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A Longitudinal Study of  
Melissa's Spontaneous Drawings

Linda Szabad-Smyth

A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Art Education

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

February, 1992

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ISBN 0-315 73699-2

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### ABSTRACT

#### A Longitudinal Study of Melissa's Spontaneous Drawings Linda Szabad-Smyth

This thesis represents a longitudinal study of the spontaneous drawings made by my eldest daughter, Melissa, from the age of fifteen months to ten years. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodology are used to explore and analyze the drawings with respect to personal style and subject matter. As a dialogical study many "voices" and "dialogues" become apparent as subject and researcher confront both the drawings and each other about the drawings. Interviews with Melissa attempt to elicit an individualized interpretation of her art making experience from her present perspective as a ten year old reflecting on the past. As mother, I experience an inner dialogue with the drawings and reveal my memories of the past with respect to the drawings. As researcher, I investigate quantity, visual language, media, subject matter and influences. Additionally, the drawings are further analyzed and explained with references to Lowenfeld's stage theory, the Wilsons' theory of cultural influences and Wolf's theory of drawing systems.

This thesis concludes with the belief that more longitudinal studies of childrens' spontanous drawings are needed to learn about additional ways children approach style and subject matter. This in turn could influence changes in school art curriculum to include more spontaneous art-making activities that would respect various childrens' interests of subject matter as well as indivdual ways of exploring process.



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my loving daughter Melissa for allowing me to use her numerous drawings for my research. I thank her for the many interview hours she gave me to explain and reflect upon these drawings, providing me with insight into her past and private art-making moments. Her "gift" to me has now become a gift I now give to her with love and respect. I dedicate this body of work to you, Melissa.

A special thank you goes out to Stephanie for although I had not made direct use of her drawings as I had of her sister's, the many times I stole peeks at her imaginative play and art-making inspired me to pursue my interest in the spontaneous nature of children's art-making.

I thank my husband David who supported me and prodded me on at times when I felt I would never reach "the light at the end of the tunnel".

I thank my thesis advisor Stan Horner for his intellectual guidance and reassuring support and for stimulating my awareness of the many voices "within".

I thank Leah Sherman and Nancy Lambert for accepting to become my readers and for their much appreciated advice and comments as experts in the field of art education.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction (The Question and the Literature)

### The Question

My choice to pursue a study of my daughter's spontaneous drawings initially grew out of my experience as an art teacher, which brought me into contact with children of all ages. In my teachings, I began to observe changes in drawing style, from early childhood to middle childhood. More specifically, I observed that as children became more concerned with the way things really looked, their drawings relied less on their imaginations and became more rigid with concern for detail. This experience sparked my interest in the process of children's art-making.

Years of teaching young children passed and then I had children of my own. As a mother I was eager to save everything that my children made. As an artist and teacher, I was fascinated with the changes in style and subject matter that I had observed in the drawings that my children did on their own. Both my experience in the classroom viewing young children's art work, and now viewing my own children's work, aroused my curiosity about the art-making process. As I leafed through the many drawings done by my own children, I became more interested in the art work that my children did on their own at home and without my intervention.

With such a vast collection of drawings at my disposal, I decided I would use the spontaneous drawings made by my oldest daughter Melissa, to observe "her" process in terms of drawing style and subject matter (spontaneous drawings represent for me those drawings Melissa has done on her own at home without adult intervention). Melissa's reflections about her past art-making experiences would also serve as a valuable source of information, contributing to my understanding of her drawings.

### The Literature

There has been much literature generated to explain children's art and art making.

Merle Flannery's doctoral thesis, Imagination in Artistic creation (1967), deals with the notion that artistic creation involves an "interplay between the intellect and imagination", between "thinking and feeling" (p. 4) and that the "ratio of sensuous knowledge to intellectual knowledge changes during human growth" (p. 96).

Viktor Lowenfeld (1953) referred to this change, toward a more realistic representation, as the dawning of realism. During this time, the child's conceptual knowledge of the world surrounding him/her and its importance is increasing and as a result, less of the self is expressed as "visual experience". By becoming more aware of a visual concept, the child's work becomes less expressive (1953).

In Artful Scribbles (1980), Howard Gardner mentions that in studies he did with colleagues, of drawings made by children over a period of several years (the same children from kindergarten through the primary grades), he found that "while Technical competence is found to improve readily with age, flavorfulness--the extent to which drawings incorporate individualizing features--reaches its apogee in first grade and then steadily recedes thereafter" (p. 148).

This change from the "flavorfulness" (aesthetic appeal) of early childhood to the more restricted concern for realistic detail of middle childhood, as well as the similarities of preschool art to the art of some adult artists, were concerns that initiated research by Gardner and Winner into the "aesthetic" of children's drawings (Winner & Gardner, 1981; Gardner & Winner, 1982; Rosenblatt & Winner, 1988; Winner, 1987). These two stages of early and



middle childhood have been referred to as "the flowering of expressivity" and "visual realism" (Gardner & Wolf, 1979), "preconventional" and "conventional" (Winner & Gardner, 1981) and as representing a "golden age" and "literal age" (Gardner & Winner, 1982). A fair amount of research done by Gardner and Winner (Project Zero) looked at the relationship of preschool children's drawings with those of adult artists and preschool drawings with those of middle childhood (Gardner & Winner, 1982; Rosenblatt & Winner, 1988). They saw "the development of artistic creativity as conforming to a U-shaped pattern" (with respect to aesthetic qualities) (Wohlwill, 1985, p. 4). Early childhood demonstrates the first high point in the U, the elementary school age child (six to eleven or twelve years of age) the decline, and with adolescence, there is an incline again (Winner & Gardner, 1981; Gardner & Winner, 1982; Wohlwill, 1985).

Gardner and Winner were struck by the resemblance of children's preschool drawings with those of some modern artists (Klee, Miro, Picasso) (Rosenblatt & Winner, 1988) and decided to "investigate the aesthetic status of children's drawings and their relationship to works of art produced by adult artists" (Winner & Gardner, 1981, p. 19). Following their research, they concluded that "even though preschool drawings look like adult works of art, and even though they could be slipped into an exhibit of contemporary art and passed off as adult works, they are produced by very different underlying processes" (Winner & Gardner, 1981, p. 29). Another vital part of their research compares the preschool art with school age art and the apparent decline in aesthetic appeal in middle childhood (Winner & Gardner, 1981; Wohlwill, 1985). Studies were done using Nelson Goodman's definition of the properties of art; repleteness, expression and balance in order to discover whether these could be found in the art work of early and middle

childhood (they could be found in adult artists' work), and therefore be considered art. Comparing early and middle childhood drawings, in terms of these properties, they concluded that,

while preschool drawings appear more expressive than 'conventional stage' drawings, it is the 10 year olds who are in control of this property while the preschoolers are not. Thus in these two cases, elementary school children have skills that they are not putting to use in their spontaneous works. And preschool age children appear to have a skill that they in fact do not have (Winner & Gardner, 1981, p. 30).

It is interesting to note that much emphasis at present is being directed at the developmental "stages" of the nine to twelve year old child who is "seeking out graphic conventions" (Korzenik, 1981, p. 20). In the past much attention was given to the stages of development in early childhood where theories of "natural unfolding" were of importance. The concern for preserving or encouraging the expressive quality of children's art could be seen both in the fifties with the theory of "creativity" (Dewey, 1958; Lowenfeld, 1953; D'Amico, 1953; Read, 1958; Schaefer-Simmern, 1950; Florence Cane, 1951) and again in the seventies with the importance of aesthetic education (education of the senses, Merle Flannery, 1977).

The art education beliefs of the fifties placed emphasis on the expressive theory where subjective feelings and body experiences were of importance (Gimenez, 1983). The art educators believed that every child had the potential to develop creatively and that this development depended on the child's idea of himself/herself and his/her mental and emotional growth. It was up the art educator to help the child in his/her creative growth and development, which consisted of both the sensuous and the conceptual elements (Gimenez, 1983).

The concern for aesthetic education in the seventies continued to question the emphasis that was being placed on the conceptual in education (Flannery, 1967), and encouraged the exploration of the sensual in art education.

Early art education appeared to be focusing on the child before eight years of age in terms of a "natural unfolding". There appears now to be a growing concern and a refocusing on the art of middle childhood and adolescence, and some researchers are looking at the significance of cultural influences in the art work of all ages.

Recent research done by Dennie Wolf (1988) suggests yet another theory or strategy for understanding children's art making. She claims that children use various "drawing systems". Unlike the developmentalists who see drawing development in a linear way, going from "scribbling" to "realistic rendering" and going from stage to stage, Dennie Wolf sees children as acquiring and using various "drawings systems" to depict their experiences or ideas (Wolf, 1988).

The literature I have presented so far indicates the existence of two ideologies to explain children's art-making; one holds that children progress through predictable stages of development, and another that children's art work is influenced largely by culture. Dennie Wolf's theory that children work through various drawing systems appears to represent a variation on the stage theory. In my analysis of Melissa's drawings I attempt to address each of these theories as they make sense of the drawings being studied.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical/Practical Justification and Research Design

### Theoretical Justification

The Progressive Movement in education (1920-1940), initiated by John Dewey, marked the beginning of attention being given to children's artistic expression. This led to the discovery of "child art". The idea of child as artist returned again in the fifties with the theory of creativity. Since the fifties, many theories of stage development, from various perspectives, have been developed to explain the child's seemingly natural unfolding in the creative process (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953; Lindstrom, 1957; Kellogg, 1969; Arnheim, 1974; Goodnow, 1977; Golomb, 1977).

In the mid 1970's the developmentalist theories were challenged by Brent and Marjorie Wilson with their culturalist point of view. The culturalists look at the influence of context in the art work of children. It questions whether all children's work is the same in terms of stages implying that cultural influences play a more significant role. The Wilsons believe that children are influenced by each other and "graphic images from the culture" (Wilson, B., 1974; Wilson & Wilson, 1977, 1981). They criticize stage theory for ignoring the "existence of influenced or borrowed images" (Wilson & Wilson, 1981, p. 5), themes and "gender-related differences" (p. 5). The Wilsons do not agree with the notion that early child art is creative. About creativity, Brent Wilson had this to say:

Indeed it seems to me that true creativity in art is not possible until a cultural style or styles have been thoroughly assimilated and mastered. Only then is there something sufficiently substantial to modify, reject and replace thus distinguishing products from their predecessors--the very essence of creativity (1976b, p. 59).

The Wilsons support spontaneous art rather than school art as they see

this art as representing the child's own culture and much of their research looks at the art making of pre-adolescents and adolescents done outside of school. In their research of spontaneous art work of pre-adolescents and adolescents (Wilson, B., 1974, 1976b; Wilson & Wilson, 1977), they claim to have discovered that from the age of eight years onward, children's work becomes more culturally influenced (sources from drawn images by family and friends, comics, television, illustrations and photographs). The Wilsons support the belief that children can learn by copying and that adult intervention should be encouraged (Wilson & Wilson, 1977).

Nancy Smith (1985) claims that among educators there are those who have a negative opinion about copying and there are others who feel it is useful in terms of teaching skills and instilling confidence in children. She presents a third view, suggesting that there are different types of copying; "some that involve artistic behavior and some not" (1985, p. 147).

Many researchers have considered the role of culture in children's art making (Alland, 1983; Ives & Gardner, 1984; Wilson & Wilson, 1977; Winner, 1987) and have questioned the idea of a universality in children's artistic development. Alexander Alland (1983) studied the art work of children from different cultures to "see how current generalizations about the development of drawing skills in children hold up under cross-cultural examination and to understand how children in different cultures put pictures together as a step by step process" (p. 1). He claims that very little study has been made of children's spontaneous drawings. He argues that cultural influences (adults and other children) are responsible for teaching children that art is to represent or symbolize, that left on their own, children might not go beyond "playing with form" to a stage of representation (1983, p. 9). His data shows that "development from scribbling toward representation is not

an automatic result of maturation or even of experience with drawing" (p. 211). He says that culture plays an "important role in influencing the development of style in children's drawings" (p. 211).

Ellen Winner (1987) looks at what is universal in artistic development as well as what is shaped by culture. Looking at the art work of middle childhood, she argues that realism and realistic representation do not come from natural or universal urges but "from the urge to master the pictorial conventions of one's culture" (p. 12). She maintains that cultural influences are apparent in the art work of middle childhood.

William Ives and Howard Gardner (1984) looked at the cultural influences within the framework of all the "developmental stages". They claimed that at all stages cultural influences are at play, but more evident in drawings after five years of age and peaking between seven and twelve years of age (Lovano-Kerr, Rush, 1982). Gardner (1982) suggests two approaches as being appropriate in art education, i.e., unfolding and training, thus representing both universal and cultural beliefs:

I submit that both approaches we have contemplated are appropriate. The one that accentuates unfolding displays its particular virtue during the first years of life, from the period of two to seven. With the developmental changes accompanying the years of schooling, a more active and interventionist stance seems advisable, especially in a milieu virtually of societal support for artistic (as opposed to scientific) endeavors (chap. 18, p. 217).

One of the big questions that arises from the debate between the universalists and the culturalists is whether one considers children's art making as creative or whether creativity is only possible after childhood. Many researchers have addressed this question (Korzenik, 1981; Wilson, 1976b;

Winner, 1987; Winner & Gardner, 1981). The debate exists between the idea of child as artist and the idea that the child needs to be trained to become an artist. When is children's work considered art? Diana Korzenik (1981) reflects on this question by asking the following two:

Do children's works become art because of changes that occur in the child, progressing through various stages of development? Or, do children's works become art when adults change, when they are culturally influenced by issues in the society so that they choose to construe the child's actions as art? (p. 20).

Dennie Wolf's theory of "drawing systems" (1988) presents yet another view of children's art making. Wolf's definition of a drawing system is as follows:

A drawing system is a set of rules designating how the full-sized, three dimensional moving, colored world of ongoing visual experience can be translated into a set of marks on a plane surface" (1988, p. 10).

Drawing systems, she states, represent a sequence of acquisitions "with distinct motives and powers" (1988, p. 21) rather than a stage of development. As well, these systems have the capacity to continue to develop and reappear at various stages of development, making drawings at all "stages" significant. Wolf (1988) mentions that unlike the developmentalists who may decide that graphic representation begins only when children draw "lookalike forms (tadpoles, suns, spiders)", she maintains that from the earliest drawings, children's art work is meaningful and is representative of the utilization of various "drawing systems".

### Research Method

A longitudinal study into Melissa's spontaneous drawings was initiated to investigate in both a quantitative and qualitative way, the style and subject matter contained by these drawings. A total of 714 saved drawings were viewed (a sampling of 278 drawings are included in this thesis). This total includes all of the "spontaneous" drawings Melissa had made between the ages of fifteen months and ten years (September 5, 1989). The term "spontaneous" refers to those drawings Melissa had made on her own, at home and without any adult intervention. I choose only spontaneous drawings for my research because I feel that these best reveal what is unique and personal about a child's own choice of subject matter, materials and process. To access the drawings for study, I divide them into age clusters; the first cluster includes the drawings done before three years of age, the second cluster represents the drawings done at three and four years of age, the third cluster represents the drawings done at five and six years of age, the fourth cluster represents the drawings done at seven and eight years of age, and finally, the fifth cluster represents the drawings done at nine years of age. Each cluster represents all of the saved drawings done at the ages indicated and as far as possible are studies in chronological order. Charts are developed to quantify and describe the drawings found in each cluster in terms of: number, media, subject matter, visual language and content. The drawings themselves constitute the primary data.

A qualitative approach is used to retrieve the secondary data. A tape recorder is used to record the interviews I have with Melissa and a journal is used to document my own responses to the drawings. Melissa reflects on her drawings from the past and tries to explain subject and process from her present perspective as a ten year old. By interviewing Melissa about



her drawings and her past art-making experiences, I hope to find out how Melissa verbalizes about the way she makes art, why she makes art and what she makes art about. My own responses to Melissa's drawings are from the point of view of mother reflecting on the past, teacher and researcher. The many "voices" and the many "dialogues" that exist attempt to make sense of Melissa's drawings from a variety of perspectives.

### Practical Justification

As Melissa's mother, the added research advantage I have is that I can observe Melissa's art-making on an on-going basis, noting such things as the particular situations in which the artworks are made, their date and their time, duration and frequency. I am also in the position to observe how personality, interests and outside influences affect her art-making. Consequently this close association provides me with the opportunity to gain valuable insight into her drawings from a variety of viewpoints not always made available to an "outside" researcher.

There are other researchers who have conducted longitudinal studies of their own family members. Angela Robertson (1987) did a participant observation study of her son's spontaneous drawings from preadolescence to adolescence. Howard Gardner (1980) also collected and studied the spontaneous drawings done by his son and daughter and describes the work they did before the age of nine (Artful Scribbles). In Psychology of Children's Drawings, Helga Eng (1953) observed the drawings of her niece from the "first stroke" to the drawings she made at eight years of age. Jacqueline Goodnow, in her book, Children Drawing (1977), also mentions that she collected the art work done by her children.

The longitudinal study provides a means of observing the child from a

variety of perspectives that are not always possible in a group situation. Group studies cannot provide such an in-depth investigation into the art making as is possible with individual art expression. In my research I investigate the private world of Melissa's drawings and I begin to discover that which is unique and personal about her style and choice of subject matter.

