which had previously hung in the centre of the artroom, allowing me to pick up my dialogues with the children and their conversations among themselves, was now adopted by the children as a favourite prop for their frequent theatre presentations. The camera,

which I used to document the puppet shows and drama presentations, was often also used by the children themselves. The children's journals were filled with cartoonish drawings, stapled samples of materials (fabrics, papers, etc.) and little diagrams. Since none of the children were fluent writers, they invented very visual ways of indicating what they had done and what they wished to do.

Projects were rarely completed in one session. The very open-ended two-hour time schedule was a luxury that was highly appreciated. However, a limit to freedom was the dependence we now had upon the various parents who were in charge of getting the children to and from the studio. Families without cars depended upon other parents to drive their children. At the beginning, the presence of adults in our art-making sessions felt a bit awkward, but as time wore on, those parents not only became active appreciators of what we were doing, but on several occasions, participated in the goings-on.

The artwork created during these sessions looked different from the objects which had been made at school. They were often very large collective works. Sometimes it was difficult to identify the owner of the completed object because so many people contributed to its production. Furthermore, initial "making" activities usually gave way to dramatizations that included dress-up and make-up as part of the visual expression, furniture, puppets, a mural background or anything else that had been created by the children during the first part of the morning. The theatrics and music-making were more important to some of the children than to others.

There were some who remained surprisingly discrete and centred upon their private processes of exploration and discovery. All the children participated in the kinds of self-motivated activities that I considered to be essential, and for everyone, without exception, it was important, at the end of the morning, to be able to take home the objects they had made.

Three factors that characterized these sessions were probably interrelated: the way the children influenced and helped each other and participated in one another's productions; the way projects evolved, often requiring several weeks to complete and resulting in spontaneous performances; the manner in which the children ascribed to their work definite functions, sometimes at the start of their projects, sometimes at the end, as though the utility of their work in their everyday lives were extremely important. The tone, the content, the rhythm of the art lessons had changed, but it must be borne in mind that the five-year-old children with whom I had begun the project had now grown to be nine years old. They were resourceful, they had an identity as a group, they were now relatively confident as makers of objects and images.

Although I enjoyed working with the children and had the impression that their art-work was losing that look of uniformity which had occasionally bothered me, late that winter I called a halt to the art lessons. It had become increasingly evident to me that the considerable energy being directed to the organization of, participation in, and

recording of the Saturday morning sessions would be better spent in finding a way to communicate what I had learned.

It was difficult for me to pull back from this group of children and their parents, all of whom I had come to think of as my colleagues within the context of the project. We had a party and promised to keep in touch.

As it turned out, we have kept in touch, because in transforming the mountain of accumulated material into a dissertation, I have periodically had to verify my reading of journals, my interpretation of a child's intentions, or my understanding of a remark on a tape recording. On such occasions, I went to the children. Each time we pored over the slides or photographs or the humble renderings done by a child at five, six or seven years of age, we found that everything looked both strange and familiar. Together we felt amazement at what was there. As the group prepared for high school and as each of the children and their families became more concerned about how he/she would fit into the social fabric of the community, the artifacts took on meaning as representations of who each of the children is.

Conclusion of the Fourth Stage

My research method had become that of documentation, the approach developed by Carini at The Prospect Institute for the Study of Meaning. I looked at each of the children's serials separately, instead of following the children's progress with flow charts, as I had during the first and second stages of the research. I was now gathering information about what each child chose to work on in the awareness that my continuous

attention to each separate process would eventually enable me to describe and interpret the work from quite a different perspective than that which I had at the moment. Whereas before I had been charting the children's progress by methodically noting what the children had done according to a standard check-list which placed all the children within the same structure (Note 23), now I studied each serial in order to identify keywords that would enable me to recognize the forms, materials and themes that the child preferred (Note 24).

My two-hour Saturday art classes ran from September until mid-February of that school year. Seven children of the original twenty-one were able to come to the classes and they brought their brothers and sisters. Thus, the groups usually included ten to fifteen children. As virtually all the work done in the classes was taken home when it was finished, I no longer collected portfolios of work, but rather photographed the projects in process, and added these photographs to the slide files of each child's work. Unlike the previous works, each artifact was now represented by more than one slide, and quite often the documentation of the development of an art object consisted of several slides and showed the intervention of several different children. This meant that although the average number of artworks created by each child was about twenty (as compared with about 65 the previous year over the same number of art class hours), the number of slides used to record each child's art process remained about the same.

The individual portfolios now served as temporary storage places for works evolving over time and were more the children's

property than mine. Each child had a notebook in which brief indications of intentions and achievements were made and I maintained the journal I had begun at the beginning of the project.

At this time, my reading consisted mainly of materials related to existential and phenomenological research in the human sciences. The work of Ken Beittel and the studies of art processes undertaken by his students (Brooks, 1980 (Note 25); Folsom, 1976 (Note 26); Smith, 1984 (Note 27); Stapleton, 1976 (Note 28)), inspired my inquiry, as did such lively accounts of lived experience as those written by Michael Armstrong (Note 29), Paul Le Bolec and Michele Le Guillou (Note 30), and often found in the periodical "Phenomenology + Pedagogy" (Note 31). At the more basic level of discourse about the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of inquiry in the human sciences, of the several bodies of philosophic writing which invite a revision of the Cartesian perspective, I found the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and particularly his articulation of the notion of the incarnate cogito, to be at once the most inspirational and the most useful. This reference, originally made available to me some years earlier through the thesis of W. J. Madenfort (Note 32), had come full-circle. Madenfort was interested in defining aesthetic experience in order to remedy what he saw as "traditional modes of an education for art, with their emphasis on techniques and final product". To do this, he used Husserl's method of reduction to describe the sensuous phenomena experienced in walking through an avenue of elm trees. These phenomena were analyzed in the light of Merleau-Ponty's

theory of the body-as-subject. The notion of aesthetic phenomena as phenomena of both our living bodies and the world was thus disclosed.

For both Madenfort and Carini, Merleau-Ponty's ideas about the pre-conceptual, sensuous nature of esthetic experience have been very significant. Realizing that esthetic experience is the ground for artistic experience, I returned to Merleau-Ponty's outline for a project of phenomenological study of human life (Note 33).

A Cartesian can believe that the existing world is not visible, that the only light is that of the mind, and that all vision takes place in God. A painter cannot grant that our openness to the world is illusory or indirect, that what we see is not the world itself, or that the mind has only to do with its thoughts or with another mind. He accepts with all its difficulties the myth of the windows of the soul; it must be that what has no place is subjected to a body... even more, that what has no place be initiated BY the body to all the others and to nature. We must take literally what vision tells us: namely, that through it we come in contact with the sun and the stars.

Notes

Chapter II

1 The school population was 223 children with 10 teachers. The general socio-economic status of the neighbourhood was middle-class and included a high percentage of immigrants from a wide range of backgrounds such as Italian, Greek, East Indian and Chinese. The kindergarten group I worked with was composed of 21 children; nine boys and eleven girls.

2 Gaston Bachelard, L'aire et les songes: essai sur l'imagination du mouvement (Paris: J. Conti, 1943) and Le droit de rêver (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1970).

3 Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (New York: Dover Pub. Inc. 1953), pp. 83-99.

4 Anton Ehrenzweig, The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

5 Carl Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 15.

6 Suzanne Langer, Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, Vol. 2 (The John Hopkins University Press, 1972), pp. 265-355.

7 Herbert Read, Education Through Art (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1946), pp. 69-168.

8 Art Education: The Journal of the National Art Education

Association, (Vol. 35(6) 1982) was a special issue called "Lowenfeld Revisited". Contributions by Kenneth Beittel, Duke Madenfort, Peter J. Smith, Robert Saunders, John A. Michael, Jerome Hausman and Edward Mattil present aspects of the Lowenfeld "legacy". Also, Laura Chapman's foreward to The Lowenfeld Lectures, John A. Michael ed. (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982) and Peter J. Smith's "Germanic Foundations: A Look At What We Are Standing On" Studies in Art Education (Vol. 23(3)1982) both help clarify the controversy that surrounds the theory and practice of Lowenfeld.

9 Artwork was photographed every week and since the children often worked on the same object for several weeks, there were many more photographs than artifacts. Also, the objects were sometimes photographed from more than one angle.

10 The keywords by which the children were identified by Chess and Thomas were 1.activity, 2.mood, 3.threshold, 4.persistence, 5.rhythmicity, 6.intensity, 7.adaptability, 8.distractability, 9.approach/withdrawal.

11 This means that there was more of an obligation involved in the decision to be with the children in the school than I had expected. I had to be at a certain place at a certain time to do a certain thing. It was no longer a personal decision and I was obliged to respect the long-term nature of the commitment even if the project appeared fruitless.

12 Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Teacher (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1963).

13 Célestin Freinet, La méthode naturelle du dessin (Belgique: Marabout, 1976).

14 Howard Gardner, The Arts and Human Development (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974).

15 Rhoda Kellogg, Analyzing Children's Art (New York: Mayfield Publishing, 1970).

16 Edith Kramer, Art as Therapy with Children: Notes on Theory and Practice (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

17 Henry Schaefer-Simmern, The Unfolding of Artistic Activity: Its Basis, Processes, and Implications (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948).

18 Arno Stern, Une nouvelle compréhension de l'art enfantin (Paris: Collection, "action pedagogique" Delachaux et Niestle, 1974).

19 This scale was inspired by one which Piaget used to typify the reactions of children to questioning in "The Child's Conception of the World", (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1929).

20 Descriptive Documentary Processes and Formats prepared at Prospect Center, April, 1980.

21 Patricia Carini, The School Lives of Seven Children: A Five Year Study (Grand Forks, N.D.: North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, 1982), pp.15-84.

22 One participant at Prospect described how my way of seeing some drawings done by a child she was studying changed her way of looking at them, which at the same time; enabled me to better understand both our points of view on child art. I am citing from an article by Kathe Jervis, "A Teacher's Quest for a Child's Questions", Harvard Educational Review, (Vol.56, No. 2), pp.132-148.

(parentheses mine) "During the year, though I saw his drawing as a mark of social progress, I did not look carefully at the content. I scooped the Joke-Books off the floor, worried that they were casually treated by the children, and marvelled only that there were so many of them, a goodly number of them not finished. Karen, (the teacher) was characteristically unconcerned. I took them along with the "Cloroxed" Drawing Book, off to the Prospect Summer Institute and left them on my shelf, ignored until a college-level children's art teacher (me) pounced on them when she came to my room for a chat. We had been discussing her doctoral research, a once-a-week class with children where she determined the agenda. She had photographed and catalogued all the products beautifully, but she was dissatisfied. All the Institute participants had oohed and aahed over her slides, but she felt her children's work was "inauthentic." When she saw Daryl's work (Daryl was the child Kathe was studying), she exclaimed, "This is what I mean by authentic work. This work has the stamp of the child all over it. What I wouldn't give to have access to a class that did artwork like this." She made me take another look at what Daryl had invested in his drawing and to pay more attention to how important it was for him to have the opportunity to draw." (Footnote, p. 142.)

23 For the check-list, I used a code system to follow these aspects of the children's art making: representation, organization, structure, degree of completion.

24 The prescribed steps of the Prospect approach are: 1. to identify one or more keywords in the child's serial; 2. to describe the medium chosen by the child according to repetitions and variations and divergencies; 3. to describe the motif or theme which is most evident in the child's work according to repetitions and divergencies; 4. to summarize the child's engagement with the medium and the theme or motif.

25 Cathy A. Brooks, The Meaning of Childhood Art Experiences: A Dialectical Hermeneutic (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1980).

26 Stanley N. Folsom, The Art Educator in the Pre-Adolescent World: A Phenomenological, Descriptive Study of

Teacher and Children (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1976).

27 Patricia A. Smith. Formative Hermeneutics: The Art of Teaching Art (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1984).

28 Donnie Joe Stapleton, Ontological Inquiry in Art Education: Hermeneutic Interpretation of a Drawing Serial (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1976).

29 Michael Armstrong, Closely Observed Children: The Diary of a Primary Classroom (London: Writers and Readers, 1980).

30 Paul Le Bolec & Michèle Le Guillou, Les dessins de Patrick: effets thérapeutiques de l'expression libre, (Belgique: Casterman, 1980), pp.7-18.

31 The regular contributions of Ton Beekman, Madelaine Grumet and Valerie Suransky were particularly inspiring.

32 W. J. Madenfort, A Phenomenology of the Esthetic and Art Education (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1965), p. 7.

33 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, Trans. James M. Eadie (Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 186.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF THE ART EDUCATION DIALOGUE

Introduction

This and the following chapter are the results of the process of reviewing the collection of documents I accumulated over the course of my study, including journals, slides, tapes and portfolios. From these documents, I selected the art serials of four children of whom I have complete records covering the entire duration of the art sessions. All four of the children attended school regularly during the three years I taught art classes there. In addition, they attended the four months of Saturday sessions I subsequently held in my studio. The art serials they made thus show a continuity which made it possible for me to approach the distinct artistic identity of each child.

The four children whose works I have chosen, Philippe, Dawn, Christina, and Scott, are shown in Figures 1-4 on the next pages. As well as seeming to embody what was meaningful about the lived experience we shared, the work of those four children represented for me four very distinct ways of approaching art making.

Besides selecting the works of four particular children, I also chose to present nine accounts of particular moments and selections of work from the art sessions. These moments and groupings become the focus of my reflections in this and the following chapters. Carini's way of becoming immersed in the children's work and describing it as it evolves over time, in order to be able later to interpret it, has influenced how





I have organized my material. The purpose of the accounts and reflections is to make present the lived experience in which the children and I participated. The accounts I will present are as follows:

First Account: Paintings Done during the First Week of Kindergarten.

Second Account: Claywork Done in Kindergarten.

Third Account: Drawings Done at the Beginning of Grade One.

Fourth Account: My Selection from Each Grade One Art Serial.

Fifth Account: Open Workshop at the End of Grade One.

Sixth Account: Claywork, "The Christmas Story".

Seventh Account: Wood Construction.

Eighth Account: Last Object in Each of the Art Serials.

Ninth Account: My Preferred Object from Each of the Art Serials.

The accounts contained within this chapter will describe both the objects made by the children and the pedagogical situation in which they were made. Each account includes an introduction, an impressionistic description of the four children's work and a reflective conclusion. Since the introductions and the descriptions are derived from my journals and from the children's work, they are in the present tense, as they were written at the time. Conclusions that were later gleaned from this process are in the past tense. The impressionistic description should enable the reader to understand the way the teacher-researcher perceived the artwork. Photographs of the children's work accompanying the descriptions are intended to help the reader form independent

ideas as to the meaning of the accumulating evidence. The inclusion, within the text and in the form of appendices, of extracts from the researcher's journal also aim to make the lived situation of my inquiry accessible to the reader.

The First Account: Four Paintings

Introduction

Looking at the four paintings produced during those first moments of what has become a very long-term relationship, I am struck by how obvious and yet mysterious each of the children is to me. Now, of course, I know them each rather well, and am aware that each one is likely to surprise, delight, impress or confound or disappoint me in a different way. I have, I now realize, a quite specific relationship with each of the children and with the artistic styles they make available to me. These relationships, as they can be differentiated from the general pedagogical relationship which I had with the whole group, is what I will now attempt to describe. By referring to this grouping of four paintings done by the children, and describing how they came to be made, I am able to begin to bring to light the pedagogical values underlying my encounters with the children and thus to provide the reader with a frame of reference within which the individual art serials, which will be described more specifically in the next chapter, can be appreciated.

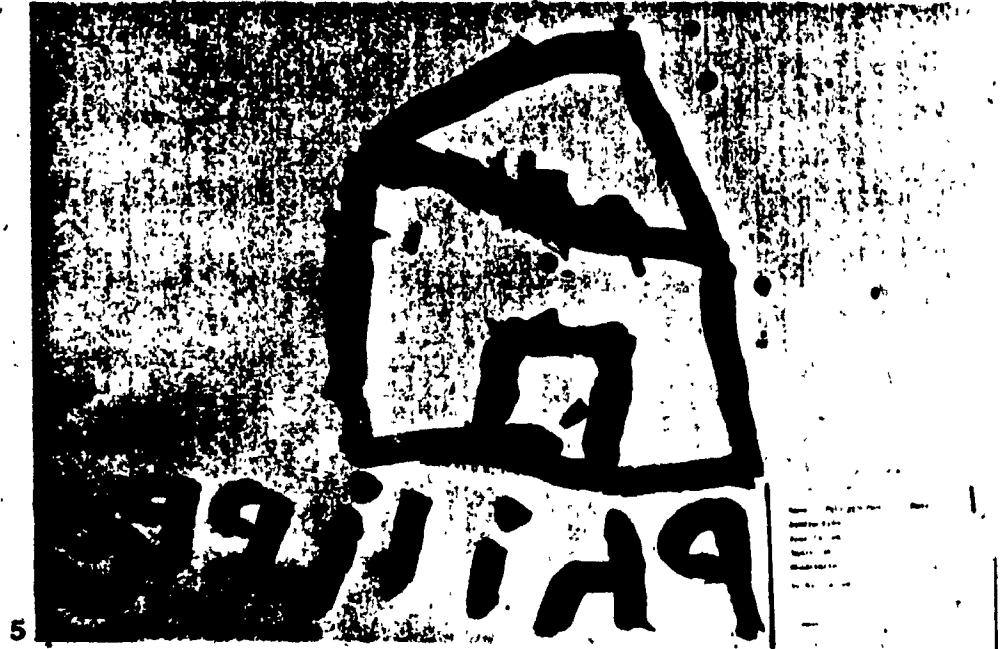
I meet the children on the Friday of the week they begin school. No art activities have yet been given to them by the teacher. For most of the children, painting is an unfamiliar

activity. I begin at the beginning, by placing at each child's place one colour of liquid paint, a large natural-bristle brush, a big sheet of white paper and generous quantities of water. Thus, I choose to adopt a "tried-and-true" teaching prerogative, that of deciding which materials and tools will be used by each child in the class. I do this despite my initial intention to assume the role of "facilitator" rather than "teacher", because the situation as I perceive it on that day, requires that I explicitly identify myself to everyone.

I carefully explain the handling of paint and paintbrush, so as to assure that only the desired quantity of paint is applied to the paper. I offer only one colour of paint. I want to find out as much as I can about each child's relationship with the art-making experience and I believe that this is most efficiently achieved by reducing the demands made of the child to a bare minimum. I want to see what each child will make visible to me and how, in terms of gesture, grasp and attitude, this will be done. I want to find out how the children understand my suggestion that they become artists.

Description

Painting - Philippe. This composition (Figure 5) contains two separate configurations. Near the top of the paper is outlined a house with a door and doorknob; across the bottom of the page is written Philippe's name, in mirror fashion. I see the house as being situated on the "horizon" of Philippe's name, which is carefully placed, letter after letter, from right to left. However, the house appears lopsided. Horizontal lines are converging, and the overall



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impression is that of someone who is carefully measuring the situation and establishing himself as a discrete, private person in this collective art making context. I see the minimalism of his image and wonder how I can encourage him to become more engaged in the exploration of matter and form. My concern at this time is to find a way of coaxing Philippe to invest more into his elaboration of whatever he is doing.

Painting - Dawn. Dawn's work (Figure 6) is a lyrical organization of undulating lines and shapes painted in various densities. There is an airiness to the work, and a semblance of movement around and between the shapes. From the first, I am charmed by Dawn's exclusive use of formal elements and by the lively grasp she has of the art-making situation. Hers is an unconventional approach, neither scribbling nor drawing, but rather exploring tool and medium and surface to find out the potential they hold for her.

Painting - Christina. Here I see a composition of three distinct configurations (Figure 7). Central is a standing girl shape; crossing the surface above is Christina's name; toward the right-hand edge of the paper stands an outline of a small symbolic house. This child, I recognize, is already competent with at least two different code systems and is also skillful with paint and brush and the organization of several elements on a single surface. I remember wondering, as I photographed Christina's work, how she managed to draw a face on her person using the large brush I had given her. She must have separated out one or two bristles and found a way to achieve just the expression she wanted. In addition to this finesse, I see in

CHRISTINA



7



8

Christina's authoritative, but well-placed, brush strokes an amazing assurance and control.

Painting - Scott. Of the four paintings considered here, this is the one (Figure 8) I remember most clearly as it was made on that first kindergarten day. Scott painted with boundless enthusiasm and energetic gestures, adding more layers of paint until the scrubbing of the hogshair brush wore right through the paper. I spread newspaper on the floor and suggested that he work there instead of on the table. Given more space, Scott used even more paint and was soon painting even the newspaper around his sheet of drawing paper. I enjoyed this display of exuberance and found myself smiling.

The kindergarten teacher also smiled when she saw Scott's abundant production. "This is the first activity that he has really participated in," she said. Apparently, although polite and agreeable, Scott had been completely unengrossed in the school program.

Unlike the work of some children, who enjoy "painting away" the paper just as one would paint a wall, Scott's painting had a form. It consisted of a fairly applied mass on the right, with strokes going in all directions toward the top and left and bottom of the paper. The erratic splotches and drips and the suggestion of an "S" shape make me wonder whether he may have been playing with the letters of his name.

Reflection

A number of problems had been resolved. My public identity was no longer that ambiguous mesh of researcher-baby sitter-artist which I had imagined at the outset of the

project: it was clearly that of art teacher. This did not mean that I had relinquished the desire to find out what artistically distinguishes the children one from the other, but that this desire would be played out while I was being as responsible for the children as I could in the situation. Thus, the descriptions became testimonials of the ongoing pedagogical dialogue between myself as art teacher and four of the children making up the group with which I worked.

Looking at the description of the four paintings made on the first day of kindergarten, I understand that my main interest was in finding out what each child would choose to paint. As an art teacher, I thought it important to find out as much as possible about the personal orientation of each child in order to be able to consider him/her as an artist. From this point onward, all my pedagogical goals were conceived in relation to individuals.

My second preoccupation, related to, but distinct from, the focus on self-direction, concerned the quality of each child's engagement with the materials, tools and techniques of art making. Philippe, Dawn, Christina and Scott made available to me four very different ways of taking up my idea and practice of art education. Although little could be understood at this early stage about each of the children's art styles, I was able to imagine how each one would approach my proposals in the future, since I myself, as a child or as an artist, had behaved with art materials in the ways that they did, and could remember something about the feelings and thoughts I had experienced.

The Second Account: Four Clay Models

Introduction

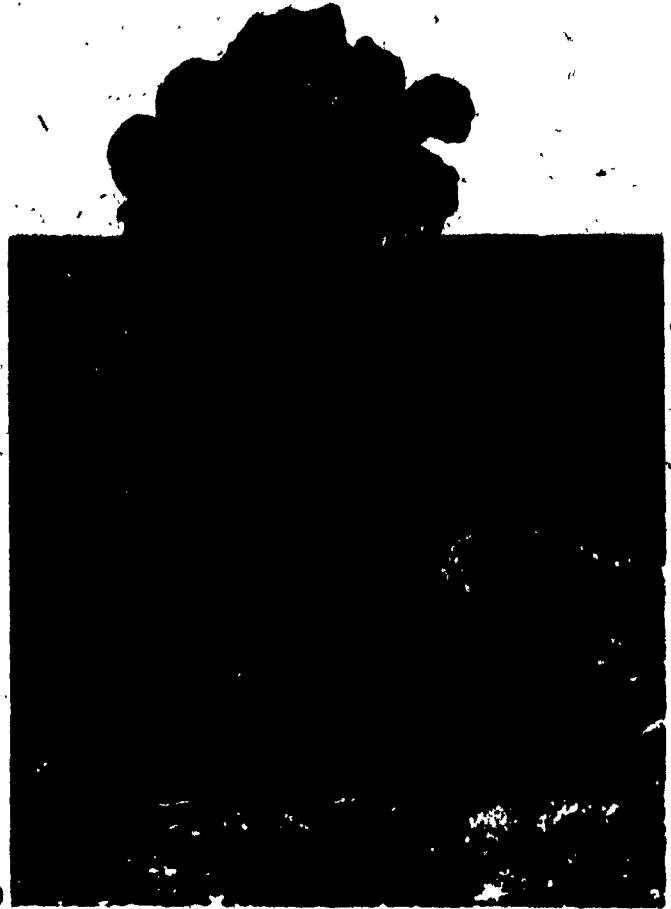
It is in April of that kindergarten year that the air-tight container full of moist natural red clay is opened for the first time. I have long favoured clay in both my art making and teaching and I am happy to be sharing this material with my group of children.

Description

Clay Model - Philippe. This piece (Figure 9) is, from any point of view, an intriguing structure. It looks like a curving bobsled run and is propped up in front and back on simplified clay cylinders. Several spheres of clay (like marbles) are poised on the chute, ready to roll down. The whole piece is about 6" high by 6" deep.

I know that for Philippe this is an important piece, because I can see how engrossed he is while working on it and how delighted he is with it when it is completed. Almost three years later, Philippe made a more complicated version of this slide: a large cylinder with an opening near the bottom from which a curved slide descended (Figure 10). A shelf at the very top of the open cylinder contained marbles which, when pushed off, dropped to the bottom and rolled out the hole and down the slide. When asked, Philippe told me that he didn't remember the earlier version.

I appreciate the sustained desire which is required to form this particular shape and then find a way to elevate it sufficiently and support the heavy wet clay and the front of



9



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the structure. I am pleased by Philippe's involvement because he rarely becomes very caught up in the classes, even when I allow the children to choose their own materials. Until this time, his plasticine work has been of minimal form and small in size. For example, I think of his "eyeglasses" (Figure 12), his "maze" (Figure 11), his series of "lighters", his "pipe", his "banana peel", his cake with floppy candles and his table with a ceremonial mug in the centre. His work is usually original, and at times even ingenious, but it often shows a lack of sustained interest.

Philippe's usually-short attention span, as well as his frequent decisions to work with materials or themes other than those suggested to the group, present me with a problem. While it is very important to me that he become interested in the art work and involved with some art materials, it seems equally important to him to be able to wander around the room. Typically, he will walk around quietly and nonchalantly while everyone else is intensely working on whatever project has been decided upon that day, peer at what other people are doing, occasionally pause to chat with special friends, and, if I allow myself to be even the least bit available, monopolize my attention with vivid accounts of last night's TV program or descriptions of a favourite toy or some event at home. Although I recognize this as expressive, and therefore acceptable, behaviour, it presents me with the challenge of finding ways of showing Philippe that he can be playful in his expression and that this playfulness can be more satisfying if it is put into form with art materials. Occasionally this



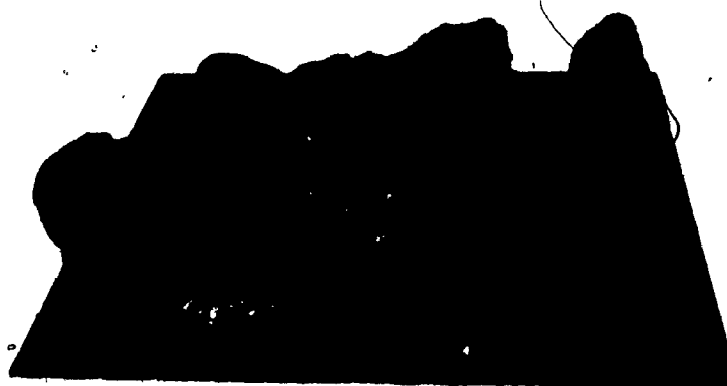
does happen, but I am unable to see it except in retrospect.

Clay Model - Dawn. This is a cavern surrounded by shapes which suggest trees and rocks (Figures 13 and 14). The building has a curved, slightly-domed roof reminiscent of an igloo, and has large openings in both front and back. It is built with many small slabs of clay that overlap and are supported underneath by coils of clay lined up like ribs. I watch Dawn work, entranced by her method and intrigued by her choice of subject. As I remark how well the "beams" inside the house serve to hold up the walls and roof, she smiles.

Toward the end of grade two, when I interviewed Dawn to verify some impressions I had, she spoke of this piece as being one of her favourites. She called it "the house on stilts".

Despite the massiveness of the tree-like and boulder-like shapes around the dwelling, they all blend together because all are rounded, organic shapes. The total effect reminds me of Dawn's first painting, which was a composition of shapes and lines in rhythmic movement.

Dawn doesn't usually go this far with her plasticine modelling work. Generally, when she is confronted by technical problems such as uprights which topple over or spheres which refuse to remain firmly joined to one another, she stops. Previously, her completed images included flat, two-dimensional people, cookies and pizzas (all richly textured), an interesting flattened coil resting comfortably on four dice-like cubes (Figure 15), a standing animal, a coiled-up yo-yo, and several dishes holding dented cubes.



Clay Model - Christina. Christina's clay work is different from all the others done on this day in that it includes within one image both two-dimensional "drawn" elements and a three-dimensional central form (Figure 16). The main element in the composition is a rabbit.

Shining down on the rabbit is a sun, neatly cut out of a quarter segment of a circle and having four radial lines. It is placed in a corner of the tile support. The rabbit is free-standing and spirals of clay (which Christina tells me are sunbeams) circle his head. The rabbit is a tour de force of representation. It is solidly build on four short legs which are attached to a curved massive, somewhat turtle-like body; behind there is a tail. The rabbit's head is unlike any I have ever seen. Christina wanted it to be seen frontally, and in order to achieve this, she attached the head, with smiling, bewhiskered face and ears, horizontally and looking up. Again, her flexibility manipulating technique and convention systems appears to me remarkable.

During this class, I ask the children to inspect their clay work carefully when it is finished, turn it in all directions and decide which way it looks best, and then try to draw it.

Christina is one of the few children in the class who follow this instruction. The other three being considered here do not. Philippe smiles quizzically at my suggestion, as though he cannot believe that anyone would want to do anything so silly, then says shortly that he cannot do it. Dawn ponders her work with pencil poised, makes a series of arcs on the paper, wrinkles her nose in dissatisfaction, signs her name

16



17.



and prepares to leave. Scott is so busy colouring and cutting scraps of paper that he does not have time to attempt a drawing.

Christina has time to draw her clay work before the bell rings. She places the rectangular paper vertically, looks several times at her model and at the paper, then carefully draws a similar organization of elements (Figure 17). The only striking difference is that the large, smiling, masklike rabbit face, the most compelling characteristic of the clay work (but impossible to depict without radical adjustment) is reduced to a miniscule circle below a pair of ears. However, sunbeam spirals dance around the recognizable rabbit and a sun shines down from the corner. Again, Christina has overcome several obstacles and with audacity and conviction has put her mark on the world.

Clay Model - Scott. This clay model surprises me. It is a large, rectangular bed in a room without a door (Figure 18). The walls roughly follow the edges of the 10" linoleum tile on which the majestic "bed" rests. The walls are of uneven heights, having been constructed of many separate flattened pieces of clay, which overlap and are somewhat bent to strengthen their surface. The bed has raised edges on three sides, which makes me think of the protective edges one puts on children's beds to prevent them from falling out.