My thesis begins with a brief biography of Melissa. Five chapters which describe the five groups of drawings from a variety of perspectives, follow. Each of these chapters begins with a brief description of the time and place in which the drawings were made, followed by a quantitative analysis of the drawings, my own personal response to the drawings, and finally, Melissa's personal response to the drawings. The two chapters that follow analyze the drawings quantitatively and theoretically. References are made to the theories of Lowenfeld, the Wilsons and Wolf. A description of the role of response in this study follows the analysis and precedes the conclusion which outlines the various implications for art education that have resulted from this research.

### Chapter 3: A Short Biography of Melissa

Melissa was born in Montreal, Quebec on September 5, 1979. Since this date, as a family, we have moved five times (all within Quebec and Ontario). Our most recent move has been to the small village of Ingleside Ontario, from Cornwall Ontario. This last move to a large old Victorian house was a welcome change from our homes before where lack of sufficient space seemed to be a problem. For Melissa this move from friends and school proved to be a difficult adjustment to make at first.

Melissa is a very attractive 10 year old girl. She wears her dark brown hair long, is of average build and has large dark brown eyes that seem to express what she is feeling at the moment. She is the eldest of my two daughters. Her sister Stephanie is now 7 years old. Both girls exhibit very different personalities. Although they could both be typified as average students in school, their individual emotional orientation differ significantly. While the two may appear very shy in public, at home they show another side. Stephanie is rather confident, outspoken and has a unique sense of humour. Melissa, on the other hand, takes life more seriously and appears to be more sensitive to what people say to her. Over the last year she has become obsessed with her appearance. Clothes have to match and be just right and her hairstyles, embellished with fluorescent ribbons, barrettes and elastics, change from day to day. She loves to listen to tapes of rock music as well as create her own musical pieces on her recorder. As extracurricular activities, she attends girl guides and jazz dance classes. Her bedroom seldom remains neat and she is very good at leaving messes in other rooms of the house where she has chosen to be "creative". Her bedroom walls are covered with calendar pictures of animals as well as cartoons cut out from the newspaper. Schoolwork is not a favourite for

Melissa, neither is reading, but "making things" is. She draws less than in the past, now preferring to make books, cards and small assemblages from scraps of paper, fabric, or whatever she can find around the house. Usually she makes these things as gifts for others (friends or family members) and usually at times when she is bored.

As I reflect on the past ten years with respect to Melissa's art-making, I remember how Melissa used to draw frequently, almost every day. She painted and made small constructions as well, but the quantity of drawings far exceeded the other forms of art. I recall one day in March (1989) while attempting to organize Melissa's drawings into "clusters", several comments made by Melissa that aroused my curiosity in terms of how she would interpret her art work from the past. Her comments were as follows: "I don't really like them. Why are you keeping them? What's so nice about them? They're just scribbles" (journal entry, March 12, 1989).

#### Chapter 4: The Drawings Done During the First Three Years

Until the age of three, Melissa was an only child. I was 27 years old when I decided to leave my full time teaching position at a private school, in Montreal West. I had been working there for six years and was now prepared to take on a new role as full time housewife and mother. My daughter became the center of my world and all my energy was directed at keeping her healthy and happy. During her napping hours, I made her clothes, quilts and toys. I made very little art for myself during these early years. I remember attending two evening high school courses in stained glass and clay, hoping these would satisfy my creative urges.

I recall how anxious I was waiting for the time to come, when Melissa would make her first art work. I remember the time when I had encouraged her to draw on a letter pad with a crayon. I still remember supporting her little hand that held the crayon, and pushing it across the surface of a cream coloured sheet, that made up one of the pages of the letter pad. Her initial reaction to this activity was that of surprise. I made this letter pad available to her often and before long it became filled with numerous scribble drawings. By the age of two years she was capable of asking for materials and for the chance to draw or paint and by the age of three years she had filled two letter pads, one sketchbook and was working through a pile of used computer paper, that her father had salvaged, from his new job in Cornwall, Ontario. Melissa used to draw frequently and would often create several drawings at one sitting. I used to give Melissa lots of encouragement as did her father. Her art work was treasured and was hung on the walls of her bedroom and the kitchen and on the refrigerator door for all to see.

I also remember that sometimes Melissa and I would draw together (see figures 33-36). She would sit on my lap on the sofa. The sketchbook would

be carefully placed on Melissa's lap and she would ask me to draw a Santa, or a Christmas tree. She would watch for a while and then add her own markings to the drawing. My drawing for her in this way, seemed to give her great delight.

The group of drawings done during the first three years consists of one hundred and sixty-seven drawings. Marker (seventy-seven drawings), ballpoint pen (thirty eight drawings) and crayon (nineteen drawings) are the most used media and the exploration of visual language is very strong. Sixty-seven drawings are scribble drawings and the remaining majority, combinations and variations on scribbles, shapes and dots. Very few drawings suggest subject matter to me. Various titled drawings reveal four named scribbles; a sun, a weatherman, a clown and a spider (see figures 5, 6, 7, 8). Shapes are coming together to suggest heads or faces. Some of these faces depict Santas as do a few of her tadpole drawings. To me the drawings exhibit a floating sense of space as well as a random choice of colour.

As I leaf through this cluster of drawings my recall of the particular art making situations remains very vague except to say that they were usually done very quickly and several drawings were usually done at one sitting. As I view these drawings, I am intrigued by a particular group of fourteen drawings that were done in the same week, from December 2 to December 9 (see figures 10, 11, 13-24). These drawings seem to mark a turning point in Melissa's drawing style. This comes at approximately 2 months after her second birthday and 3 weeks before Christmas. Her earlier drawings consisted mainly of scribbles, shapes and dots and enclosures. What intrigues me is the great variety of drawings created in this one week. The

drawings range from floating facial features to tadpoles. All the drawings are done in marker, colour choice is random and there is little colour change within each drawing. All are done in the same sketchbook. Most of the drawings are of Santa where a variety of schemata has been used to depict him. Santa appears as a sun shape, as a scribble with legs and shoes, as a head with and without rays, as a tadpole and as an elongated figure with buttons. There is one drawing in this group of drawings, the drawing of "Santa and mummy" (see figure 24), where my influence came into play. I remember that at the time when Melissa had drawn Santa with buttons (see figure 23), I was surprised with this "new way" of drawing Santa, elongated and buttoned. I wondered if she could repeat this new schema if asked. I prompted Melissa to draw "mummy" with Santa to see if there would be a difference in the representation of the two figures. To my surprise she drew two different schema to differentiate mummy from Santa. She was able to repeat the same schema for Santa for the second drawing and "mummy" was depicted as a tadpole figure. After these two drawings I never saw the "buttoned Santa" again.

It didn't surprise me that Melissa had very little recall of the drawings in this cluster. Before we began the interview she asked "What if I don't remember any of these drawings?" I told her that that would be all right and that if she did remember any of the drawings, she could talk about them. The day preceding the interview, we looked through our family photo album to try to reflect back to the time when Melissa created her first drawings.

With the tape recorder running, we began the long tedious task of going through the 167 drawings one by one. I asked Melissa to look carefully at each of the drawings and to pick out the ones she remembered doing or the

ones that she remembered what they were about. Methodically she began placing the drawings into three piles and gave names for these piles. The decision to organize the drawings into three piles this way, was her own. One pile, the pretty sure pile, represented the drawings that she felt she knew what they were about. The second pile, the not-so-sure pile, consisted of drawings that she thought she knew what they were about but was not completely sure. Finally the third pile, the not-sure-at-all pile, represented drawings the identity of which she had no recall.

We began by discussing the sure pile. As we moved through the pile we came upon a scribble that had the words family room (see figure 1) written on it and immediately Melissa responded by telling me that this was a picture of the family room. She said she knew this because the words were written on the page. What she didn't know was that the words were written on the letter pad by her grandmother years earlier. Melissa had used this paper to do her scribble drawing over the words. This led me to believe that perhaps the drawing and the words had no connection, maybe Melissa was relying on the words and not memory to determine the subject matter of the drawing. Because of this I decided to investigate the remaining drawings in the sure pile to see if they all had their subject matter labelled. I discovered that most of the drawings in the sure pile, but not all, had their subject matter indicated and most were representational. I was to discover later that some of the drawings which were not labelled had triggered recall thereby dispelling my doubts about Melissa's total reliance on subject matter titles. Perhaps in some cases the titles helped Melissa to recall the content of the drawings.

The pretty sure pile consisted of twenty three drawings. She identified figure 25 and figure 26 as drawings of a bird and an elephant respectively.



Neither of these drawings was labelled with titles. About the bird drawing she had this to say: "this would probably be a bird trying to land because it has a beak, eye and wings and I'm pretty sure that's how I made birds when I was little" (journal, interview, Nov. 5, 1989). I asked Melissa if she remembered making the elephant and if she could tell me about the drawing. She identified two ears and a trunk and added that sometimes people will include several perspectives to illustrate motion and that that is what she had done with the trunk. Her explanation of this was as follows:

Whenever I saw...like some people...they showed the bottom, the middle and up to make it look like it's going up and down so I put it down and up so that it would look like it's down and up.

About the eyes of the elephant she added: "I guess it's on the side [profile], that's why I did only one eye and this is the mouth" (journal, interview, Nov. 5, 1989). As I see it, Melissa's description of her method of drawing the elephant, demonstrates an interpretation based on her ten year old perspective. At ten years old, she is aware of various perspectives and has read this into her drawing. However, this drawing was done at a very early age and it is my hunch that perhaps when Melissa had drawn the elephant, the different positions of the trunk were not done to indicate various perspectives or movement, but rather they represent various attempts at drawing the trunk.

Melissa went on to talk about the named scribbles; the clown (see figure 7), the sun (see figure 5), and the weatherman (see figure 6). She pointed out the title for the clown and showed me its nose. She added that in this drawing she didn't think of adding feet.

The sun drawing (see figure 5) had only one ray Melissa said, because when she was young she didn't know what the sun really looked like, that

it should have many rays. Referring to this drawing she had this to say: "there's one there [pointing to the sun's ray] but...so that if there were any more it would be like the sun I usually do.."

Referring to the weatherman (see figure 6), she giggled, showed me the correct way to view it and pointed out hair, shoes and a magic wand. She added:

I also remember when I was doing it...to make it funny and be real fat and when I was little I didn't know how they did the weather and I thought they were magic...they turned it [weather] into whatever they wanted it to be.

I was fascinated with Melissa's recall of this drawing, which went beyond a subject matter description. She was able to remember how she thought at the time of the drawing.

There were several Santa pictures (see figures 11, 13, 14, 16, 20-24), one which included mummy with Santa (see figure 24). For these drawings she pointed out the features she could recognize such as hair, beard, legs, shoes. About Santa's hair she said.." I never saw Santa's hair when I was little so I did just two little strips of hair". She also kept pointing out that she only included three lines instead of four for the legs.

She remembered doing the figure of mummy (see figure 27). This scribble she said was a picture of me. She said "I was mad at you so I did your hair spiky all over the place". It is interesting to note that this drawing was not titled. For both this drawing of mummy and the drawing of the weatherman, I sensed that Melissa's recollection had gone beyond a description of the subject matter. In both instances Melissa was able to relive the way she felt and thought when the drawings were made.

She had very little to say about the remaining drawings in this pile.

About the spider drawing (see figure 8) she mentioned that the spider had a big mouth and 26 legs; the green drawing (see figure 10) was of a frog and she had this to say about it: "I know that because um..big eyes and it's...and when I was little I thought frogs had antennae". The drawing of Santa (see figure 16) she thought was "a chicken pox person" before she read the title. Figure 28 looked like a fish because it had a tail, body and eyes of a fish. The ladder drawing (see figure 29) she said must have been done when she lived in Cornwall where there were railway tracks in the backyard. Green men (figure 12) were just people.

For the not-so-sure pile (eleven drawings), she had very little to say and her descriptions usually consisted of a word or two to describe the subject matter. For example she told me that figure 9 represented a dog or a cat, figure 30, a design, and figure 31, a bird. About the bird drawing she had this to say: "I'm not saying it is...it might be a bird because it has a long beak and this is how I used to do my legs and then all those pretty feathered things". Figure 32, she said, were lines and zigzags and that she remembered when she used to draw lines over each other this way.

The last group of drawings (not-sure-at-all pile), consisted mainly of scribbles and variations on shapes and dots and scribbles. None of these drawings was titled and none initiated recall from Melissa.

I asked Melissa to tell me how she felt about the drawings. I asked her about the way she worked and I asked her to describe the group of drawings. She described the group of drawings by saying: "really weird and really different compared to what I am doing now". When I asked how they were different from her drawings now, she explained that now when she draws, she uses very little colouring-in. About when she was little she had this to say: "I could do anything I felt..just like freeing my arm and doing

anything I want..you know" (journal, interview, Nov. 5, 1989). When I asked her if she could do that now she said that she could, but that now they (scribble type drawings) would be mazes and the lines couldn't touch whereas in her earlier drawings the scribbled lines could touch. She added that:

I didn't care if I made a mistake because when I was little a mistake was nothing. If I was making a face and whoops..oh well, I could just scribble over it. I could do anything I wanted with it, just make it into something else.

About her drawing now she said:

It does matter if I make a mistake, like if I make a little line by accident..someone bumps my arm and I make a line..like where an ear would be..I'd have to start over again cause that wouldn't make sense to me or anything" (journal, interview, Nov. 15, 1989).

When I asked Melissa what these drawings looked like to her now and what they were about, she said they looked like scribbling. She added that she used to like drawing circles and that it didn't matter what she would draw. She said she used to look around the house and pick something and draw it (indicating to me that perhaps she had only a vague recollection of where her subject matter came from, since children at this age rarely seek objects to draw from). She also added that some of her ideas came from television shows. When asked to choose a drawing she didn't like, she chose a scribble drawing (see figure 4) from the not-sure-at-all pile and said "I don't really care for this one here because it doesn't really mean anything to me" (journal, interview, Nov. 5, 1989).



Figure 1. Family Room (age c.2).

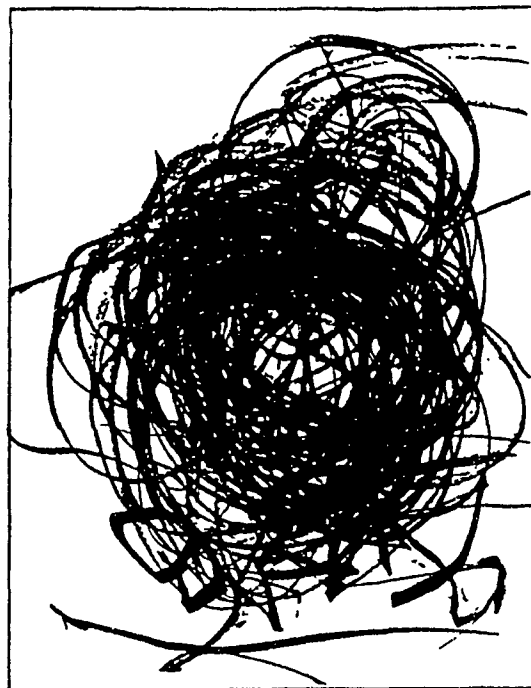


Figure 2. Early Line Drawing (age c.2).



Figure 3. Early Line Drawing (age 2).



Figure 4. Early Line Drawing (age 2).

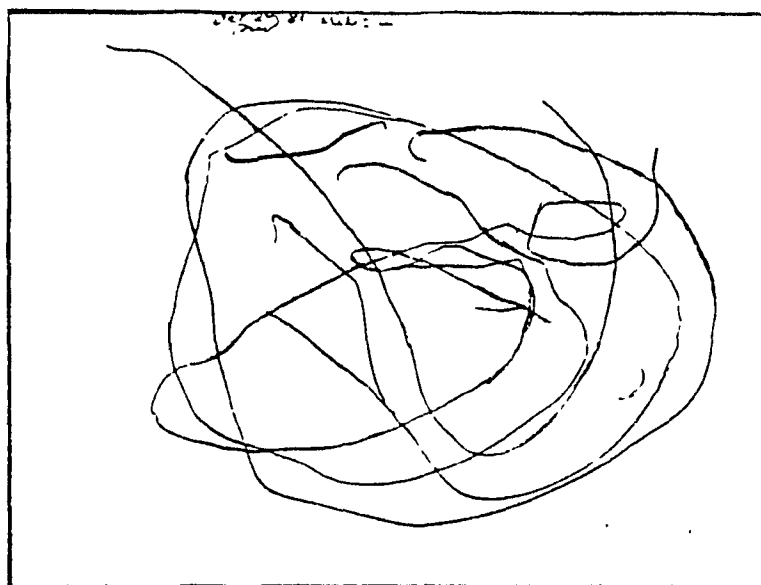


Figure 5. A Sun (age 2.1).

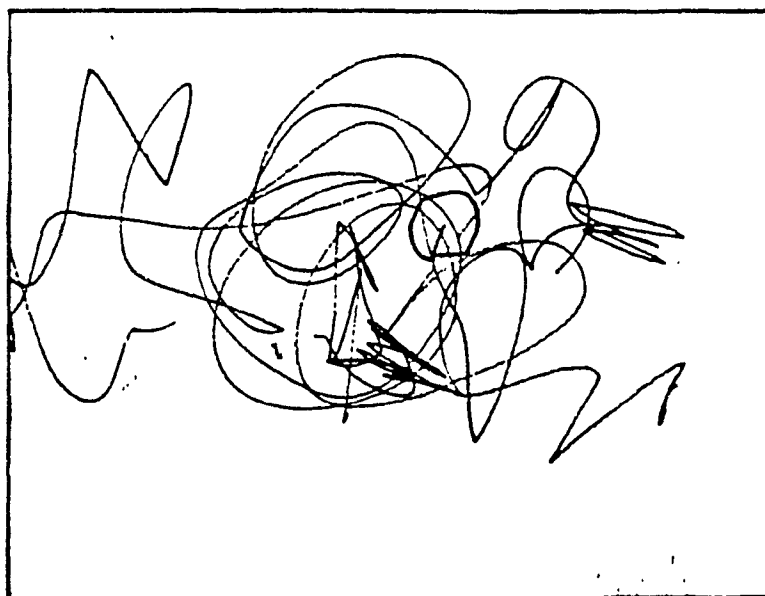


Figure 6. Weatherman (age 2.3).

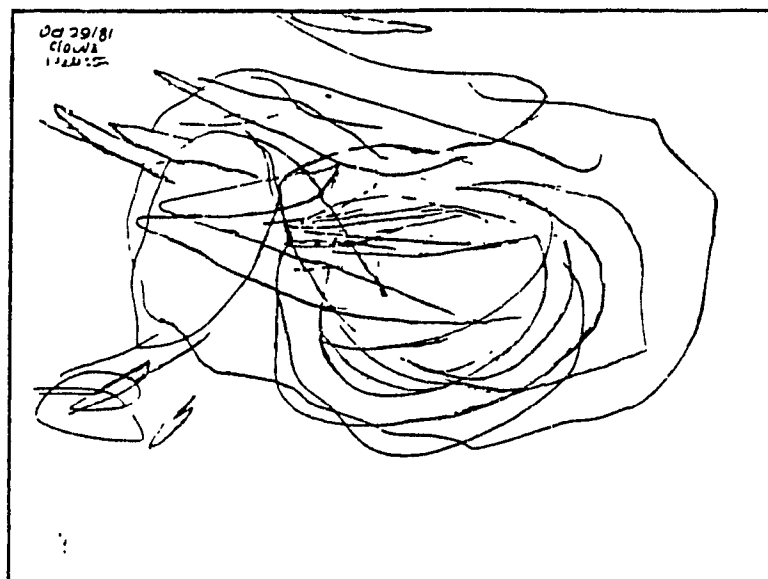


Figure 7. A Clown (age 2.1).

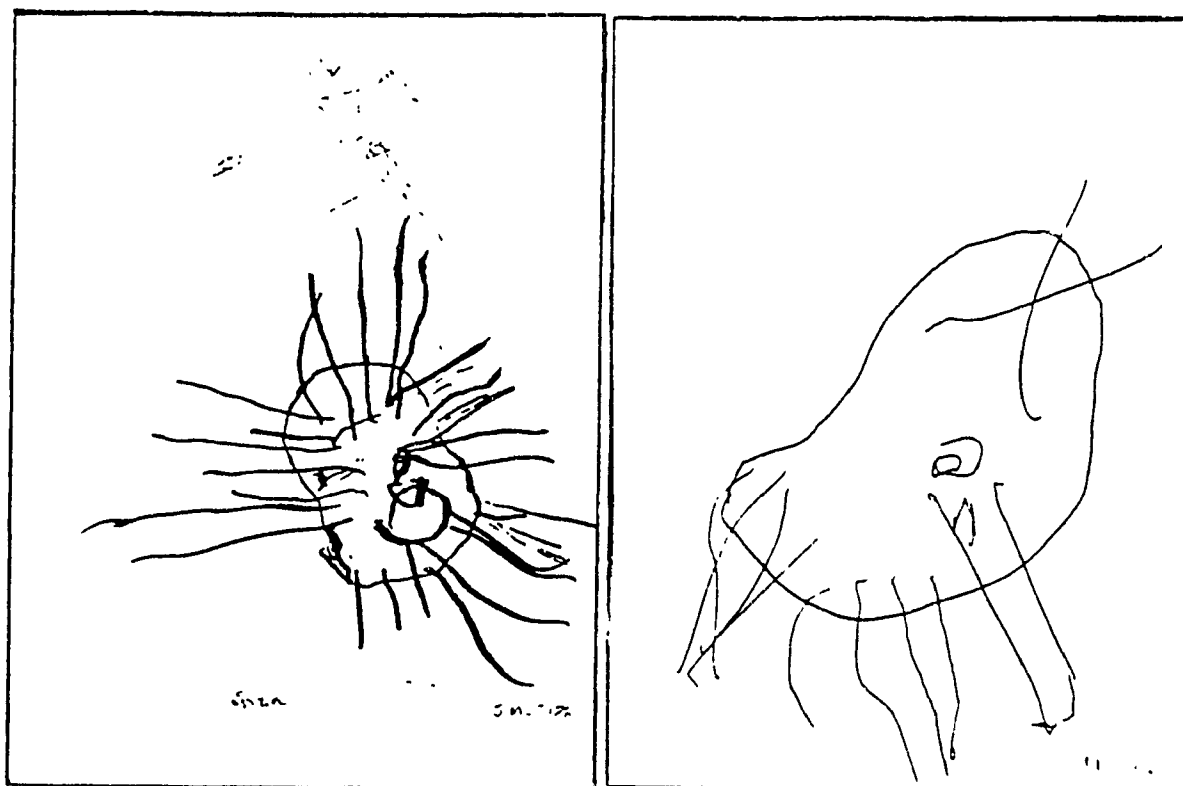


Figure 8. A Spider (age 2.4).

Figure 9. "A Dog or Cat" (age c.2).

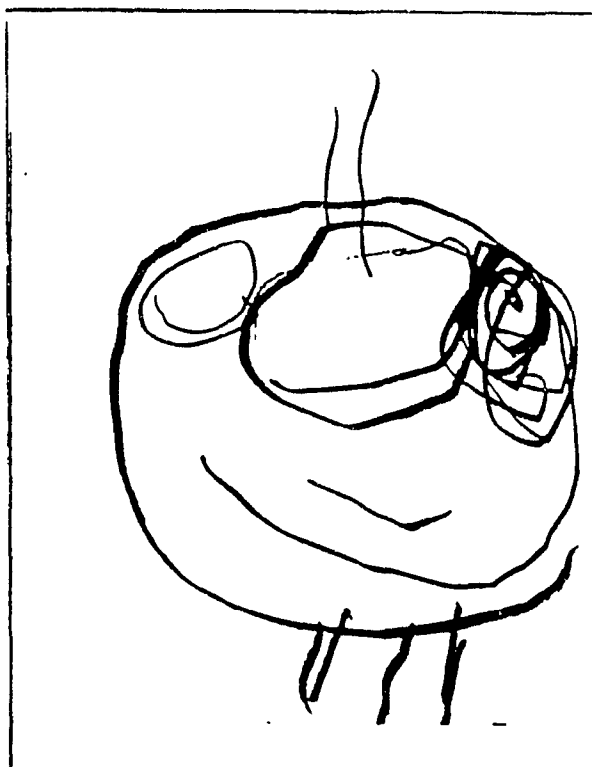


Figure 10. Frog (age 2.3).

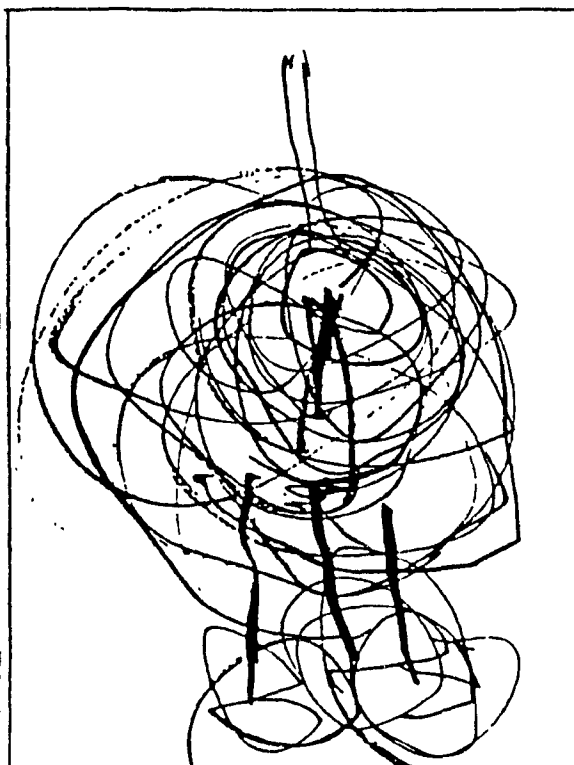


Figure 11. Santa (age 2.3).

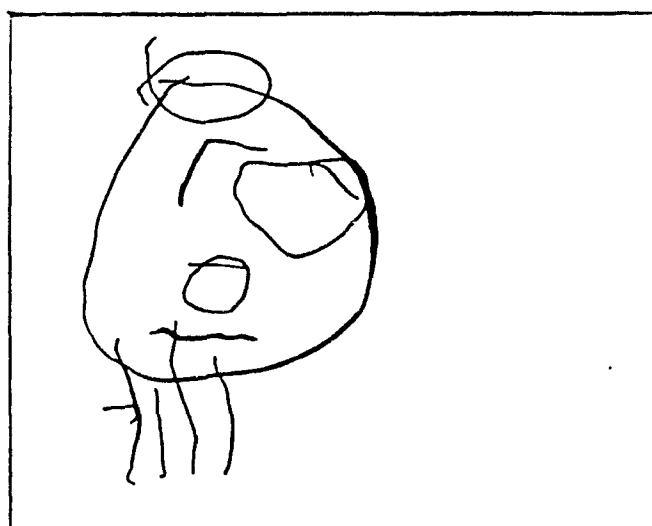


Figure 12. Green Men (age c.2).



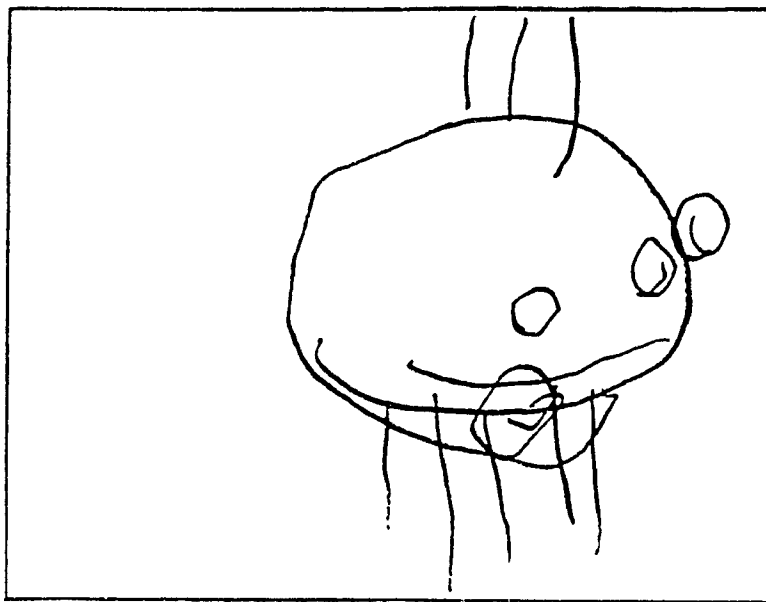


Figure 13. Santa (age 2.3).

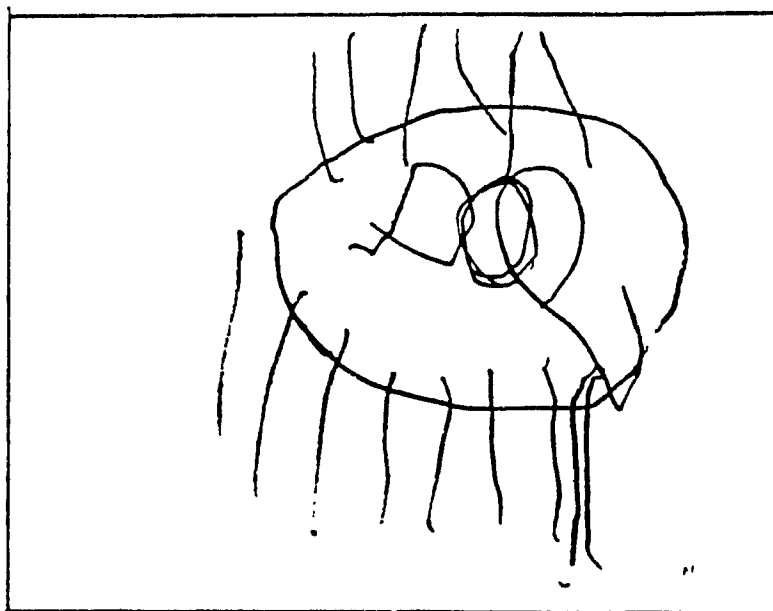


Figure 14. Santa (age 2.3).

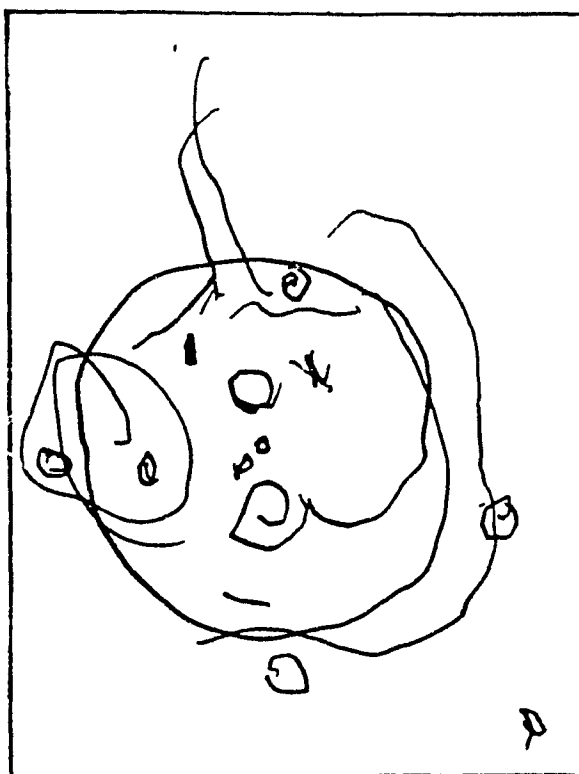


Figure 15. A Face (age 2.3).

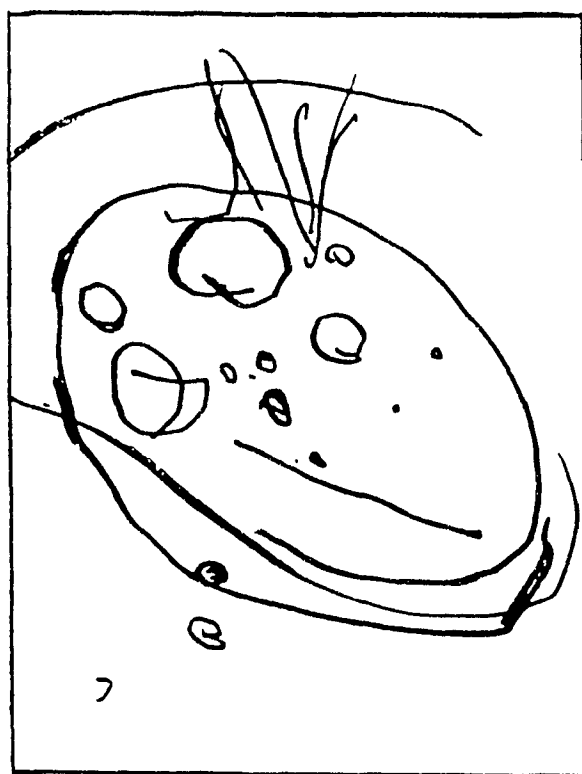


Figure 16. Santa Claus (age 2.3).

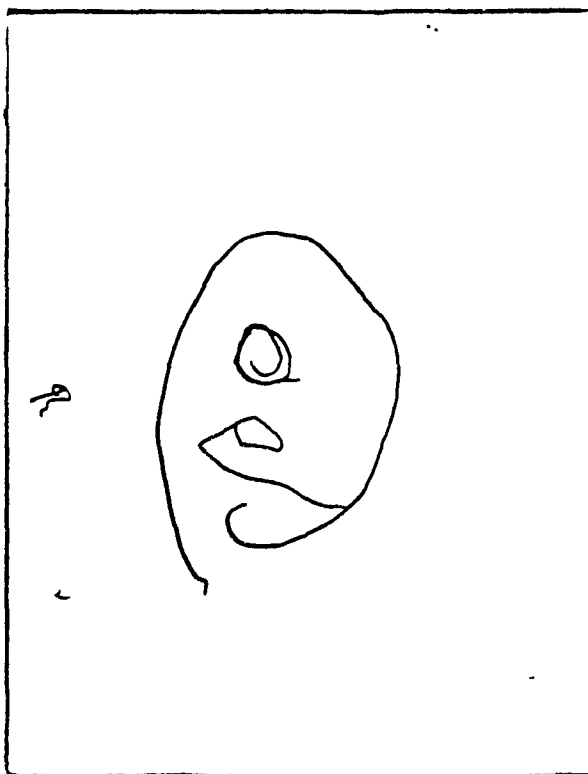


Figure 17. A Face (age 2.3).