It is when I see Scott crayoning energetically on a piece of paper that I really begin to notice this piece. Since the only material I have prepared is clay, I wonder why he is crayoning. But I do not ask. He is very involved, and although

18



I cannot figure out what his cake-like, flattened shape surrounded by upright shapes can be, I presume that Scott himself knows. A bit later, I notice that he is cutting out many coloured spots, apparently having decided not to continue the clay work.

Managing the class diverts my attention, and it is only when we are tidying up that I notice how Scott completed his work. The many little pieces of crayoned paper have been pressed into the wet clay in two parallel rows. I am startled by this very unusual combination of materials and I find the strong contrast between the naturalness of the clay and the artificiality of the bits of coloured paper to be wonderful. Exactly what it is meant to be I still do not know, since this is the first time I have ever encountered a clay bedroom. Scott tells me, "It is a bed." Ah, yes; then that is the cover. Scott nods. "It's a quilt," he says and leaves the kindergarten room smiling.

Reflection

In the description of the creation of Scott's "bedroom", several didactic features are clear. My main preoccupation was to be able to closely observe each art teaching and learning event; in order to achieve this, I minimized technical instruction and provided the simplest materials possible. On this day, I had chosen clay and everyone had participated in an exploratory exercise before they began their own creations. The warming-up part of the lesson had consisted of telling the children to build as high a post as possible out of the clay and to try to use all of their clay. As usual, a lot of

exchanges and laughter were heard when everyone tried to stretch the physical properties of the medium to its limits. They then sang out the names of their tall shapes; a tower, a tree, a chimney, a telephone pole, a skinny mountain...

Once everyone had become involved with his/her own activity, I found myself absorbed by concerns of many kinds. Some children needed encouragement even to get started; others started quickly and just as rapidly exhausted their interest; still others had a lot to say and needed an ear to listen and someone to respond; most needed a bit of technical support at some point in the lesson. Given how busy I was, it is not surprising that I did not see the evolution of Scott's model except in flashes and that only later, while writing the journal and still in the presence of the freshly-made clay objects, was I able to partially reconstruct the event.

While simplifying the technical objectives - in this case, that each person build a three-dimensional object of clay - I was always interested in noticing, and if possible, encouraging, those children who went beyond the immediate context by searching for materials and tools that would enhance their present image. Scott's initiative was an example of just such "going beyond".

Third Account: Drawing of a Summertime Memory

Introduction

Just as the first account was a description of the first art objects made in kindergarten, this account is about the very first art objects made in grade one. I am now meeting the

children after what seems like an aeon, in fact, the time between June and September. The group has been split into two different classes, so I cannot count on the group spirit I had grown with last year. We are, however, in our own "artroom" and thus an aura of specialness surrounds today's coming together. This is my first day of a new school year; I want to meet the children as "aesthetically" as possible and also have some idea at the close of the day of the way in which each child is growing. Crayon drawings are my way of dealing with the hub-bub which greets me as the children vie with each other in their efforts to tell me something important about their holidays or about this first week of school.

I have put at each child's place containers heaped with soft, oil-pastel crayons and large sheets of white paper. This particular kind of crayon, introduced to me while I was at art school twenty years ago, has remained my favourite for both my studio work and my teaching. The colours are clear, can be mixed and overlaid to obtain transparencies, and are easy to apply. They have a "painterly" quality, while allowing for sensitive line drawing.

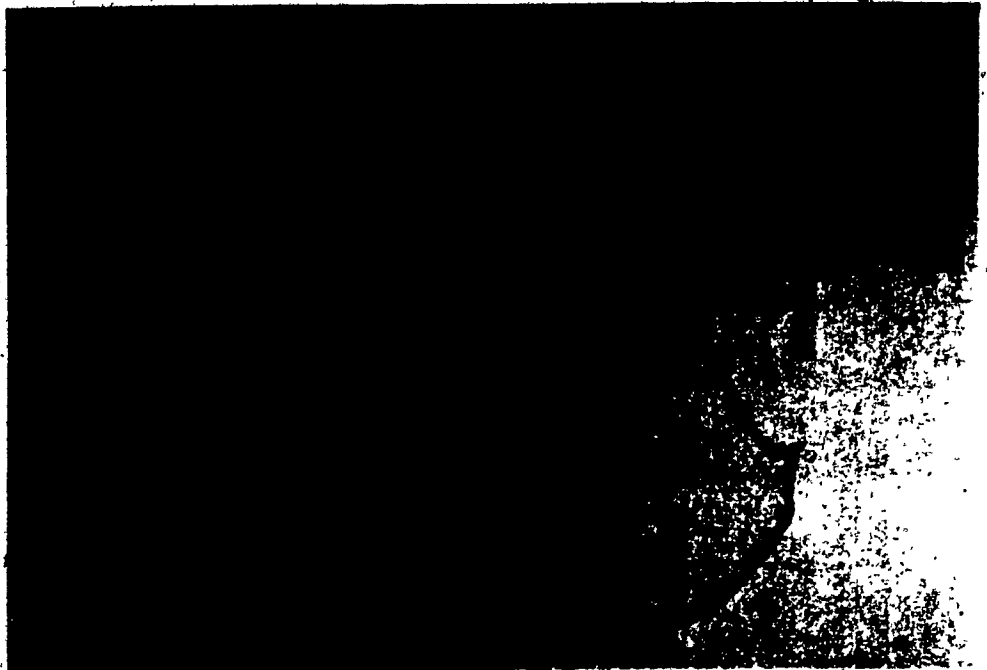
I ask the children to first warm up by making a gesture drawing. Gesture drawings are familiar to the children as preliminary exercises to almost all our drawing projects. Then, I ask them to recreate for me one very important moment of their summer vacation.

Description

Drawings - Philippe. The crayon exercise (Figure 19) is a very energetic drawing done in many colours, primarily red,



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blue, yellow and purple. The swirling mass of lines is in sharp contrast to his second drawing (Figure 20) which is an unusual organization of textures, motifs and configurations rendered in sombre colours (black, brown, blue, green). I can't figure out what it is about without help from Philippe. Knowing that he has developed a preference for topological representation and that he likes to show relations between objects and how things work, I especially enjoy his excited explanation of the fireworks his grandfather sets up on the sandy beach at the lake. His slow, smiling exclamation "oh-yah!" rings in my ears now as I remember all the occasions when I was witness to his noticing something, figuring out something or being surprised by some small truth. This seemed to be his life's blood. Now I see clearly the silhouetted rocket-shaped firecracker, the dampened sand, the blackness of the night sky hovering over the crescent beach and the many exploding blue sparks shooting above the blackness. Like Philippe, I see the location from above and notice that the sandy arc is edged with green grass. The firecrackers are at once dormant and alive. Puffs of smoke at the bottom of the drawing show me that Philippe has made a reconstruction of his experience of time as well as space and form. I can also see that when he is caught up in his drawing of an important experience, he does not consider how the experience fits into the space available, which in this case is the surface of the paper.

In this drawing, I rediscover Philippe's enjoyment of the magical, the overpowering and I see again his fascination with

fire. I remember his series of birthday cakes with candles, his lighters, his airplanes taking off on runways as seen from above, his racing cars springing wildly out of coloured containers, his marble slide, his ambulances and all those hypnotizing mazes he made during his kindergarten year.

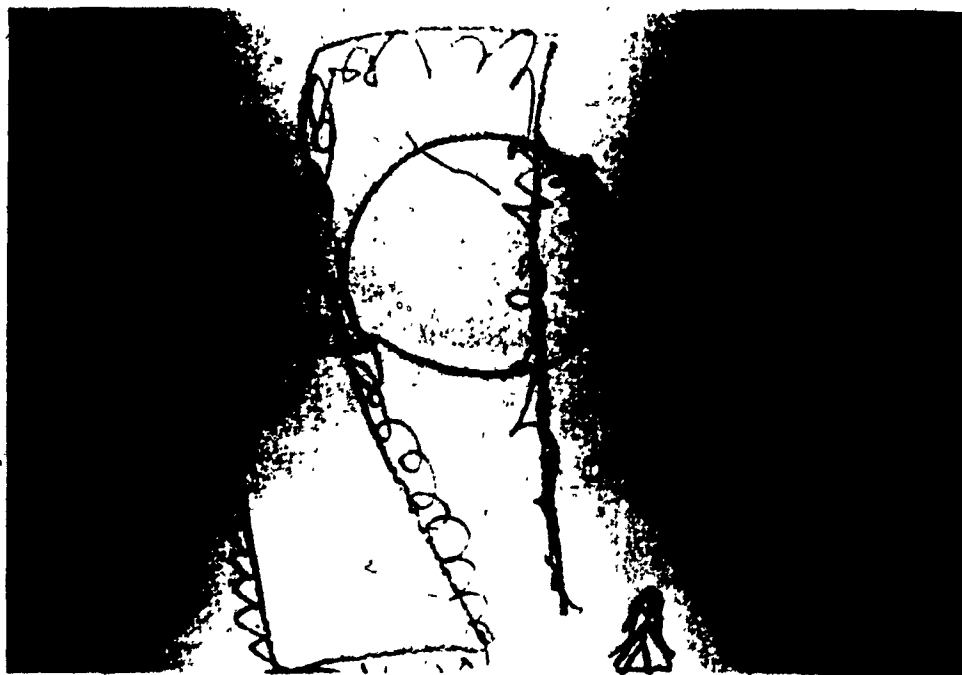
Drawings - Dawn. Dawn's crayon exercise (Figure 21) is also in marked contrast with her second drawing. She applies layer after layer of dense colour, starting with blues and yellows and finishing with red. She seems to be searching for new colours and this preoccupation is different from her approach to the second drawing, which is spatial and linear.

(Dawn chooses to tell me about her experience on the "Great Adventure" amusement park ride (Figure 22). With a single red crayon, she draws straight up to the top, across, straight down, up again, across, down, and then retraces the path with zigzag and then looping lines which tell me of the speed and the vibration of Dawn's amazing ride through space. A horizontal line containing a circle in the centre is superimposed over the vertical roller coaster, and heavily-applied crayon strokes on one downward edge of the concave side of the circle indicate the most intense instant of Dawn's experience. Dawn is seen, diminutive, under the great loop, beside the attendant's window of the "Great Adventure" ticket booth. What a breath-taking description of being hurtled bodily through space on a looping, diving track! How much sense it makes to me as I remember Dawn's

Kandinsky-like painting done a year ago! Her gesture is sure, the lines are precise, the retracing of the marvellous voyage



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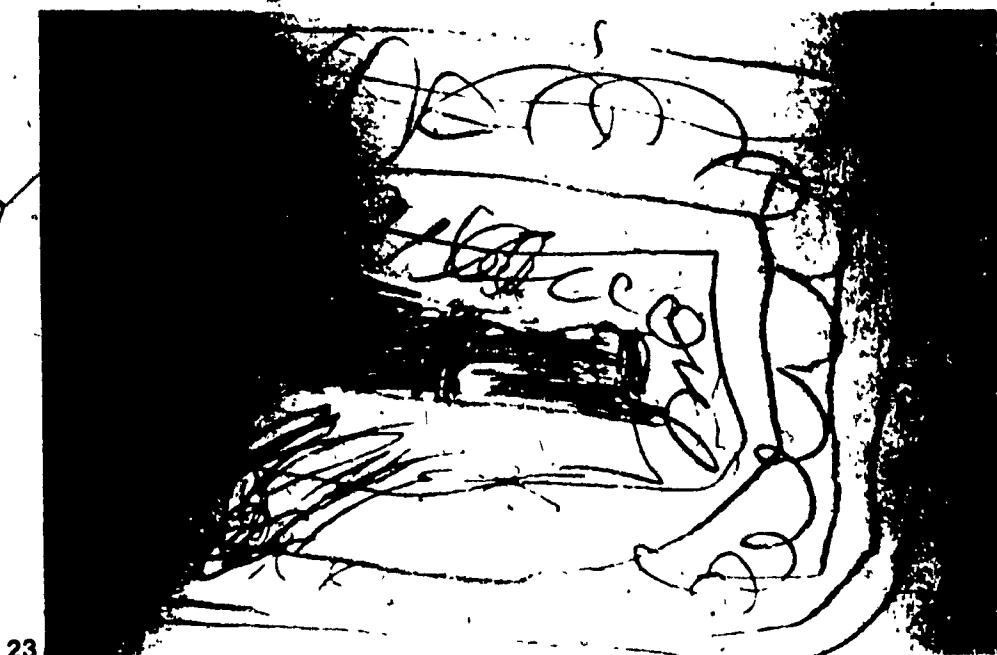
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is rhythmic and generous. Her own figure is without feet and seems to be able to rise into the air, weightless.

Drawings - Christina. Christina makes a series of concentric rectangles (Figure 23), each of a different colour: red, blue, purple, pink, yellow, turquoise. These follow the edges of the paper and culminate in a central rectangle upon which she concentrates. A white base is covered half-and-half with pink and red. Looping lines overlap the straight lines of the rectangular form, making two circles around the dominant shape. I can feel Christina methodically taking possession of her paper with the diminishing series of rectangles and I perceive her pleasure in the mixing of new pinks and reds. I also enjoy the repetitive-rhythm of the frames and the spirals.

Somewhat akin to the surprise I felt when I glanced from Dawn's relentless search for transparency with the oil crayons to her "Great Adventure" is my surprise when I look from Christina's exercise to her composed, quiet, serene tent drawing. But then I notice that both works are balanced, both begin from a base line, both have first been structured and then coloured, and in both, line is more important than colour.

Christina begins her drawing by tracing flat, brown earth upon which a bright, yellow tent is carefully and solidly erected (Figure 24). The tent's triangular front opening occupies most of its visible surface. Compositionally, and in terms of the focus of meaning, this opening in the tent is the same as the face of the rabbit on Christina's kindergarten



23



24

claywork, which was also "turned" for the viewer. However, this time, the side of the tent is also included. Brown lines, oblique in front and vertical on the side of the tent, show me that Christina remembers the construction of the tent and probably noticed when she was inside it that when the light passes through the fabric, the seams appear dark. A sun smiles down on the scene, and to the left are four tightly-grouped trees of the same height as the tent. Knowing Christina's close relationship with the other three members of her family, I look upon this huddled cluster of delicately-drawn trees as a symbol of Christina's family. Her family is presumably with her in the tent. Thus, in a curious way, Christina's drawing is about the experience of being inside and outside the tent at the same time. Three discrete elements (forest, sun, tent) form the bottom-heavy triangular organization favoured by Christina. Her concern for visual recognizability and correctness of colour are poetically compensated for by the great, happy sun, reminding me that she is living in an intensely-animated world despite her facility with convention.

Drawings - Scott. Scott's crayon exercise fills the paper equally with repetitive, fluid, rhythmic gestures (Figure 25). The many black dots filling the "background" tell me that Scott is now interested in filling up the surface, an aspect of drawing which had not concerned him formerly. His drawing of his summertime memory shows this "filling up" tendency. Here I see Scott as most anxious to tell us about swimming near the sand dunes by the lake, and his drawing is an expression of his participation in that environment (Figure



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26). Unlike the other children in the class, Scott places his paper vertically and, without any hesitation, launches into a vigorous rendering of himself in a landscape. He shows the dunes as three symmetrical domes near the top of the sheet. A broad blue expanse of equally-heavily-crayoned "water" cuts across the paper. Below this is more sand. Central within this dramatic landscape is Scott himself, swimming in the blue water. His stick figure with upward-reaching arms has not changed since kindergarten, but his ability to impart that which is important to him about his summer holiday, to tell us something about his world, has greatly expanded. His work always occupies all the space available and what it lacks in detail and thematic elaboration, it makes up for in the general vitality of the rendering style.

Reflection

I can remember how nervous I was about renewing the relationship with the children (much more nervous than I had been at the beginning of the previous year) and how important it was to me to recapture the spirit which I had come to associate with these art-making sessions. My journal notes show me that that first day in the "artroom" turned out to be satisfying and indeed, encouraging. The instructions I gave to the children calmed the atmosphere and I sensed them looking back over time, remembering, choosing, evaluating the possibilities of showing one or other of their memories and measuring their ability to do justice to it in a drawing. The group had changed decidedly. Their relationship with drawing and with their own past experience had become more precise and

available. I was able to see a great deal of intention and a high level of intellectual and emotional tension.

Now, as I look at the two drawings of each of the children, I see that even at that time I was aware of the basic temperament of each of the children and that I thus really knew quite a lot about them.

Philippe's approach, for example, appears rather random in the first drawing, but is defined, logical and methodical in the second.

Dawn's image is isolated and heavily applied in the first drawing, but her second drawing is expressive of movement in several ways.

Christina's style is symmetric, orderly, energetic in the first drawing and intentional, careful, "grounded" in the second.

In his first drawing, Scott appears to show indiscriminate involvement with lines and dots; in the second, he is immersed in a careful organization of basic forms.

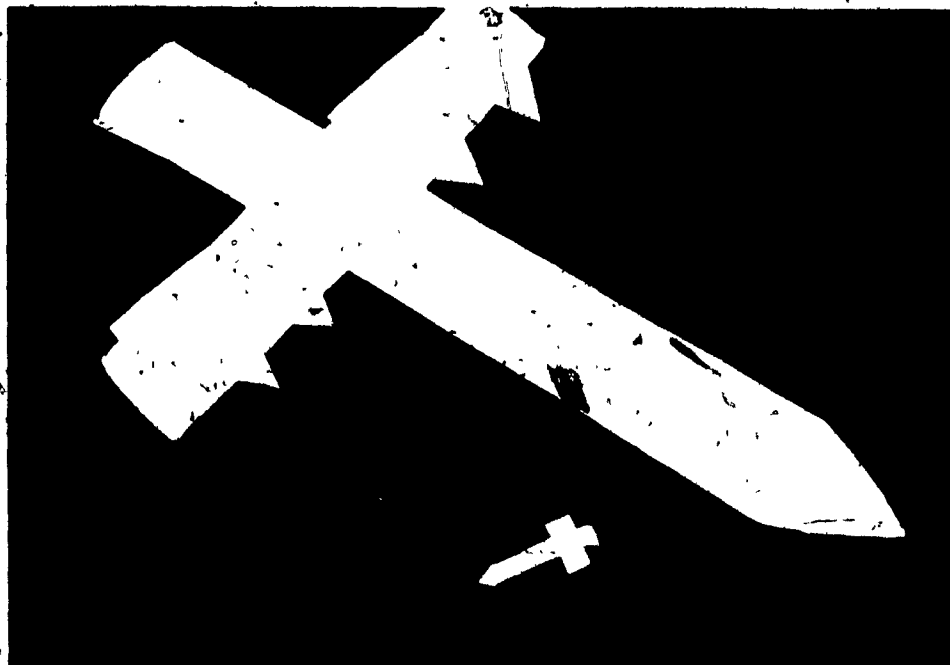
Philippe, who is thoughtful, is also energetic, enthusiastic in his drawing and generous with line, gesture and colour. Dawn, who represents with astonishing simplicity a myriad of bodily experiences, is also interested in the overlaying of colour, the density of surface and can isolate the interest in transparency as her only concern. Christina, who shows great facility in learning rules and norms and the way materials work, amazes me by the way she also joyfully fills a surface with repetitive gestures while exploring colour. Scott, who usually favours a monolithic style of

composition, can also take pleasure in modulating surfaces and working with textures.

Fourth Account: Artifacts Which Represent the Children Introduction

This account will focus upon four artifacts (one from each of the children's serials) which I have chosen from the work done in grade one because they seem to me to reflect something basic about each child's artistic style. Again, the living situations within which the art objects were made will be evoked by referring to background detail recorded in my journal.

Object from Grade One Art Serial - Philippe. Out of white drawing paper, Philippe has made two symbolic daggers (Figure 27). One is very large (about 14"); the other is very small (about 2"). Near the tip of the larger dagger, he has made a raised triangular pocket to hold the smaller one. Both daggers are in the shape of a cross (blade and hilt), and are made of cut, folded and glued paper. Four triangular-shaped spikes are fixed to the handguard of the larger one. I find the total effect striking. First of all, one notes the precision needed to make such a neat object, the artist's certainty about what he wanted to make and the aggressiveness which the very presence of a dagger suggests, then one sees the humour associated with the kangaroo pocket for the baby dagger, the ambiguity of the completed piece and the expression of a kind of tenderness in the provision of a place for the tiny dagger. (For a journal entry that helps to



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situate Philippe's paper dagger in the general context of the art class, see Appendix A).

Taking into account the way Philippe chooses his material, theme and technique and is able to carry them through to make something with which he is satisfied, I very much admire this object. I also see here the playfulness and sardonic humour which I have come to associate with Philippe's art work and his ability to transgress school rules (such as those about not making weapons and not making things that will serve as toys after school) while, at the same time, behaving agreeably.

Object from Grade One Art Serial - Dawn. Sometime at the beginning of grade one, Dawn made this collage, which has remained one of my preferred items in her serial. It is a non-representational composition, made with superimposed rectangles of tissue paper and coloured cellophane (Figure 28). The impression of transparency gained from all the layering of thin coloured paper reminds me of Dawn's "scribble" drawing done last month and I take pleasure in retracing her careful choices of colour and placement. There is a glue-down pink shape and a pale-blue one; the blue is partially overlapped by a turquoise paper, and a scarlet sheet partially obscures all three of the colours. The collage is centred on white paper. It would seem a mundane grouping of scraps of paper were it not for the finishing touches, which are astonishing in their simplicity and their formal value. The first of these touches is a small sheet of green cellophane placed right in the middle of the collage, giving

visual weight to the whole structure.

The second "finishing touch" is a crumpled wad of scarlet tissue paper glued right in the middle of the palest area of the whole collage, giving to the composition an arresting and brilliant high note.

The day Dawn creates this piece, I have prepared collage-making as the main activity. No specific subject matter is suggested; I have made new materials available, and I want to find out how the children will approach the translucent and transparent sheets before being more directive in my teaching. The white paper onto which these delicate sheets are to be organized was chosen to encourage the children to play with the effects they will achieve when transparent colours are overlaid. At the beginning of the lesson, we hold various colours up to the sunny window and everyone oohs and ahs at the magical appearance of brilliant new colours, especially when two colours overlap. My hope is that, inspired by a new material, some of the children will move beyond their current repetitive pictorial organizations. However, I am also well aware of the danger of providing a continual fare of unfamiliar art materials in the hope that these will seduce the beginning artists into more prolonged and active engagement with the art process.

A rule-of-thumb way by which I judge the appropriateness of adding a new art material to the basic paint, crayons, clay, etc., is to ask myself whether this material can be made routinely available after the initial rules of handling have been learnt. This criterion excludes expensive materials and

novelty materials, such as those required for leatherwork, metal embossing, weaving, basketwork and copper enamelling, all of which require considerable direction and guidance.

In my teaching, I give the rules of handling a new material or using a new technique in the briefest possible way, merely in order to point out a possible direction. The "rules" are given in two or three simple instructions at the beginning of a lesson; then at least one session is devoted to using that material or technique in an open workshop, where I can observe individual behaviour and judge whether or not a more focused pedagogical procedure is warranted. For example, on this occasion, I let the children practice tearing and cutting a sample scrap of tissue paper, then tell them to trade with a neighbour, so that with two colours they can obtain a third and thus grasp the notion of transparency. Then I show them the visual effect obtained with liquid glue on overlaid colours, so that they can make the fragile quality of the materials a conscious element in their compositions. The instruction is intended to prevent undue discouragement and to provide several possible approaches; it takes only a few minutes out of the precious time we have together.

This "technical information" flowing from me to the children is an element of my pedagogical dialogue with them, that I am aware will be taken up differently by each one, and will be transformed by each unique vision of the world and each unique tendency to attribute importance to this or that out of the entire repertoire of possibilities among the techniques and materials of the visual arts. But as modest as

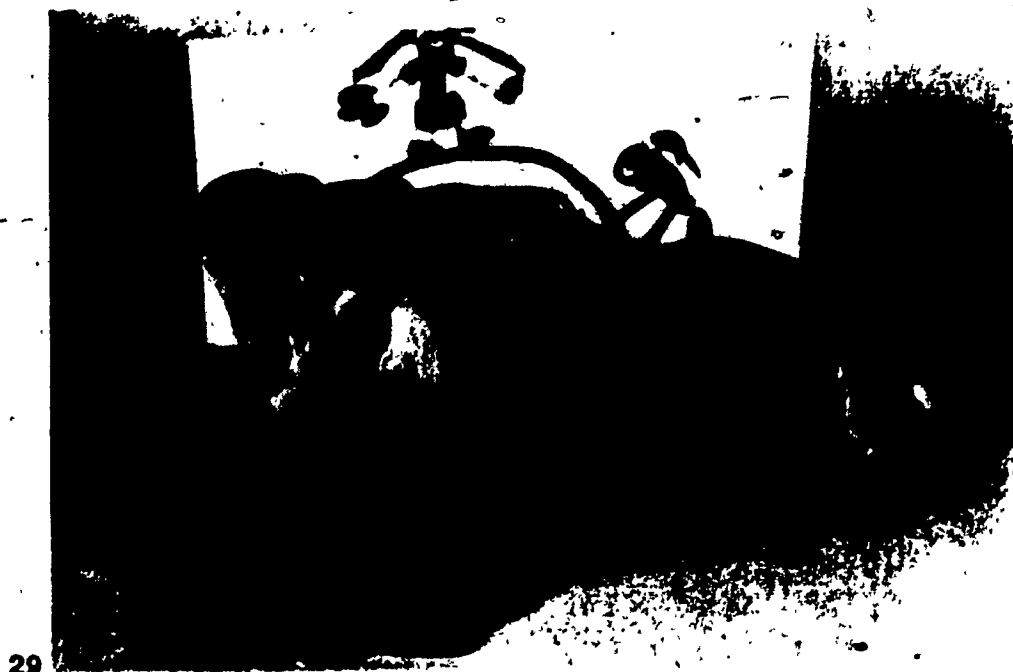
it is, this "teaching of technique" is an essential aspect of my pedagogical practice.

After the day on which the children learned collage-making, tissue paper and cellophane paper were always made available, and I enjoyed occasionally discovering that someone had decided to add collage to a drawing or painting or, conversely, to use crayons or pencils to add drawn detail to a construction or collage.

In relation to Dawn's charming collage, which sums up the simplicity of approach so characteristic of her serial and shows how she inevitably achieves an elegant (and occasionally complex) composition, I add a short anecdote.

During the annual end-of-the-year-meetings with the children's families, I showed Dawn's family her year's serial in a slide presentation. I was surprised and happy to hear Dawn's father chuckle as he viewed the collage. "I like that. I really like that," he said. I realized that Dawn was recognized in much the same way at home as she was here in the artroom; she often made me smile in just the same way.

Object in Grade One Art Serial - Christina. I have chosen a plasticine and drawing composition from Christina's serial (Figure 29). Christina begins by making a smiling horse of grey plasticine upon which two figures are riding. The figure in front is a girl; the figure in back is a boy. Near the standing horse and riders is placed a blue, pink and yellow plasticine rainbow. All these objects are upright and occupy three-dimensional space. The composition is completed with a background drawn on a white index card with felt



markers. A multi-coloured rainbow fills the centre of the card; a smiling girl balances on top; two suns shine merrily from the corners and a black animal climbs the rainbow to where the girl is standing.

Once again Christina's composition shows three separate configurations (see Figure 30). There is a main figure (the horse and riders) and two others, which make statements about background or support; of these two, one, the rainbow, is three-dimensional while the other is a two-dimensional drawing. On this particular day, Christina is intensely engaged with materials and complex image making problems. Her well-proportioned "horse" supports the heaviness of two "riders", each of which are in themselves rather complicated structures. I see Christina's approach (so reminiscent of her way of going about making the clay image of a rabbit in the sunshine), wherein she mixes modelling techniques (using the grey clay for the main massive elements) with an enumerative graphic style for the rendering of finer details (using the coloured clay), as being unusually methodical in comparison with the other children in our group. Even once she achieves the impression she wants, Christina often continues, apparently without losing her focus, as is exemplified here by her addition of a colourful drawn background.

An important thread in the fabric of my art teaching is storytelling. I sometimes use stories to help distract the children momentarily from their frustrations with the resistance of materials and tools, to smooth out the difficult moments of transition from their classrooms to the artroom

and back again, and to draw the group together and help the students acquire the habit of imagining rather than just relying on observation and memory.

For the children, narrative serves as an entry into many art-making activities. The week before this plasticine lesson, our project was storybook making. Each child was given one card, onto which he/she was asked to draw something happening. When this was done, they were told to imagine what could happen next, and draw that onto a second card. This process was continued until the children considered their stories to be complete. Then, holes were punched on one edge of the cards and these pages were tied together with yarn or ribbon. If the children wanted to, they could make covers, add colour or collage to their drawings or begin another story. I felt that the results obtained were very exciting: there was a great variety in the dramatic expression, graphic style, technical choices and theme of the storybooks.

On this day when Christina makes her horse and riders, we are all sitting around a large, low table. In front of each of us are four lumps of plasticine - grey, blue, pink, yellow. I begin the lesson by picking up the plasticine, one piece at a time, and warming it in my hand, while telling a story about an adventure in a faraway land. Making up as I go along, I talk about some lost children who are helped by a pony who lives over the rainbow. The tale goes on and on, with several children helping me to weave it into its final form. Using the now well-softened plasticine, the children begin shaping those details of the story which they each find most compelling. As

I see that everyone is caught up in his/her own image, my tale comes to an end.

Last week I had been particularly enchanted by Christina's storybooks, which were more elaborate both in their chronology and their narrative content than those of many of the other children. I am familiar by now with her repertoire of characters as well as with her capacity for fitting them into intricate and fabulous situations. Today, I see Christina finish the horse, onto which she places herself and her brother. She then constructs a sturdy rainbow and sets it behind. She puts her composition on the artroom windowsill, stands back, looks hard, then reaches for the white index cards from last week and chooses a handful of felt pens of exactly the same colours as the plasticine. With these, she renders yet another moment in the tale.

Object in Grade One Art Serial - Scott. Scott's life-size self-portrait is the item of his serial which I think best presents Scott as a beginning artist. Before Scott achieved a self-portrait he was satisfied with, the work passed through three stages (Figures 31, 32, 33). Scott began by painting in an outline with quite true-to-life colours and details representing himself. The following week, he cut out the outline and added some more detail. Then, two months later, at a time when no one else was working on these giant self-portraits, Scott decided to add a goalie's outfit to his figure, and to place it with an appropriate hockey stick and puck in front of a net. These stages spanned several months.



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Drawing, painting and cutting activity of this type, is common in schools. Like many art teachers, I enjoy seeing the children work together two by two. They trace around one another's bodies, and see their hand-held crayon's slowly making their way around the long, amazingly-complicated outline. They gaze with disbelief at the resultant odd shape, so unlike the geometrical bodies they are used to making. I like to provide sufficient paint, mixing containers and brushes of different sizes, so that the clothes, hair and facial features can be included in a way corresponding with each child's perception, conception and imagination of his/her appearance in the world. This kind of activity meets most of my criteria: it gets the children to move around, to use a variety of large and small gestures, to be and to interact with others, to look, to touch, to think, to compare, to act on and by that which is central to our experience of life, our bodies. Reproducing "visual reality" is not an objective and while I appreciate the technical demands the activity makes of the children, I know that some children will choose to make an entirely fantastic "me" rather than a readily-recognizable image. I also value the way this activity fills the children with purpose and sustains their interest for more time than is usual for six-year-olds.

After two weeks, Scott's self-portrait looks neither better nor worse than those of most of the other children: he had been engrossed and the results are there. But I see quite a matter-of-fact rendering of Scott. I cannot see any sign that he has transcended either the resistance of the material

or his own embodied self. But by the third step, when he transforms his image into that of a powerful protector, making himself into a goalie, I see Scott as a maker of images.

My journal entry for that date (February 26, 1982) shows that Scott's work can be to some extent understood when considered as an individual expression within a complex art-teaching situation. I include that entry to show the quality of our art teaching and learning sessions, as well as to provide the reader with a typical example of a day in class.

Last week (a pedagogical holiday) I came in and pasted all those self-portrait cut-outs which have been cluttering the room onto contrasting wrapping paper, white onto brown, brown onto white. This took a lot of time but was enjoyable, since it gave me the opportunity to see clearly what everyone had done. It is also an attempt to retrieve some half-finished pieces and to convince the children to finish them.

Also the colour-mixing exercise which several (Ursula, Geo, Christina, Louise) had not finished could be worked on while the portraits are finally completed. (I can't understand why so many of the children prefer to spend whole sessions mixing colours instead of becoming involved in more original projects.)

As it turned out, only Scott chose to continue his self-portrait. Most of the others viewed again confronting their giant paintings with distain, not remarking upon the fact that they had been fastened to contrasting mural paper.

Several people immediately wanted to work on the blackboard. This is an evident "need". The blackboard and coloured chalk seem to be extremely enticing to all the children. I have brought in some good-quality colours but have not yet found a way to integrate this simple activity into the time I have with this group.

Today the children have an assembly in the gym and we are 15 minutes late getting started and I resign myself to a morning of finishing off past projects so as to prepare for papier-maché next week. This is how it went:

Mary and Ann want to paint. Their work is so slap-dash that for the umpteenth time I explain carefully to them how important it is to stick with a chosen project and to finish

it properly. They seem to like my moralizing as much as I dislike it and their overwhelming energies are for a brief moment stymied. Our objectives seem to be contradictory: they apparently want to start as many activities as possible in any given time span; I want them to stay with any activity as long as possible.

Geo does not want to complete her puppet saying that it is not hers. Instead she paints and glues, but at the end of the lesson she goes back to the puppet, telling me that she will finish it next week using a special ribbon she has at home.

Scott's person needs a vest, he tells me as he begins drawing in the armholes and the collar. Then he helps himself to a tray of paint, a brush and a container of water. He wants to add knee-pads because this is a hockey player. Since there is no brown paint to help him achieve the exact beige colour, he asks for my help. I tell him to try on his own but that I will be back in a few moments if he is unable to find the right shade. Eventually I do indeed help him. With this, he adds elbow pads, a hockey stick, a net behind the goalie and some expressive detail in the face and a helmet.

Lydia completes her puppet and then paints.

Christina completes the paint-mixing exercise and then works on her puppet.

Joseph is absent.

Thomas paints two empty, desolate paintings.

Dawn draws spring flowers with chalk on dark construction paper having spent about half the period just selecting the right materials for her project.

Louise completes last week's painting and begins another.

Annick paints hearts on a giant card to take home to her mother. I spend time showing her how to control the drips and smudges and how to blend them into the background.

Philippe draws a monster and his house, both isolated on a sheet of white paper. I perceive it as unfinished and wonder what to do. Alternatives are to accept it (in this case, what do I say to Philippe that would be honest?), to ask him to tell me about it (he tells me that it is a monster and that that is his house). I ask where the house is (hoping to draw his attention to the fact that the image could easily be completed if it were given a background). Is it on the moon, in the dark, in a city? "Anywhere", Philippe answers, apparently unmotivated to do anything further with his drawing. Well aware that I could only insist more at my own risk, I nevertheless continue, "but the monster and his house cannot just float around in space. Finish your drawing

Philippe." He comes to me sometime later with a line drawn under the two figures and green lines (which he says is grass) underneath. Now he wants to make a monster with plasticine and asks me to help him warm and soften the clay, all the time chattering about Christina's boyfriend Patrick whom he wants to make as a monster. A few minutes later he is beside me saying he does not know how to make Patrick. I ask him how Patrick seems to him. He says, "I don't know". I say, "Start from the beginning then, one thing at a time". He says, "I'll start with the feet. He has big feet." I leave. A few minutes later he appears beside me with one well-made foot and leg for his model. At the end of the lesson I found this relic on the table, a lonely reminder of an idea and I felt a bit sad and disappointed and also very challenged.

Debbie has been painting with Thomas. I offer her a small brush when I see that she has trouble planning her picture. Again she has done a person standing on a balcony of a house. This is a curious image which has appeared before and which despite my conversations with Sharon about it, remains strangely unelaborated.

Thomas's house is black with super-imposed blue symmetric windows, eye-like, and like Thomas himself, watching. It is a perfectly proportioned archetypal house, solidly situated off centre within the frame of his picture. I am surprised by the bleakness of this very controlled image. His second painting, "a tent" is even more empty because the black triangular shape is placed left of centre and the sky is a pale yellow and is even of colour and consistency behind the tent. The ground is an acid green.

Thomas is so quiet, never asking for anything, dominated by Debbie who is so energetic. Today her second painting is of a girl drowning with a giant shark about to gobble her up. The sun is shining out of the same yellow sky as Thomas's painting and some brush marks on this surface are explained to me as being flowers when the girl is dead and is up in heaven which is what she is thinking about.

I reflect on the Thomas-Debbie struggle which has been obvious to me since I met them both last year and which is an extension of both their family lives, and I realize how inseparable this is from what I am doing as an art teacher.

Ursula makes a plasticine rainbow and some Easter pictures with pastel chalk on dark paper. As always, she is remarkably prolific.

Reflection

As can be understood from the foregoing journal excerpt, each of the children was visible to me, but, try as I would, I

could not accurately predict what would grip them individually or collectively or gauge to my satisfaction what would carry them forward into uncharted waters. This lesson is more an example of how much individual sense there can be in an apparently-chaotic setting than of success in planning. Indeed, Scott did take up my cue, but this had more to do with his desire to see himself as a goalie than it did with his inclination to follow my instructions. This is an important qualification, since to the extent that I make all the important decisions, I keep seeing myself, not the children. I am bound up with the children in this pedagogical meeting, but it is important to me and in the interest of an understanding of art, including child art, to create the quality of space in which each child can "dream the myth forward" (Jung or Cassirer; an expression often used by Pat Carini).

Yes, I was pleased that Scott continued and I appreciated the extended attention he gave his image. But I was also pleased to notice that not one of the other children was diverted from his/her chosen medium when Scott's transformed portrait was displayed at the end of the session. The notion of completing and even, if possible, later transforming a piece is important to me, but like other educational values, I saw that this one must be purveyed with sensitivity and some caution.

I can see that within the pedagogical dialogue I was beginning to identify each of the children as a different kind of artist, concerned with different fundamentals of life, and that each was becoming competent with specific approaches and

techniques to help in this mediation of the world.

Fifth Account: Open Workshop at the End of Grade One

Introduction

This activity was planned specifically to provide me with some clear information about the children's preferences for certain materials, themes and techniques and thus no instruction was given other than to choose a work area and "make whatever you want". This day then, is a red letter day for me. For almost two years I had been gradually teaching the group to work with, and thus to identify with, materials in such a way as to encourage the merging of interior and exterior realities.

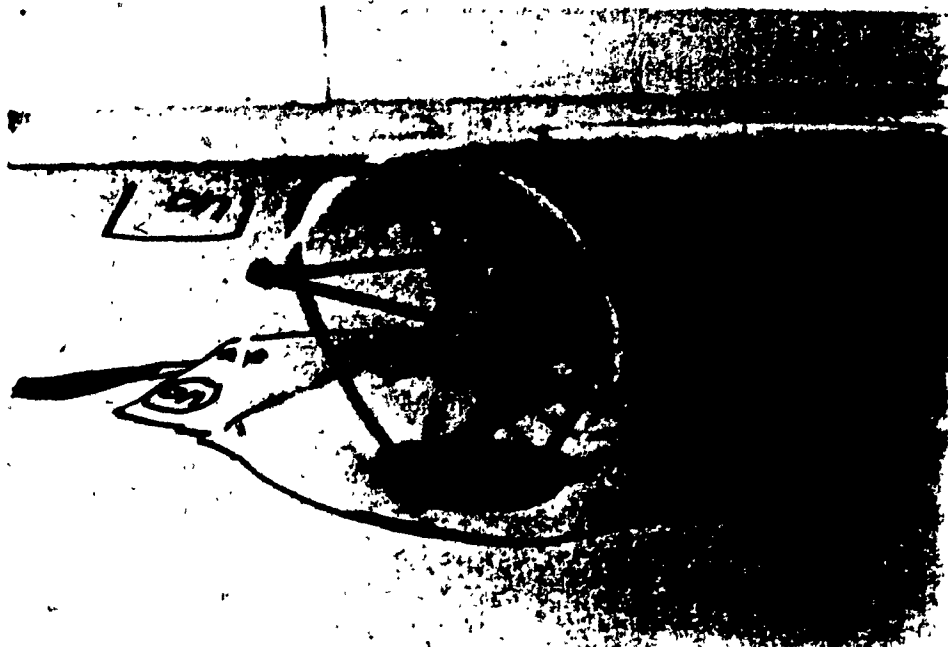
I was about to be with the children without introducing any new materials, visual elements or vocabulary, and without prescribing or even suggesting themes. On the basis of what the children did, as well as what I could learn about the experience by attending to the records, this event would enable me to see how the children were evolving as artists.

Four distinct work areas were organized in the artroom: one grouping of tables had the construction supplies arranged, with scissors, glue and coloured papers; another was spread with newspapers and had trays of liquid paint, brushes, water containers and various sizes of white, grey and black paper; a third area was organized for modelling activities and included the possibility of choosing between clay and plasticine; a fourth had coloured felt pens, oil crayons, pencils, charcoal, chalk and a variety of different sizes and colours of drawing

Since I don't remember very clearly what happened in the class, and since the journal entry is brief and reflects a somewhat negative reaction to this particular lesson, I decide to listen to the tape recording in order to recapture the feeling of that day. I can hear that all the children seem to be enjoying themselves. The loud voices of several of the children are particularly noticeable; among them is Dawn, who chatters throughout the lesson. She was also the last to leave and I remember how difficult it was to convince a number of the stragglers to go back to their classes. I hear a lot of joking among the children, as well as singing and jabbering into the microphone and numerous requests for help with materials. On one occasion, I admonish Mary and Ann for not sticking to their chosen activity, but otherwise, I hear myself talking humourously with the children, always appreciative of their work and in good spirits. This surprises me since the journal entry points to my singular lack of involvement with the lesson that day and my total lack of satisfaction with what the children made.

Description

Choices in an Open Workshop - Philippe. Out of all that is available today, Philippe has chosen a 12"x18" sheet of pink construction paper, a yellow, a brown and two orange lengths of pipe cleaner; red, purple and black lengths of mop twine, black, purple and orange felt pens and some scissors. In the centre of the pink paper, using a black crayon, he draws the contour of a machine as seen from above. Then he



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fixes the yellow, brown and orange wire pipe cleaners into intersecting arcs by pushing the ends through the paper. An orange wire encircles them, binding them together and forming the three-dimensional insides of an engine. Red cord joins two of the arcs partially together and then trails off to be attached to the purple cord. This ends in a hole entering the machine. The black cord comes from another hole and ends near a drawn electrical outlet. Opposite this on the same edge is a drawing in purple saying "on" and "off". This is the control switch of Philippe's motor and is a construction about the mysteries of mechanical working, about the wonders of complex systems, about a desire to have some control over a complicated phenomenon (Figure 34).

I look to the weeks preceding this and see that when left to his own devices Philippe has made:

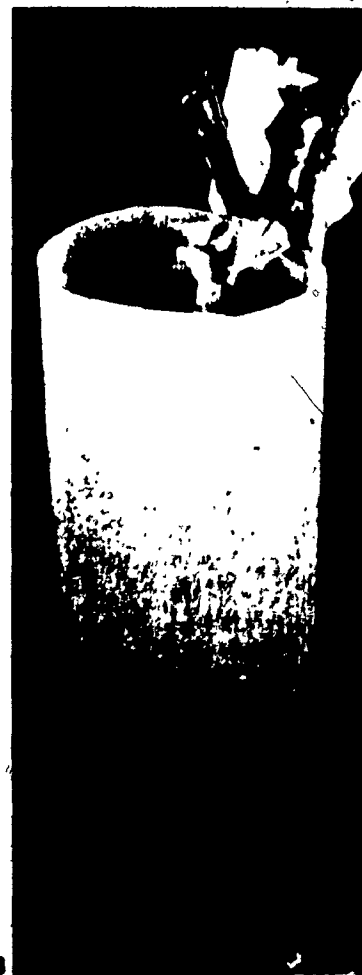
1. A giant pair of 4" plasticine cube dice, joined together by a length of pipe cleaner inserted in corners of each of the dice. I remember that Philippe was unusually delighted with this object, while I saw it as being extremely trivial, and I recognize his preoccupation with things that refer to the metaphors of "chance", "surprise", "playing with the unknown", "hope".
2. A flattened horror mask of clay with open mouth and fangs. This is crudely fashioned and stands in sharp contrast to the "dice" and the "machine".
3. A superbly-drawn helicopter with a "6" (Philippe's age) on the door. Shading shows the diminishing form of the back; lines on windows indicate glass which is concave; wheels are

placed exactly as needed to achieve balance of the vehicle. Philippe is clearly in tune with whole forms and has a remarkable grasp of interacting and interdependent elements.

Choices in an Open Workshop - Dawn. Having begun by completing a collage started last week, Dawn now decides to continue with these materials, and thus she stays at the construction table. I can see that she has made an image of herself, a well-proportioned figure, diminutive, in a walking position, centered on the horizon line of the bottom edge of a sheet of orange construction paper. She is smiling, dressed in mauve and pink and has red hair (Figure 35). Now Dawn carefully adds a sun and a small red butterfly. The final touch is a series of purple and orange lines of mop\twine glued in easy moving lines around the figure and filling the orange face of the sun.

Dawn tells me that this is how the butterfly keeps out of reach of the girl and my memory carries me back to "The Great Adventure" picture she made last September. As she did then, Dawn again creates herself, but now she has her feet firmly planted on the ground and possesses considerable technical know-how. There is no doubt that she is again rendering the experience of participating in a harmoniously-moving world. (On several occasions in charcoal drawings, in a collage, and once in a painting, Dawn put into her images human-like renderings of God looking down from the sky.)

She puts her image aside, having finished it to her satisfaction, and reaches for another sheet of orange paper.



This time, she cuts up some styrofoam egg cartons (Figure 37) to make a row of seven yellow and white "flowers". In the middle of the flowers she draws little orange faces and petals and she adds green stems and leaves with felt markers. This amazingly-rigid little garden surprises me, especially since Dawn is so pleased with it and sees no need to address the bottom half of the paper, which is completely empty. In order to understand, I review Dawn's year's work. I wonder, am I overvaluing her moving, linear qualities? If not, how do I account for this military row of flowers?

I see in Dawn's work since October a rather continuous exploration of "flower" as form, motif, meaning. Rarely are flowers used as background or adornment as, for example, in Christina's work. They are always present in themselves, as flower necklaces, flower bracelets and rings (Figure 37), flower vases (Figure 38), drawing of singing flowers, even a Venus-fly-trap flower shaped out of plasticine, which she made when the class did a group project on strange creatures.

Today's garden can thus be understood as a moment in the development of Dawn's homage to flowers. As I look more closely at her "garden", I see that this is not strictly speaking a repetitive row of identical flowers, but rather a symmetrical composition of alternating yellow and white, resulting in a balanced composition. Inside each of the semi-closed flowers I find that the minute face has an expression of amusement.

Choices in an Open Workshop - Christina. As usual, Christina sets herself a complex series of problems to solve.

Having chosen a sheet of yellow construction paper, she next helps herself to some blue, turquoise, yellow, orange, pink and grey plasticine. Her ambition is to make a plasticine picture with a large background. She fashions two radiating, multi-coloured flowers out of the plasticine, and, after some effort, manages to convince them to stand up. Then she makes a skirted, smiling girl, adds yarn as hair and places her parallel to the two flowers (Figure 39). Butterflies, birds, clouds and a blue sky, all made of collage materials and highlighted with felt pens, serve as a background to the girl and the giant flowers.

Here again is Christina, working in her usual bold manner, bending a series of conventions by combining two- and three-dimensional elements into a sort of "tableau" organization, where spatial depth is always ambiguous.

As I look at Christina's creation, post-modernist painters come to my mind. I think of how they often disregard both the "vanishing point" and the "topological" frames of reference while suggesting depth on the picture plane and see in Christina's rendering just such an energetic struggle with plastic and visual elements.

At the end of the class, as Christina folds the paper to coax it into an upright background position, I ask her whether she has taken her idea from Alice in Wonderland. "No," she answers. "I just want to make something pretty to take home."

Recent artworks made by Christina which seem to have led up to this piece are:

1. A large, painted Mother's Day card, in which multi-coloured

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flowers have been combined with drawn details, some collage and a written text on a well-defined background

2. Last week's 3' tall marionette of her mother, to which numerous strands of black yarn were added to represent hair on an otherwise-flat paper collage.

Choices in an Open Workshop Situation - Scott. Scott has chosen a sheet of green construction paper, then a yellow one, and proceeds to make a cone-shaped teepee. I am amazed that there is such homogeneity of approach in the group, considering that there is such a variety of possibilities available to them on this occasion.

Following much struggle (which I witness without intervening), he finds a way to glue the teepee to the grass and adds sticks to the roof opening. He then constructs the human drama. He cuts a horse out of paper and glues it lying down; it is presumably dead or injured. Across from the horse lies an Indian, open-mouthed. A cowboy with a pistol is standing near the teepee (Figure 40).

Scott includes in his image many opposites: the protective dwelling and the outdoors; the dangerous person and the endangered one; being up and being down; light and dark; living and dead. This kind of story-telling has become a main theme in Scott's work. A few weeks ago, he had made out of clay a two-headed monster "strangling a girl" (he told me). He has also made a friendly space creature with one large eye glued on, a devil with a flying witch and a pirate with a sword. Several very elaborate aircraft carriers had been the scene for the enactment of war dramas.

Interspersed with these threatening images, there have also been such benevolent ones as a clown, a baseball player, a series of trees, some flowers and houses, houses with imposing rainbows arched over them and a very intricate rendering of a bee flying toward a hanging bee's nest. The images are often about power; they are simple, monumental, out-going and out-looking.

Reflection

Remembering this event was difficult, because apart from having organized the artroom into four separate workshop areas, I did not feel that I was actively engaged in the art-making process. Looking back at all the proposed themes, suggested materials and demonstrated techniques of the two years leading up to this moment, I could easily identify how each one was an important fragment of my own experience and understand the value it could have for someone else. My deliberate abstention this time from active participation in what the children were doing made it difficult for me to maintain contact with their art-making activity. Whereas in past lessons, the children often chose materials and themes quite apart from what I proposed (and were indeed encouraged to do so), they did so "in spite of" a prepared agenda. The paradox is that I am almost as little "in" the situation when I have imposed "choice" as when I teach the techniques and mechanics of art without reference to the long-term dialogue with each of the children. So it would seem that there is a trade-off. What I gain in insight about what the children spontaneously do; I lose in the quality of the dialogue. As

each child selects, reflects on, organizes materials, there is no meaning for me the teacher and I am thus outside the event having, in the final analysis, no memory of it. This lesson, whilst useful for the study, left me as teacher without a curriculum through which I could apprehend the individual choices, and left me ultimately, as enquirer, without the sense of vivid experience which I usually associate with these descriptions. That is, although I had always believed and thought that an art teacher ideally "sets the scene" and then, although maintaining a nurturing and caring attitude, just hangs around to find out what will happen, I found out that for myself in this particular teaching situation, such an approach precluded my identity as the art teacher.

Sixth Account: Claywork. "The Christmas Story"

Introduction

It is early December and today's theme is the Christmas Story. Clay is our medium and the modelling techniques of building with coils, tiles and pinched elements are revised before the main theme is introduced. A month of drawing and painting has preceded this project and from a glance at my journal notes I see that this is my way of responding to a whole series of artistic and expressive needs which are becoming ever more explicit. Extracts from my journals over a period of three weeks give some indication of the pedagogical climate (Appendix B).

Description

"The Christmas Story" - Philippe. Philippe constructs a



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single, standing, pear-shaped figure, onto which an equally-massive spherical head is mounted. This is the beginning of a Christmas angel; long arms extend from the sides of the robed body and meet in front, forming hands held in prayer. Two wings made of thick slabs of clay, from which the outline of wings are cut, are attached at the back of the figure. The only fine details are the delicately-balanced halo suspended above the head, the eyes and the smile. The facial features are pushed into the soft clay face and a bit of hair is added. The overall impression of simplicity and candour contrasts with that conveyed by Philippe's more usual complicated and difficult-to-understand art objects (Figure 41). Only the halo, which, having been deftly joined to the figure at the back, gives the appearance of hovering above the head, reminds me of Philippe's individual style.

"The Christmas Story" - Dawn. Dawn has made a very rough semblance of a receptacle, the manger, into which she places an equally-roughly-wrought baby Jesus. This figure is fashioned of two spheric shapes, one of which bears a few cursory indentations probably intended to represent a face. Underneath the manger, some wads of clay are haphazardly trying to hold up the main form (Figure 42).

I am struck by the fragmented appearance of the clay, since I know how important it is to Dawn to have clear, smooth images. It is apparent to me that she has struggled with the clay, and I see her rendering of the baby Jesus as being at once pathetic, in as much as it is a reflection of trial, error and failure, and courageous, as it reflects her decision

to stay with her initial desire to make an image of the central figure in the Christmas Story. Dawn's accomplishment here seems important to me, since she has not taken the alternative attitude which I encounter often in such cases, that of rejecting the final product because it does not measure up to the original idea of how it should look. She is willing to allow it to stand as her claywork.

"The Christmas Story" - Christina. Christina has made Mary, an angel and a donkey. They are all small and rather delicate and rendered in considerable detail. Mary's figure has been given the most attention. It has a long trailing cloak, a well-proportioned body and a smiling face. The angel holds a basket and has its wings spread as if it has just descended into the Christmas tableau. The donkey has small pointed ears and an upright tail and, were it not for the setting, could be mistaken for a dog. Again I see Christina's choice of a three-element composition, in which one element is central and the other two serve to situate it (Figure 43). The donkey is Mary's source of physical support; the angel is Mary's source of delight and marvel. Mary exists in all the confidence I now associate with Christina, whose narrative style of imagery shows the Christmas Story to be about relationships among living characters.

"The Christmas Story" - Scott. Scott has made one of the kings. The feet are large enough to support a solid, stocky figure bearing a cube-shaped gift, which is held in outstretched arms, in a pose of offering. A proud crown tops the king's head, which rests on well-formed neck and

shoulders. Aside from the incised smiling face and a carefully-fashioned bow on the gift, there is no detail. Scott's king is striking, both in the way all the parts of the figure fit together to create an image of authority blended with generosity, and in the way the theme has been wrought from clay (Figure 44). I feel, in the surfaces of the gift, Scott's carefully-pressing fingers seeking to produce exactly the right six-sided shape out of the lump of clay. The crown, which has been fashioned from a strip of clay, was flattened, cut into a series of even points, then bent into a cylindrical shape and firmly pushed down on the king's head. The precision of Scott's gestures impress me and his completed image, as well as demonstrating technical virtuosity, expresses to me the essence of Scott as I have come to know him.

Reflection

I see that the choice of the Christmas story as a subject that day was in no way arbitrary. The theme is part of my past more than it is part of either the past or the present of the children. My way of dealing with an uneasy situation was to put myself more explicitly into it and to demand of the children that they participate in an activity which was almost entirely determined by me. The group did indeed participate, each person in his/her own way, following a short discussion of the biblical story. I see how far I have come from the original idea of following the children in their process of making art and I realize how utopic was the idea of being someone other than a "teacher" when working with children in

this school. Considering the relative merit of the very controlled and controlling teaching I have been doing, I come to the conclusion that such an approach meets the needs of certain situations quite well; it creates, at least temporarily, an atmosphere of security, and although it precludes the kind of experimentation with materials and themes that I value so highly, it provides a setting within which skills with materials and techniques can be taught and the degree of competence acquired can be evaluated. The Christmas lesson enabled me to compare the children in terms of their ability to identify mythic characters they wanted to represent, their pleasure in working with clay and their engagement with the medium, and their ability to bring the imaginary identification and the investment in the medium, to a satisfying conclusion. There was also the possibility for the children to find ways of placing their figures with others and sharing their work, which would oblige them to view their own art products from a certain distance. All of these were considerations which I was able to attend to, since the teaching style I adopted that day provided me with a basis for comparison of the way each child went about the activity.

At first glance, the productions seem different in virtue of what each child chooses to select from the "The Christmas Story". Philippe has chosen to work on the image of one of the more esoteric and difficult-to-understand aspects of the Christmas story - a praying angel. Dawn, by her determination to make visible the presence of the infant Jesus in the manger, makes evident her ability to focus on what is central

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in any situation. Christina's three standing figures tell me how she imagines the Christmas scene and sees its meaning in terms of a number of people being together. Scott's king brings me into contact with Scott, whom I have come to know as a particularly forward-looking, generous, outgoing child.

In terms of the technical devices which the four children choose to employ, there is also variety. Both Scott and Dawn use incised fine details; all four use modulated mass and joined coils. Christina's work shows more variety of structure than the others. The sizes of the four clayworks differ.

Philippe and Scott, both of whom have worked with the entire volume of clay, have made figures standing about seven inches in height; Dawn and Christina, who have broken their clay into a number of small pieces, have made objects that are quite small.

All four children use both the pinch and the assemblage techniques and, with the exception of Dawn, who has apparent difficulty with the techniques, they seem reasonably competent with them. The most technically-difficult aspects of the clay models are the assemblage of the halo on Philippe's angel, and the supporting of the basket by Christina's angel and of the gift by Scott's king.

Thoughts like these about the relative qualities of each of the children's art serials had now become a part of my way of looking at the group work at the end of each art class. Whereas, at the beginning of our relationship, I had been more attentive to the general degree of "success" of the day (that is, I was looking for evidence that there had been a certain

degree of involvement with ideas and materials), I now accepted that some of the children would completely fail to come to a satisfactory conclusion and looked instead for specific signs of change within the individual art processes. This comparative approach was something which I had arrived at gradually and which was intuitive and acquired rather than deliberate.

Seventh Account: Wooden Constructions

Introduction

This project began in January, but due to an extended teachers' strike it could only be completed in March. Philippe finished his wooden construction the first week. Dawn added the final touches to hers the second week. Scott built the base for his structure in March. The journal notes in Appendix C give the background for this construction activity.

Description

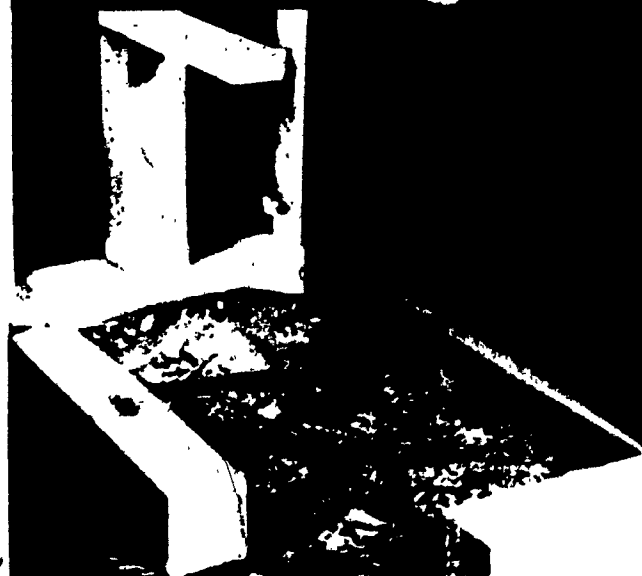
Wood Construction - Philippe. Philippe has made a tree out of several pieces of wood glued together in an upright position (Figure 45). One piece of wood is the base, another is the trunk, the third is glued to the trunk in "T" formation at the top and is parallel to the base. Fabric and cord placed over the third piece of wood become the branches. To make the branches, Philippe cuts out a circle of green silky material, which he places to cover and overlap the top of the structure and glues to the "T". He then drapes a series of uneven lengths of green mop twine over the green silk, radiating from the centre and hanging down at different heights from the



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base. The impression he creates is of a stately swamp tree dripping with moss. Bits of brilliant red cloth are attached to the dangling branches, heightening the effect of an exotic tree laden with flowers or fruit. The most arresting detail of the completed construction is a felt-pen drawing of a yellow bird, which Philippe has carefully cut out and glued to the trunk in such a way as to make the bird visible through a giant knothole. I now see that this tree is intended to be the home of a small, half-hidden bird. In terms of Philippe's style, the inclusion of something which is very much alive, and at the same time half-hidden within an elaborate "container", is becoming clearly important.

Wood Construction. - Dawn. Dawn has made an unusual bed out of twelve pieces of long, narrow blocks of wood (Figure 46). The total structure is about 20" long, 12" wide, and 12" high. The first pieces of wood are glued into a rectangular frame, with an opening left in one corner ("so that the person can get into the bed" as Dawn tells me). Upright posts are glued to the three other corners and a sturdy upright is placed at the head of the bed in the middle. To this upright is added an overhanging length of wood, glued to the top and projecting over, giving an illusion of containedness despite the generous expanse within the frame. As if to stress the importance of this "roof" on the bed, three lengths of red cord are attached carefully to the underside of the overhanging roof and a blue, a yellow, and a red ball of tissue paper are glued to the tips. These tissue balls hang down and enliven an otherwise-austere organization. At the

end, the surface of the bed is added (Figure 47). A rectangle of pink-flowered wool is cut to fit the frame and, as I watch amazed, I see that Dawn has found a way to add this to a structure which cannot be turned over. She covers the edges of the fabric with glue, lifts the whole frame and places it evenly onto the cloth. There is now a floor as well as a roof; the construction has six sides. Dawn's deft and delicate touch, as well as her perseverance and her ability to plan her work, are now quite observable traits.