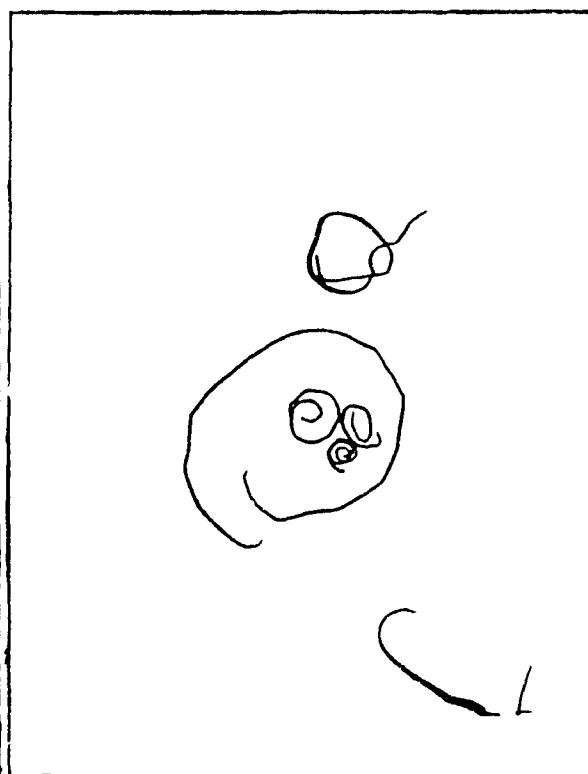


Figure 18. A Face (age 2.3).

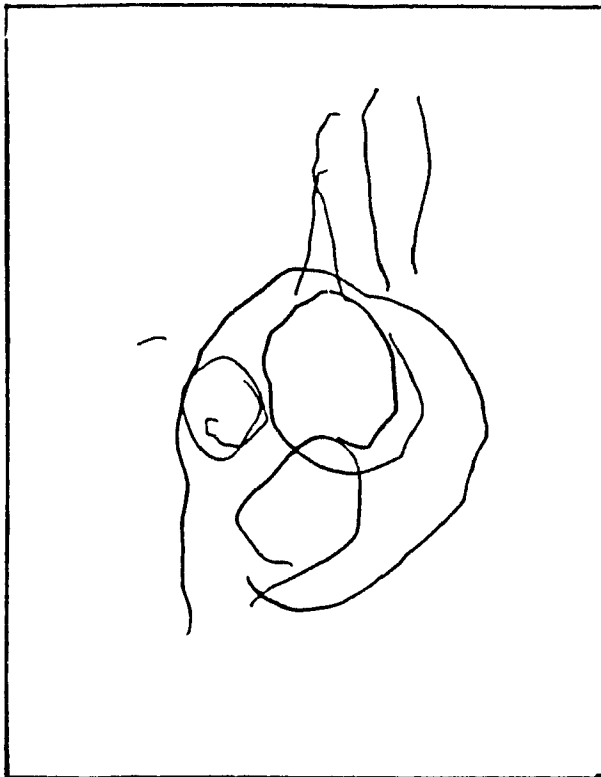


Figure 19. A Face (age 2.3).

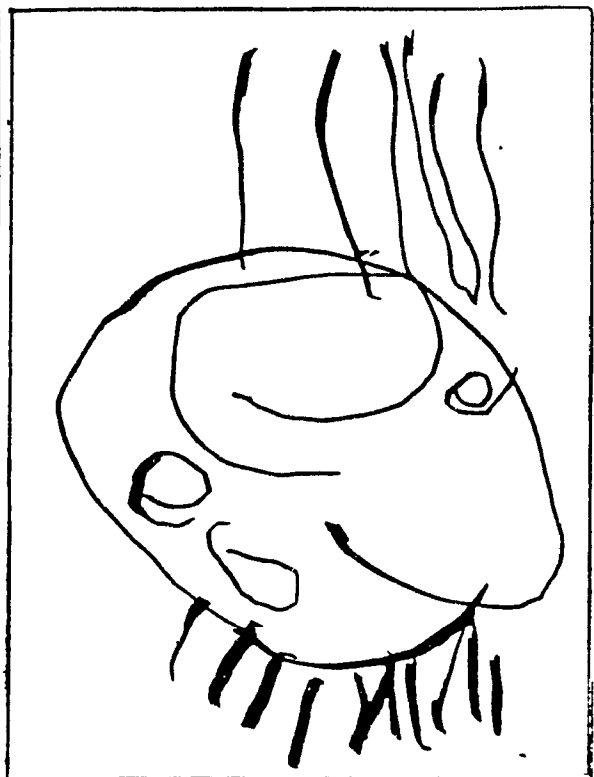


Figure 20. Santa (age 2.3).

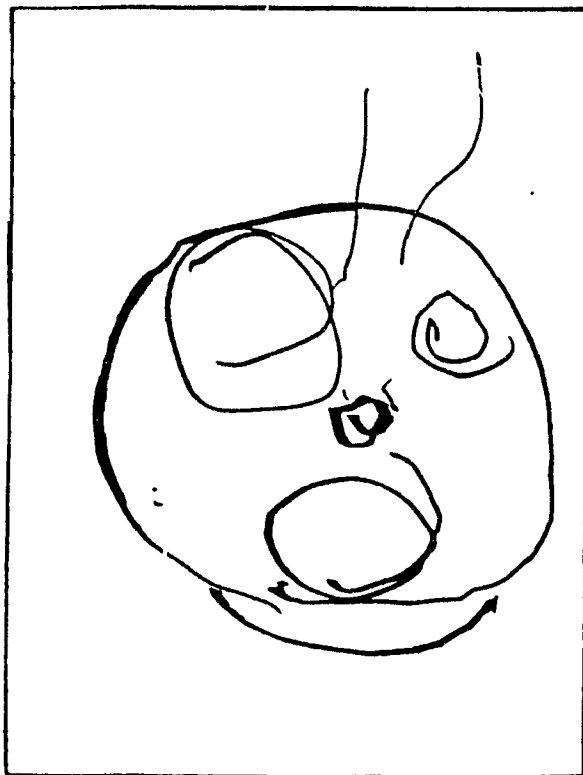


Figure 21. Santa (age 2.3).

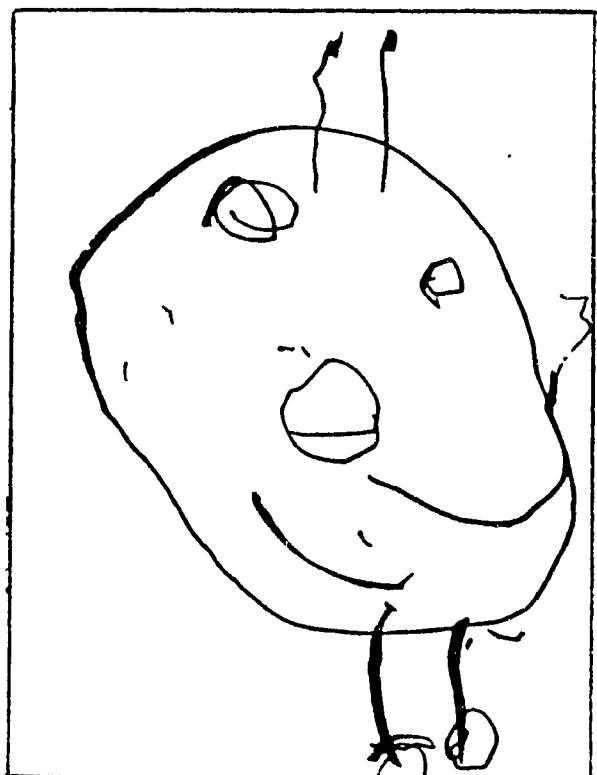


Figure 22. Santa (age 2.3).

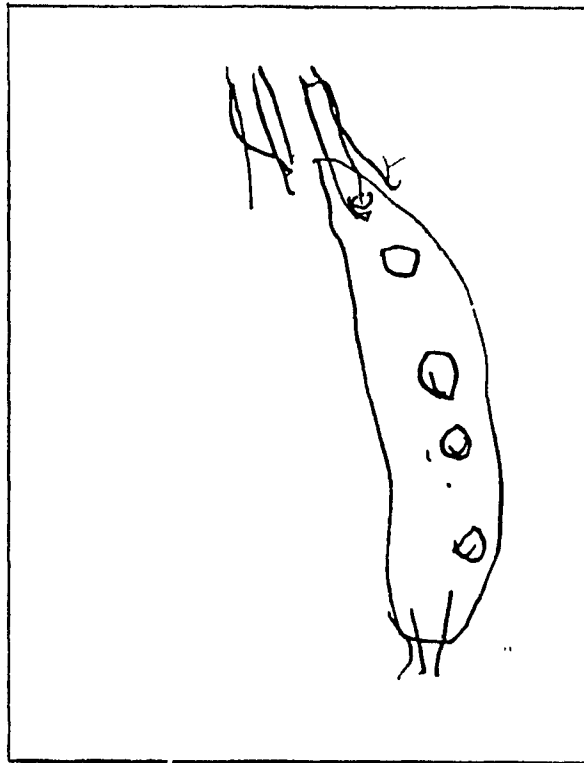


Figure 23. Buttoned Santa (age 2.3).

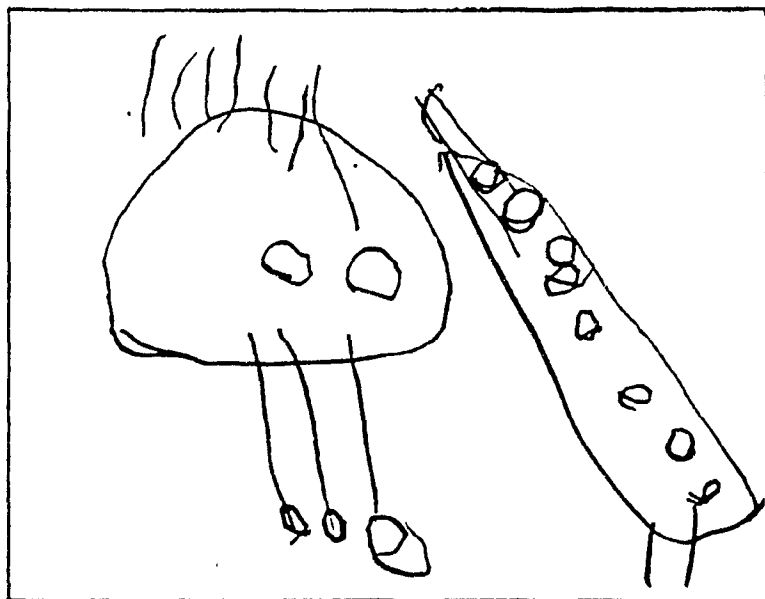


Figure 24. Santa and Mummy (age 2.3).

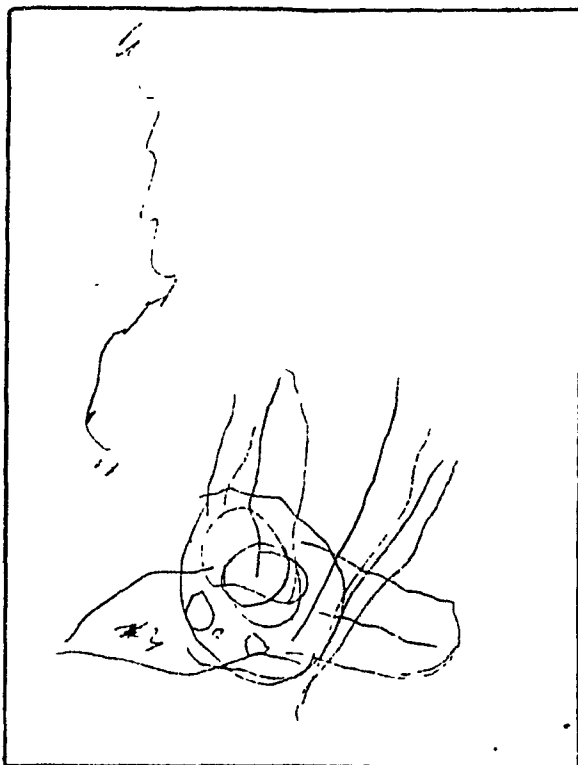


Figure 25. Bird (age c.2).

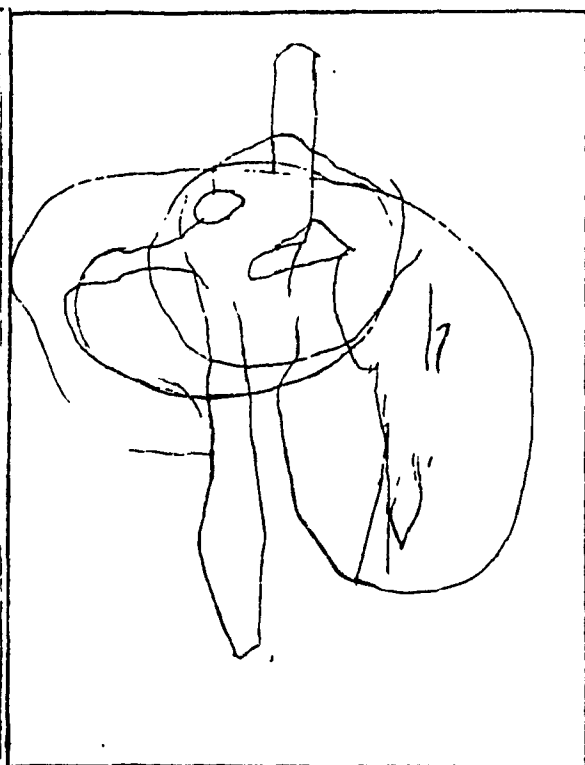


Figure 26. Elephant (age c.2).

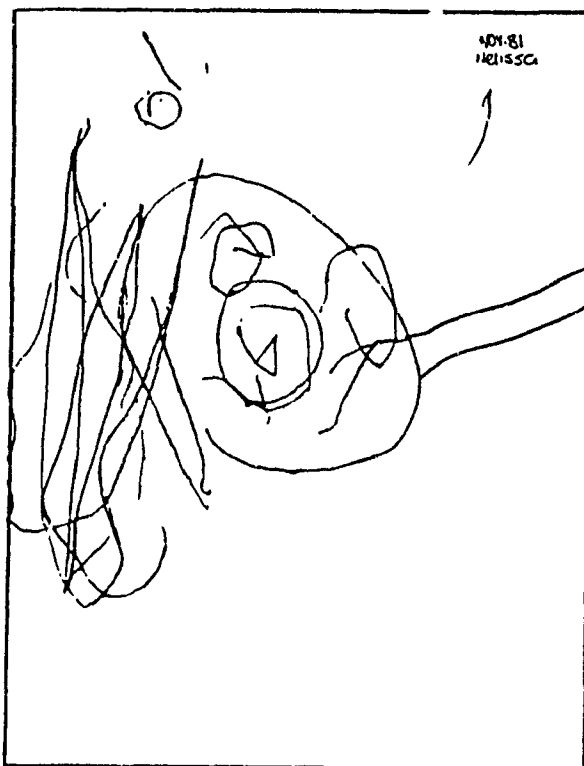


Figure 27. "Mummy with Spiky Hair."  
(age 2.2).

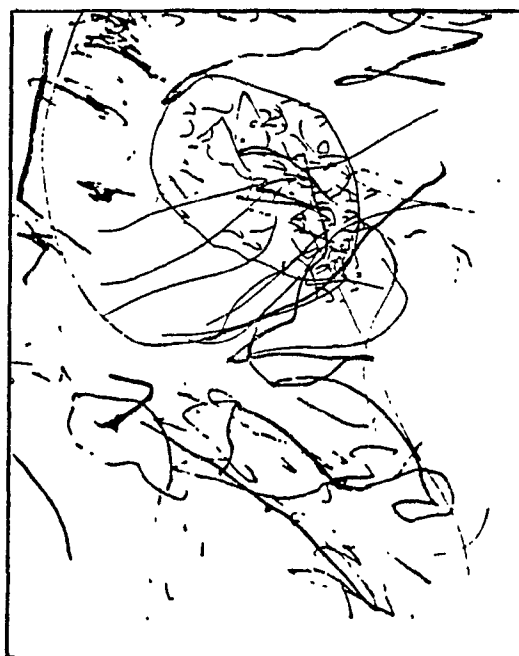


Figure 28. A Fish (age c.2).

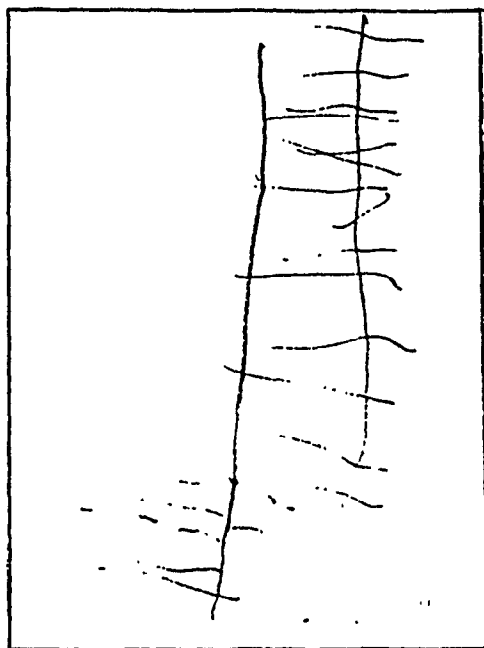


Figure 29. A Ladder (age c.2).