Wood Construction - Christina. Christina wanted very much to make a house, a real house, and she gathers quantities of wood to do just that. To the flatter pieces (those which Philippe used for his "tree") she assigns the function of "floor". The wood pieces are sorted according to size and placed side-by-side to form a single surface. The walls of the house are assembled from the 2"x2" lengths which Dawn chose for her bed. Once everything is ready, Christina begins joining the pieces. However, she is not able to do it, because the contact of the edges is not precise and the glue takes too long to dry. I offer some suggestions, but Christina is too engrossed to take heed. At the end of the hour, she is completely discouraged, having managed to join together only five boards for the back wall of her house (Figure 48). Both she and I are very disappointed that her "interior" has not materialized.

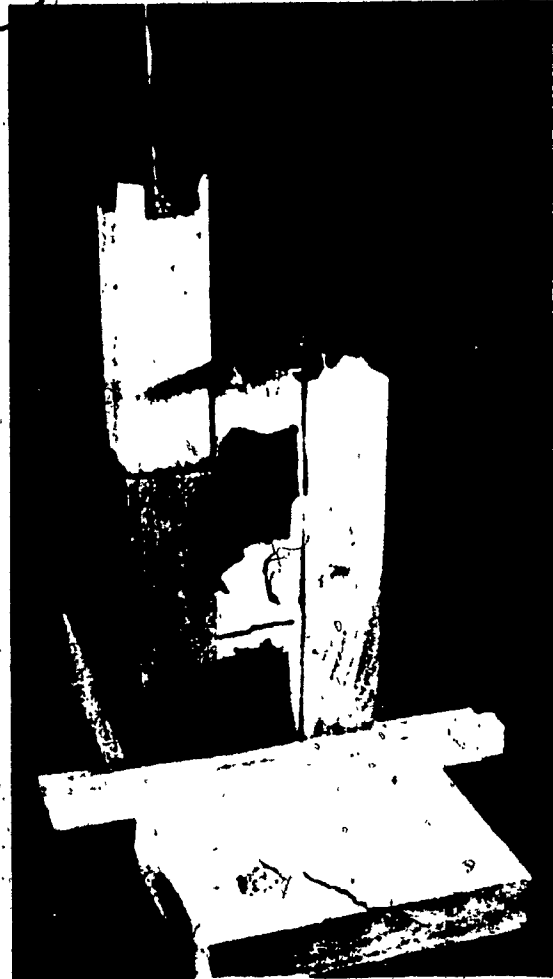
Wood Construction - Scott. Scott manages to complete his project to his satisfaction. It is a tall skyscraper constructed of a number of 2"x2" boards glued together. It is



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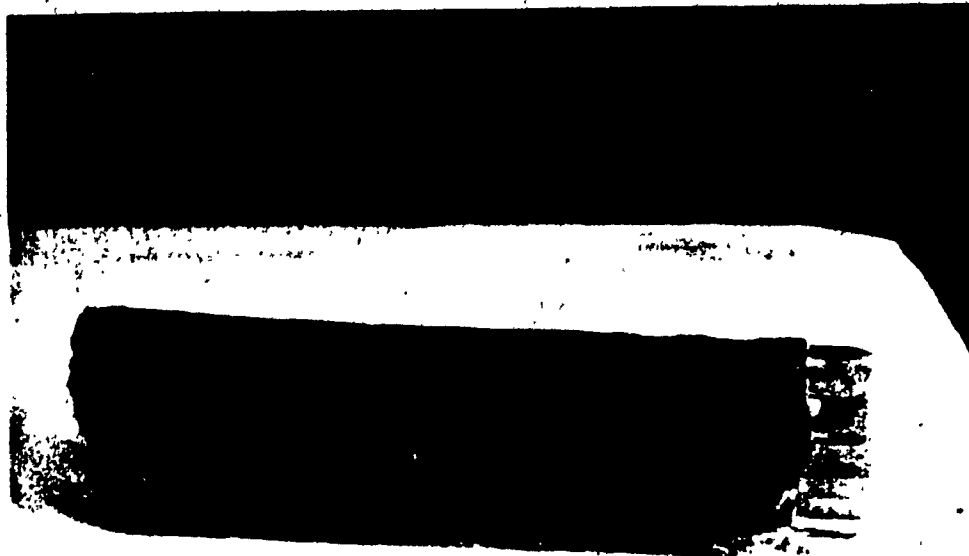
about 18" tall, on a base which is 6" square. Doors and windows are drawn with felt pens, and bits of brown velvet are added as roofing. A piece of corrugated wood molding is placed in front of the door to represent steps (Figures 49 and 50). This whole construction is finally glued to a large flat board, which enables Scott to carry his construction home.

An Afterword to this Account

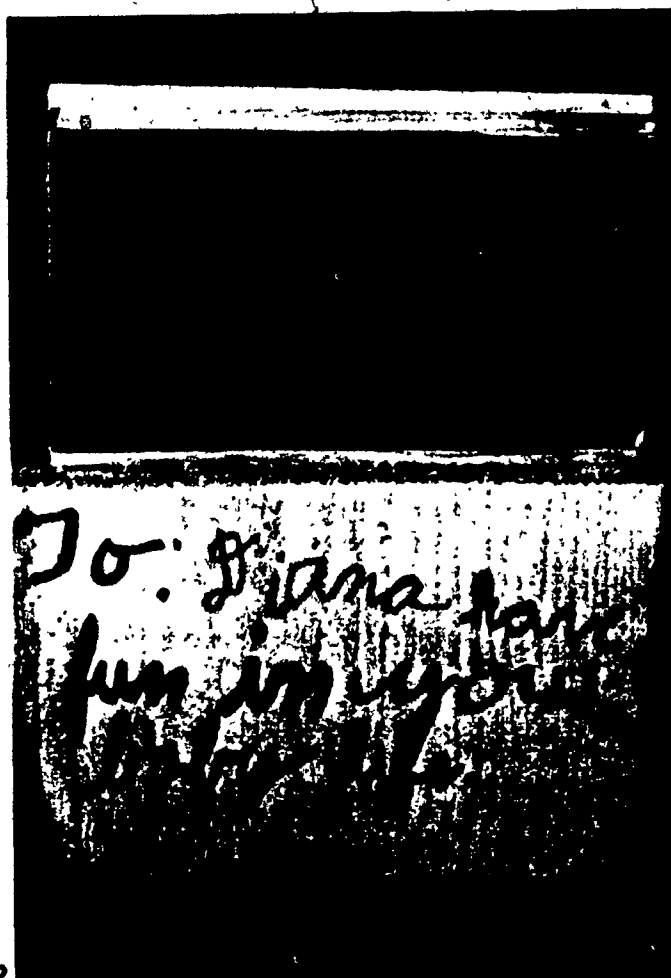
When we are finally able to continue the art classes in March, I try to help the children finish the work which was begun so long ago, but I am only partially successful since the wood structures are now quite obviously part of the children's distant past. Other projects are begun (soft sculptures, a puppet show, Easter pictures) and I am obliged to do the best I can to pick up the threads of our interrupted relationship.

The documentation shows me that in later weeks, each of the children finds a personal way of using the left-over bits of wood. Philippe's most interesting object is a "camera" (Figure 51) made from a single piece of wood that has a small knothole at one end. He covers the wood evenly with shiny brown material and adds some back-and-forth lines of bright red mop twine, which he glues to almost cover the front of the camera. Although delighted with the effect and the way he can see in a special way through the peephole, Philippe forgets the camera at school.

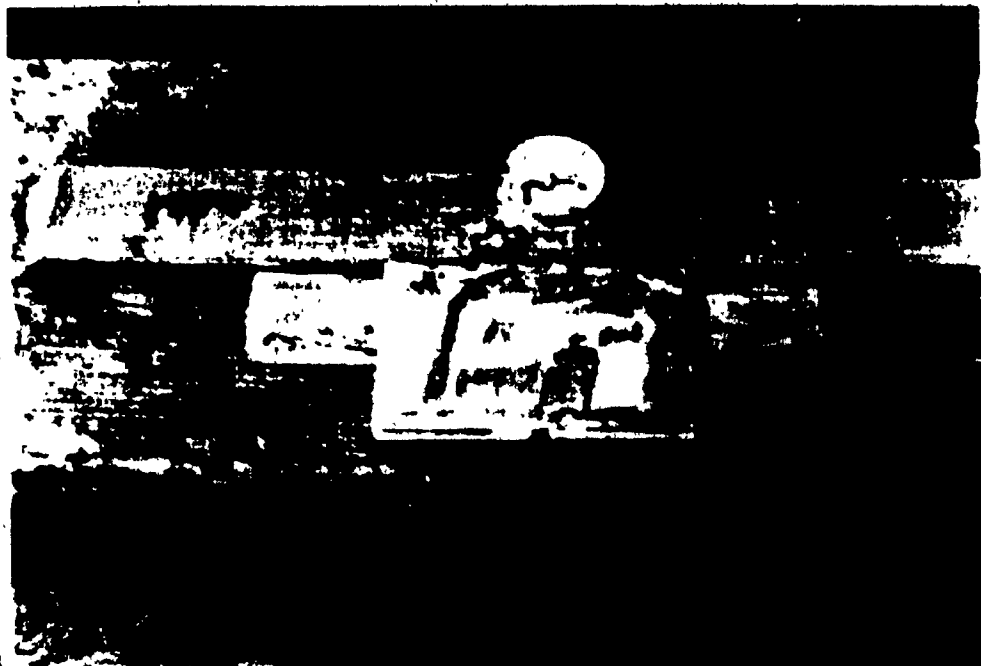
Dawn makes an offering for her new baby sister (Figure 52). She glues together several wide rectangular shapes to form a standing column. The front surface of the top rectangle



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is coloured dark blue and has a turquoise rendering of the name DIANA in the centre. The lower block carries the message "To: Diana have fun in your baby life" written in many colours on the natural wood. Dawn decorates the assemblage with tissue paper and takes it home as a gift.

Christina's singular lack of success with this medium has left her with unfinished business. Her very first choice of material the following year was wood. At that time, she was able to glue three long boards together with no apparent difficulty (Figure 53). She chose a box of coloured chalk and drew a barren landscape containing a house in the centre, a moon, clouds and a number of "M" shaped birds. I showed her how to "fix" the chalk drawing because she wanted to take the object home.

Scott makes a bench-like structure, a crosspiece resting on two uprights. The uprights are wrapped with gold silk. At the end of the session, Scott takes a red felt pen and draws a ragged red line across the middle of the crosspiece. "This is blood", he informs me. "This is a karate block", (Figure 54) he adds, and proudly takes it home to show his older brother, Lance.

Reflection

It became more and more evident to me that my immediate reaction with regard to the relative success or failure of the workshops was not a very reliable indicator of the overall success of my project to trace the development of individual child art styles. My journal notes more often showed negative than positive assessments of my performances as an art teacher

and the children's performances as beginning artists. Seen from my present perspective I have the impression that at the beginning of each lesson I had a rather utopian image of what was about to transpire and that this led me to invest considerably in the preparation for each new day. My memories of having discovered, while I worked as an artist or as an art teacher, forms and images which were important to me, dictated largely the materials, themes and techniques I chose to work with. This, together with my analysis of the readiness of the group for ever more demanding approaches to visual expression, gave me the impression every week that that lesson would be the art teacher's equivalent of a masterpiece, that during that day's class Mary would suddenly realize that her amazing strength of personality could be more satisfactorily directed toward finishing a drawing than rushing from one idea to the next; that Geo and Lydia would at last become less mutually dependent and strike out each on her own; that Christina would finally become less concerned with the careful manipulation of materials and give some rein to her intuitive sense of form and colour; that Philippe would allow himself to be taken over by the sensual pleasure of working with art materials. Now I see that this is what kept me interested in the children and their work, but also to some extent obstructed my full appreciation of what they were accomplishing in the here and now.

Conclusion of Descriptions of School Setting

I could see that I was a long way from my initial idea which conceived of children as natural artists. In this situation, the traditional responsibility of the teacher took precedence over my identity as a researcher. This could be seen in my decisions to initiate group projects, instead of organizing the workshops around materials and themes which necessitated individual processes. (Appendix D is a journal excerpt describing the high-lights of several weeks of puppet-making, which typified the atmosphere of the grade two art lessons.) Although I had begun the project with the idea of "following" the children in their idiosyncratic processes of taking up the tools and techniques of art, it had become obvious that unless I helped the group to find a purpose for all their making of things, most of the individual processes would dwindle into quite trivial and short-term explorations of materials.

With such collective projects as puppet making, the underlying research question, which focused upon individual art process, became transformed into a search for the specific qualities of each child within a specific context. My earlier way of thinking about child art implied that it is possible to apprehend innate tendencies as context-free phenomena. My second way of thinking about child art saw all human action as being in a dynamic relation with a situation and thus as being relative. Each of the children was indeed somewhat present as some essential artistic and expressive qualities and the

content of each person's work, mediated through his/her own idiosyncratic grasp of technique and composition and determined by his/her preferences for the sensual qualities or physical properties of certain materials, was now more recognizable than it had been earlier. However, all this could be known only as being part of something else and thus the unique vision was a vision of something, mediated by something, situated in a place. Disclosure of the pure art process was no longer my intention.

In this case of the puppet-making class, the context was visible as an ensemble of choices and preparations and concerns made by me as the teacher. I provided the materials for the making of the puppets and organized the class for putting on some performances. The children made their personal visions of the world partially visible to me and these become forms against the background of my teaching.

At this point, acutely aware of the ambiguity of my own process as an art educator whose idea of simply "following" the children in their art making had not proven feasible, I decided to interview each of the children individually. This was an attempt to find out whether there was something I had overlooked, something I should have known, something would help me understand why I was still organizing the weekly art workshops for the children when I wanted them to reach out on their own.

The interviews took place in the artroom, where all the materials were visible and the children's portfolios, full of three years of productions, were on hand. Since I expected

that each child's memories regarding one or another aspect of the art-making sessions would point to what was most important for him/her, I made each interview a conversation about what we found in the child's portfolio and about the materials and displays in the artroom. I prompted the children to talk about their experiences and asked questions about the preferred pieces in their serials.

Rather than learning a great deal that I didn't already know about the children's experiences, I discovered that the children had little to say except as related to very specific remembered events. (Fragments of the transcribed interviews, together with an analysis, can be found in Appendix E.) It was evident, however, that most of my ideas about the art classes were understood by the children, but that they were able to become involved in a project to make art only if it was easy to do so. There seemed to be nothing I had overlooked; however, it occurred to me that the children were so conscious of the value of what we were doing that perhaps I could be more demanding in the future. Such a new approach would require a new setting.

Eighth Account: Art Work Done in my Studio

Introduction

The children are now in grade three. Rather than continuing to study the children's art processes at the school, I have invited them to my studio on Saturday mornings. Not everyone is able to come. Those who do come bring their older or younger brothers and sisters. Thus, a fluctuating

group of between nine and fifteen children gathers in my studio at nine o'clock and works until about 11 o'clock. As they arrive, individually, in pairs or in groups, they decide what they will do and write this in their personal notebooks, which are kept near the entrance. We now have more than twice the amount of time for our work as we had at the school, and, since here no school bells ring and no teachers come to remind us of other duties, we can continue as long as we need to. The following journal entry helps situate Philippe, Dawn, Christina and Scott in the art studio among the other children.

Journal notes: January 7, 1984, 11:30 A M
 Darlene and Nancy have just left with Sylvia. Lance and Scott left with their Dad. The morning was very hectic and I'm exhausted. It was also (compared with the kind of art classes I remember from last year), very calm. The family-sibling aspect, I believe, is the saving factor in what could otherwise be an impossibly chaotic event. It is as if everyone knows what to expect from the others and a kind of vigorous harmony is maintained. Marianne and Christian also spent the morning with us and although they are new members in the group, they fit in well.

Lance and Scott first wanted to make a doll crib for their sister Cassie's doll but when they began hunting around for materials, it was apparent that they would have to wait for another week. When I suggest that they make a large drawing to plan their approach, they quickly decide to make a table to go with the gold chair of some weeks ago. They had found some "masonite" which appealed to them and later found wood which could be cut to the length they wanted for the legs. All the sawing, sanding, gluing, nailing is accompanied by valiant attempts to reinforce a sagging mid-section.

Christina, in the meantime, had the idea of making a tablecloth for the table, since she has begun using some wooden blocks to print on fabric. This took up all her time and seemed very repetitive from my point of view, although it didn't bother her at all.

Annick painted with Christian and then, using collage materials and fabrics from the construction corner, invented three different costumes which she hung in the dress-up corner ready for the next group production.

Marianne did a tree collage and then finished her history poster. I noticed a drawing which she had left on the table was emulated by Dawn and the results were astonishing.

Philippe left a sheaf of drawings that he had done at home. I am puzzled by them. One depicts a pink castle surrounded by a moat which has shark heads poking out of the water. Another, an interior with a Christmas tree and fireplace drawn with great precision, has a framed picture of a soldier firing a gun hanging on the wall. These two are drawn using a ruler and pencil crayons. The third one is done on black paper using the white china marker I had given each of the children in a folder of art materials that they could use at home. This drawing shows a graveyard with tombstones and ghosts. The names of Scott, Lance and several of Philippe's other friends are on the stones. I am at a loss.

In a corner of the studio someone, (possibly Dawn?), has left a miniature set of dishes, fashioned from the white clay to dry. This must be intended to be part of the table and tablecloth production. Interesting!

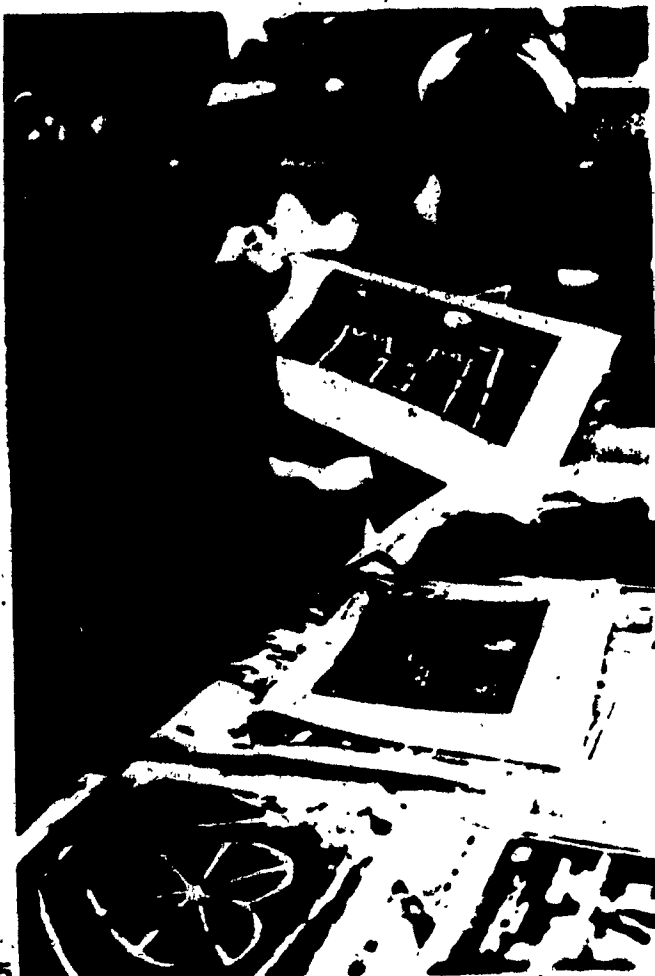
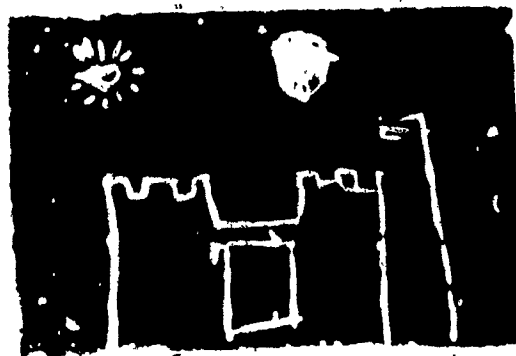
Eventually, owing to outside pressures, I halt the on-going documentation. The work which was done on the last day of the project, while the children were at the studio, is described next.

Description

Artwork on the Last Day - Philippe. Philippe has decided to make a linoleum print (Figure 55). He works beside Scott's older brother, Lance. Lance never has any difficulty knowing what he wants to make and this morning he has no hesitation in beginning a fortress with an arched door and an American flag flying. Philippe makes a similar shape, with a rectangular door placed in the middle like a window, a cloud, a sun and a flag. The fortress is carefully outlined and the contour reveals two towers, each having three turrets. The door in the centre of the facade indicates that this is a drawbridge and thus that there must be a moat around the castle. The tiny sun is shining



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brightly, but the cloud is the element in the composition to which Philippe has accorded the most importance and it is visually dominant. Both boys print these linocuts on papers of several different colours (Figure 56) and they mount the series on larger sheets of construction paper.

Artwork on the Last Day - Dawn. Dawn is making a three-dimensional Valentine for her mother. To begin with, she folds a 12"x18" sheet of white drawing paper in half. Then a heart-shaped ~~pocket~~ (Figure 57) containing green, purple and yellow hearts drawn in oil pastels, is coloured red and orange. Bright yellow and pale blue hearts are elongated to become an arrow pointing at the small purple heart. In large curving letters Dawn has written across the pocket "to Mammy to my Love". The other side of the card is a fold-out book of four red hearts cut together out of construction paper (Figure 58). These are carefully glued along the middle fold line and each page is decorated with a different-coloured heart. Inside (Figure 59), on the right hand side is written, "roses are red" with humorous little touches of coloured paper. On the left hand side, a large heart is added and this becomes a receptacle for three paper hearts on long stems. Written in many colours on the large base is, "Love is the anser no mater wat the quistion". All four pages of the card show strong contrast in colour, in form and in the way the compositional elements are handled. Careful contour contrasts with areas filled with gestural crayon marks. Words contrast with signs. Three dimensional shapes contrast with flat shapes.

Since today's date is February 11, at the end of the

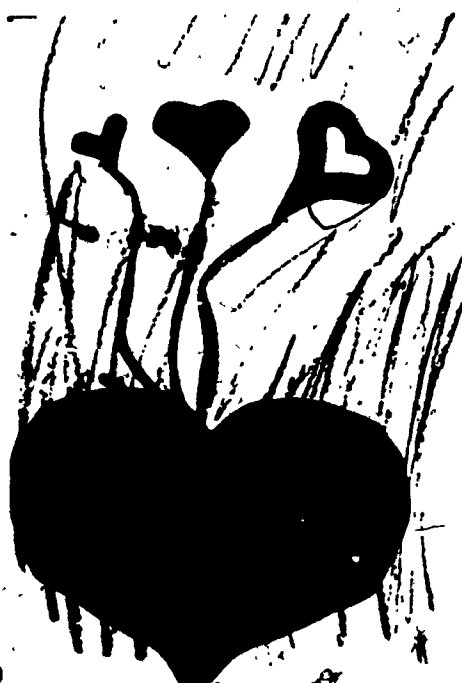
THE



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ROISSES
ARE
WILLIG
SUGAR
SUGAR IS
SWEET AND
SO ARE YOU

morning the card is tied together with some pink ribbon and taken home.

Artwork on the Last Day - Christina. Christina's involvement in the Saturday morning sessions is mostly in the form of giving help to others in their projects. Rarely does she initiate activities, but she is always welcomed by the group she chooses to join. Exceptions to this tendency to allow other people's projects to preoccupy her are the day when she arrived with the expressed intention of making some large wooden rainbows to decorate her bedroom, and the two gifts she made on this, her last day with us.

Today, she first makes a pair of yellow cellophane glasses for her cousin, whose birthday it is (Figure 60). To make the glasses, she attaches a long elastic to both ends of a strip of transparent paper. She then cuts a piece of purple velvet to size as wrapping paper (Figure 61), and writes birthday greetings on the velvet using light and dark blue crayons. She folds the glasses and secures in the fabric with some tape (Figure 62). She puts the glasses in her coat pocket as she leaves at the end of the lesson.

The second object Christina makes is for her Grandmother. It is a feltpen drawing of a rabbit (Figure 63), cut out and assembled from a lined, decorated sheet from a notebook, then mounted on cardboard. Christina tells me that it is a menu card. At first glance, I see the familiar and stereotyped resemblance to Bugs Bunny. If I were not aware of Christina's history of using human-like animals in her imagery, this object would appear trite to me. However, I remember the many cheerful,



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smiling animals which Christina has created in the past, including the clay rabbit made early in kindergarten (Figure 16).

The clay rabbit stood against a lively background. This rabbit is both the form and the ground (Figure 63) and it holds before it a flat surface which can be written upon. I see it as an interesting continuity and transformation of one of Christina's preferred themes.

Artwork on the Last Day - Scott. Scott has decided to make a cradle for his sister's Cabbage Patch doll. He begins (Figure 64) with a cardboard box, to which he adds pressed wood sides. He paints these blue. Then he sets about making two upright supports (Figure 65) between which to suspend the cradle. This involves learning how to use the electric drill, fitting the two posts into the prepared holes, and drilling holes in the upper ends of the posts from which to suspend the bed. He then paints the ends red and white (Figure 66). When the paint has dried, the blue container is hung with great care and attention. Balancing the cradle is difficult because it is too heavy for the structure (Figure 67). Nevertheless, this rickety structure is admired by all the children.

Furniture making has been Scott's main interest since September. Often he seeks help from others, most often from Philippe and from his brother, Lance, but also occasionally from Christina. He is determined and remarkably persevering, even when working on his own and when his work repeatedly falls apart. He is always proud of his work, anxious to show it to his family and happy to take it home.



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For my part, I would like to see Scott take on more than this strictly "functional" object making, so that he would become more aware of and conversant with the elements of art, rather than just with the mechanics of it. But even though I show him some books and posters with examples of fantastic objects which relate to furniture, hoping that this will fire his imagination, his real interest remains making a chair he can sit on and take home at the first opportunity. In fact, Scott was so taken with the "look" of a wooden table he had made, that he didn't even want to paint it when he had finished the construction. Possibly the texture of the wood appealed to him, because when I suggested that he use some varnish to heighten the effect, he was delighted. I wonder whether he hasn't been discouraged by the fact that a chair he made last fall changed colour and decorations several times (just about everyone in the group having added to it) before he finally took it home, a gold painted chair with black stencilled stars and moons.

Reflection

The art work made in my studio looked different from the objects that had been made at school and three interrelated factors surprised me: the way the children influenced each other, helped each other and participated in one another's productions; the way projects naturally snow-balled and took several weeks to complete, yielding completely unforeseen results; the manner in which most of the children ascribed to their work a definite function, sometimes at the start of their endeavour, and sometimes at the end, as if the usefulness of it in their daily lives, was extremely important. Not only did the

possibility of building quite large things out of wood and pressed board allow for a new kind of expression, but the distinction between that which was individual and that which was collective became increasingly blurred.

None of the children in the group were the least bit interested in the art books, which I made very much available in the studio, nor in the reproductions of art, the prints or the examples of adult art that were hung on the walls. Such occasional attempts to link the children up with reproductions of art from the "real" art world, seemed to be futile.

Ninth Account:

A Preferred Item From the Entire Serial of Each Child

Introduction

Here I depart from the chronological and collectively-situated approach which I have so far been using. The descriptions of these four objects (Philippe's fold-out card, Dawn's mixed-media drawing, Christina's painting, Scott's ceramic bird) are important to the total description of each of the art serials, because they enable me to point to some qualities within each of the serials which haven't come to the fore in the comparative format used until now.

Preferred Object -- Philippe. This fold-out card was made just before Christmas, when Philippe was in grade two. He generally completed class projects very quickly, then wandered around looking at what the others were doing, gazing at displays, examining objects put to dry on the window ledge, or searching through the containers of materials, tools and scraps



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to find something he liked. This is consistent with Philippe's amiable, pensive and autonomous presence in the artroom. Since the object which is described below was not part of a group project, it is evident that Philippe makes his own decisions regarding materials, techniques and themes. I remember discovering Philippe's card while tidying up after a hectic mural-making session and being enchanted by it.

Philippe has chosen a large sheet of purple construction paper and folded it in half, to make the beginning of a giant Christmas card. Inside (Figure 68), he has drawn a tall Christmas tree, dripping with yellow and red decorations and topped by a yellow star; opposite the tree is glued a small package made of manilla paper folded into twelve sections. The package is secured by a length of red twine, which runs through a perforated hole around the back of the card and forms a bow. The bow can be undone to reveal a ribbon (Figure 70), indicating that the package is a gift. The ribbon is also drawn as a bow on a purple background above the "gift". At the very centre is a car that is discovered when one undoes all the threads (Figure 71). The car, which is speeding along a road, is outlined in red, while the driver, lights, wheels and the frame around the car are drawn with a black feltpen. Philippe explains to me that the little sheet of white shiny cardboard in the card is reserved for a message which he will write once he decides who to give the card to.

Philippe folds the giant card into its original position and glues a great red cross of mop twine across the entire surface (Figure 68). This is a third and final rendering of the



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red ribbon that identifies Philippe's object as a gift.

Preferred Object - Dawn. This drawing is one of many made by Dawn during the spring of her grade one year (Figure 72). It combines a mixture of media, including crayons, felt markers, paint and oil pastels, and is done on typewriter paper.

I have chosen it for the way it reflects those qualities of Dawn's artistic style which are most interesting to me: her way of taking up themes common to all children and making them explicitly her own her own by incorporating a moving airiness into the total composition, her original treatment of the familiar themes and her joy in doing art.

This drawing has "Dawn's House" painted across the domed roof of an interesting composition dominated by the frontal view of a house. There is symmetry at the bottom and a flowing line at the top. The flowing line, which is the sky, is very dark blue, and at times, overlaps the house. Turquoise clouds are, like the sky, carefully rendered. The movement of this part of the picture is in sharp contrast with the straight horizon line at the bottom and the thin, rigid trunks of the two trees on either side of the house.

Dawn has chosen to use bold, sharply contrasting colours; she places a small, vivid-yellow sun in a corner of the dark-blue sky. Bright pink, surrounded by orange, is used to colour the gargoyle-like windows, which cover the whole of the front of the house. A very small, pink door under the windows, drawn in the middle of the house, looks as though it could be the mouth on a sun-glassed face.

The image shows tension, force, strength, movement and



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balance; boundaries are very important. The flanking trees leaning in toward the house look fragile. A very fine line contoured around the base of the house confines the delicately-tinted surface. It is the sun and the trees which maintain the picture's balance. The most curious aspects of the composition are the way Dawn has outlined the roof and then allowed the sky to overlap it, thus producing a transparent effect, and the three-dimensional quality of the house, which seems to protrude out of the picture plane.

There are no people in the picture, which gives the image a dream-like aura, and when the paper is turned upside down, the house looks like an ark riding on a swelling mass of water. A special kind of energy, a tilting and holding, a touching and not touching, an interplay between all the elements characterize this drawing by Dawn.

Preferred Object - Christina. In the winter of her kindergarten year, Christina made a painting (Figure 73) which I very much appreciate, because it so clearly represents her ability to invest greatly in paint, colour and pictorial organization without worrying about how it looks to others. It is obvious that Christina had a good time making this image.

The painting is large and Christina seems to have begun by colouring a turquoise frame around the edges. Then, using white paint, she made a series of five hearts which follow a curving path across the surface. She outlined the hearts with purple paint and continued with this colour to make a mandala of two concentric rings under the line of hearts. With yellow paint, she very carefully covered the surface around the hearts and the

ring, adding a ring of yellow inside the large purple circles. Returning to the original turquoise, she painted a centre to her mandala and signed her name in an arching line over the mass of concentric lines. Since the clear blue paint on top of the yellow creates green, these last marks are all green. Apparently happy with the effect, Christina continued to mix the two colours, using great vertical up-and-down gestures from the top to the bottom of the paper. Green begins to surround one of the hearts and covers the "A" of her name. At this point, Christina seems to have stood back from her work and said "That is it!"

Looking at this image, I am reminded of the expressionistic canvasses of Robert Rauchenberg, Jasper Johns, Hans Hoffman and Jim Dine, wherein symbols merge with the surface, and I am compelled to wonder whether this is a landscape or a series of signs spread in playful interaction. From a distance, I can make out an eye with lashes and a brow. The composition is balanced and there is a suggestion of a shadow along the edge of the larger expanse. It is as though Christina had outlined a place within which to play, and then in five well-executed steps, using blue, white, purple, yellow and blue-green, completed her game, placing herself at the centre of a luminous world. Dark and light areas dominate the painting and I cannot but be struck by the care which Christina has taken to avoid covering the five little hearts.

Preferred Object - Scott. This is a clay model of a large swan with an arching neck holding a fish in its beak (Figure 83). Scott has built it solidly with a firm base and a strong neck and added outspread, pointed wings extending from the



sides. The graceful neck ends in a sharp beak; the eyes have been added rapidly with one jab of a flat tool. The angle of the head expresses readiness, tension, a quality of alertness. The work shows a degree of competence which I usually associate with artists, not child artists.

Whether this piece of Scott's "oeuvre" is accidental (since it so little resembles most of the objects in his series) I am not able to determine. Possibly, he borrowed the idea from Ursula, who also made a bird poised for flight that day. But the clay model reflects to me some of the qualities which I have come to associate with Scott as a person and as an artist. From the beginning, his work has been characterized by symmetry, movement and an overall monumental appearance. And the sense evoked by the swan's sharp beak and general attitude is consistent with other objects in Scott's series.

Reflection

Philippe's Christmas card is something he made explicitly to give away. He was being distinctly private in his over-layering of a powerful, energetic centre. Through this piece, I am in touch with Philippe as someone who does significant work outside the framework of school instruction.

"Dawn's House" was also made as a private rendering expressing her understanding of her home. As it was made without any external suggestion, it is all the more certain to be expressive of her style. At the time it was made, I did not know what it was about, since it is impossible to be sure how literally any child means what he/she says. Dawn was clearly making her house, but the question was, is it a fictional house,

a desired house, a remembered house, a surrogate house, or the house which she experiences daily, the one she lives in? I discovered while visiting her home several years later that Dawn was indeed making her own house. The roof on her family home was rounded, but in profile, rather than frontally as in "Dawn's House". I saw that the small front door shown in the drawing quite accurately presented the feeling of going into Dawn's home, because, since the main living area is above the entrance to the house, anyone standing at the front door tends to feel dwarfed by the importance of the space above. The goggle-like appearance of the windows in the picture was Dawn's way of representing the curved bay-windows which dominate the house's facade.

Thus, this drawing permits me to focus on the quality of flux between the conventions of Dawn's outside world and the inventions which she brings to that reality.

Christina's painting, by contrast, is the result of a painting class which had the specific didactic objective of helping the children become more competent with paint and paintbrushes. The fact that I have chosen a work of Christina's which came out of such a restrictive art-making situation indicates to me that I perceive Christina as being exceptionally creative in settings that other children may find constraining and limiting.

Selecting this painting also lets me focus on the kind of energetic formalism which I appreciate in Christina's work, but which so often takes a back seat to her equally-formidable capacity to make what her kindergarten teacher used to call

"pretty pictures".

Scott's "swan", like Christina's non-representational painting, was made on a day when the materials were prepared for the children in advance of the class. However, since on that occasion I had no specific material-centred, skill-building objectives, I know that the emergence of this particular piece speaks of Scott as a beginning artist. I can see that what I was seeking in my dialogue with Scott was a way of showing him the beauty of a form outside of considerations of use and conventional meaning. This object expresses the contained and dignified way Scott approaches his world and also shows me that Scott does indeed have that aesthetic sense of three-dimensional form which seems to me so valuable.

This Pedagogical Dialogue: Conclusion

As I examined my way of following the children, I saw that I had been looking at the children as artists in a rather consistent way. I had been searching for specific signs of what I considered to be artistic behaviour. Based upon what I wrote about the children in my journals, these signs of artistic behaviour appeared to fall into three general categories, all of which related to the "self" of the child.

First and foremost, I looked for the child's ability to make choices, to decide upon themes, to seek out and discover personally satisfying image-making strategies. In a very general way, I conceived of this as evidence that the child is self-directed and inclined to act independently of an exterior authority. What I found was that each of the four children was

capable of self-direction in a different way and in relation to different specific aspects of our art-making situation. I noticed that my discussion of the children's self-direction was clearest toward the end of the recording process and thus came to realize that in order to either appreciate or evaluate the child's ability to be self-directed in a school setting it is necessary to consider the long-term educational process of the child.

Secondly, I looked for the capacity of the child to become engaged with art materials, tools and techniques and to maintain over time a relationship with favoured art media. Although self-direction is, at least to some extent, a prerequisite to this, this is distinct from the child's inner direction because it is a manifestation of the child's participatory being. When the child mediates art material, he/she is held and holds him/herself in a relationship of reciprocal trust which extends the primordial state of being, that is, the absolutely participatory state wherein the person is not aware of being either a subject perceiving the world or an object receiving the gaze of the world upon it. For each of my young "colleagues", this loss of self was evidently quite different, as was the way each apparently found a world awaiting him/her as the tools and materials of art were taken up. Within the group, there was a striking lack of homogeneity with respect to the manner and the degree of commitment each child gave to art as an activity.

Finally, I looked for the child's tendency to extend his/her art-making activity into the social world. I came to think of this as self-sharing since it became evident to me that

the child had to assume that the social world was a place which cared about his/her artwork if he/she took the outside world into consideration in a consistently distinct way. The "sharing" took different forms, including the way each child listened to instructions and attended to suggestions given either by me or by other children around him/her, the way he/she incorporated the ideas of others into his/her artwork, the way he/she told others about what he/she was doing or had done or wanted to do and the way he/she carried his/her artwork into the world of friends and family as something which had value to someone other than him/herself.

I had not deliberately set out to monitor these three aspects of the children's behaviour, and indeed, my relationship with each of the children included many other (and in some cases, more important) aspects. However, in striving to meet my objective of documenting several examples of the child art process in order to be able to show that children do have their own styles, it was these three considerations which I intuitively and persistently focused upon.

In the next chapter an interpretation of each child's art style, as can be seen within each child's art process, will be given. It will be seen that the three points of reference mentioned above provided me with a standardized method for following the children that was compatible with my role as an art teacher.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE CHILD ART SERIALS

Introduction

"Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you want to go to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where..." said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"So long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

(from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll).

In this analysis, I refer to the detailed portrayals of the art-making situations which have preceded this chapter. There, in Chapters Two and Three, I described how an art education inquiry became an art-teaching experience. In addition, I recreated the art-teaching environment and showed and described the art objects that were made in that setting. The accounts presented in detail the four children's preferences regarding materials, techniques, themes and composing strategies. The focus was on four individual children, Philippe, Dawn, Christina and Scott, within the context of art teaching. The descriptions ended in an explanation of the particular way I looked at what happened in the artroom. Three important considerations governed this gaze -- the way the child chose the materials, themes and forms of art, the way the child became engaged in the art-making process and the way the child extended that process into the world.

Here, I will attempt to distill some key dimensions of artistic style from the nine accounts. This will show the differences among the four children and indicate how art

teachers can perceive the artistic styles of children. The matrix, that is, the art teacher's constant way of valuing what the children do, pulls together a final interpretation of the four artists and provides a framework for initiating more delimited observation.

Entry into the Interpretations

What each child chose to make reflects to me, in some way, who each child was in his/her experience with the world, since the art serials hold traces of lived experience and the reminder of singular experiences with matter. Let us consider the artifacts described in the second account. On this occasion, all four children were confronted with the possibility of becoming involved with clay as an image-making material. Figures 9, 13, 16 and 18 show us that each of the four children chose to make a very different kind of clay model. Philippe made a strange construction resembling a slide or game for marbles; Dawn made a landscape with a tunnel-like dwelling; Christina made a peculiar representation of a rabbit against a background of sun and sunbeams; Scott made a rudimentary bed in a walled room.

What an artist chooses to make is, in some way, what the artist is just as what each of us dreams at night is an aspect of our being. We can only remember, think, wish for, dream or imagine something of which we have at least a faint experience, and to have experience of something, one has to have had, at least momentarily, participated in the reality of that thing and at least for an instant, lost one's self in that thing. Thus when we gaze upon these traces of a

kindergarten art lesson we can feel assured that they tell us something of the child's grasp of the world and something of what he/she values.

Philippe is reflected in his slide game. He is determined to overcome the heaviness of clay. He is contemptuous of the heaviness of a wet and sticky material. He is dreaming of being the creator of something amusing. He reaches up and thus away from the surface which he has been given to work upon. He is a builder of surprising shapes, a magician surprising even himself. He enjoys the humour of sliding down an inclined surface and the sensation of rolling to the bottom.

Dawn is reflected in her well-wrought abode. She desires to make the clay stand up in space even though it is wafer-thin and unsupported. She manages to make it stand up alone by propping it on a series of rolled coils. She is the creator of a domed tent which can be seen through, which is open to the world, which stands among rocks, trees and smaller caves. Dawn is a builder of a delicate arching structure in a landscape of similar rounded shapes.

Christina is reflected in her handling of the clay and in what she makes. She rolls, flattens, smooths and then assembles the many well-fashioned parts in a complex organization. She is concentrated and engaged. Christina is focused. She is like her smiling rabbit which looks up at a moving sky, gazing outward through many layers of resources. She is aware of being part of the world which is looked down upon by a smiling sun - is animated by many spiraling lines. She is also solid, like her turtle-like rabbit, which stands

confidently beneath a large, smooth shell.

Scott is reflected in the centred, symmetric shape he has made with the clay and also in the thin, upright ridge which forms a wall and encloses the bed. He is seen in the attention he gives to the series of coloured scraps of paper which have been painstakingly crayoned and cut out of white paper. He is present in two parallel rows of finger depressions in the soft wet clay where the bright spots of paper come to rest. He is part of what he is representing - the comfort of a closed bedroom and the usefulness of a bed in it.

Philippe makes a free-standing structure with spheres rolling down it. Dawn makes a dwelling in a landscape of rounded, amorphous shapes. Christina makes a sturdy, smiling rabbit on a background of rotating lines. Scott makes an enclosed, covered bed. Each child is an artist telling us about his or her world. What the worlds are is, to some extent, what the children are and the differences among these worlds inform me about the diversity which exists within this group of children.

I will now look separately at each of the four child art serials. Five artifacts out of each serial (objects which have been discussed within Chapter Three as part of the discussion about the pedagogical dialogue) will be interpreted as meaningful objects that reveal the art style of the individual child. I will introduce each child briefly in terms of his/her posture and gestural style as they were described in my notebooks. Then I will discuss the child's art-making style, focusing on his/her preferred techniques and materials,

his/her recurring formal choices, his/her favoured themes and subjects, and finally, his/her way of conceiving of art making as a more or less important aspect of his/her world.

Philippe's Art Serial.

Entry

My five-year-old son is beside me, hunched over my light table, peering at the slides which I am sorting. He begins asking who has done what. It becomes a game: he puts his finger on one of the slides of the children's work and I tell him who the artist is, Philippe, Dawn, Christina or Scott. Then he stops, glances from the dagger to the plasticine maze to the purple fold-out card and announces that Philippe has made them all. I say, yes. He continues, "ça paraît parce que Philippe, il fait des choses pas comme les autres. C'est son style!" Having pen in hand, I copy down his words.

Philippe's style is visible to a very young child and is recognized as a style on the basis of being unlike what the other three children make. Through my description of prime pieces done over an extended period of early childhood, that is between the ages of five and nine, I have come (albeit with more hesitation), to a similar understanding of Philippe's artistic style. The style is not easy to exactly describe, because of all the contradictions which seem to come forth as I try give words to what is there. However, the feeling of what Philippe is all about in his art is quite distinct. Not only was my five-year-old son able to confirm my sensation of puzzlement when faced with Philippe's images, but

others (his kindergarten teacher, his mother, colleagues in art education who came to know the art serials) also expressed surprised incomprehension of the sequence and of certain individual works. In order to better understand why Philippe's work inspires puzzlement, I shall look at the themes mentioned as emerging in five of the accounts of his work given earlier. The accounts I have chosen are the following:

Account Two: Claywork Done in Kindergarten (Figures 9, 10, 11, 12).

Account Four: My Choice of a Grade One Representative Piece (Figure 27).

Account Five: Open Workshop (Figure 34).

Account Seven: Wood Construction (Figure 45).

Account Nine: My Preferred Piece (Figures 68, 69, 70, 71).

Themes Appearing in Account Two

The kindergarten clay work done by Philippe is distinctive by virtue of its inventiveness, playfulness, preoccupation with technique, interest in time, movement and seeing. His decision to make a slide out of clay is an unusual one within the context of a classroom. It put me in contact with his self-directedness; it enabled me to meet him as a developing artist. However the form of the clay piece is unslidelike in its roughness and the unevenness of its edges; the chute swerves abruptly and has depressions, and a prop holds up one side which does not seem to be integrated into the structure. Even the "marbles" have been hastily rolled between Philippe's hands. Thus, it is the decision to make a slide, more than the way the slide was made, that conveys to

me an image of Philippe. The many steps required to complete the structure, the fact that Philippe was obliged to find more clay when his supply ran out (and convince me, the art teacher, to open a new bag), tell me that this artifact has meaning for my understanding of Philippe's art. Philippe is interested in the time the balls take to roll to the bottom of the slide. Their trajectory, which he has controlled with great glee so that there is an unexpected movement after the initial fall from the top, speaks to me of his pleasure in surprise, in having control, while in the process of learning to work with clay.

The clayworks made by Philippe previous to this one, which I discussed in Account Two (the blue plasticine maze and the pair of glasses), make it possible for me to speak of his qualities with some authority. The maze is also quite unlike other artifacts made at that time by other children: it is a line with neither beginning nor end which encloses irregular spaces, continually curving back upon itself. Its form bespeaks some technical difficulty: the coils are uneven in length, thickness and the way they are joined one to another: at one place, the wall of the maze is composed of ten or twelve wads of clay squeezed together, replacing a length of coil; the resulting line is more consistent in weight than the smoother, but greatly varying, walls. As in the clay slide, Philippe here completes his image having very obviously had to overcome some resistance in the material. This evidence of Philippe's tenacity in following his desire to make a "maze" shows me how important it was for him.

To me, a maze is a closed space intended to confuse, enclose and possibly imprison one. To me, a maze is about trying to find one's way step by step out of a puzzle. As I look at Philippe's maze, I see all the mazes in the world of art and myth and literature: the story of the Minotaur and the labyrinth; the theme of self-enclosed gardens and endless pathways sheltered by flowering trees found in eighteenth-century Indian painting; Lewis Carroll's Victorian garden of clipped hedges, from which Alice desperately wanted to escape; the "optical art" of the '60s, designed to destabilize our visual perception. And Philippe has made a maze into which he can look from above, over which he can have absolute control and within which he can safely play, secure in the knowledge that at any moment he can choose to destroy the walls and find a way out.

Philippe's "glasses" are about seeing through rather than about seeing into. The form is simpler, smoother and more solid than those of the slide or the maze, but I sense the same physical coming to grips with a resistant world, the same original positioning of someone who is trying to figure things out. Peering through the glasses, I see that my field of vision is reduced and that everything is strangely isolated, as when I look through binoculars. This tells me that Philippe is distancing himself from his world in order to better apprehend it, or in order to be in it in a way that suits his disposition. The care which he took making the glasses tells me that this object is no more arbitrary than is the maze or is the slide and that his looking through and out

at the world is an important aspect of his artistic style.

When Philippe made a second clay slide at the end of grade two, a work improved in many respects but still recognizable as an extension of the kindergarten idea, he had no memory of already having worked on this theme. He did vaguely recall it when I described it and showed him pictures (Figure 12), but he was only slightly interested. On the other hand, I, as the art teacher, was delighted, but not surprised, at the appearance of the second slide.

Although obviously inspired by the same desire to play with the force of gravity, to make things disappear and then reappear, to control the beginning and the end of a moving object's journey, to know what is going to happen next and to be able to repeat a sleight-of-hand trick, this second structure was technically and conceptually more competent than the first clay slide. I could see here that Philippe had held onto an idea and sought to improve on it without any help from others in his world. In my terms, he had developed significantly as an artist, since not only did he have a better grasp of the material world, he had also been able to maintain his original quest and was now experimenting with its elements in a more focused manner.

Themes Emerging from Accounts Four, Five, Seven and Nine

The white paper daggers (Figure 27) are an example of how Philippe passed his time in the art room in grade one, because as often as not he chose his own activities. By now I had come to appreciate his astuteness and he had learned to use the art time to his advantage.

The dagger, precisely folded, precisely cut, precisely fastened is a marvellous piece of childhood "bricolage". It speaks to me of Philippe's continued interest in power and movement, as well as his increasing use of humour, metaphor and visual pun. For at the tip of this very "dangerous" weapon is a small, protective pocket into which he has slipped a miniscule white knife.

The shape of this dagger, like that of several other objects in Philippe's serial, is that of a cross (other examples of moments when the cross is a preferred form are the wooden tree and the front of the fold-out card). Since I know that in every mythic tradition the cross, being composed of two directional right angle axes intersecting exactly at the centre, refers to justice, synthesis and measure, I can see in this artifact a continuation of Philippe's dwelling on these basic notions (already evidenced in his Christmas angel and the marble slides). This is a cross which is a dagger, a sword. This is an object referring to good and evil, to the ability to ward off evil, to protect, to do harm, to be brave, to destroy, to be a saint or a warrior. This is also a white sword (Philippe does not have a penchant for colour, using it generally to symbolize rather than for its sensual qualities), which makes me think of lightning, particularly since he has added jagged triangles at the base of the hilt. His favoured theme, "fire", thus has taken another form. (Previous fire images are the firework drawing, the candles and lighters, the campfire for his puppet, the electrical on-off machine).

Like the clay pieces, this paper construction lets me

know that Philippe enjoys playing the role of the trickster. He has made a strong image containing reference to potential danger, and then, in a flourish, redeemed it by adding the kangaroo pocket for a diminutive replica of the fearsome arm. Also, a paper knife is a dangerous object only in the imagination.

Philippe's "on-off" machine is less primordial in form than the dagger, but impresses me by the same appearance of focused attention. Again, I see an image that speaks of polarities and extremes, which this time are designated as off and on. I can see by the circle around the machine that the artist intended it to be considered "on". Placed opposite to the electrical outlet, and also encircled, the word "on" again insists that what I am looking at is a living, energy-filled entity which, by means of the electrical cord and plug at its end, can be activated at will. Like the blue plasticine maze, this image is self-contained; it is about complexity inside something, a complexity which can magically be seen and shown by the artist. This ability to see that which is secret, that which is hidden from view, seems to be important to Philippe and although it is at times bound up with his relation with the world (as when he tries to fool us by hiding something in his image which only he knows about, for example, the baby dagger in the large dagger, the yellow bird hiding in the tree hole, the marbles which disappear and then reappear, the speeding car hidden within layers of folded paper in a card), it is also his preferred way of approaching the world. This is evidenced by Philippe's recurring inclusion of his own act of

bodily "looking" as part of his art work. His plasticine eye glasses, his wooden camera and his systematic exclusion of his own body as an explicit element in the serial point to the position he assumes most naturally. The approach that he takes, resisting the seductiveness of all the sensual art materials available to him, indicates that Philippe is more comfortable thinking about the world, reasoning about its intricacies, wondering about its problems than he is in participating in its ambiguities.

Philippe speaks to us of extremes, off-on, in-out, up-down, black-white, open-closed, right-wrong, good-evil, horizontal-vertical, movement-stasis, complex-simple; very occasionally he chooses to deal with nuances, as we see in the form of the "on-off" machine (which is doubly framed, once by a circle and secondly by the paper edges, which provide a space for the energy source), and the form of his fruit tree construction.

In the wood construction (Figure 45) I see Philippe's usual dramatic entry into an art project. Just as he knew exactly what he was doing as he folded, cut and fastened the white drawing paper to make a dagger, just as he knew from the beginning that the coloured pipe cleaners and yarn were wires for a machine, just as he knew that one convincing fold in a sheet of purple construction paper would provide a cover for a book-card-gift, he now knows that a piece of wood with a great open knothole is a ready-made tree. With his customary economy of gesture, he places two other pieces of wood as the base and the top of the tree and then, uncharacteristically, seeks to

make his "tree" into a representation of a tree rather than a metaphor of a tree. To do this, he layers a green silk circle over the wood, puts green yarn over this as branches, one red fragment of fabric onto each branch. He then cuts out a drawing of a yellow bird and pastes it behind the knothole. It is in this detail that I see Philippe's style most clearly, for again, the bird is concealed, half-hidden under the branches and at the back of the yawning opening in the trunk. Like the marbles which hid on top of the game before they were put into motion by the artist, the machine which is a mass of strings and wires until it is in the imagination turned "on", the speeding car under a dozen layers of paper and the miniature knife in its pocket, the bird has a safe perspective on the world from which it can venture forth if it chooses, but to which it can always return at will.

In terms of form, the tree and the dagger share many common elements. Defined most essentially by their verticality, both take on meaning by virtue of an added right angle traverse and are embellished by the addition of a downward-focused repeated motif (the row of spikes on the knife; the dangling branches on the tree). Both are transformed in their meaning by the presence of a centrally-placed form which violates the surface of the object, one (the pocket) being above the surface, the other (the bird's home) being through the surface.

The dagger is in the shape of a cross, white and eerie and threatening; the fruit tree, the tree of life, stands straight, still and protective; one is to be grasped, the

other, to take shelter under; both are vivid hommages to power, authority, and the need of a small child for a place from which to view the world safely. I see the themes of security-freedom, survival and the origins and hidden sources of life being dealt with here and my memory flashes to Philippe's series of peculiar little multi-coloured plasticine figures, each with an opening or door in its middle.

The camera, again a many-layered object (wood covered with brown paint, covered with brown shiny cloth, embellished by the final addition of glued layers of red yarn) also provides Philippe with an ideal place from which to peer at the world and frame it so that he can isolate details and accord them the attention needed, without being distracted by background. And again it is a hole through a surface (this time a natural knothole in the wood which Philippe, habitually an opportunist in such matters, retrieves), an opening that through his gaze becomes imbued with life.

This giving of life to his images almost at the last moment, almost as an afterthought, is, I believe, one of the aspects of Philippe's art which unsettles the viewer. For as I look at any of his objects, what I mainly see is the frame, and since it is such a comprehensive form, I find myself concentrating on its presence; I am thus rudely jolted by the realization that there is another and more important layer of meaning. The large purple fold-out card will help me explain this.

Philippe begins once more by establishing a cross as the main form. The outer surface of the card is made of many

strands of heavy red yarn, glued across and up and down to indicate the ribbon binding together a gift. Horizontality and verticality are joined in one form. Three perforated holes are made near the folded edge at the top, bottom and middle of the card. Inside the card, two separate compositions grace the two halves of the paper. On the left is a felt pen drawing of a tall Christmas tree, its star touching the top edge of the paper. Strangely, the tree lacks a base upon which to stand. This tree, like the fruit tree, has been carefully, though not abundantly, decorated and is rendered with conviction and ease. It is also a statement about verticality, about hope, enchantment, wonder. On the opposite side is a folded package of paper, which Philippe has glued and then bound by a length of red yarn tied in a neat bow. Opening it I find another "drawn" red bow, and in the innermost recesses at the bottom of all, is a lively little car speeding off the paper (were it not confined by the drawn frame around it). In the car is a person, (the only actual representation of a person in this sample of Philippe's serial), and the attitude of the car, as well as the fact that it is placed so deeply within such an elaborate "frame", makes me appreciate its importance as an element of Philippe's artistic expression.

In his gift-card he has three times and in three different ways (collage, assemblage, drawing) told us that this is a gift. The tree tells us that it is a Christmas gift. Upon opening the string and unfolding all the layers of paper, we discover an exquisitely-drawn little car. The drawing evokes controlled energy, but I am aware that it is a secret, maybe

even a joke, and that Philippe only draws in this thoroughly competent way when he is, so to speak, whispering in someone's ear. Like the singularly-oriented marbles, which moved with the force of gravity, the tiny dagger placed in the larger dagger, the electricity coursing through the many-hued wires, the yellow bird flying into and out of his tree house, this last addition to his gift carries the work into the world, out of the "frame".

The repeated ribbon, bow, knot image tells me that this object is about the special surprise associated with gifts, that it is about generosity and being given to, as well as giving.

Philippe's Artistic Style

Philippe has a proclivity for the underlying relationship, the inferential, the invisible pattern in thought, nature or machinery. He wants to know the why and how of things. His is an interestingly outward orientation (looking at things and observing patterns of action, which he often incorporates symbolically into his work) combined with a certain capacity for reflecting while doing things and making objects. This means that Philippe is led more by an idea than by his involvement with materials or techniques and also that the initial idea can broaden or deepen while it is being depicted. His is usually an intuitive start (he reaches for some material or tool), followed by a logico-deductive path leading to the denouement in the form of some last-minute transformation. His are images of movement and also of framing and boundaries. They are about seeing and also about hiding

and layering, and recovering. Philippe's art is about control and also about protection. The human element is present only as inference, as exemplified in his frequent allusions to fire (light, energy, movement). Thought, reasoning, imagination and a particular type of wonderment are the ways by which Philippe approaches his art making. To me, as art teacher, the most winning quality of his art is its unusualness.

Distinctive in that his makings are more "objects" in the world with a function and purpose, than they are drawings, models or constructions, his style (despite its occasional cursoriness) became ever more visible, particularly in grades one and two, as that of an essentially inner-directed child dealing with large questions.

Dawn's Art Serial

Entry

Changing position often, alternately sprawling full-length across the table, standing to paint at the wall, sitting on the floor, she works on a drawing singing quietly to herself. Hoots of laughter from another part of the studio break Dawn's concentration and she raises her head, to pause with crayon poised; she listens, judges the relative interest of the event, then smiles to herself and continues. A second later her head bobs up as she realizes I am writing and have been watching her. She slides gracefully off the table, comes to where I'm sitting, reads out loud what I've just written, then sits down with her drawing and her crayons and continues to colour while telling me about a story she wrote for her

aunt.

Dawn was fluent with all the materials and tools of the artroom. Her~~s~~ was a happy, humourous and also serious approach to art media. Since she was at ease with all the image-making procedures, it is appropriate to consider all of the areas of my "curriculum" in this brief interpretation of Dawn's art style.

They are:

Account One: Painting at the Start of Kindergarten (Figure 6).

Account Two: Claywork Done in Kindergarten (Figures 13, 14, 15).

Account Three: Drawing at the Beginning of Grade One (Figures 21, 22).

Account Four: Collage Done in Grade One (Figure 28).

Account Seven: Wood Construction Done in Grade Two (Figures 46, 47, 52).

Themes Appearing in Account One

The very first day I worked with the children, I could see that Dawn's art work was distinctive in its rhythmic use of formal elements and its lack of the kind of preoccupied reference to figurative representation which is common among five-year-olds. Figure 6 shows a free-floating composition of many different shapes, qualities of line, densities of paint. We see here an example of the kind of exploratory behaviour which any artist, young or old, must indulge in when working with unfamiliar tools and materials. Dawn's spontaneous adoption of this attitude enabled me to identify the quality of her self-directedness.

I speculated, looking at the moving, lyrical, apparently unselfconscious application of red paint, about Dawn as a young artist. I saw her as a very special member of our group, because she approached the act of painting in different ways (daubing, drybrush, washes, etc.), rather than drawing with the paintbrush. While the painting was interesting as a composition, what was more important was that it showed that particular searching, exploring way of going about the gradual building up of a relationship with any art material which foretells eventual accomplishment.

Dawn's main themes here are movement, harmony, exploration, variety, contrast, lightness. Her work refers to sound, to music, to the movement of time and the experience of space.

Themes Emerging from Accounts Two, Three, Four and Seven

Considering Dawn's penchant for light and airy expression, it would have been understandable had she taken awkwardly to claywork. Figures 13, 14, 15 show that, on the contrary, clay provided Dawn with the means to translate her being into new forms.

The domed tent-like dwelling is built on a series of linear coils which support the outer "skin" like a skeleton. This gives the impression of something light, rather than of clay. The dome in art and in religious architecture always refers to an earthly, material representation of the sky; it unites all into a single whole, like a universal umbrella for all the aspects of life. Dawn's curved shelter is even, intact and meets the ground in a continuous, well-wrought line.

Whereas houses and dwellings in art can reflect the artist's need for protection, this place is open and seems to flow with the landscape in which it is placed. Indeed, it is a part of the landscape, since it is made of the same rounded shapes and concave and convex surfaces as the trees, boulders and mini-caves around it. Light circulates through its openings. Dawn has made an image which is, at once, solidly "grounded" in a natural field and miraculously light, as if at any moment it could become airborne and float away like a hot-air balloon.

The little plasticine "animal" (Figure 15) made of five delicately-rolled and pressed wads of clay, is even more evidently mobile. Its body, neck and head flow in one simple, smooth, continuous line. No features have been added, but anyone can see that this is a living being with a front and back. Whether the four rounded supports are feet, legs, wheels or rollers is unimportant. This animal, with its row of soft indentations all along its back, is moving gently, slowly, easily.

Like the red painting, these clayworks include a variety of technical devices and formal elements. Dawn's work is distinguished in particular by the constant inclusion of lines, as well as textured spots and overlayed, built-up masses. In this work we can see both lyricism and the careful and patient approach of a "builder".