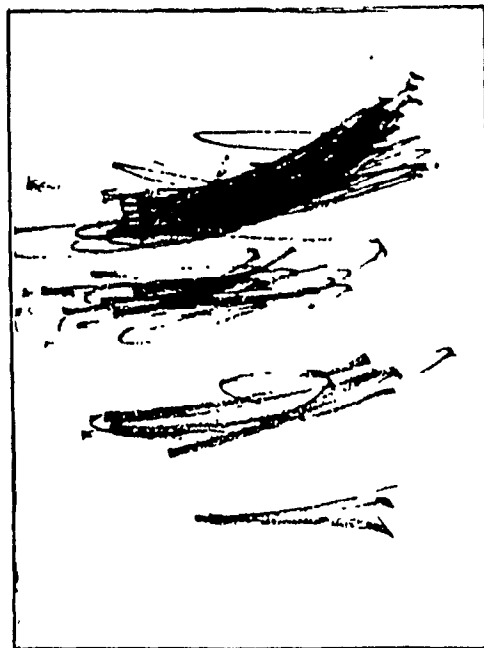


Figure 30. A Design (age c.2).

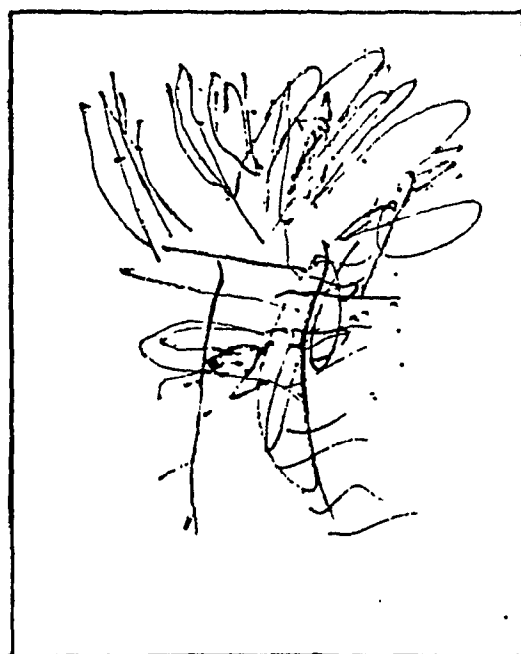


Figure 31. A Bird (age c.2).

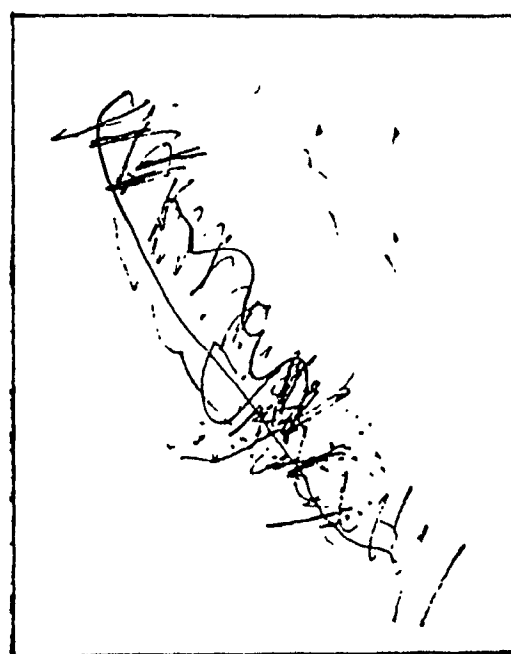


Figure 32. Lines and Zigzags (age c.2).



Figure 33. Christmas Tree (age c.2).



Figure 34. Christmas Tree (age c.2).



Figure 35. Santa (age c.2).

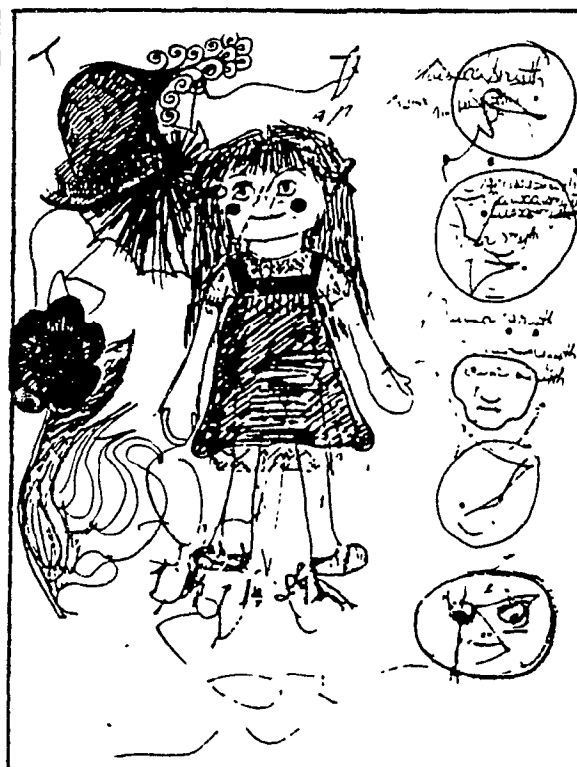


Figure 36. Little Girl (age c.2).

### Chapter 5: The Drawings Done During the Third and Fourth Years

By the time Melissa's third birthday had arrived, we had been living in Cornwall for a little over a year. A month prior to Melissa's third birthday, Stephanie, her sister, was born and the time Melissa and I were to spend together and apart, would be different. At the time I had sensed that Melissa had found this adjustment rather difficult, having to share me with her new sister. With a new born baby to care for, I was unable to give Melissa as much attention as she had been accustomed to.

Over the last year (from the age of two to three years), Melissa had made a best friend with the boy next door, Mathew, and the two became inseparable. They played together for hours, almost every day, and together they entered nursery school for the first time, at age three. Nursery school gave Melissa a chance to do something "special" and served as a way to get away from her sister whom she viewed as an intruder.

Shortly before her fourth birthday, we moved again. I believe this move may have been a bit traumatic for Melissa, for although we were still living in Cornwall, Mathew's home was not within walking distance. She would miss the close friendship they once shared even though they would be attending the same junior kindergarten class. I recall Melissa telling me about the mean teacher at this Catholic school--the woman who yelled and made the children cry. She told me about the naps they had to take and the prayers before every activity.

Melissa had not yet made any new friends. Many fall days were spent inside the house, where Melissa amused herself with play and lots of drawing. Sometimes she would play with her sister but found it difficult to converse with one who could not as yet utter complete sentences. I remember Melissa had two favourite places she liked to draw; at the large



oak table in the kitchen and at the low coffee table in the living room. An abundant supply of used computer paper, some coloured paper, paint, markers and crayons were always made available to her. Most of her drawings, but not all, were done in private and I was only aware of them once they were completed and shown to me for "approval". It was six years now, since I had done any art work.

The winter was long and the summer that followed proved to be better for all of us. Melissa finally made some friends and spent most of her time outdoors playing dolls with her sister and Sarah, her new friend who lived next door. This was the summer for outdoor birthday parties, a trip to Wonderland and this was the summer that Daddy built a treehouse in the yard, from scrap wood.

One hundred and forty-three drawings comprise the group of drawings made by Melissa during the ages of three and four years. Crayon (eighty-three drawings) and marker (twenty-six drawings) were the media most often used. Most of the drawings were done on sheets of computer paper, measuring eleven by fourteen inches.

As I view these drawings, I sense that the exploration of visual language is still pretty strong, but at the same time I observe an increase (over the drawings done before the third birthday) in the number of drawings that suggest subject matter to me. The subject matter for this group of drawings seems to consist mainly of animals and people. The Halloween theme seems evident to me in some of Melissa's drawings of pumpkin heads (see figures, 37, 38, 39).

As I continue to study these drawings, I begin to observe what I believe to be four types of drawings. These "types" consist of the following:

designs which are non-figurative and include scribbles and/or shapes, or lettering (thirty-four drawings, see figures 40-43, 52-54), named scribbles (where line, shape or design may suggest subject matter to Melissa) (fourteen drawings, see figures 44-48), scribble drawings with people (twenty-five drawings, see figures 49-51), and drawings of a person or people (with or without torso, pumpkin and sun faces inclusive) and no background (seventy drawings, see figures 37-39, 55, 57, 58, 61-76, 79, 80). When I compare the drawings done at three years old with those done at four years of age, relative to the four "types" of drawings outlined, I note some differences. For example, the three year old design drawings consist mainly of lines forming scribbles (see figures 40, 41) while the four year old designs began to include more shapes than lines (see figures 42, 43). Also as Melissa turns four, she begins to explore lettering as a design element (see figures 52-54). The named scribbles at three years of age seem to suggest a situation or event (see figure 44: Car on the road with windows open, figure 45: Elephant and zebra at the zoo, figure 48: Frog eating a bug) while the named scribbles done at the age of four are suggestive of a single subject matter and derived from Melissa's imaginative interpretation of the "single form" that was drawn (see figure 46: Rabbit, figure 47: Elephant). Most of the people drawings done before her fourth birthday, include a background made up of scribbles and/or shapes that seem to work around the figures (see figures 49, 50, 51). The drawings of people done at four years of age seem to generally focus on the face without too much concern for background (see figures 61-76).

Before her fourth birthday, Melissa drew numerous tadpole figures (see figures 55-58) and continued to explore the formation of facial features. Often she would use only one colour throughout the drawing. After her

birthday, the majority of her people drawings include only the head with a preponderance of experimentation with hair, facial features (eyes, mouths, noses), and expression (see figures 61-76). Although not used realistically, colour is more varied in these later drawings.

In the total group of drawings done during the ages of three and four years, sixty-seven make use of only one colour, the remaining seventy-seven make use of two or more colours. None of the drawings use colour realistically and the drawing mediums are usually used to outline. There is very little colouring-in. Overall, the drawings suggest to me a floating sense of space. In some of the drawings, there is some suggestion that the figures relate to their surroundings. Examples of this can be found in figures 59 and 60 where the "people" appear to be on top of or behind the shape.

Melissa used to like to draw on her own, and usually in a room other than the one I would be in. She would proudly show me her work only when it was complete and would eagerly await a response from myself. My responses were always positive, as I had hoped encouragement would motivate her to continue with her interest in drawing. As I look over her drawings, I note a particular group of drawings that trigger recall. Figures 46 and 47 represent two of the drawings from a certain group of named scribbles done by Melissa when she was four. I remember that all of these drawings were done on the same day, in the space of a couple of hours. While busying myself with housework, Melissa had chosen to go into another room and draw with crayon on computer paper. After a short while she returned to the room I was in, carrying a drawing in her hand. Quite excited about the drawing she said "look it's a rabbit" (see figure 46). At the time I thought this was great and told her so. The drawing had started

as a scribble of lines and the shape that resulted suggested the form of an animal, in this case a rabbit. I sensed at the time she was quite thrilled with this new way of drawing. She could scribble anything and then visualize what it could be. I remember that after this first drawing, she continued to make several more drawings in the same way, each time leaving the room and returning to show me a newly made animal.

About the remainder of the drawings I remember very little. I am curious about the many drawings of people's heads (see figures 61-75). The "October" drawings of people's heads (see figures 70-75) bring me back to the group of Santa drawings that Melissa had made before the age of three. For both the Santa and the head drawings, Melissa displayed a fervent desire to repeatedly draw a common subject matter over and over again. As well, I observed that very little time had elapsed during the making of these drawings within each "set" and that sometimes they were all completed within a couple of hours on the same day.

The responses I obtained from Melissa concerning these drawings, came from two interviews I had with her, one conducted on March 17, 1989 about her drawings that she did when she was four years old, and the other conducted on March 4, 1990 about the drawings done during the ages of three and four. Each of the interviews had been conducted in a slightly different manner. For the 1989 interview, the three year old drawings were not included and Melissa was asked to respond to various groups of drawings, prepared and organized by myself according to subject matter. For the 1990 interview, Melissa was asked to view the drawings, one by one and to set aside those drawings of which she had some recall. Worth noting is that Melissa had more to say in the 1989 interview and had responded to

more drawings than she had for the 1990 interview (this could be due to the way the drawings were set up). However for both interviews Melissa had the same things to say about the drawings that were commonly chosen for discussion. For the second interview, Melissa appeared tired and understandably so, as she was struggling with a cold she had had for a week. She was also somewhat mischievous for this second interview, choosing to play with the microphone and tape recorder.

For the 1990 interview, Melissa chose to divide the drawings into two groups, one representing the drawings she "thought she knew what they were about" (approximately fifty-two drawings), and the other representing "the guess pile" (approximately five drawings), drawings of which she could only "guess" at the subject matter. Once in a while a drawing would create some uncertainties in Melissa's mind as to subject matter and then she would move the drawing from the larger pile to the smaller pile. One of the drawings (see figure 61) that came from the larger pile really had her stumped. She couldn't decide whether the drawing represented a girl with pigtails or a dog with ears and she had this to say about the drawing:

That's a dog. I'm guessing a bit because I think I remember me doing a dog but then it might be a person's pigtails. I don't know but I think it might even be a dog because it has spots on it but it could be a person with pigtails (interview, March 4, 1990).

Overall, Melissa had very little recall of actually doing any of the drawings. She could however, discuss some of the subject matter and at times could offer some insight into the origins of the image.

At the age of four years, Melissa had created many drawings of what I viewed as girls' heads. Without hesitation Melissa had set aside these drawings to talk about. She pointed to figure 62 and said "that's Raggedy-

Ann, remember I did Raggedy-Ann? I did a nose like that?" (referring to the similarity of the drawn nose to that of the doll's) (journal, interview, March 4, 1990). She pointed out the doll's curly hair in the drawing and noted that she had drawn the hair the same way in some of her other drawings (see figure 69). Worth noting is that a year earlier, she had told me that she thought the idea of drawing curly hair came from viewing my own hair, which at the time had been curly (March 17, 1989). Also worth noting is that Raggedy-Ann's hair is not curly, but it does stick out on top. In any case, it appears to me that Melissa felt a need to explore the many ways of rendering hair with respect to this group of drawings, whether the idea came from the doll or myself or both, it is not certain.

In reference to figure 64, I asked Melissa why she thought she had coloured the cheeks purple. She replied, "cause I had a purple crayon in my hand" (interview, March 4, 1990). We looked at the "mouths" of these "people" and Melissa commented on the tongues which were visible when the mouths were open (see figures 63, 64) and went on to explain where the idea came from. Her comment was as follows:

[That's] a person smiling, well they have teeth in their mouth and that's supposed to be the tongue. I remember doing that, 'cause you know when on t.v. the puppets on Sesame Street? The puppets have like a tongue, as soon as they open their mouths you can see it, because I watched Sesame Street then (journal, interview, March 4, 1990).

As Melissa continued to leaf through the remaining head drawings, she stopped at figure 66 and remarked:

I remember what I did, like I don't remember where I was that minute but I remember like what it was when I thought of it. This is supposed to be a beard. This is supposed to be Dad. This is Dad, definitely Dad

(interview, March 4, 1990).

In reference to the remaining drawings of heads (see figures 67-69), I asked Melissa who were these people she drew. She said usually they were people she didn't know (interview, March 17, 1989). When I asked if they were imaginary people, she said "well no, not an imaginary person but like I'll draw a person" (interview, March 17, 1989). Perhaps her idea of an imaginary person represented a creature short of human characteristics. She told me that the drawings usually represented a girl and that she makes up her own people (interview, March 17, 1989). When I questioned about why she usually drew girls, she replied, "cause I was a girl" (interview, March 4, 1990). When I asked what she was trying to do in all these drawings, she answered by saying that she was attempting to find new ways to make people (interview, March 17, 1989). Her ideas came from observing people walking down the street or watching people on television. Through her observations she discovered characteristics that she wanted to include in her drawings (interview, March 17, 1989).

Another group of drawings that Melissa made reference to was a group of marker drawings of people (see figures 70-76). She called this group of drawings "the sleeping people", mainly because the eyes were drawn in a way suggestive of sleep. I asked Melissa if the eyes were portrayed this way to show the eyes closed. I also wanted to know where her idea of drawing eyes this way, came from. Melissa mentioned that she remembered starting to make eyelashes. She wasn't sure whether the eyes were supposed to look closed or whether she had just forgotten to include the pupil. She showed me a drawing where the eyelashes were done the same way as the closed one, but in this drawing the pupils were included as well (see figure 75). In the more recent interview she added: "I could have just done it by

accident one day and said, hey it's sleeping" (interview March 4, 1990). Melissa went on to describe some other details she noticed in these drawings. She guessed that the portion under the heads could have been a bed or body (see figures 70-74) but wasn't sure. In reference to a specific face drawing (see figure 75) she recalled drawing the lower line of the face. She remembered having drawn it in the "wrong place" and told me so, "I remember, I remember that moment too, I made a mistake" (interview, March 17, 1989). When I asked Melissa why she kept drawing the same face over and over again, she said, "well I wanted to make different patterns, different, well make them look different" (interview, March 17, 1989). She told me that half of these drawings were of her and the other half could be just any girl or any face. She did point out a couple of drawings (see figures 70-73) that she told me represented her. She knew this because of the letters "E M" which she believed had been accidentally reversed and should have read as ME to represent "me" or Melissa. She added that if a drawing had included the letters "E M" or "M E" or anything that Melissa might be wearing at the time the drawing was made, then the drawing would be depicting herself. She used the example of dangling earrings to explain her point as follows:

Say if I had [were wearing] dangling earrings, [then] I'd put dangling earrings in a picture. That means it would probably be me in the picture or if I put (the letters) "M E", like I did, "M E" and all that, it'd be me.

Two drawings involving groups of people (see figures 77, 78) initiated response from Melissa. They were made up of a number of people drawn in ball-point pen and Melissa had this to say about them, "those are people, different kinds of people, I remember whenever I did that I was trying to test all the different kinds of people I could do" (interview, March 4, 1990).