Dawn's "Great Adventure" drawing carries the theme of movement forward with astonishing precision. She has used a red crayon to express the sensation of being hurtled through

space, while at the same time safely riding the rail of an amusement park ride. Up, across, down, across, up, across, down... rattling, rumbling, roaring... zigzag, spiraling, looping... the lines end at the diminutive figure of a little girl standing beneath the awesome ride. There is, as well as the vertical thrust, a horizontal trajectory which has a great circular loop. The focus of Dawn's air-borne journey is here on the heavily crayoned concave inner wall of the loop, high over her head. The heads of a row of participants can be seen over the edges of the red car being held firmly in their places by centrifugal force.

Dawn's drawing is also a narrative event. She is present and she has purchased a ticket from a person in a booth. A billboard tells us that this is a "Great Adventure"; thus Dawn clearly realizes that the viewer needs some literal information to be able to appreciate what is being shown. Dawn is thoroughly IN the work, while being quite outside it, since she can also understand the audience's point of view.

Compositionally, the "ride" resembles the smaller structure of the ticket-seller's booth since both are characterized by a circle centered within several square and rectangular shapes. One image is about a thrilling experience; the other is about naming that experience, getting to it, buying a ticket in order to be allowed to try it. As in her previous artworks, Dawn here conciliates two very different attitudes, the literal (the one which looks at and then tells about) and the lyrical (the one which moves with and participates in).

In contrast to this lyrical-literal drawing, is the crayon exercise Dawn did on that same day (Figure 21). Here, emphasis was put on building up new colours by applying one heavy layer over another. There was no variety in the gestures which Dawn used; there was no intention to "compose". She started with a dark patch of colour, then worked to render it lighter by putting paler, transparent colours on top. This is reminiscent of the large, heavily painted area described in the first account, of the way the "skin" of the domed dwelling was built up with layers of carefully-flattened pieces of damp clay, and of the intensely-drawn car full of people in the "Great Adventure". This formal aspect of Dawn's work is also a theme, since it recurs throughout the serial.

I sense that for Dawn, the "Great Adventure" was more exciting than frightening and conclude that Dawn basically trusts her world and that her appearance in the drawing is that of a solitary, but very confident, person. The "bigness" of her world, the way she proportions herself in it, the sky, the air, the space around, everything are important elements.

Figure 28, a tissue paper and cellophane collage made by Dawn while she was in grade one, shows some of the qualities seen in these artworks and a further development of them.

Colour is clearly important to Dawn; it is easy to imagine her pleasure in selecting an assortment of coloured slips of paper and then arranging them methodically to suit her taste. As with the plasticine "animal", to which Dawn took a most discrete approach, here, too, she has shaped the medium only minimally. Instead, she tried seeing how it would look on

its own, by simply placing it. The brightest of colours (vivid fuschia) is overlapped by the palest (pastel blue), which creates a third colour, since neither is hidden. A large rectangle of clear turquoise obscures the middle of these first two colours, and this in turn is in large part covered by a brilliant scarlet square of tissue paper. Where the glue is visible through the layers, Dawn solves the problem of a blot on the work by inventively adding on some coloured cellophane. This makes a focus in the centre of the composition by reinforcing the darkness, as well as adding a different, reflective surface. Dawn tore off a corner from the scarlet square and made out of it a wad, which she glued in the middle of the pale blue area. The effect is startling. It gives an interesting negative-positive interplay between the upper and lower parts of the collage and provides relief to what would have been a geometric composition. As if to balance (or compensate for) the empty bottom corner left by this tear in the scarlet paper, Dawn has delicately placed a narrow strip of pink paper along the bottom of the support.

Each layer of the collage is partly concealed, partly visible. Each layer adds to and transforms the next. The whole process of creation bespeaks a series of careful choices, a wholehearted engagement with colour, weight, transparency, opacity, surface, space, contour and the effect of wet materials on dry, absorbent or resistant ones. It was an intuitive process of gradually building up an image and although in its light touch, its deftness, its lively way of dealing with materials, the collage resembles the

previously-considered works, it is singular in its attention to the relationship of all the parts to the whole.

In terms of focus, the collage is clearly organized around the centre of the surface support. While the painting described in the first account seems to have been without such an identifiable focus of interest, the clay dwelling is similarly the centre of the landscape within which it exists. In the "Great Adventure" drawing, a large circle, containing the focus of action as well as the focus of interest, serves the same purpose as does the scarlet three-dimensional shape over the dense, dark, reflecting middle of the collage. While Dawn's structures are always solid and well integrated, she likes to provide a point around which the whole can rotate.

The effect created in the collage is never static and the work's vividness is heightened by the use of strongly-contrasting colours. Looking back, I see that this deliberate and controlled superimposition of colours is similar to Dawn's approach to the crayon exercise, both in the search for new colours and the respect for the inherent physical properties of the medium being used. While vigorous treatment was required with respect to colour, the materials demanded a gentle approach.

The themes here are aesthetic ones -- how parts are related to one another, how harmony and balance are achieved despite the push and pull of contrasting elements, how a form can take shape without destroying the integrity of any of its parts.

This, then, is how Dawn handled paint, clay, plasticine

and delicate collage materials. Let us see now whether her essentially-aesthetic response was maintained when she was confronted with a very resistant material.

Figures 46 and 47 show two versions of her wooden construction. These are two different moments in the making of a "bed". Dawn made a strong frame around an almost-enclosed space and, in order to emphasize the three corners which do not have openings, added some tall, slender rods. How does this very practical approach to working with wood (simply gluing right angle to right angle) relate to Dawn, the young artist whose style reflects an interest in movement, in contrast, in space? I was able to perceive evidence of her "style" once she began to define the way the wooden frame would extend into space. The three corners opened up for Dawn the possibility of using the space contained within the vertical perimeter. Thus, she added another solid, vertical block and attached a horizontal length to this, so that, in effect, the space within the frame was completely contained. The roof of the structure is only suggested, just as the entrance is indicated without being clearly explained. As it stands, the "bed" is much like the clay dwelling in its openness-closedness and its solidity.

On the first day of her engagement with this theme and this material, Dawn added a final detail to the work. It was a cluster of lengths of red yarn which she suspended from the overhanging wooden block. At the end of each piece of yarn, she glued a carefully-rolled wad of yellow, blue, and then red, tissue paper. Whether these are purely whimsical elements

intended to relieve the hardness of the wooden construction, indications of a curtain that encloses the bed or elements of a mobile hanging above the bed, perhaps even a mobile which Dawn really knows, is impossible to tell. What can be seen is the way this touch enlivens the total construction.

On the second week that she worked on the "bed", Dawn continued to search for ways of making it the kind of object she liked. This meant that she had to find a way of de-emphasizing the hard, frame-like quality of her structure. It was not easy to do this, both because of the nature of the material and the kind of theme she had chosen. However, miraculously, when she dug into the scrap box, Dawn found a piece of fabric that served her project in just the way she needed. It was soft, printed with an animated design of flowers and leaves and large enough to make a complete floor for the construction. With this fabric, Dawn completed the structure and achieved just the effect she was looking for.

The themes that emerge from this work are those of boundaries, overcoming the limits of materials, contrasts in physical properties and potentials, the mixture of techniques. Beds refer to safety, comfort, peace, and Dawn's bed also is a place where movement, and the possibility of coming in or going out, are present.

This piece reminds me of some of the earlier artifacts in Dawn's serial, but it also demonstrates to me her formidable technical competency and her patient way of dealing with difficult situations.

Dawn's Artistic Style

Dawn shows a remarkably-continuous development with regard to particular themes and her approach to the materials and techniques of art. Attending to the kind of self-directedness, self-loss and self-sharing which each of the children made available to me, I came to know Dawn as an artist whose expression was at once free-flowing and open to suggestion. Of the children discussed in this study, she is the one who consistently entered into art-making activities most easily. Her approach was always open and accepting of the many unexpected occurrences which are part of art making. The many physical and social aspects of the art-making situation, which intrude upon the personal ones, she incorporated into her artistic process. Thus, Dawn's artistic style can be said to be characterized by flexibility with materials and an intuitive approach to structure and composition. Dawn seems to be aware of space as an important aspect of her world. All her compositions flow in an undulating manner, and line is the predominant formal element in her work. The sky, wind and objects moving in space are frequent aspects of her work. Even the most "structural" artifacts are animated and somehow appear to be alive.

Dawn takes seriously her dreams, her imaginings, the stories she has heard about God and her early childhood memories and finds it natural to include reference to them in her artwork. Thus, she makes a very rich world of experience available to us. Narrative is not a strong thread in the fabric of her work, but references to her own experience come through implicitly and constantly.

At the same time, Dawn listens to others around her. Just as she attends to what the art teacher says and is able to discriminate between what she wants to do and what the art teacher is suggesting, she refers often to her older sister, her aunt, her mother -- she knows about the demands of our culture and enjoys responding to them. We see this in her lack of distinction between art forms and written forms, as in her calligraphic message written with felt pens on wood (Account Seven), in her colourful Valentine card (Account Eight), as well as in the identification of "Dawn's House" (Account Nine).

Dawn's is a distinctly affectionate, as well as, humorous, style. She likes to pass on funny messages to others by the works she creates and shows herself as viewing things from the angle of their potential for humour. We see this in her references to "the house on stilts" (Account Two), which she wanted to try building with her sister during the summer vacation, her drawing in the "Great Adventure" of miniscule, upside-down people (Account Three) who, she told another child, might fall out in the picture, but couldn't fall out "really", the little faces with different expressions in the flowers that were part of her garden (Account Five), her wood assemblage, a gift to her infant sister Diana (Account Seven), which told Diana to "have fun in your baby life", and the Valentine card she made for her mother, which read, "whatever the question, love is the answer" (Account Eight). Her general tenderness and concern for others can also be seen in the rendering of the baby (Account Six) and in her

jewellery-making activities, which were always intended to provide her with gifts to take home to family and friends (Account Five, Account Eight).

Dawn brought so much with her to the art-making situation (joy in just being there, appreciation of the sensual qualities of art-making materials, a capacity to dwell with materials and tools for the length of time required to become competent in the dialogue with the media, and patience and curiosity), that I frequently forgot that she was in the artroom. But when I had time to look at her work, I saw her remarkable understanding of all the formal elements of art. Her use of line was immediately appreciable; she used colour with dexterity and flair and seemed to know from the very beginning how to structure overlapping shapes into harmonious forms. Transparency, an element in the language of the visual arts which is usually associated developmentally with older children, was apparent in Dawn's work in kindergarten and remained present throughout the serial.

In looking at Dawn's work, one has the impression of being in touch with the cosmos. Although light and moving, her artwork also shows an undertone of strength and is characterized by definite boundaries and clear edges. Her style is lyrical, formal and precise, and is filled with poetic references to personal experience.

Christina's Art Serial

Entry

"I have been particularly intrigued, in studying

Christina's art serial, by the wide range of conventions she experimented with from the very beginning: she made signs, visual lists of formal elements, symbolic notes to friends, pictographic labels, storybooks, greeting cards, games, maquettes. While the actual form was quite unconventional, the purpose of her work was often conventional. That is, once she had made the image, Christina usually put it to use in a culturally-understandable way.

It would be easy to conclude that her purpose is that of competence, mastery and control. That is the overriding element in her art style, but there is another, and from the art teacher's point of view, more valuable, aspect to her artwork. The "feel" which she seemed to have for a variety of art media and the facility she had in translating complex visual phenomena into two- and three-dimensional renderings is truly astonishing.

This amazing dexterity with convention and representational modes will be briefly interpreted from within the first accounts presented in this paper. The accounts are as follow:

Account One (Figure 7): Painting Done at the Beginning of Kindergarten.

Account Two (Figures 16 and 17): Claywork in Kindergarten.

Account Three (Figures 23 and 24): Drawing at the Beginning of Grade One.

Account Four (Figures 29 and 30): One Artwork from Christina's Grade One Art Serial.

Account Eight (Figures 60, 61, 62, 63): Christina's Last

Artworks Made in my Studio.

Themes Appearing in Account One

Figure 7 contains a repertoire of three conventional alternatives, all referring to the person of Christina; it also displays clarity of style and competency with paint and brush. Straight lines, enumeration, an understanding of the vertical and horizontal nature of this pictorial surface also characterize Christina's painting. Her own totem-like figure dominates the foreground; numerous radiating lines indicate her "power-full" stance in the world.

Christina's approach is, first of all, one of affirmation and presence. She shows what she knows with a flourish and impresses us by her authoritative grasp of a complicated world.

Knowing this, and aware of the limits of the conventional approach to the language of art, I wondered how she would fare as a member of our group and as a beginning artist. As it turned out, it was her conventionality, together with her original and participatory style of being with art materials which, by the tension which such disparate attitudes create, determined Christina's style.

The themes in this work are quite literally those of the human body, of name, of house and of "background". There is also the theme of context, since Christina's girl figure is "placed" somewhere; it doesn't exist out of time and place as do solitary schemas of human figures. Three conventional configurations form the aggregate.

Only when we see the evidence that Christina wanted to

place a smiling face on her girl do we perceive a change in her approach to technique. Unable to accomplish her task easily with the large bristle brush she was using, Christina appears to have taken great pains to separate the bristles and apply just the amount of paint needed to create her happily-smiling, larger-than-life person. The importance of the detail of the smile for Christina is a clue to what was of most value to her in her self-conception as an artist. This forward-looking smiling face appears repeatedly in Christina's art.

Themes Emerging in Accounts Two, Three, Four and Eight

Figure 16 shows us Christina's remarkable clay rabbit, smiling broadly against a background of implied warmth and light. Quite apart from showing Christina's skill, this piece puts us in contact with her ability to bend conventions in order to make her completed image fulfill her demands. Just as her self-portrait (Account One) gives the impression of being finished by its three-part, tightly-knit structure, this model of a free-standing animal backed by a radiating sun and a series of spiraling coils, also looks obviously finished. Again, the main figure is held within a context over which it reigns. Christina has solved the problem of putting the sky above her rabbit by treating the support surface in a two-dimensional manner, while engaging in the construction of the rabbit as a three-dimensional process.

Rather as she painted by using many straight line strokes (instead of risking the less-easily-controlled wavy or curved line approach), Christina here works with a series of

flattened, rectangular masses of clay, one superimposed upon the other, and many rolled coils, which she uses as modules and flattens or divides according to the requirements of her image. The linear coils help her to "draw" the features on her rabbit's face (which is every bit as important here as was the face in her painting), and she uses them to make the many snail-like shapes which fill the space above the rabbit's head.

Christina, unlike Philippe, Dawn and Scott, who all tried to push the heavy clay up above a base, found ways to achieve the image she wanted by using the heaviness and by working with surface relief detail and the grounded mass of the clay. Probably because she had approached the activity with specific graphic techniques, rather than those commonly associated with modelling, Christina had no difficulty drawing a pencil representation of her image. This drawing, as can be seen in Figure 17, shows clearly the series of concentric rectangles which form the rabbit's body, the four wheel-like circles which stand for the feet, the many spirals which animate the space between the rabbit and the smiling sun high above. When confronted with the necessity of showing the face (which would have been invisible had Christina rigorously followed through with the frontal view she had adopted), Christina again bends her conventional viewpoint and with as much aplomb as ever, draws a miniscule smiling face on a little circular head at the upper corner of the rectangular shape. Pointed ears and some whiskers radiate from this face, as did the fingers and feet of her self-portrait and as do the rays of the ever

present sun.

Christina has again made a three-configuration ensemble in which one monumental figure dominates and in which two subordinate figures serve as the ground for the first. Because in the first account the central figure was herself, we can assume that here, the rabbit is an important image for Christina.

Depending upon which mythological tradition one refers to, rabbits can relate to different things. They can symbolize intuitive aspects of the psyche, as in the story of Alice in Wonderland, in which the White Rabbit guided Alice along difficult tunnels across the threshold into Wonderland. Or they can be the hare, which appears with the trickster in the system of the Tarot and speaks of transformation from one state of being to another. According to Jung's three modes of psychic activity (upwards, conscious and extrovert) rabbits, and other creatures who survive by breeding and pouring out into life, are extroverts. In fable and allegory, as for example, Aesop's hare/tortoise tale or the contemporary cartoons of Bugs Bunny/Elmer Fudd, there is dramatic contrast between the transformative ability of the rabbit and the archaic, intractable forces of life present in the other being. If we look closely at Christina's image, we cannot but be struck by how she has combined the two opposing qualities of the last of these mythic interpretations, the one which would surely be the most familiar to Christina. Both the hare AND the tortoise can be seen in her image -- the tortoise in the rounded carapace and stumpy legs -- the rabbit by the

pointed ears and smiling whiskered face. Thus we find in Christina's work the intractable with the transformative.

Figure 24, a crayon drawing, shows a luminous yellow tent, a grouping of four trees opposite the tent, and a merry yellow sun hovering equidistant from the trees and the tent. This, again, is about an ambiguous situation. It speaks of being outdoors while being hidden from view. It speaks of known structures of home life and the family, but also about the unknown, about being in nature, about being vulnerable. From Christina's interest in this moment of her summer holiday, and particularly from the masterly way she handled crayons to draw it, we know how important such a radically-new way of relating to the organic universe of trees and sky and other people was for Christina. The tent flaps are drawn; thus, we know that this is not an open space, as was Dawn's domed cavern. The sun is no longer in the corner, but rather overhead, giving the appearance of protecting the abode. Christina's three-figure compositional style remains constant in this work and the dominant subject suggests, rather than shows, its contents.

The themes are those of realistic representation, evocation of lived memory, context, that which is hidden, and the groundedness of experience. There is no hint of anything going on above the base line provided by the edge of the sheet of paper, apart from the faint presence of the animating sun.

Christina's preferred formal elements remain parallel straight lines, radiating lines, repetitive loops and surface bound by well-defined edges. As in the two

previously-described works, it is the multiplicity of points of view presented within the image that determines Christina's style. The tent is seen from its triangular front, while also being seen from the side. The sun is drawn in a primitive, schematic fashion, while the other two elements (tent and trees) show that Christina's graphic style has become much more impressionistic. The implied meaning of the grinning sun (remnants of an "animated" early childhood) is also in direct contradiction with Christina's naturalistic approach to the forest and tent.

Figure 23, the crayon exercise which was done on the same day, shows how Christina spontaneously organized the picture surface when line and colour, rather than "Summertime Memory," were the subject. Here, her penchant for the diminishing series of concentric shapes can be seen to be the main organizing feature. As always, she establishes an authoritative form -- here the red and pink mass in the very centre -- and follows with an energetic and systematic enumeration of the formal possibilities, which here are the red, purple, blue, pink, green, orange and yellow crayons. Each colour fills a rectangle. In the middle, where some white has been rubbed into the magenta, we see a hint of experimentation with the crayons, but this is not maintained. Instead, an abundance of looping, zigzag and spiraling lines rotates around the brilliant centre and fills the surface.

Here is Christina at her most exuberant. Her enthusiasm came forth whenever she found it more important to enjoy the materials than make a good picture. The fact that she was

still able to experience this primordially-participatory way of being in the world explained why she was able to maintain her interest in making art (considering the complex demands she made of herself) and explained how she overcame the limits of her intrinsic interest in and talent for convention.

Account Four (Figure 29) is about the item I chose from Christina's grade one art serial because it seemed to me to show her clearly as a beginning artist. Let us consider this piece in the light of the interpretations we have just done of three other of her artifacts.

On the day this image was made, the children were invited to work with plasticine after having been told a fantasy tale about a pony and a rainbow. Christina made a collection of interrelated objects. First, she made a horse (structured similarly to the clay rabbit), which supports two riders (a girl and a boy). All are smiling and we notice that Christina's animated world and her three-point compositional style has remained constant. Following this, she made a sturdy, multicoloured rainbow using her now familiar series of concentric arcs. The rainbow provides a vertical background for her horse and riders and is unlike (more developed than) the flat, two-dimensional background she gave to her rabbit image. Then, reaffirming her multi-viewpoint stylistic approach, Christina drew a second background, showing herself standing on top of the rainbow (quite literally, standing on top of the world) while the horse climbs to meet her. Two suns frame the drawing in the top corners. With that, Christina's three-figure image, with its one predominant form (the horse

and riders) in the foreground, is complete.

The number of resources Christina has used to build up this lively scene is astounding. She considered colour an important element, and used it to great visual advantage. She turned plasticine into a variety of spheres, coils and tiles and pinched it into a complex assemblage, particularly in the case of the horse and riders. The rainbow shows a masterly understanding of form: Christina found a way of making the four colours (which are simply round coils) cohere into one strong, balanced shape which stands on its own, occupying space and giving depth to her scene. Her decision to add a last element in the form of a drawn illustration, (the pattern and overall composition of which expresses joy and is accomplished in technique), lets us know how important it was to Christina to situate her images in a setting, and, if possible, against a background.

Figures 60, 61, 62, 63 show the last objects in Christina's art serial. These were made when she was nine years old. On one Saturday morning she made two different objects which, I think, point out the seemingly contradictory aspects of her artistic expression.

Both of the objects are gifts for people in her family. The first is a menu card for her Grandmother; the second is a pair of yellow cellophane glasses and velvet wrapping made for her cousin whose birthday it was that day. The first gift shows us Christina at her most conventional -- drawing, cutting-out, assembling, decorating a cardboard surface, which will eventually serve to inform people who are eating at her

Grandmother's table what the bill of fare will be. We recognize Christina's skillfulness with art materials, her meticulousness, her appreciation of naturalistic colours, qualities which have all been evident throughout this art serial. The formal aspects are also in line with her previous work since we know that the interplay of form and background is always present in her work and that framing is important to her sense of the finished work. We can see how she has held on to the rabbit character which appeared at the very beginning of the serial, and how she has found a way of accommodating it to the needs of her developing personality. Four paws overlap the edges of the card, giving the impression of a three-dimensional image and flowers drawn in a circle remind us of Christina's early use of concentric shapes. Her strong links with her family and the pleasure she took in giving away her artwork are also apparent here.

The second gift was made in the last few minutes before Christina left to go home and it shows her at her most spontaneous, most in tune with the sensuousness of materials. Fascinated by some scraps of clear yellow cellophane, she attached a thick rubber band and wore the "glasses" while selecting some purple velvet from the fabric drawer. Deciding that the cloth was not in itself quite interesting enough to be wrapping for the "glasses", she chose a light and a medium shade oil pastel and wrote a birthday message rhythmically all over the dark surface. Then she placed doubled tapes along the edges of the fabric, put the "glasses" into their container and wrapped the package smoothly into an envelope shape.

Themes which are apparent in this work are those pertaining to technique and a "bricolage" attitude toward artwork. Christina was the person in our group who was the most adroit with tools and materials, and who most actively searched for new and more interesting ways of doing things. With these characteristics came the tendency to consider art as something one makes, rather than as a formal extension of oneself. Paradoxically, Christina's very competence with materials seemed to make it difficult for her to, so to speak, strike up a relationship with a particular set of tools and materials and stay with them in order to deepen her imagery.

Christina's Artistic Style

With head bent in deep concentration, her long blond hair shielding her face from the distractions of the artroom, Christina pursues her art-making activities in a solitary, focused and visibly engaged manner. Another child peers over her shoulder and she straightens up, responds to her friend, her sharp-eyed glance darting around the artroom as she laughs and then bends over her work with renewed intensity.

Alert, watchful, intent, Christina came to my art-making project with a predisposition to learn those techniques which she didn't already know, to learn them well and to learn them fast. She seemed to be continuously looking for ways to make her work look better, and her ability to quickly master new materials and put them to work made her a much-admired person in the group. At times, this ambitiousness led her to undertake more than she was capable of handling and her

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participatory mode, wherein she was caught up in the materials and her motivation to make something, would then lead her to grief (example Figure 48 the abandoned wooden "interior").

Although quick to learn and eager to put her knowledge to use, Christina also became engrossed in very time-consuming (and what many children considered, boring) exercises, such as mixing colours, practicing different qualities of lines and doing string collage. This bespeaks her meditative attitude, which is also apparent in the recurrence in her work of some mandala forms (concentric circles, suns) and shows that, as well as being cognitively and emotionally involved in the symbols of her artwork, she could also be involved bodily in a ritualistic, non-figurative art-making process.

Christina said that she preferred building and constructing to drawing, painting and modelling. Indeed, our construction projects seemed to require just the right mesh of problem solving and engagement with materials and tools to suit her. It is as if she constantly sought ever more demanding approaches and was not content unless she was working with a material which resisted her control.

Christina's work is characterized by the themes of context, organization, animism and intense participation with materials, tools and techniques of art. Particularly, it speaks of situation. Once she made the first element in a composition (usually a person or an animal), she proceeded to surround this living thing with details and/or other living things that would establish the place within which it existed. One way of doing this (when clay, construction or modelling

was the activity and when most of the children were making single objects), was by flanking the original object with supporting elements that identified the central form. This constant situatedness of Christina's work makes the narrative quality quite important, and the abundance of characters, symbols and marks, all related one to another, let the viewer know that the artist was, in a way, telling a story about something. An example of this is the first painting (Figure 7), where she made a schematic representation of herself, then added a painting of her name and finally the outline of a distant house. The process was at once enumerative and narrative and situational. She proceeded by showing what she could do (complete body schema, correctly spelled name), then added the setting, which in this case was a schematic house. Christina's "story" was about what she could already do on her own without any help from anyone. It also showed that she was IN a world and could distance herself from herself and look back at herself with satisfaction.

The multi-faceted nature of Christina's artwork can be considered in the drawing done at the beginning of grade one (Figure 24). This is part conventional schema (the sun), part gestural and calligraphic ease with drawing techniques (the trees), and part a figurative rendering of a difficult-to-represent object (the tent). Christina's focus here is on the tent. This is evidenced by the clear, defined outlines and the double viewpoint, which shows that she understood the tent's structure and how it stood in space, and also that the tent was in itself an interesting object in her

world.

Christina's artwork was about the people in her world. The tent was a place where people were together with her in a special way. The painting was about herself, a person in kindergarten. The rabbit was about a sturdy animal presence in a delimited space. Her plasticine riders were about being together and overcoming obstacles with the help of a powerful animal. The three figures in the model creche bespoke human relationship.

As I mentioned in the descriptive part of this dissertation, Christina often had a definite idea of whom she was making her artwork for. Her continuous relatedness with other people outside the art-making situation was another way that expressed her style as an artist. By giving herself the objective of making something for someone, she reduced the choices which she had when selecting the themes, materials, formats and organizations of her work, because she had to refer to the person she was planning to give it to and think about what he/she would like. This propensity of Christina's to give her art away to friends and family members, tells me that for her, art was more than an activity; it was objects in the world which have value because they look nice and they give other people pleasure.

Stylistically, she seems to vacillate between two modes of making art and the disparity between these two approaches is striking. The first, which is the most apparent, is one of caution, methodicalness, and great competence in using materials and building up images. Examples which testify to

this approach are Figure 7 (the red painting), Figure 16 (the clay rabbit) and Figure 63 (the menu card):

The other mode is more spontaneous, less controlled gesturally, and shows Christina to have had more fun with her art making. Examples of artifacts made when Christina was working this way are Figure 23 (the crayon exercise), Figure 39 (the paper collage with plasticine girl in a landscape), and Figure 60, 61, 62 (the golden glasses made as a gift).

Occasionally, the two modes come equally into play. At such times, the results are particularly successful from my point of view, since in both modes Christina showed an amazing concentration and intensity. Examples of such moments in Christina's art serial are Figure 29 (the plasticine horse and riders with a rainbow), Figure 53 (the chalk drawing with flying birds on an assemblage) and Figure 73 (a kindergarten painting).

As the descriptions of the art-making situations will have made evident, I particularly valued the more extrovert side of Christina's artistic style, not because the other side was not important (it was certainly impressive in every respect), but because that aspect of Christina was already receiving ample recognition from others in her world.

Landscapes and interiors peopled with smiling animals and children are Christina's favoured themes. Of the four elements, air and earth are most present in her work. It is the tension between her talent for learning convention (which has enabled her to acquire so many art-making resources in the short time I worked with her), and her great enthusiasm when

working with the art materials themselves that seem most succinctly to define Christina as a beginning artist. She brought an element of maturity and even authority to our art-making project.

Scott's Art Serial

Entry

Strong and sturdy, precise in his gestures and sure of himself (although generally soft-spoken here in the artroom and elsewhere), Scott as a beginning artist is reflected in his art serial. Of the group, he was the one who had the least interest in making art, inasmuch as this propensity can usually be noticed in play activities at home and at school. Teachers and parents said that they had rarely known a child less drawn to art activities than Scott. However, within our group, not only did he cooperate, but he brought enthusiasm and many of his own ideas to the situation. As I noticed on the very first day of the kindergarten classes, Scott dove right into my painting session although he had been noticeably uninterested in everything else his teacher had planned.

The accounts which will be discussed in this final crystallization of Scott's artistic process and allow us to glimpse Scott's underlying artistic style are as follow:
Account Three: Drawing at the Beginning of Grade One (Figures 25, 26).

Account Four: Self-portrait, Painting (Figures 31, 32, 33).

Account Six: Claywork in Grade Two (Figure 44).

Account Seven: Wooden Construction (Figure 49, 50, 54).

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Account Eight: Last Artwork in the Serial (Figures 64, 65, 66, 67).

Themes Appearing in Account Three

Scott's "Summertime Memory" is a crayon drawing which shows him swimming near some sand dunes. Because he pictures himself alone in an environment of sand, water and sky, we know that it is the sensation of the experience, rather than its social aspect, that appeals to Scott. Present in this drawing is the impression of a marvellous place. Pictured is a simple, primordial place where great mounds of sand stand outlined against the empty sky, and blue water lies with its still, even, clear surface stretching from the beginning until the end of time. In this place, Scott is happily swimming in the water.

Simplicity of means characterize both the picture organization and the techniques Scott has used. By turning the paper and using it vertically (rather than horizontally as is most usual), Scott immediately achieved a surface which responded to his need to show the grandeur and specialness of his experience. His decision to use only the two colours which symbolize his memory of water and sand, blue and brown, determines the minimalness and the strength of the image. Straight lines are used almost as a pictograph, to show Scott in the water. Only the hair and ears of his figure are slightly emphasized, along with the face and widely-smiling mouth.

The total drawing is rigorously symmetrical from the upflung arms of the stick-figure to the three, evenly-shaped

mounds of sand. The compositional approach is geometric, although we know that Scott is expressing a particularly sensual experience. The gestures used to colour the three large expanses of paper are mainly horizontal for the beach at the bottom of the composition, mainly vertical for the water, and mainly diagonal for the hills of sand. Texture is not a concern. Rather, Scott was trying to fill in these areas as completely as possible. His abundant energy, persistence and determination shine through.

In Figure 25, we can see how Scott interpreted the idea of doing a crayon exercise. He used all the colours available, made no attempt to organize his sheet of paper, used great swirling gestures which encompassed the whole area and generally gave the impression of enjoying the kind of freedom of movement which my invitation afforded him. At the bottom of the sheet, many black speckles form a base and take up about the same amount of paper as does the "beach" in the drawing he did next. Thus, we can see that Scott's choice to limit his artistic means in his "beach" picture had nothing to do with the means at his disposal (since we see that he is aware of texture, overlapping, transparency, colour) and we can conclude that he was making some important artistic decisions when he chose among his options and structured his image as he did.

Important themes here are those of bodily involvement, space and movement, personal involvement in a majestic situation, simplicity, strength, power, symmetry, balance. The formal elements Scott uses here are surface, mass, contour,

boundaries and symbolic colour.

Themes Emerging from Accounts Four, Six, Seven and Eight

Figures 31, 32, 33 show us the three-step evolution of Scott's self-portrait. It is at the final stage that the image becomes meaningful in terms of Scott's expression. Here he has skillfully transformed himself into a goalie, complete with a net in the background, a padded vest, elbow and shin pads, a helmet, a wide goalie's stick and a puck. Emphasis has been added to his face by increasing the contrast between the features and the background.

Scott has taken on the garb of the hero, since as a goalie he becomes the defender of his team's territory, preventing the puck from entering his team's net. The goalie is the most important single person on a hockey team and is, in effect, the guardian of his group's honour. This speaks to me of how Scott idealizes himself as an important individual within a group, as the most important person, as a hero.

As he selected his paints Scott referred to the colours of his own clothing, and asked for help when he was unable to achieve exactly the shade of beige required for the knee pads. Being true-to-life was extremely important to him. To produce all the details, Scott used a number of drawing and colouring techniques including feltpen, paint, collage and crayon. The long-term engagement and the intensity of Scott's investment in this image let us know that for Scott, making this homage to strength, bravery and skill was important.

His approach was similar to the way he began the "beach" picture. In both cases, he started by building in the simplest

way possible, without any apparent foresight or overall plan. As he continued, he found a way to put himself literally into the picture. The swimming picture allowed him to add himself at the very last moment on top of a landscape, in such a way as to be swimming in the water. The goalie was a last-minute invention that permitted him to transcend his modest (although life-size) self-portrait.

Figure 44 is Scott's contribution to a class project. Each of the children used clay to render a character or a group of characters in The Christmas Story.

The king is Scott's contribution. This king holds a carefully-shaped gift in his outstretched arms. The gift is topped by a decorative bow. On the king's head is a finely-wrought crown, placed with assurance and dignity. The king stands tall and upright, looking forward with a well-defined smile. Scott's king is another version of the heroic figure he created out of the self-portrait. It speaks of generosity as well as of power and strength. It speaks of Scott's identification with such giving, and his capacity to conceive of the importance of such an homage.

To make the form, Scott combined both analytic and synthetic modelling approaches, although the synthetic (the articulating of the clay by pressing and pinching without breaking, forming and then reassembling the material) is the way he began. The final features (the gift and crown) give expressive meaning to the creche figure and are analytically added at the end, just as were the elements of the two previously-discussed objects that served to give them

significance.

Figures 49, 50, 54 are some wood constructions made in grade two. Of all the possible things he could have chosen to make, Scott decided to make a tall building, which he identified to his friends as a church. Again, he chose to work vertically. Door and windows are represented with feltpens and glued shiny fabric. On the second week of the wood construction project, Scott did very little to embellish the facade of his "church", but instead, added to the volume by joining many blocks of wood at the back of the facade. He also increased the surface by situating the whole structure on a base that stretched out in front to form an entrance, a kind of verandah with some long steps leading into the building.

It is evidently the actual shape and size of the construction which was important to Scott. The heaviness, the compactness, the monumental quality of the object define the way it exists in the world and set it apart from the other children's projects (for example, Philippe's "tree" and Dawn's "bed") which took on different, less massive, forms.

Figure 54 shows an example of the kind of wooden object Scott constructed when he wanted to make something to take home for himself and there was no question of his work being displayed at school. According to Scott, this was a "karate block". Its simplicity, its rigid symmetry, its association with vigorous (and in this case, violent) physical activity, and its reference to autonomous, individualistic and heroic behaviour maintain the artistic identity I now attribute to Scott. Some aspects also give an indication of the way Scott

is developing. As well as the explicit "blood" in the middle of the transom and at the base of a support, he has added shiny gold silk to give the impression of something which is extremely important, almost sacred. Discrimination was required. Not only was Scott strongly motivated, but he was also able to elaborate on his original inspiration in such a way as to render his work singularly interesting as a form, quite apart from its allegorical meaning.

Figures 64, 65, 66, 67 illustrate Scott's "doll cradle", as it was being made for his sister. This was the last of his furniture-making projects, which preoccupied him during the months he was working in my studio on Saturday mornings. In its form, its reference to a certain kind of functional object and its disclosure of the material and procedural choices Scott made, this item gives a clear idea of the way he was coming to identify himself as a maker of objects.

Figure 65 shows Scott in the process of finding the correct distance between the extremities of his structure. He is balanced on the balls of his feet, his back is straight, his arms outstretched, hands touching the ends of the upright posts. He is concentrated, focused. His body seems to represent the images in his art serial -- the centred bed in a well-enclosed bedroom made of clay, the swimmer flanked by two dunes, the balanced, sturdy king holding his gift, the church with its double spires, the karate block resting on two silk-shrouded pedestals.

Figure 67, the completed doll's cradle, shows that Scott was becoming more and more concerned with the usefulness of

his artwork. Rarely at that time did he choose to participate in group activities such as print-making (except when someone offered to help him print a table cloth for a table he had made), or finger painting (except to literally, "mess around" for a few minutes in between more important projects), or making Christmas decorations (except when he discovered that he could "build" a Christmas tree by gluing together blocks of styrofoam and then colouring them). For him, an object worth making was one which was rather solid, existed in three-dimensional space, served some purpose related to the body (bed, chair, table, hand-held puppet) and could be used by someone. He enjoyed wood-working tools and very clearly was playing at being grown up. Although he participated enthusiastically in spontaneous, dramatic creations, thoroughly enjoyed inventing and dressing up in absurd costumes and putting on make-up (usually wicked red slashes across his cheek), and always took part in the paper bag puppet plays, his purpose when he arrived each day was to make or finish some specific item.

The cradle is remarkable in that it is about Behaviour which is usually not associated with childhood creativity, yet it retains many of the characteristics of Scott's earlier artwork.

Scott's Artistic Style

If we are to begin to grasp Scott's artistic style, we must recognize how generalized was his tendency to approach most situations as if the building/constructing process was the only possible alternative. Whether he worked with paint,

crayon, clay or wood, Scott, when he wasn't just revelling in the kinaesthetic pleasure of shaping and reshaping materials, was focused upon a linear building-up process. He liked everything to be well-defined, but was not prone to engage in meticulous finishing of his images. Thus, the construction was done once and forever, and unless the object could be continued at quite a different time, Scott was never inclined to work on or elaborate his initial form. For that reason, it was important that he be constantly confronted with his past work. Only in such a way did he transcend the intrinsic difficulty of this "automatic" approach and achieve some depth of expression.

Scott's forms are inevitably characterized by their overall symmetry, their tendency to either take up three-dimensional space or refer explicitly to it and to be attached to a base line (that is, grounded).

His preferred materials are resistant ones, such as cardboard, styrofoam or wood, although he was always happy to try any new material.

Scott's themes are of two types. If the class projects included implicitly or explicitly the making of human figures, (for example self-portrait, puppets, narrative murals, depiction of personal experience), he usually turned toward fabricating powerful, frightening and physically-strong characters: Some of his favourites were devils, pirates, witches, two-headed monsters, cowboys, Indians, Hulk, cobras, baseball players, hockey players and kings. The second type of theme which attracted Scott's attention is that of habitable

structures. Examples of this are his "bedroom", the wooden "church", numerous drawing and paintings of houses, several cardboard constructions of teepees. His series of furniture can be considered an extension of this interest. The only vehicles which appeared regularly in Scott's serial were boats, and on each occasion these took the form of battleships or aircraft carriers. Once Scott made a helicopter.

Scott's approach to art-making activities was that of someone who, at the beginning, didn't quite seem to know why he was there. Because he followed instructions well and had a great enthusiasm for actually working with art materials (pushing around paint on paper, squashing clay and squeezing it into shapes, filling expanses with black charcoal), he entered into the process without a strong desire to make something in particular but with a general confidence in the situation. He had a strong sense of order and propriety toward other people, while also being individualistic in his art-making and his expression of the world.

Conclusion

The child as a beginning artist draws upon his/her world. These descriptions and interpretations of four childhood art serials reveal that, despite the intractable nature of the child art process and the way childhood artistic development is contextually grounded, I was able to identify aspects of each child art serial which appear continuous and seem to reflect an artistic style. Because style in art refers to the development of a sequence and to the simple relatedness of

traits such as form, organization, theme and content, in my descriptions and interpretations I dealt with the individual artworks as autonomous objects in the world.

"What each and every aesthetic object imposes upon us, in appropriate rhythms, is a unique and singular formula for the flow of our energy... Every work of art embodies a principle of proceeding, of stopping, of scanning; an image of energy or relaxation, the imprint of a caressing or destroying hand which is the artist's alone." We can call this the physiognomy of the work, or its rhythm, or, as I would rather do, its style. (Note 1)

With such a definition of style, we have come full circle, to the point from which we embarked on this exploration of childhood art making. We are back to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of art as embodied cognition and as "autofigurative". "The spectacle is first of all a spectacle of itself before it is a spectacle of something outside of it." (Note 2)

...art...draws upon this fabric of brute meaning which activism (or operationalism-Trans.) would prefer to ignore. Art and only art does so in full innocence. From the writer and the philosopher, in contrast, we want opinions and advice. We will not allow them to hold the world suspended. We want them to take a stand; they cannot waive the responsibilities of men who speak. Music at the other extreme, is too far beyond the world and the designatable to depict anything but certain outlines of Being-its ebb and flow, its growth, its upheavals, its turbulence.

I came to think of Philippe as being oriented toward structure; Dawn as being organic in her approach to art making; Christina as being a symbolic artist; Scott as being functional by nature. While these very general predispositions seemed obvious to me, I also noticed that embedded in the interpretations were continuums of each of these four qualities. Thus, Philippe's structural style includes also

much which is complementary to it - magic, surprise, danger. While Dawn's work is clearly organic, it also shows the contrasting qualities of order and method. Similarly, Christina's symbolic approach is balanced by animistic and energetic traits. Scott's continued desire to make things with which he could do something led me to call his approach functional, but also present in his work is the capacity to participate totally in a variety of materials and themes. Thus I would be inclined to say that the complement of Scott's style is participatory.

Having come this far, I sit back and look at these few words I have written. "What, is it only that?" And then Paul Klee's words, written when he was thirty-seven and later engraved on his tombstone come to mind: "I cannot be caught in immanence". Indeed I have been presumptuous! What I have been trying to translate is more mysterious than any written text. It is mingled in the very roots of being. It is mixed with the impalpable source of sensations. Understandably, what I can say is the feeblest uttering compared with what the serials are.

Notes

Chapter IV

1 Susan Sontag quoting Raymond Bayer, Against Interpretation (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1966), p. 28.

2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 181.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

in the beginning
was not the Word...earlier
Reigned the grand silence

before the first word
is the sigh of the sea
and after the last

it lies in the dust
you can pick it up like that
the first word...nothing

it lies in the dust
you can pick it up like this
the last word...nothing
(Note 1)

This concluding chapter is a retrospective look at the several understandings which came from the study and are all in one way or another related to the intention announced at the beginning of this dissertation, to describe the child art process. My desire to describe what the children were doing came from the impression that child art is not an entirely ineffable phenomenon and that my prolonged and persistent gaze would allow me not only to come to an essential grasp of individual child art styles but also to speak about them with knowledge. This turned out partially to be the case, and the degree of failure I had is just as important as the degree of success. Where I failed, I learned to accept limits and to reorder the phenomenon of child art in light of how I, as the art teacher, experienced it.

I found that it was often difficult to give words to my experience of coming to know the children's work. The unnamable reminds me of the rich, uncontrollable dimension of existence and of the imperiousness of the nonlinguistic. The exercise of trying to write about what is presumed to be a well-known phenomenon in our field, child art, reawakened me to the ordinariness, as well as to the extraordinariness, of art education. It was an unsettling experience, since I was without exemplars and was driven on by a kind of blind faith in children's creative imaginations. Finding words to tell about the choices of materials, techniques and themes which each of the children made was fairly simple, but discovering words to show what these choices meant to me required that I detach myself from all expectations about how art should look and assume that each child was already an artist. Noticing the ineffable, coming to terms with the impossibility of adequately describing what the children were doing when they were making art, helped me wonder at the field of art education in which I work. For then, the awareness re-emerged that my reflective life was situated entirely within my unreflective life, and I realized that everything verbal had its roots in the non-verbal. It became evident to me that art education can only unfold as a cultural inscription from an attitude of concern with and for the silence of each person.

It now appears problematic that leaders in the field should be defining art education more and more in terms of linguistic and rational-analytic controls. The incredible extraordinariness of each child's sense of rightness (and the

rightness of these in terms of art theory and art history) cannot be taken into account in the newer focus of art education. This, the "aesthetic education" movement (currently associated with the Getty Institute), which seeks to change both the theory and practice guiding our field by exchanging our traditional focus on making art for a focus on appreciating "excellent" art, claim that art history, aesthetics and art criticism must be included with studio art at all levels of the curriculum. From what I have learned through this study, it will be impossible to reconcile the needs of discipline-based art education and the children's sense of personal propriety. It is one of those rare either-or situations since it appears absolutely imperative to my interpretation of the art education project that we be able to listen to the silence in each child and that we find ways of talking about it in clearer and ever more understandable ways, regardless of our stuttering and our feelings of foolishness about our awkwardness with language.

The conclusions will focus upon how my experience of trying to get to the roots of who the children were as artists has had implications upon my own practice and has enabled me to come to grips with certain education and art education traditions in the province of Quebec. The theory underlying the practice which motivated this project is reconsidered in light of what I learned by studying the art processes of a group of children.

Educational Implications

The major purpose of this study has been to understand individual children's art styles while working with children who were encountering for the first time the idea that art was an important consideration. The results of my study support the idiosyncratic theory about what children do as artists, but the differences between the children were found to be more subtle and more difficult to typify than had been expected. While PhilPippe, Dawn, Christina and Scott proved to be very different kinds of artists and although this diversity was evident from the start, appreciating the integrity and the quality of each child's language and then learning to talk about these languages required that I adopt not only an attitude of unconditional respect toward the children's work, but also the practice of methodically describing what the children had done. It was this ongoing process of verbally describing the children's artifacts which proved to be the single most important aspect of the project for me. I learned that the long-term engagement in individual art serials brings with it an ever-increasing sensitivity about how people experience their worlds and translate this experience into objects, and an ever-increasing capacity to speak about these individual ways of being in the world.

In order to be able to describe the artwork, Carini's approach to children's work in general was adapted to meet the specific characteristics of this art education project. The prolonged exercise of the descriptive-interpretive approach has changed the way I conceive of evaluation in art teaching and has influenced my work in teacher education. Evaluation of

classroom art now seems to me to be not only possible but also important, inasmuch as the valuing process implicit in my experience obliges the teacher to take each child seriously as an artist. Description of the child's work automatically gives the teacher cumulative access to levels of the child's experience which are not usually accessible, and thus enables the teacher to be judicious in the organization of art activities.

Into my practice in teacher education I have gradually incorporated a series of procedures whereby all the studio work of each student teacher (technical exercises, figurative and non-figurative work, as well as contributions to collective work) is now considered for dominant and recurring themes. The interpretations of each person's relationship with the world thus achieved avoid the problems associated with psychological interpretations and by virtue of the quality of the empirical evidence furnished through the art objects can be confidently shared by groups of students. For student-teachers destined to become general classroom teachers, who are habitually intimidated by the idea that competence with materials takes precedence over other considerations in art, the possibility of having access to their own styles without being evaluated in terms of their capacity to represent visual phenomena has immediate and long-term significance. For my students, and for myself, this ability to recognize and appreciate the originality of each person and to have the means of maintaining this as our focus while answering the needs of a technical world is extremely

exciting.

Our enthusiasm is easy to understand, for contemporary discourse in education has tended to dichotomize experience. For example, teacher-preparation programmes of study offer courses which treat human experience as if the reflective life could be definitively separated from action; attention is accorded either to the child or to the programme of study, either to developmental characteristics of the child or to techniques recommended for certain age groups, either to the person as an expressive entity or to the conventions of our society. This separation, which was probably intended to rationalize a complex professional enterprise, has resulted in an accentuation of the problem. That which is indeed complex and difficult to understand, human behaviour, when apprehended through such a structure of opposition, appears confusing and insignificant, because there are no pragmatic means of coming to grips with the phenomenon. I believe now that were the descriptive-interpretive process, as it can be experienced in art education, taken seriously as a means of participating respectfully in the reality of another person (through technique, convention and method) while maintaining one's sense of unfolding self-identity, many of the wishes of education theorists could become reality.

Two other features of the art teaching-learning situation kept appearing and re-appearing in my accounts. One, the process of a child becoming "good in art", (that is, having a positive identification with the domain of the arts and feeling confident about him/herself as an artist) proved

itself to be riddled with pitfalls and unexpected complications. Whereas most art education theories (including my own) stressed the importance of the quality of the relationship between the teacher and the child, emphasized the need for careful structuring of the lessons and at the same time purveyed the notion that art was a natural and even a spontaneous manifestation of childhood, I found that while each of the children was indeed a potential artist, convincing him/her of this was no easy task. I was obliged to re-evaluate my own notion of the relationship between theory and practice within the field of art education. This in turn allowed me to reflect upon the possibility of alternative approaches to trying to lessen the gap between that which is believed, that which is understood and that which is done.

Several years ago I wrote (Note 2) -

What shines through the literature is a clear picture of the skills and values of art educators who are perceiving children in a very particular and uniform manner. The imbalance between the image of the artist-teacher and the child-artist is such that it is currently possible to peruse the writing of our field without coming to any "artistic understanding" (term used by Rachel Mason, 1982) (Note 3) with regards to the development of children.

Now, having studied my own experience of what went on in an artroom, I realize that while the child-artist's image in some of our literature is isolated from its context and fragmented from its source, the artist-teacher's experience is also unclear. The imbalance is of a different order from what I first suspected, and what is really being bandied about as exemplars of art teaching are rationalizations of an ideology. One of the emotional underpinnings of our enterprise has

appeared to be that children enjoy what we ask them to do and that they all love art. That there is indeed something magical about the mixture of childhood and art materials I do not question: indeed my study once again confirmed for me the simplicity of relationship between these two entities. However, it is important to remember that this group of children were making art because an adult said that art making was a worthwhile activity and that (with the possible exception of Dawn) they would foreseeably have engaged in many other sorts of activities, even in the artroom, had I not made my interest explicit.

I found out that it was very difficult to plan lessons in such a way as to ensure that the majority of the children had, from my point of view, educational and artistic experiences, while at the same time enjoying being in the artroom. The only way that I could consistently achieve the ambience which my pedagogical mode required was by very gently introducing even the simplest of technical problems, thematic considerations or formal concepts, by introducing these things as I would introduce a precious, faithful friend who had stood by me and who I wished to see stand by others as well. Only by appealing to the children's delight in intense sensations (bright colours contrasting with soft and dark ones; thin delicate papers becoming malleable material through the intervention of the ruthless metal of their scissors; amorphous cold earth taking form by the pressure of warm fingers and the grasp of hands) and their desire to make things which have value for others in their worlds, was I able to teach art. I was

constantly encouraging them, for, as has been well documented by those who have studied the transitions from play to art and from art to play,

In contrast to learning, which is reality-oriented, art resembles play inasmuch as it enjoys sanctuary from the laws of time, place, and causality. Nevertheless art is more stressful than play. Attempts to induce people to exert themselves in art by presenting it as a kind of play soon lead to dead ends. (Note 4)

As I carried on my study and focused on how the children were engaging in ideas about art, I came to realize that what I was asking required of the children a great deal of courage. Some of the children were, at first, simply not very interested in what I proposed and I, for my part, had to wait for the moment when something in their worlds would merge with something in mine and the art-making process would haltingly appear. Others at first approached what I had to say as though it were a command and as though all they had to do was to carry out my wishes. Still others were cautious and seemed always to be deferring judgement about what to make of my suggestion that we make art. A few were present, from the outset, to my thoughts about art. My suggestions were experienced by the children in varied ways and not everyone found my truths irresistible. I thus cannot imagine that I could have achieved more, in terms of drawing them into my world of art, by correcting them, by judging their work or by demanding that they criticize their own work. What became evident to me from analysis of my own pedagogical dialogue is that it is indeed very particular, that my own sense of what was right was very strong, that I was constantly worried about

how well the children were doing and that this worry could have been alleviated had I known what I know now. That is, it seems to me that each child, in terms of an extended life-world of family, culture and personal predispositions, is as much responsible for his/her own artistic process as I am. Also, I now realize that the consistency (or the logic and internal coherency) of the process can be seen only in retrospect. Before being confronted with the true forms and expressions of the child (which were there all the time, but eluded rational depiction), the teacher simply has to have faith in the child as an artist.

In view of what I learned from the children about their grasp of art, I have difficulty reconciling the priority which many art educators accord to drawing and realistic graphic representation. Despite my own appreciation of and ease with drawing as an important artistic mode, none of the children showed a preference for drawing. This was particularly remarked upon at the time I interviewed the children, at the end of grade two, when without exception, drawing was at the bottom of the lists of what the children said to be their preferred art activities. The many explanations for this do not change the evidence that, given a choice, the children in my group all engaged in painting, constructing, modelling or "bricolage" activities rather than drawing.

The second feature, which is directly related to my ongoing consternation when confronted with the incredible complexity of the artroom, was my discovery of the paradoxical nature of my objective. Making art became a cultural

possibility for the children when I, as artist-teacher, was in the setting and could participate in what the children were doing. At other times, this "making" was named according to its technique or its purpose such as colouring, cutting out or making hallowe'en masks. Thus the art teacher is the context in many respects and must be considered in any study of children's art making. The children each also are "context" and thus all that remains is the marvellous and intricate network of dialogues to which the art serials bear witness.

This second realization concerning my responsibility surprised me as much as had the first, which focused upon the individual child as a being who is strongly inner-directed, but not necessarily predisposed to create. Here I was up against conflicting evidence and much of the contents of this thesis unveils how I came to terms with the contradiction embedded in the concept of the project. I believe that children are beginning artists only to those of us who look at them as beginning artists. Recognition of children as beginning artists carries with it a weight of responsibility and certain problems for the adult. Based on this experience, I am able to affirm that meeting children in an art-making project requires of the artist-teacher a much more extensive inventory of skills, competencies, techniques and experience as an artist than has been discussed in the art education literature. This realization came to me as a surprise, since I had begun with no real plan about how to didactically structure the art activities in such a way as to include the child as artist. The demands made of the teacher are

considerable, and I was able to understand both the reaction to Lowenfeldian art education (which places minor importance on the degree of preparation of the teacher) and the lack of impact of the mode suggested by Beittel (which places the onus on the teacher to come to an essential understanding of the beginning artist). What had been left out of both these accounts of what art teaching is was the experience of the teacher.

Pedagogy and Aims

As was indicated in the preceding section, teaching children as beginning artists is very hard work when undertaken in a school setting. This means that, first of all, the myth of art as a natural activity which has only to be lovingly nurtured if it is to bear the fruits of authentic image making must be dispelled. In the educational community of the province of Quebec, the program of studies which governs classroom teachers and art specialists in the teaching and evaluating of art at the elementary level provided specific guidelines. It states:

1 Le critère d'évaluation privilègie en arts plastiques qui englobe tous les autres, c'est l'authenticité.

2 C'est à l'enseignant compétent que revient la responsabilité d'évaluer la démarche de l'enfant.

3 C'est la démarche de l'élève que l'enseignant évalue.

(Note 5)

Thus we are told that the teacher who knows the child is the only person able to evaluate, that it is the process which is to be evaluated, that the only important criterion of the evaluation is the "authenticity" of the process. Since teachers find themselves to be intruding on the childhood landscape, which is without a concept of art (which plays,

makes things, but which is without a notion of art as a specific kind of human activity), they have to find ways of gently drawing children into their world. On this, the Quebec program of studies is also clearly saying that it is to the degree that the teacher is sensitive to, and cognizant of, his/her own image, that he/she will be able to "see" the child's image. (Note 6)

The importance of this, and the difficulty of including it in school situations, cannot, I believe, be overestimated. It is the procedures by which art teaching is accomplished that determine whether or not it is art education. Only our focus on the procedure rather than on the results can tell us that this is an art education situation. This calls into question the aims of art education and (as I found in my ruminations) all positing of distant goals raises ethical problems. It is accepted that an educator must have aims, for, as a concept, "education" itself has a standard or norm, as it were, built into it. We are committed to judgements of value each time we mention 'education', even in contexts quite remote from that of the artroom. Some aims appeal to many of us (self-realization, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, nature as a guide toward goodness, beauty in everyday life), but I found that such general aims are never merely harmless extravagances. They are always dangerous, because in education, the impact of one person on the other is more conscious than in daily life and the differences between us are accentuated. The crucial question is, what procedures are to be adopted to implement the aims and can these pedagogical

processes include within them the long-term objectives? The aims are embedded in the procedures, not vice versa, and the many possible different approaches to the task of implementation of theory make the justification of education by a reference to an end which is extrinsic to it extremely problematic. In this respect, I came to appreciate what is written into the art program of Quebec, for it puts emphasis upon the actual procedure of teaching and develops its global objective from the process of pedagogy, rather than from some future behaviour.

...amener l'enfant à faire et à voir son image à chaque étape de son évolution graphique pour acquérir une connaissance intuitive de lui-même et de son environnement.
(Note 7)

This puts the emphasis upon the dialogue rather than upon either the talent of the child or the competence of the teacher and (although I don't understand why the concept of graphic evolution has been used as a guide to artistic development in general) enables thought about the teaching of art to reside within the process of teaching. And I am able also to appreciate that our vocabulary avoids the pitfalls of such aims as self-realization, life, happiness and so on, which, I now realize, do more than simply obscure the person of the beginning artist; they also encourage an instrumental way of looking at our reasons for teaching art. The truth is that there is a quality of life embedded in the artroom activities which constitute art education, and that any of our objectives can be explicated only by reference to such activities. Our institutional art program, with intermediate

goals formulated in such terms as "to represent", "to organize", "to explore", "to modify", "to discover", and ultimate goals, in words such as "to use", "to tell", "to explain" (Note 8), has recognized that the content of art curriculum must be linked to the ongoing making process, rather than to foreseeable behavioural objectives.

In this sense, the term "authenticity", as it has been used in our own curriculum, stands as the central focus for all evaluative acts and is enlightened by testimony from the life-world of the artroom, where description is more than the translation of a romantic desire for escape from the doubt which plagues the art teacher. Placing one's faith in the authenticity of the child is to be replaced by placing one's faith in the authenticity of the child's artwork, in which recognition can fruitfully be sought and from which insight into the values of the child in the world can be gained. This way, art is considered as other than a means to an end (that is, as a conventionalized system which can be taught and learnt within the normal schooling process as an ensemble of techniques, concepts and skills), and children can be known as continuous in their experience, which has nothing to do with adult notions of beauty and value. This is important because "we as human beings can make comparisons (education and evaluation always include comparison) that truly illuminate only if we have the imagination to grasp individual essences". (Note 9)

Validity and Intersubjectivity

I realized that if by 'life' is meant what goes on

outside schools, there is an important sense in which 'life' must be for the sake of what goes on in the artroom, not art for life. It was thus obvious that I was inextricably linked to the children in their lives outside the artroom and I realized the importance of what I was doing (albeit in a theoretical sense), but the futility of doing it in the context of a research project. For my aim was to educate the children as artists and about art, and I had not been given that task by the parents, the school, or the children themselves. I was an outsider from the start and although a special and (from my viewpoint) very wonderful relationship was created within the framework of the study (I often spoke of my young "colleagues" for example, rather than of the children or of my students), I had no real accountability to anyone and like any other volunteer offering my services, I could retreat at any moment.

Thus, while I was handicapped by a lack of continuity in the pedagogical relationship and by an "outsider" status which precluded the depth of mutual experience usually considered the base of everyday school relationships, I was privileged in that my regular comings and goings to and from the school enabled me continuously to review the quality of the art teaching relationship. Every encounter was an event and each event brought with it its own performance of asymmetry as I experienced my relative success with telling the children about art as a valuable aspect of life. This privilege precluded my acting as though reciprocity were possible. I found, as have others, that "the intersubjective relation is a

non-symmetrical relation. I am responsible for the other without waiting for reciprocity. Reciprocity is his affair" (Note 10).

In my examination of this one aspect of my relationship with art education, I found myself able to move beyond the focused vision of reality, as this applied to questions which determine action, to one that encompasses the broader and interconnected components of art education. Where the theme of the individual as artist and as child artist was of prime interest before, now I see the child as part of the we of my world and I am simply another part of the we within which we both participate. Axiological considerations (that is, the good and bad things that I do to the child or that the child does to me), do not disappear, but they are located within a shared landscape quite distinct from that of psychology, where child art exists as a manifestation of the child's inner nature, and quite distinct from traditional didactics, where child art exists as a response of the child to adult-determined exemplars of art. I now see that the art period each week was a remote and separate moment in most of the children's week and that this little island of time, which I experienced as part of my past, present and future, was almost an anomaly for them within the scope of their educational lives. I learnt that there is an immense network of values which helps each of us begin to exist as a person within the horizon of the school, but that art as a mode of being and as a program of study exists in a state of tension (and at times antagonism) with the prime threads of the web.

On the Subject of Talent

Directly related to my continued interest in the way each child was approaching the materials and themes of my world was a theme which has always provoked ambivalent reactions from art educators and from myself as a member of that group. My conversations with the parents and teachers of the children inevitably led to the issue of talent and (as I found out by rereading my journals and listening to the tapes) to my lack of response to their questions or my non-committal inference that all children are "natural" artists. At the time, I was not struck by the apparently-universal supposition among adults who were peripheral to my project that I must be looking for talent, since for an artist (as common opinion has it) only talent is worth investing in and becoming engaged with. Now I see this as being of central importance to any discussion about child art and curriculum planning. I avoided talking to the parents, because I felt I didn't have the words to tell them about the quality of the talent of their children. I was thinking of myself as being without that shared community which we call art education. I was acting as though our field of work was without a tradition of personal experience (tacit or explicit) that seeks to do more than assume that an individual art teacher will somehow muddle through without words which speak of the imaginative styles of their students. Recognizing talent in art (as in other areas) refers to what appears to teachers as an essential understanding of the particular way one child exists in a world of cultural objects. Teachers can learn to talk about

this and, I believe, must learn to talk about this in a living language based upon first-hand experience of the child. In this way, a language can be built up and a field of work, that of art education, looking to be considered a "discipline", may tend toward its long-desired reward. The art educator has a rich source to work from to be able to gradually create this language, for as has been demonstrated by those working in phenomenology who are interested in art and expression, the aesthetic object is open to description, while the aesthetic experience remains elusive.