Another drawing of a group of people (see figure 79) was done as a birthday card and Melissa's response to this drawing was as follows:

That's you, that's Dad, that's Steph and that's my birthday. No I don't know, there's a birthday cake, I know that. It's you [second from the left], I used to draw your hair like that, do you remember? I used to always draw your hair like that. And that's whenever I was doing stick men [tadpole people]. That's it, it's a birthday card. That's me and Steph and you and Dad and the birthday cake. I knew it was somebody's birthday 'cause usually when I was little and I did birthday cards, I did it with the whole family, then a little cake or something and then [Melissa opens the card and reads aloud], happy birthday Dad, from Melissa, Steph and Mummy. And I was pretending to write there [referring to the writing made inside the card] (interview, March 4, 1990).

Melissa had very little to say about the remaining drawings that she had initially set aside. Two drawings with holes made through them (see figures 80, 81) triggered memory of body movement. In figure 81 the holes in the page brought back recall, not so much the drawing itself which was of a face. She told me she remembered making this drawing on the living room carpet. She demonstrated the motion of putting holes through the paper and said "it was real neat" (March 17, 1989). In the more recent interview, Melissa added that she had probably poked a hole through the page by accident and then finding it to be fun, repeated the motion to make holes throughout her piece (interview, March 4, 1990). She pointed out a second drawing (see figure 80) with holes and had this to say about it, "this is me and um a snowman and the dots are snow, that I remember really" (interview, March 4, 1990). It is interesting to note these drawings with holes were done eight months apart, the face was done at four years of age and the snowman

at three years of age.

Melissa pointed out the "sun" drawings (see figures 82-84) and informed me that she had drawn faces on the sun. A group of drawings done on coloured construction paper were viewed. Looking carefully at these drawings, Melissa showed me a unicorn (see figure 65), a clown, and a person she guessed to be going out to play in the snow. The round things on their heads could be hats or the horns of a unicorn (interview, March 17, 1989). She said that judging from the dates on these drawings, she figured they must have been done for Halloween and added, "I was probably excited about Halloween, like you know whenever it gets close to Halloween you like to make lots of pictures about Halloween and that?" (interview, March 4, 1990).

Melissa made reference to three drawings that she thought represented people in cars. Two are represented by figures 59 and 60. She added that whenever there were two people they could have been myself and her father. About the letter drawings done in marker (see figures 52-54), Melissa had this to say, "this one [see figure 52] I was practising my name you know, and this one [see figure 53] I was practising letters and trying to spell a word and this one [see figure 54] I was trying to write my name with a design in the middle" (interview, March 17, 1989).

I asked Melissa to give me her overall impression of these drawings. She wondered why I had bothered keeping them. She said she thought the drawings were weird and said her drawings now are much better. She added that at the age of four years she didn't always include the body and comparing the use of colour then and now she said:

Well when I was four years old, I think I used more colour because... but right now I'm using, you know, pencil now and [I am] really not colouring anything because I don't have the time. I just feel that if I draw a

picture, I'm just halfway, I'm just saying hurry up, I just have another idea for the next picture and all that, because I made a mistake and I have to do something else, takes a while (interview, March 17, 1989).

Asked which drawing she liked the least, she chose the letter drawings (see figures 52-54) and about them she said, "they don't make sense to me, so why keep them?" (interview, March 17, 1989).



Figure 37. Pumpkin Head (age 4.1).

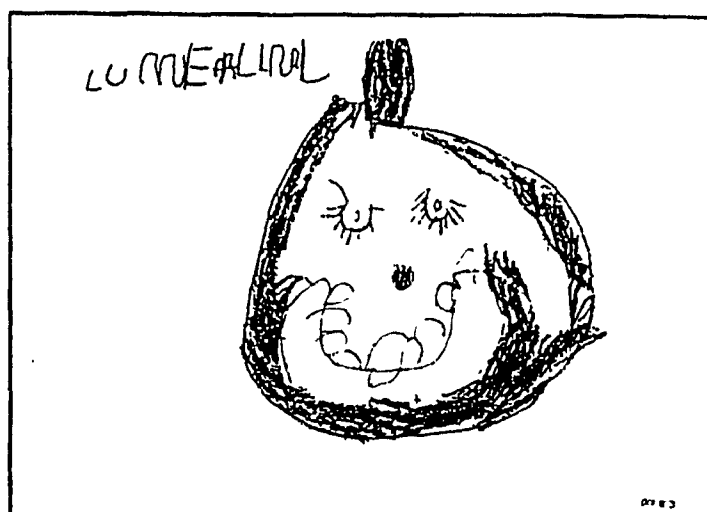


Figure 38. Pumpkin Head (age 4.1).

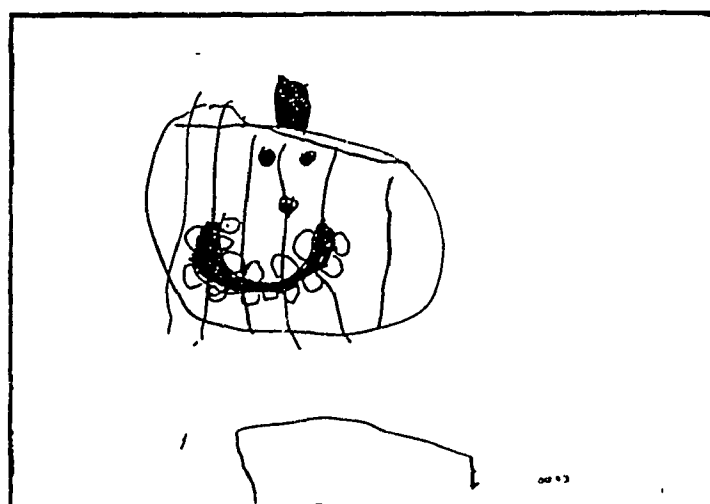


Figure 39. Pumpkin Head With Stripes (age 4.1).

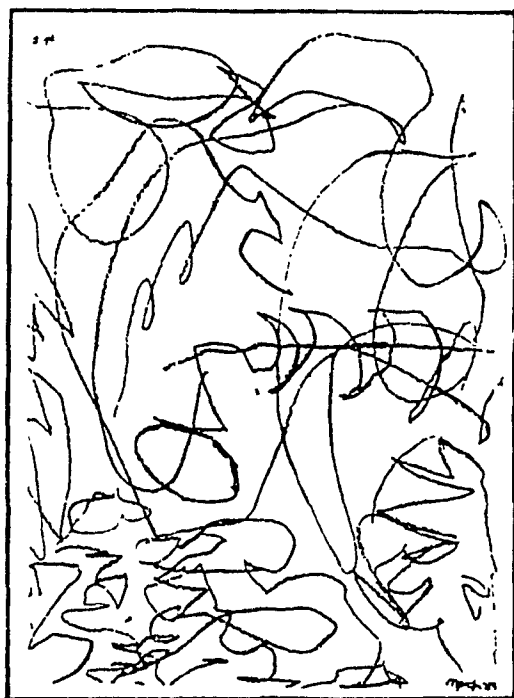


Figure 40. Line Design (age 3.6).



Figure 41. Line and Shape (age 3.7).

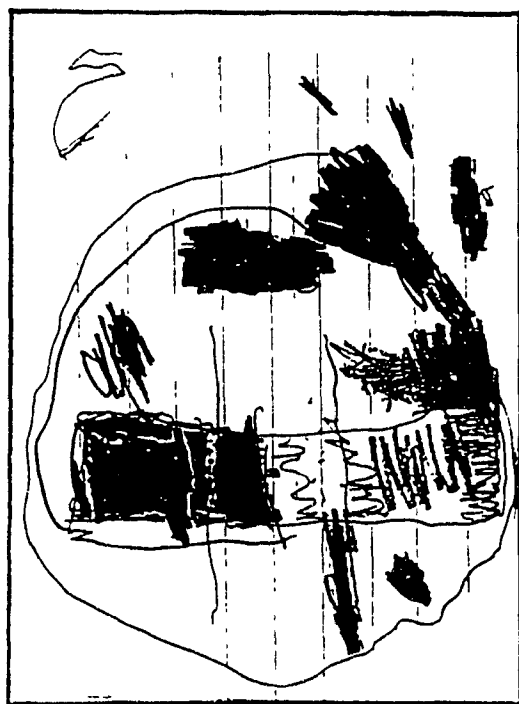


Figure 42. Line and Shape (age c.4).

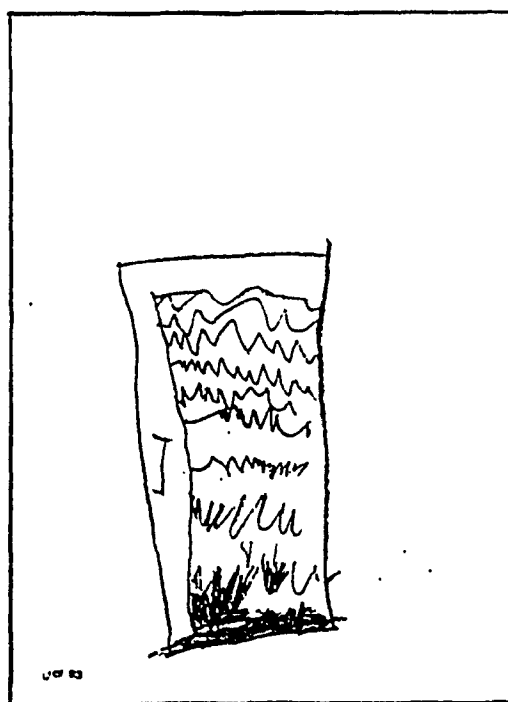


Figure 43. Design (age 4.1).

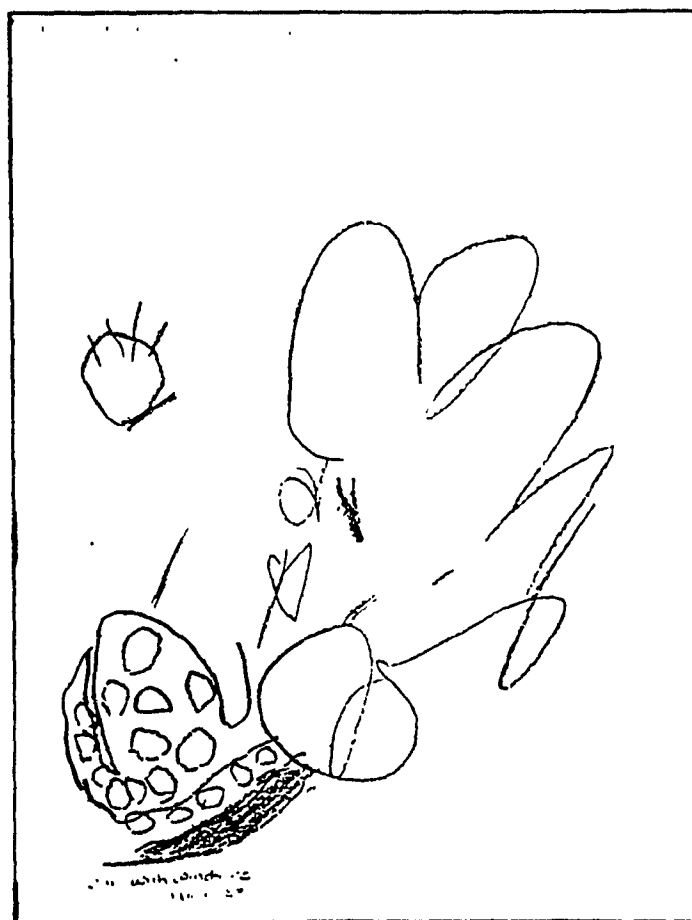


Figure 44. A car On the Road With The Windows Open (age 3.6).

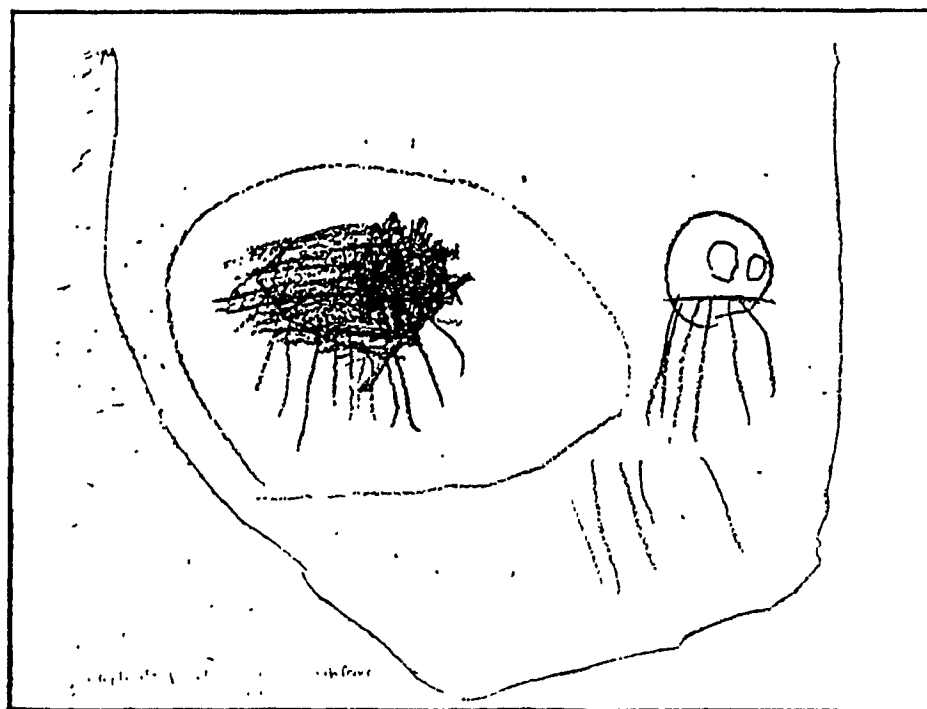


Figure 45. Elephant and Zebra at the Zoo (age 3.6).



Figure 46. Rabbit (age 4.1).

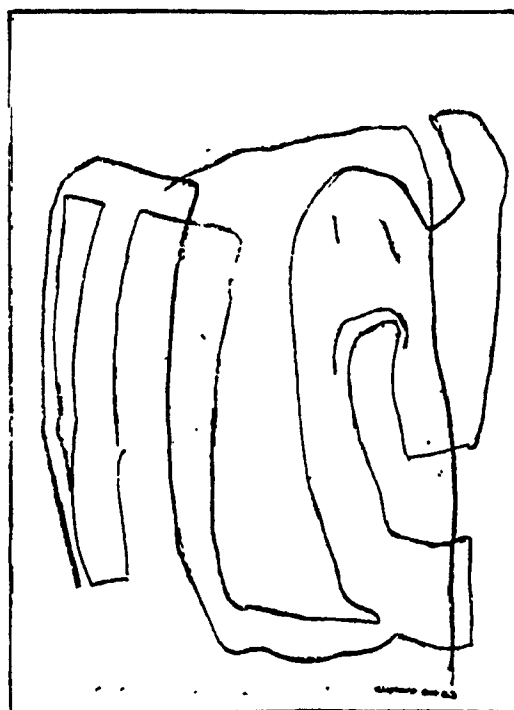


Figure 47. Elephant (age 4.1).

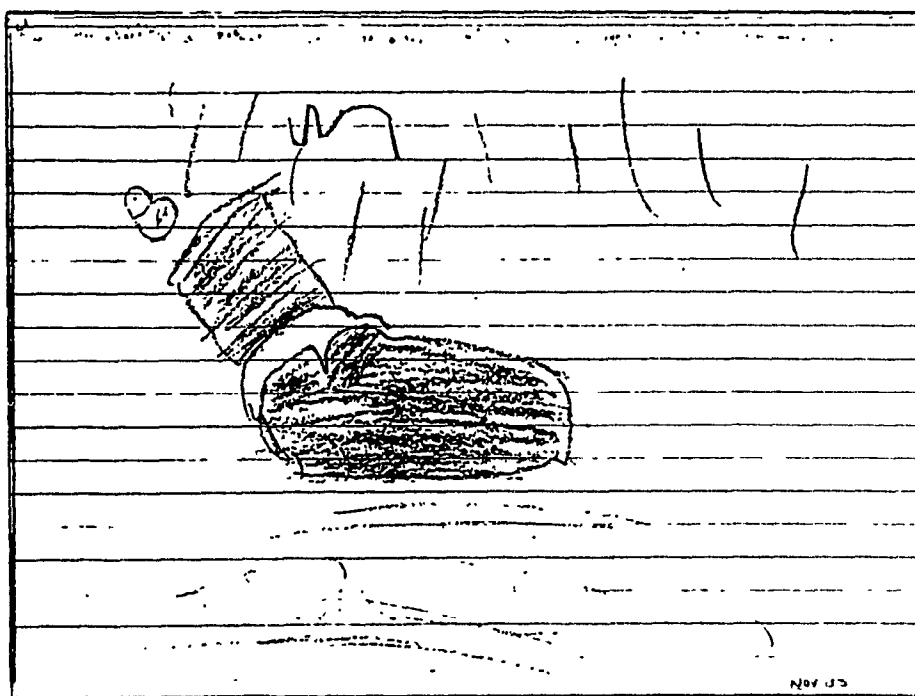


Figure 48. A Frog Eating a Bug (age 4.2).