Style is the locus in which the artist appears. And this is due to what is strictly technical in style: a certain way of treating matter, of assembling and arranging stones, colours, or sounds. In order to create an aesthetic object, style gives the appearance of urgency to these arrangements, simplifications, and combinations by which man keeps adding to nature and asserting his freedom from all accepted facts and models. (Noté~11)

But as many have pointed out, the realization of generative ideas requires a sustained dialogue between inner thoughts and the process of realization. For children working in schools as beginning artists, just as for artists working in their studios, the ability to extend one's style into the outer world depends as much upon sustenance and support (the art teacher's role) as it does upon inspiration or talent. It is in the labour, which can be interchangeable with play, but which must not be confused with it, that the idea is worked out and that children represent themselves to the world as beginning artists.

To think is to hold an idea long enough to unlock and shape its power in the varied contexts of shared human knowledge. There are differences among human beings in their willingness

to pursue and hold the power of ideas, and it is within this domain that the similarities and differences between thought in its mundane and creative forms may live. (Note 12)

In this statement by Vera John-Steiner, I find the most important elements of the pedagogical dialogue already ordered in a configuration which permits art education to take place. Emphasis is placed first upon the willingness of the person, that is, the child's necessary complicity with the art teacher. Second, the long-term duration of the dialogue is cited as a consideration. Third, the notion of creative expression as shared expression is underlined. These keywords are strikingly similar to the pedagogical matrix identified within the descriptions (Chapter Three of this thesis), where self-direction, self-loss and self-sharing were identified as the elements of the constant mechanism by which the children and I were held in pedagogical tension.

New Research Questions

I believe that at present, all research questions in art education must be framed with an understanding of the meaning of our failure to put our theory into practice and of the dangers of destroying the theory upon which our field of practice has been built by thinking too much about how we can better control the art teaching situation.

It is within the how that we must work, for within the how, within the ongoing dialogues, much is going on that simply does not lend itself to pat statements about learning. From such a perspective, questions such as these can be asked:

1. What kind of pedagogical dialogue would enable me to study

image making in drawing as I have studied image making in all the structural modes available to young children in our culture? That is, faced with the difficulty which the continually-changing sensuous modes of being with materials imposed upon my analysis of how children situate themselves in an artroom, could the element of choice (possibly with regards to the format, medium, support and theme) be included, and, at the same time, the need to be focused upon form also met? Although drawing does not seem to be as important an expressive mode for young children as the traditional art education texts imply, this study confirms that for the adult who wants to understand the child through his/her art, analysis of drawings is easier than that of other modes because there is so much information made immediately available to the adult.

2. How do the particular ways of children acting as artists make sense to me in terms of my own understanding of what has value? That is, how does Philippe's, Dawn's, Christina's and Scott's particular ways of being artists correspond with what I am able to identify as my own grasp, and what does this correspondence mean to our collective art education project?
3. From within the pedagogical dialogue, is it possible to determine various children's preferred expressive modes and to plan pedagogy on a disciplinary basis, which would be more appropriate to the personal styles of the children? That is, I noticed that within my group there were some children for whom dramatic expression was a more attractive art form, and others for whom movement and dance were more basic modes of

expression. Could this evidence be put into art educational practice?

4. How does a particular child's early art relate to (or resemble) the child's writing? speech? play? reading? That is, could interdisciplinary studies carried out by art teachers and other educators lead us to a better understanding of the child's intrinsic style in the school?

5. How does the child "transform" the techniques which I offer? That is, if the limited concept of technique (which refers to particular ways I encourage the children to use materials, thinking that my chosen ways are universally more efficient), rather than being "mastered", is transformed by each child, how can we describe the quality of the transformation, how can we clearly see it?

6. Is it possible to sort out, from the perspective of the pedagogical dialogue, why art has become known as male and female? That is, is it true that male art is concerned with permanence and structuralism, public image and abstract theory, while female art is concerned with adaptability and psychological needs, resistance to specialization and biography and autobiography"? (Note 13)

All these questions and more followed me in my work and all await more work and more thought. One thing I learnt is that such questions require engagement rather than resolution. Each question is the tentative formulation of new worlds which appeared while I tried to describe child art. A moment's reflection on each reveals outlines of clearer worlds. For example, the last question brings to mind how I saw each of

the four children at different moments of the study. Philippe brought me to momentary contact with Man Ray in his eclecticism and with Magritte through his playfulness and delight in strangeness. He brought me to Kepes with his machines and to Steven Spielberg by his pleasure in pop heroes and surprise and moral issues. His iconic imagery also brought back to me elements of Judy Chicago's language.

Dawn, on the other hand, brings me to the architecture of Gaudi, to the expressionism of Rauchenberg, to the movement and clarity of Kandinsky. Her large, centrally-focused shapes bring to mind Georgia O'Keeffe and her sparkling use of colour speaks to me of Bonnard.

Christina, by her vivid narrative style, reminds me of Maurice Sendak, by her way of surrounding her portraits with domestic intention, reminds me of Mary Cassatt. But there are also aspects of De Kooning in her work (the generous, even "violent" gestures), as well as of Molinari, Albers and Grandma Moses.

Scott brings me to Nancy Graves with his whimsical furniture and his monumentality of style. There are also references to Marisol, to the modular forms of Buckminster Fuller's organic architecture, as well as to the soaring forms of Gothic style.

Although both the boys spent a lot of their time building and constructing objects which represented movement and power, while the girls spent much of their time making things which would please others, when I associated each of the children with the world of art, I found elements of both female and

male art in their productions. Thus, although an art critic remarks that "these stereotypes are more often proved right than wrong" (Note 14), this study did not find a clear-cut distinction between the two sexes.

A Final Word

Looking back I can see that I began my study acting as though there were a "true" child and a distorted, "institutionalized" child. But as each deeper layer of meaning was uncovered within the descriptions of my institutionally-situated art serials, I realized the false dichotomy which such a concept of child art leads to, making problematic the acknowledgement of the child as an artist. A metaphor captures my recognition of the problem.

Reality is not a peach which under a coat of skin hides a true, hard core. It is an onion, made up of rather than hidden by, its skins. If we peel long enough, we will not reach the true, hard core. Instead we will end up weeping over a meaningless handful of onion skins. (Note 15)

Notes

Chapter V

1 Ine Dienske, citation of J.C. Schagen, 1971 in "Beyond Words", Phenomenology and Pedagogy (Vol. 3, No. 1, 1985) p. 18.

2 The paper, entitled "Is a Long-Term Study of Child Art Needed?", was submitted to professor Robert Parker of Concordia University, in May, 1984.

3 Rachel Mason, "An Exercise in Artistic Understanding" Studies in Art Education (23(2), 1982, p.27-35.

4 Edith Kramer, "Therapy and Play", American Journal of Art Therapy (Vol. 17, October 1977) p. 6.

5 Programme d'études, arts plastiques, primaire, Ministère de l'Education de Québec, p. 68.

6 Ce respect est possible dans la mesure où l'enseignant connaît les étapes de l'image, les gestes et techniques, le langage plastique et dans la mesure où il peut voir l'image. L'enseignant qui fait son image se met en situation de mieux comprendre l'activité artistique de ses élèves et de dispenser un enseignement adapté (p.51).

7 Ibid, p. 48.

8 Ibid, p. 55-56.

9 Jane K. Adan, "The Child David: An Attempt to Understand and Guide Him Through His Difficulties", Phenomenology and Pedagogy (Vol. 5, No. 1, 1987) p.33.

10 This is becoming an important theme in education, as evidenced by Emmanuel Levinas, Ethics and Infinity (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1985) p.98, Madeleine Grumet's

article "My Face is Thine Eye, Thine in Mine Appears: The Look of Parenting and Pedagogy" Phenomenology and Pedagogy (Vol.1, No. 1, 1983) pp. 45-59, in which she outlined three respects in which mutuality, for all its romanticism, fails the pedagogical project and Mariette Hellemans in "Questioning the Meaning of Educational Responsibility" Phenomenology and Pedagogy (Vol. 2, No. 2, 1984) pp.124-130, where it is shown that "substitution" remains the only adequate definition for the concept of educational responsibility.


11 Mikel Dufrenne, The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973) p. 105.

12 Vera John-Steiner, Notebooks of the Mind: Explorations of Thinking (University of New Mexico Press, 1985) p. 9.

13 Lucy Lippard, From the Center (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976) p.73-76.

14 Ibid, p. 74.

15 Erazim Kohak, Idea and Experience (The University of Chicago Press, 1978) p.111.



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APPENDIX A

JOURNAL EXCERPT: APRIL 19, 1982

Journal Excerpts: April 19

Everyone likes the mural we made last week. Each of the two groups wanted to have it displayed in their classroom. The principal mentioned that it would look nice at the entrance near his office and since I didn't relish the idea of choosing between the two groups, it was put up at the front door.

I have the feeling that the time is ripe for more group projects. Last week for the first time in a long while, there was no evidence of the friction between the class leaders which has become such an annoying theme in these weekly entries. Today, another and more difficult (and hopefully, challenging) mural might have the same cohesive effect on the group. This time it will be painted directly on the mural paper instead of proceeding by the cutting and pasting of individual painted images that is our usual approach. I don't know how well the children can manage it. To make the project even harder, I will not premix those greens and browns that just about everyone revels in. We'll see...

(Two hours later the same day)

My arrangement did not appeal to many people. I found this strange since some terrific themes were generated during the discussion period as we sat around the white mural paper on the floor talking about what had been going on at school. But as soon as the time came to decide who would do what and where, many of the children asked to work on other projects. Thomas, Christina, and Geo wanted to make Mother's Day cards. Mary, Ann and Annick wanted very much to work standing up at the easels (the new kindergarten furniture came today and the surplus easels have been stored here). Christopher is absent as usual. Philippe worked alone helping himself to supplies and seeming oblivious to the many projects under way. He made a dagger. Dawn wanted to work on a set of necklaces and bracelets. Since I was really in the mood to paint today, I made an effort to rally some interest and finally found myself with the team of Louise, Lydia, Scott and Debbie. And we did indeed have a good time. The mural turned out to be a forest full of witches, rainbows, blackbirds.

Despite my disappointment at the lack of interest shown for today's project (which had been complicated to plan for), I can see now that it was rather foreseeable given the last sentence in last week's journal entry: "Finishing the mural was no easy task. It required some commandeering of labour. I have the feeling that I pushed too much."

APPENDIX B

JOURNAL EXCERPTS: NOVEMBER 26, DECEMBER 3, DECEMBER 10, 1982

Journal Excerpt: November 26, 1982

...have brought some new black and white paint having noticed that some of the children quickly lose interest in the primary colours. Their colours become muddy. Perhaps the high contrast of black and white on the coloured background will encourage them to further explore the possibilities of paint.

(after the class)

...atmosphere was calm, engaged, deliberate today but almost everyone, once the painting of "a terrible storm" (the theme I had suggested) had been concluded, chose other materials and ways of working. For example, Mary went to join Ann and tried to imitate the painting that Ann had just finished. They gathered drawing materials and ensconced themselves in a corner of the classroom on the floor. No sooner were they settled when they decided to work on the blackboard. After several minutes even this lost its appeal and all the work was left barely begun, including the large painting they had started with. Then they started work on a large "Tom & Jerry" book. This in turn was abandoned.

Christina did the only "storm" picture which included people. Then she and Ursula did a Christmas landscape. Unfortunately they spilled a whole can of water and when they moved to a drier place, again spilled water, this time spoiling Mary's book. Considering how unfocused on making art I perceive Mary to be, her outrage at Ursula and Christina's "faux pas" makes me think that perhaps she identifies just as strongly with her quite sketchy attempts as others do with very meticulously worked images.

Dawn did a picture which she called "The Bridge to New York in a Storm" and then she wanted to make some flowers. I did not encourage the project since I can't see that there is much value in this kind of activity. I'm sure that had Mary and Ann not been bothering me so much I would have made more of an effort to adjust my prejudices to fit with Dawn's choices.

Louise wanted to make birds on a mobile. She did not get anything done at all since everything she tried proved to be too difficult. At the same time, her desire to attempt to make a bird mobile required that I not insist on the "storm" painting. Again, I'm not sure that my approach was the best one, under the circumstances.

Annick did three variations of the "storm" theme and then spent the remainder of time tidying the room.

Scott made a "Chinaman" out of a construction paper cylinder and cone. He told me that he had learned to make this in Sunday school.

Christina and Ursula worked together on a painting and then they began to draw and cut out some figures for the "battle" mural. This mural was my (very much improvised) method of dealing with the dissonance that reigned in the artroom that day. I proposed the theme of "fighting" in an attempt to make the discomfort of our present situation work for the collective art making project.

Journal excerpt, December 3.

Today there were numerous projects going on. The "battle" mural was to be completed by cutting out and pasting on all the people which were drawn last week. The background which Mary began with energy and enthusiasm, had to be completed. A few of the children had begun Christmas books and (like Louise) isolated themselves.

When I arrived today, Louise's teacher said that she had wanted to punish Louise for some misdemeanor by not allowing her to come to the art class. Louise had replied "but I wasn't going anyway". She had already checked the parking lot and seen that my car wasn't there. (I was a bit late today). The teacher said that Louise's week seemed to be one long wait until Friday afternoon when I come. She added that now that my being there or not being there could not be used against Louise, she would allow her to come to art class and she would try to find some other way of punishing her. Louise arrived in class red-cheeked and solemn. I kept an eye on her throughout the lesson and she seemed gainfully employed all the time so I didn't look closer, though I probably should have. At the end of the lesson, completely out of character, she tidied up her place before leaving.

If I was so unable to meet Louise's needs, it was probably because a problem preoccupies me. Mary lords her position as controller of the mural over everyone, and since Ann is absent today, she had surplus energy and was able to make everyone feel the power. Philippe was only allowed a little space; Scott, however, went ahead with his drawing of "Hulk" who is heaving a black car in the air. Dawn was none too subtly shoved off onto her own table along with Geo. She worked on a maquette of a boxing ring containing "Rocky" being knocked down by another boxer (Dawn told me) and she painted it and wrapped it up to take home to her mother as a Christmas gift.

I helped Geo who was half-heartedly starting her own mural.

Journal excerpt, December 10.

The principal told me as I arrived, the Geo's mother phoned to say that Mary has been making life so miserable for Geo that Geo no longer wanted to come to the art class. I thought how lucky Geo is to have someone at home who listens to her. The principal spoke to Mary as she came into the artroom, telling her that she

had only one more opportunity to prove that she could behave properly in the artroom. "If this fails", he said, "you will not be able to come anymore". I was glad that he spoke to her. Mary brushed by me, flushed and firm-lipped, without giving me her usual cheery "hello what are we doing today?"

I had arranged clay at each of the children's places but first we sat around in the circle discussing the day's project. My idea was to focus the class on a simple, timely theme which would enable everyone to succeed in contributing their personal ideas to a group project. Since Christmas was on the minds of everyone, I asked the children what they knew about the Christmas story. Surprisingly, they were not very clear about it at all, but after some probing, all the main characters were named; shepherds, angels, wisemen, kings, Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the sheep and the barn animals. It was decided that each person would make one character and then at the end of the lesson, we would group the figures into different tableau creches according to size and style.

Geo made Jesus and an angel which went well with Christina's Mary, donkey and angel. Ann made a very rudimentary angel and then left the clay table to work on a scratch board drawing. Mary did a rough resemblance of a hut with a wrapped baby inside and then left to join her friend Ann. Lydia had enormous trouble with the clay today and never managed to model anything more than a minute receptacle surrounded by little anonymous, amorphous, shapes. Dawn, also spent most of her time on an angel which never materialized and at the end of the class, I found a few wads of clay pressed into a simple unsupported crib among the many trials and errors scattered on the table at her place. Louise constructed a magnificent, and very large, seated angel which held a baby in its out-stretched arms. Philippe made a statuesque angel. Scott made a king bearing a gift.

Toward the end of the hour, Mary came up to me with down-cast eyes. "Why did you complain about me to the principal?" she asked. I explained that I hadn't but that I agreed with both him and Geo's mother that her behaviour would have to change if she wanted to remain in the group. She would have to make an effort to consider other people.

I am touched by her question which I recognize as a query more than an accusation and in it I see the Mary who had charmed me the first day I met her. Strong, out-going, frank and also capable of caring about her friends, she was asking me whether I had broken the trust she placed in me. She listened intently to my answer and accepted my moralizing with a little nod. I know that she understood although that I do not believe that there will be any long term change.

APPENDIX C
JOURNAL EXCERPTS: JANUARY 25, 1983

Journal Excerpts: January 25, 1983

(before the children arrive)

I've decided to add real construction materials to our inventory of art materials and picked up a sack of kindling at the construction yard on the way over. The glue bottles, paste brushes, string and cord have been put out. The tables are prepared with scraps of fabric and paper as well as felt markers and scissors. Tape is purposely not provided but is available if anyone asks.

(after everyone has left)

I'm disappointed with the results since few of the children got beyond using the wood like building blocks. Despite all the children's original ideas about things which could be made with the wood (robots, boats that will really float, monsters that can be painted and taken home) that were mentioned during the discussion period, when confronted with the wood, the choices of subject matter became more conventional. It was lucky that I had put out the colour and collage materials.

Christina had the hardest time of all. Her efforts were tenacious but she was unable to get anything to work. Each of her structures fell apart even though I had pointed out the basic dos and don'ts at the beginning. She kept trying impossible approaches like gluing the thin edges of a whole line of boards together without having provided any base, joining numerous blocks at right angles without allowing sufficient time for the glue on each to dry before adding more.

Dawn approached her construction with more reserve adding the uprights of her "bed" once the base had been well glued. Annick's "Barbie stage" was also more modest in both approach and structure as was Scott's building. Mary and Ann each chose four identical lengths and made frames into which they fit felt pen drawings. Ursula made a miniature city, Lydia made a set of blocks by colouring the sides of many of the larger pieces of wood. Louise's "chair" is the most structurally ambitious of all the objects made today. Philippe's "tree" is a marvellous combination of materials and it resulted from a question he asked me as everyone was rummaging around and staking out territorial and material claims at the beginning. He was wandering around in his own inimitable way, but he was also squinting through a hole in a piece of wood which seemed to attract him. He asked me what the knothole was and I explained how the branches growing from the trunk disturbed the concentric series of rings and caused these particularities. Philippe was visibly intrigued.

APPENDIX D

JOURNAL EXCERPTS: PUPPET MAKING; APRIL 8, 15 and 22, 1983

Journal Excerpts: April 8, 1983

(before the group arrives)

Finally, another day here at school with the children. I have not seen them for almost a month due to the continual preempting of our art classes by other school activities. Since I've completely lost track of the children, I've decided to propose puppet making. This always engages the whole group. I am taking a bag of old socks, a box of elastic bands and a pile of many different coloured squares of cloth. We shall see how well it goes.

(after the group has left)

The afternoon was lovely! Almost without exception the children were calm (for them, that is) and interested in the project of planning a puppet show. A minor impediment was Mary who has a wart on her foot. Her pain was felt by all. She did however, become very involved in the class enterprise.

Philippe's Indian was probably the most personal inasmuch as it looked different from the others and also since each of the materials and techniques which he used was chosen with so much discrimination. However his idea to make an Indian came in fact from Scott who had characteristically plunged right into the development of his theme without any hesitation at all. Christina and Ursula have created a private little cave under the teacher's desk and worked in isolation so I didn't see how their puppets progressed. Ursula seems to have taken hers home since it isn't here to photograph for my documentation: I will ask her about it next week. Annick is missing. Her cheeriness is missed as well.

Journal Excerpts: April 15, 1983

Ursula rushed in today looking for her puppet. Dismayed, she came to me. This was indeed curious since I had also missed it last week and had presumed that it had been taken home. On a hunch, I suggested to her that perhaps she had hidden it. A slow smile spread over face and she ran to the teacher's desk, knelt down to open the lowest drawer. Indeed, her puppet lay awaiting her. Both she and I were relieved.

Louise's teacher is keeping Louise out until she can complete her math work. Apparently Louise has failed this year. The teacher said that the parents are not cooperating. It is all very sad.

Ann has chickenpox. Mary, who was for once on her own, worked wonderfully with Scott and Philippe on an Indian tableau and then helped me with the lighting for the final show. Lydia worked with Dawn and she was obviously stimulated by all Dawn's enthusiasm. Together they completed an impressive background for their two puppets. Christina and Ursula were visibly admiring of

Dawn and Lydia's scenery and worked on a derivation of this.

Today I had an unusually long and intense conversation with one of the teachers. We talked about the children in her class who are also in my group. She struck me as being very sensitive with regards the individuals and she related some fascinating events which underline the caring relationship between Mary and Ann. She said that she will nevertheless recommend that they be placed in different groups next year so that they can be "taught". The difference between the two teachers who share my group of children between them, in respect to their ways of interpreting the children in the group, is quite astounding.

Journal Excerpts: April 22, 1983

(the day that the puppet production was shown to the principal).

I remember Scott's satisfaction as he exclaims, "This is the best thing I've ever made!" I remember Philippe's pleasure in seeing his model tree emulated by others and used as props in two puppet plays. Louise's enjoyment of her role as Dracula opposite three prim ladies whom she is supposed to torment was apparent. Annick's involvement with the whole puppet production has been fitful and partial since she has been ill. The very elaborate stage and theatre which Mary and Ann have made, required a great deal of concentration and concerted effort and is an important accomplishment within the scheme of these art classes. Christina and Ursula have also managed to maintain the momentum of the last two weeks. Dawn's welcoming of Louise (who is the most marginal of all the children in the group) into their group, reminds me again of her boundless generosity. Lydia's dependence on Geo's presence has been interrupted by her participation in the project and her calm, sparkling manner was an important factor in the way their presentation turned out. All in all the day was well spent, though heaven only knows what it has to do with an art education project!

APPENDIX E**INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN: EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTS
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Fragments of my Interview with Philippe

As he looks through his portfolio, Philippe says, "Oh, I like these. They're nice" (while looking at some prints made with fingerpaints done in kindergarten). "I like clay; when you do it it's nice. Where is that cardboard construction I made?"

"What is this? I think I did not even make these. Is it a map? ...a puzzle? Oh no, it's more of those mazes. They're all kind of the same... kind of different. This one is really a picnic table but it's hard to see. You're looking at it from above...see?"

"The moose is really nice. See that?... it's a laser beam... came off the styrofoam stupid computer... no, crazy machine (Philippe is referring to a theme "the crazy machine" we once worked with)... oh yeah, that was really neat!"

I ask about his favourite materials. "I do not like messy things... charcoal, finger paint, paint..yuck!!! But clay is OK. It's soft and nice. I think wood is the best. You know what? Sometimes when you do it it's boring, but when it's finished, it looks good. Like the apple tree. It kept falling over but then it turned out perfect! It was really boring at the beginning."

I ask what he would do right now if he had the choice and the time to make anything at all. "I would make a cardboard house. I've never made one. No it wouldn't be too big. I would work with Scott. I like to work with Scott. Beside the house I'd build a place for my motor boat. It's called The Great Pumpkin."

Philippe likes most of his work and he is at ease talking about it. He appreciates the tactile nature of objects quite often choosing collages, prints and paintings which have surface relief.

He looks at a painting musing over what it is...wondering if it is a turtle. "I think I was trying to make a map; we were mixing colours that day, remember? I guess that was a cloud, maybe a guy going skiing." (He doesn't try to find out what the mysterious images could have meant to him before.) "Oh, that's me and my Mom. And that guy running back and forth, I think it's me. It was Halloween. Have you got the one we did in the woods?"

Looking at a series of feltpen drawings, "See that? It's a racket. I lost the other one but my Father bought me one so it's OK. I was doing this one upside down. Is it a fence? can't be that's not grass. It's a landing strip..for an airplane. The dog looks like an airplane but really I copied the dog Christina brought...remember? It was done like with a laser beam coming out."

"That is my Grandfather's house with windows all over it, the garage, it's half way over. That is a road in the back of my house, and a motor boat. Maybe it's The Great Pumpkin. I was waiting for the school bus. This is my house. That is the house with the cellophane on it... different textures...remember?"

Of the four children Philippe is most interested in trying to figure out exactly what he was trying to represent and he even wondered why such images would have interested him. Of the four children, he is the one who remembers, and is able to articulate the most clearly, the actual experience of struggling

to make various of the artifacts.

Fragments of my Interview with Dawn

"I remember making a house out of clay; it looked like a little tunnel on stilts. And I remember making paintings with girls, houses, hearts, tulips, stuff to put on my door. That's me in my room by myself at Christmas time. I like working with clay. It is wet like and soft and mooshy."

I ask her what she would choose to make with clay now if she could stay all afternoon. "A flower maybe. It's hard to make the petals: It's hard to make clay stand up. I would make a girl picking flowers. It's hard to make something you've already seen before. The ones that work out are when I've never seen them before."

"Second best I like doing construction, yarn on paper, materials, the pretty papers, the crinkly ones you can see through. I remember I made a basket on red paper at Easter, with an egg."

"Yes, I like drawing too, oil pastels and magic markers are my favourites... and I love painting finger paintings. I like having fun getting dirty. But it can be hard too. In painting you have to be sure to fill things in. I like everything."

Dawn has the most uniformly positive attitude toward everything she has done and, of the four children, is the one who makes the fewest judgmental remarks with regards the art making situation. She simply likes coming to the artroom. It is only when asked to express a preference that she admits to being more interested in the clay and construction materials than in the paint and drawing materials.

Fragments of my Interview with Christina

"Remember, you came almost every day when we were in kindergarten? And we did lots of fingerpainting. Here you can do all kinds of different things, drawing, anything. That is what I like about coming to art. This year I liked making puppets, the materials were perfect. I liked making the hands on my puppet."

I ask which of the art materials she prefers. "I like plasticine, clay, no, I remember the mess I made with the water. It was like mud! I hated that. But I still like clay. I think I prefer construction. If I had a choice I would make something for Father's Day, something with wood, two pieces stuck on paper and material. Maybe I would make a mountain, flowers, trees, grass, people, animals... if I had enough time. I like when everything you want is on it. I like it to be nice for your Mom or Dad."

"My second favourite is clay. I would make something for my Mother... a bouquet, maybe... some flowers. I would roll it make a leaf for it. I would make something for Father.. maybe a car. I would make it with a ball, make it flat, flatten it out, flat, flat, flat. After that I would make something for my Brother... a teddy bear, maybe."

Christina, like Philippe, is very at ease discussing her work and expressing preferences. I ask her how she knows that

her work is finished. "It's done when it is made well, when it looks good, when it doesn't break, when nothing else can be done."

"I like being able to start whenever I want to; I like especially the pop-out books and the cards. What I like best about coming is that you don't have to do what the teacher says; you do better things." I ask her whether the noise bothers her: It doesn't. I ask her whether she finds that she has enough opportunity to do group work. She does but she likes doing art alone too. "I really like working with wood".

Christina is clear about what she appreciates about the artroom experience. She can do things here which she can't do elsewhere. Of the four children, she is the one who most consistently refers to her family as a constant concern for her as she chooses themes and materials.

Fragments of my Interview with Scott

Scott pulls out a collage self-portrait from his portfolio and ponders it when I ask why he has chosen it. "It's a baseball player on my second favourite team. He's dressed up good. His shoes are nice and he's happy. See, you can see what team he's on, that tells what club he belongs to."

Looking around at all the materials in the artroom, he says that the construction activities are his favourite and that the one he remembers best is the one with cowboys and Indians. Clay is the material he would choose second and paint would be the next. "I like doing charcoal drawing, it comes off easy.. remember the houses we drew? ...now we have four bedrooms at home... me and my brother have separate rooms, I like that." He remembers making a rock up on top of his house, and a cheetah on top of his mother's house. But gazing at some quite recent drawings he asks, "Is this all from kindergarten?" obviously finding his work a bit baby-like. It is particularly the case with a series of drawings done quite spontaneously. When questioned about his preferences he replies, "I like the baseball pictures, the sailboat, the fishing picture and all the times there are cowboys and Indians. My favourite team is Houston and I've coloured it nice. Can I take it home?"

He searches for a giant poster of a witch. "I learned to draw witches this year and I'm trying to find out how to make a chomper, sort of like a pac-man."

When I ask what he would make now if he could stay for a while in the artroom, he answers "maybe a tiger; maybe a chicken," in his always obliging, always down to earth and energetic approach to artroom activities. Scott is a builder and a doer; he is resilient and very sociable. "You know what we should do? ...everybody bring in wood and we could build a real house, right here in the middle of the artroom. That would be great!"

Scott focuses on work which is very recognizable and talks about the people he has made during the art making sessions. He is the only person to have ideas about art projects for the future which are different from the kind of activities I usually make available.

Conclusions of Interviews

Interestingly, the children seemed to recognize most clearly the drawings and paintings which were most strongly directed and they seemed to forget the drawings and paintings of more private origins. They often could not believe that they had made them. This makes me realize how tenuous is the hold which the child has upon his/her own centre, how easy it is to convince the child that his/her experience is other than what it is. Apparently, even when the child's experience is the prime interest of the teacher, the presence of a group requiring a structure is a weight which can only in a small way be compensated for by the intervention of aesthetics and the disciplines of art. And I become aware of something I should have known all along... that the child can have an intense experience as he/she is reflected back to her/himself from within the collective project where everyone is attending to the same task.

Another presumption proved wrong. I had thought that in general, the children liked working on group projects where interaction is at a maximum. On the contrary, given a choice, most of the children would work alone although everyone mentioned at least one group activity they had particularly enjoyed.

Throughout the art classes I had been aware of myself keeping a determinedly low profile in terms of instructing. Thus I was surprised when they volunteered quite a bit of general information about how to manage materials competently and how to succeed with demanding techniques. Some examples of knowledge which the children gave were about how to build with coils of clay, about how to use yarn as collage material when it is important to fill the surface and how to successfully join wood to styrofoam. They knew exactly how to achieve needed colours from the primary colours and they freely enumerated themes related to the use of and maintenance of tools which I had just mentioned in passing, never, according to my memory, having put emphasis on this aspect of the artroom experience.

Predictably they liked to have their images resemble the everyday world as much as possible. However, they were not disturbed by vague resemblances.

I realized from this series of interviews how conscious the children were of what I was doing. They knew how different it was from their other school work. They knew also that it was "work", not play, and that there was nothing easy about what they were doing.