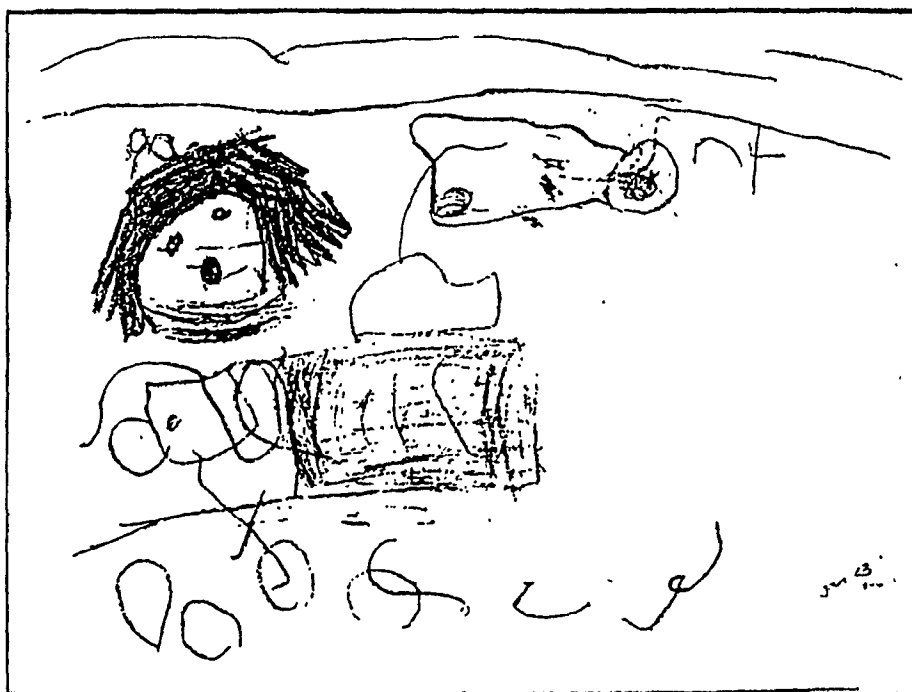


Figure 49. Face With Shapes (age 3.4).



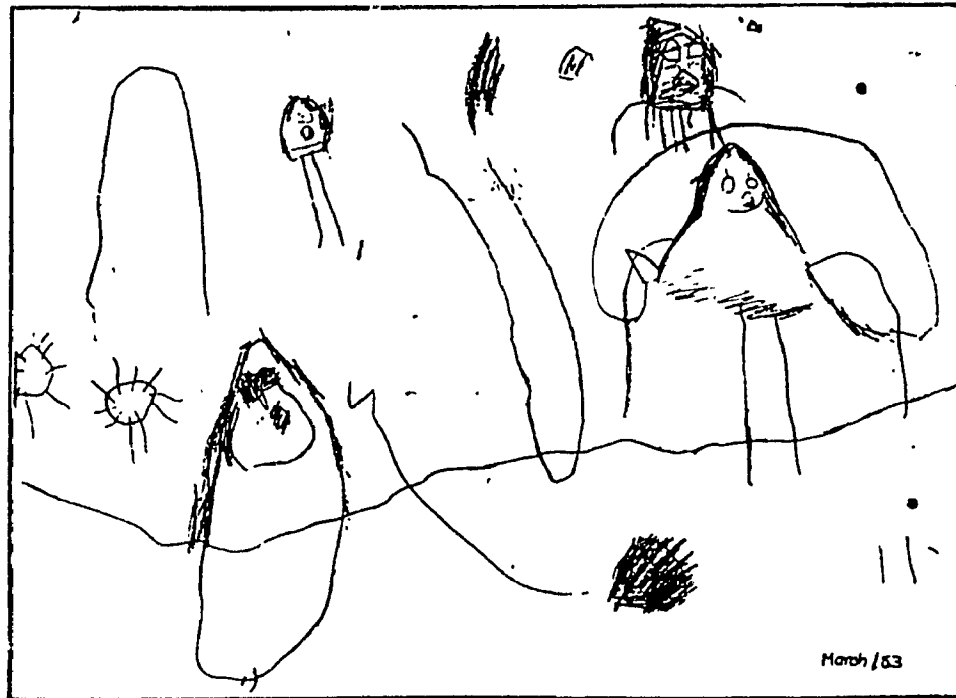


Figure 50. Lines and Tadpole Figures (age 3.6).

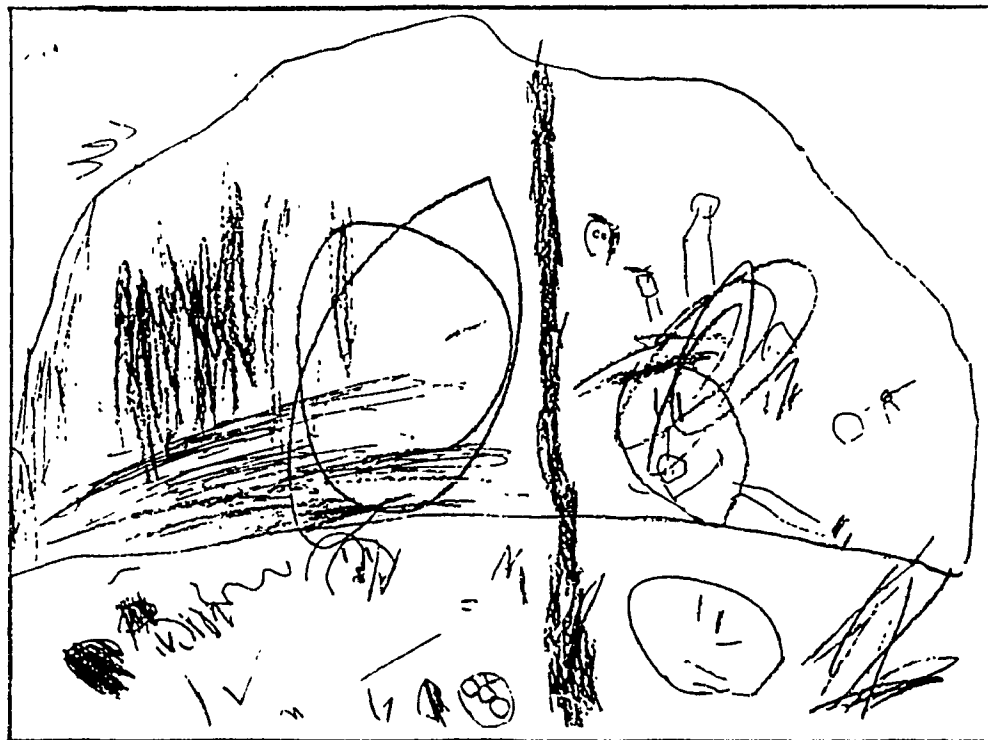


Figure 51. Scribble Drawing With People (age c.3).

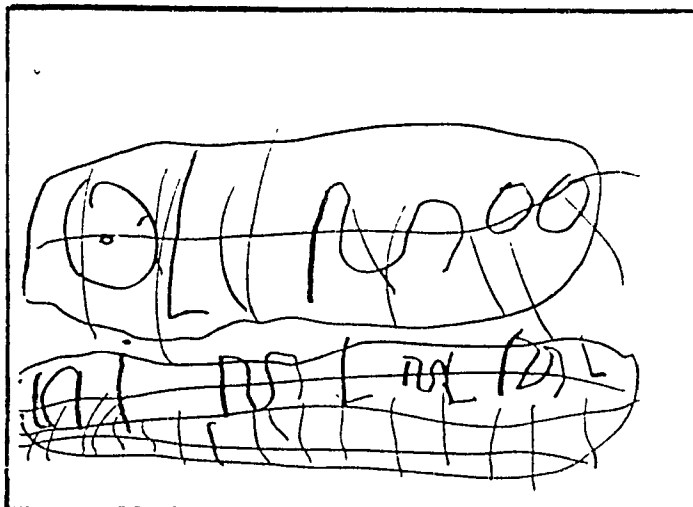


Figure 52. Melissa's Name (age 4).

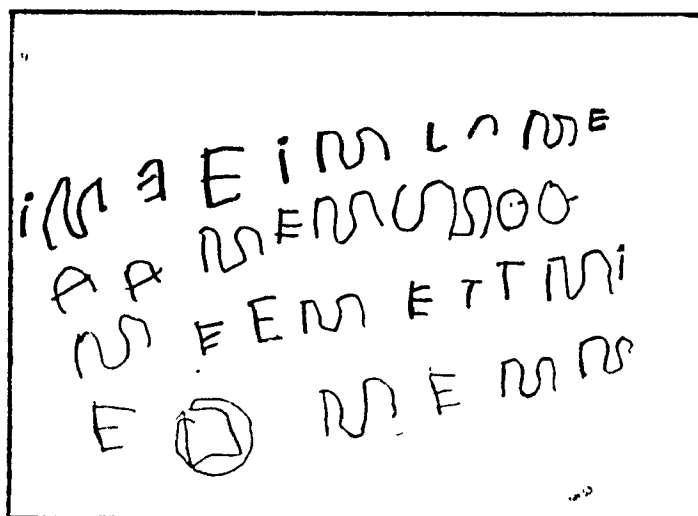


Figure 53. Spelling a Word (age 4.2).



Figure 54. Melissa's Name (age 4).

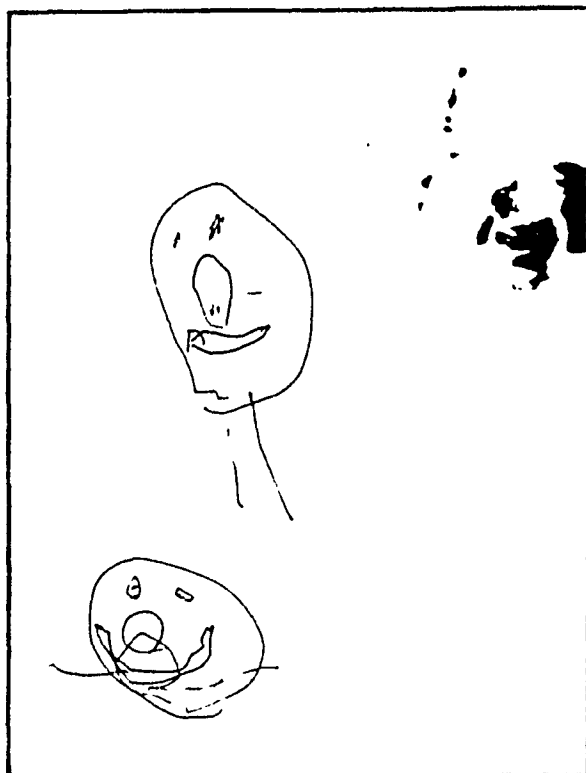


Figure 55. Tadpole People (age 3.9).



Figure 56. Tadpole Person (age 3.6).

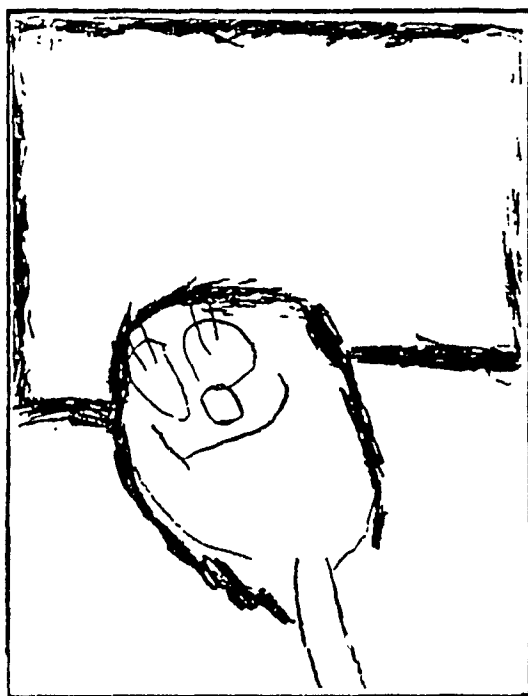


Figure 57. Tadpole Person (age 3.6).

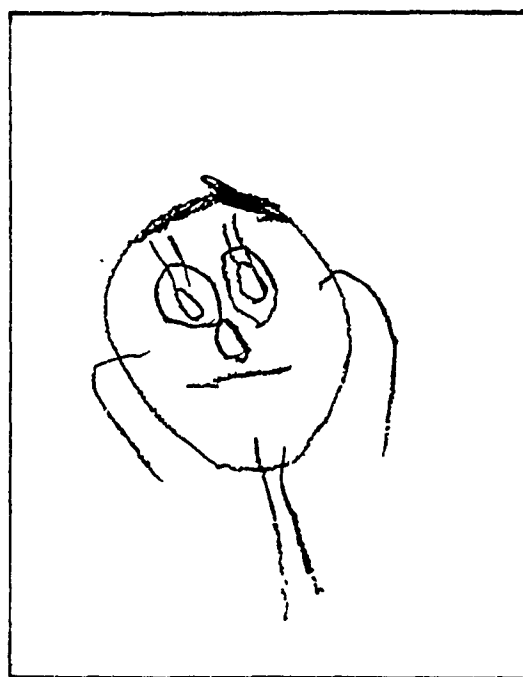


Figure 58. Tadpole Person (age 3.6).

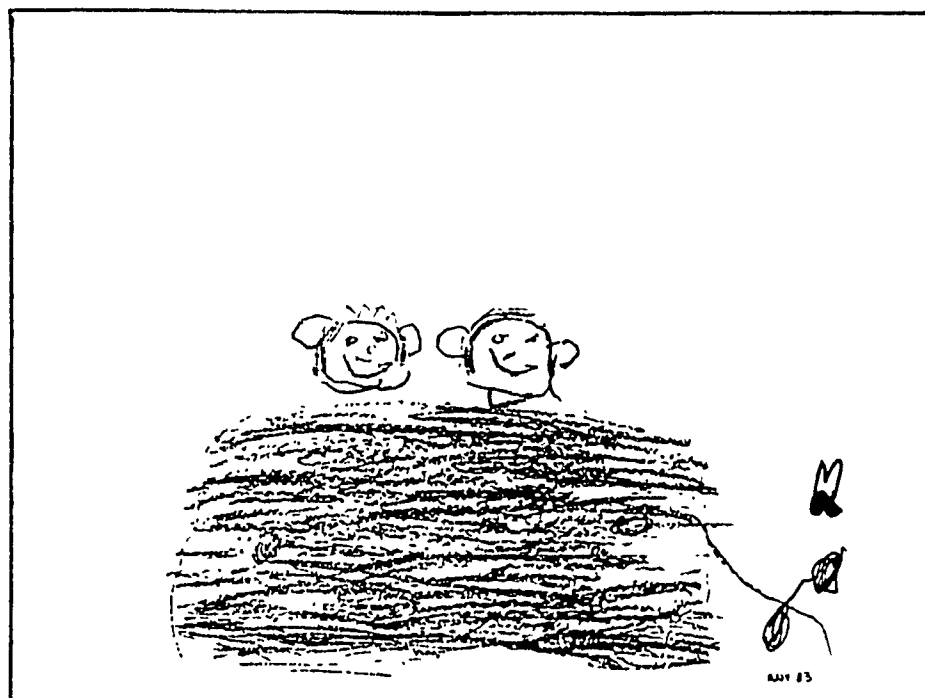


Figure 59. "My Parents in a Car" (age 4.2).

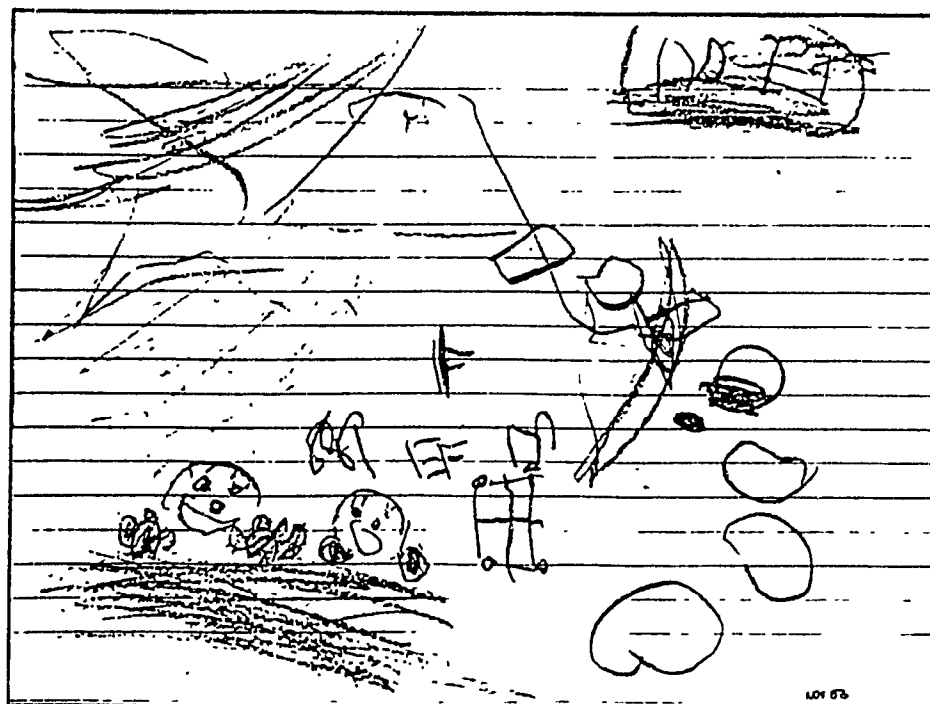


Figure 60. "My Parents in a Car" (age 4.2).

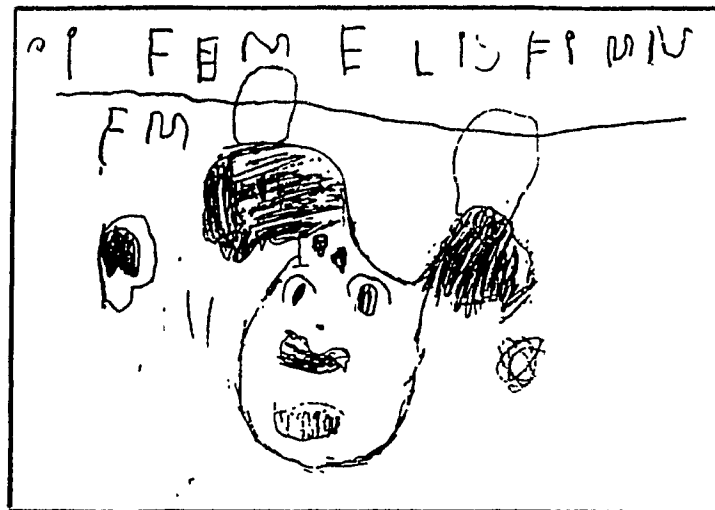


Figure 61. "A Girl or a Dog" (age 4.2).

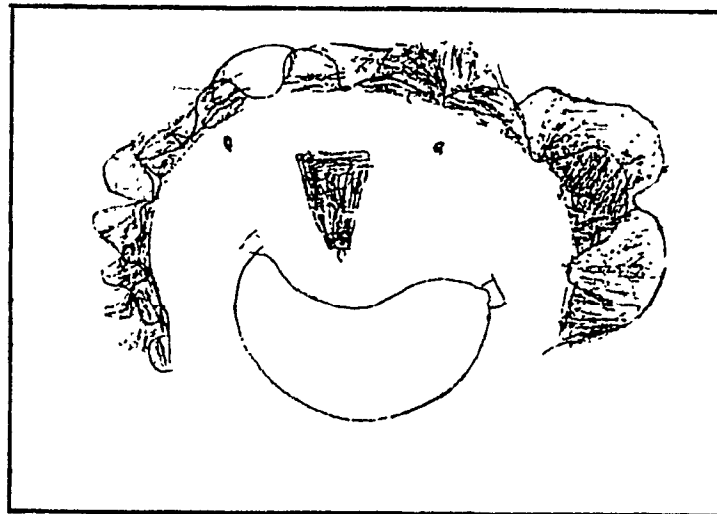


Figure 62. Raggedy-Ann (age c.4).

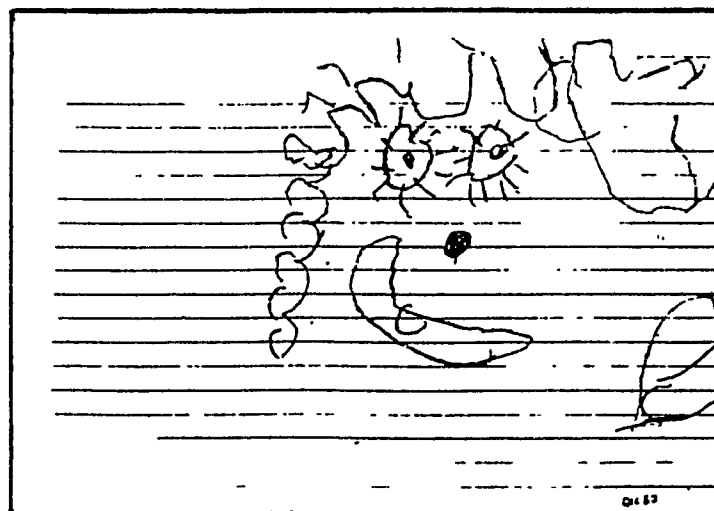


Figure 63. A Face (age 4.3).

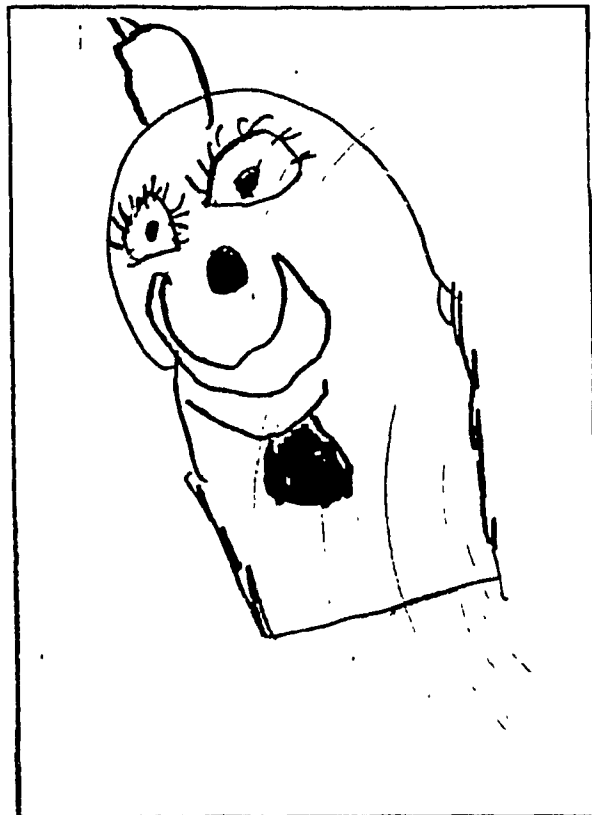
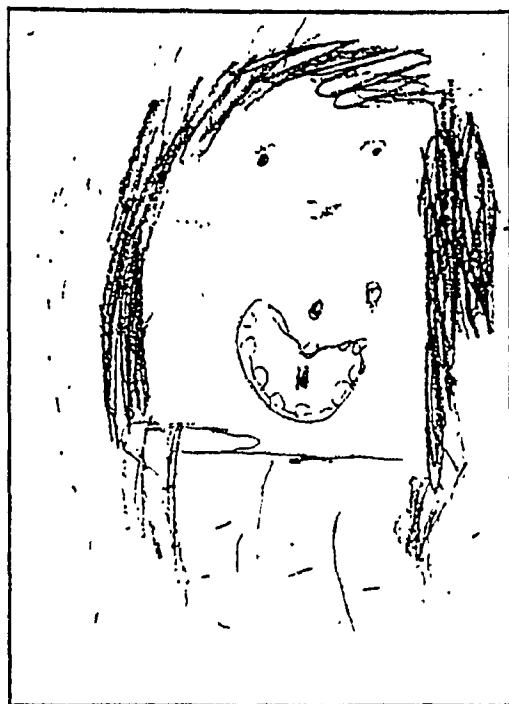


Figure 64. Purple Cheeks (age 4.3) Figure 65. A Unicorn (age 4.1).

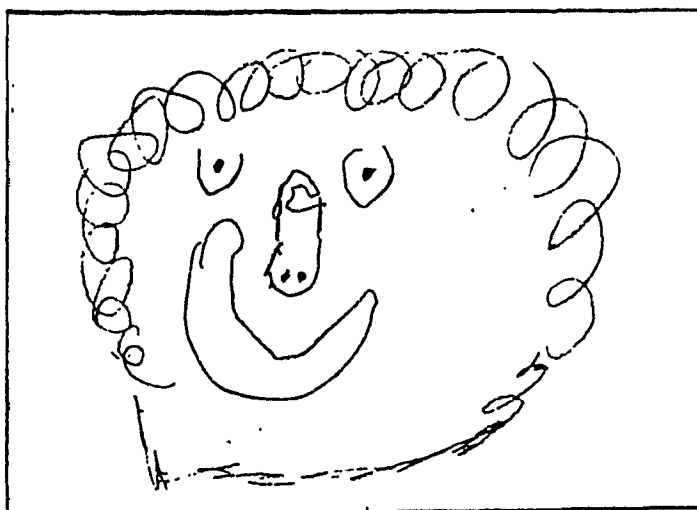


Figure 66. Dad With Beard (age 4.3).

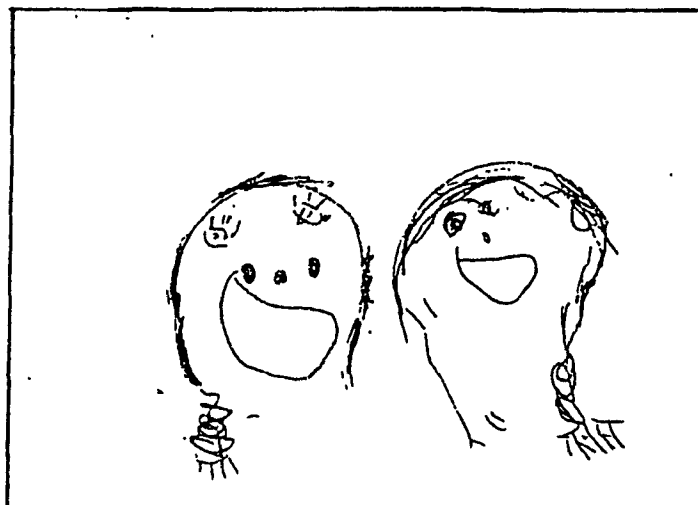


Figure 67. Two Girls (age 4).



Figure 68. Girl With Braids (4.3).

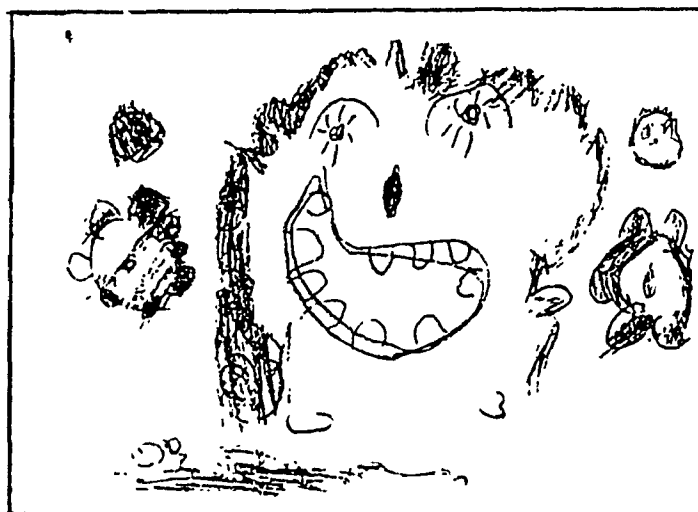


Figure 69. Girl With Teeth (age 4.2).

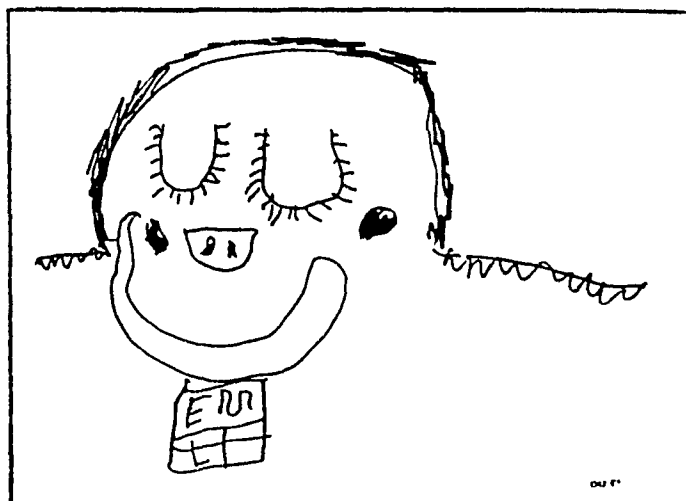


Figure 70. Self Portrait (age 4.1).

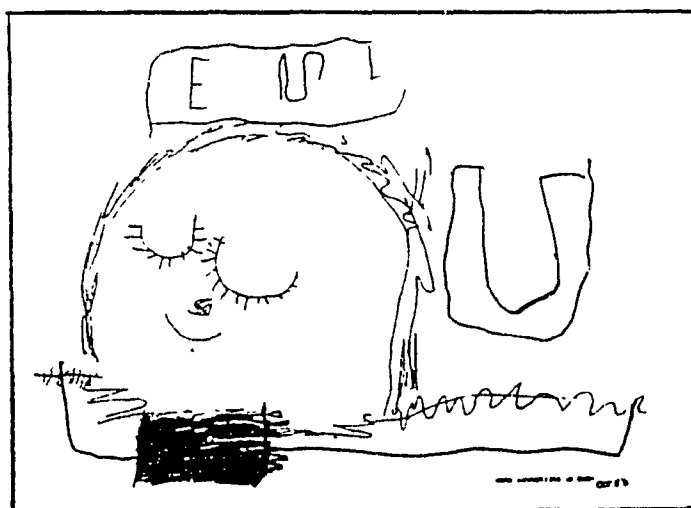


Figure 71. Self Portrait (age 4.1).

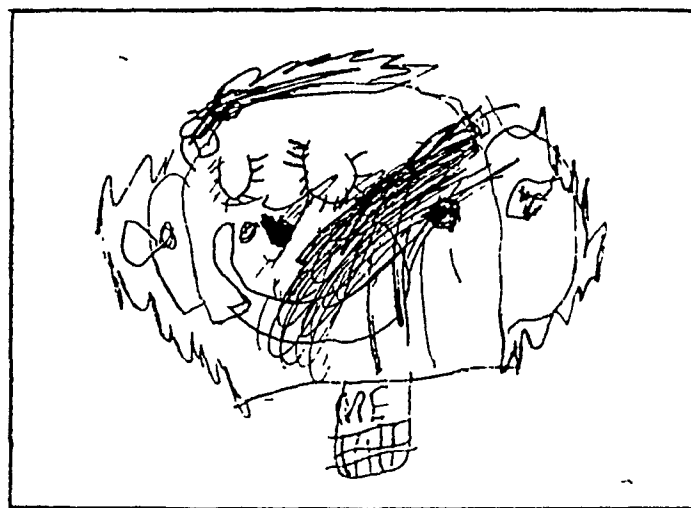


Figure 72. Self Portrait (age 4.1).



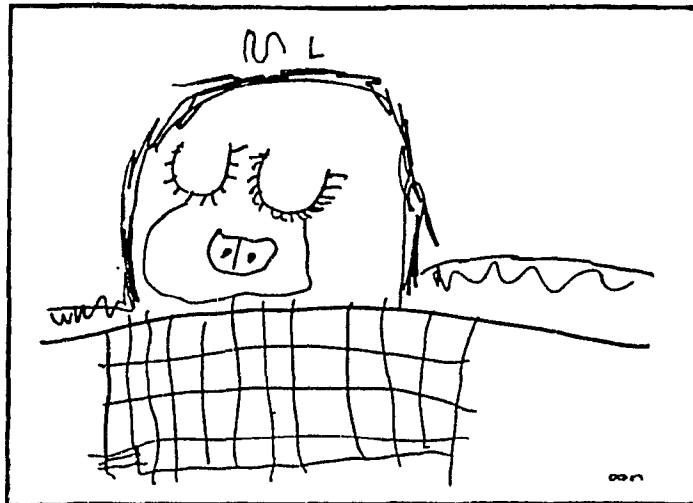


Figure 73. Self Portrait (age 4.1).

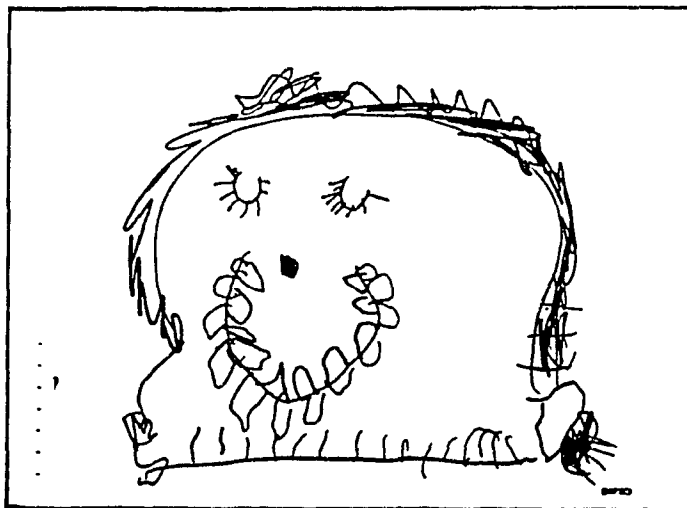


Figure 74. A Girl (age 4.1).

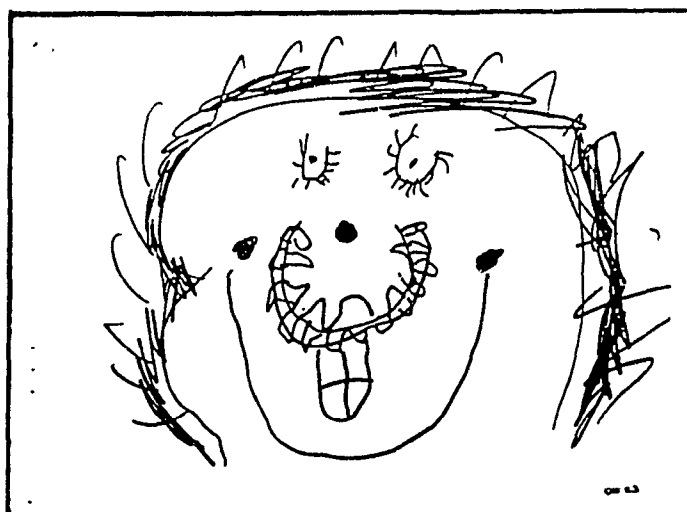


Figure 75. A Girl (age 4.1).

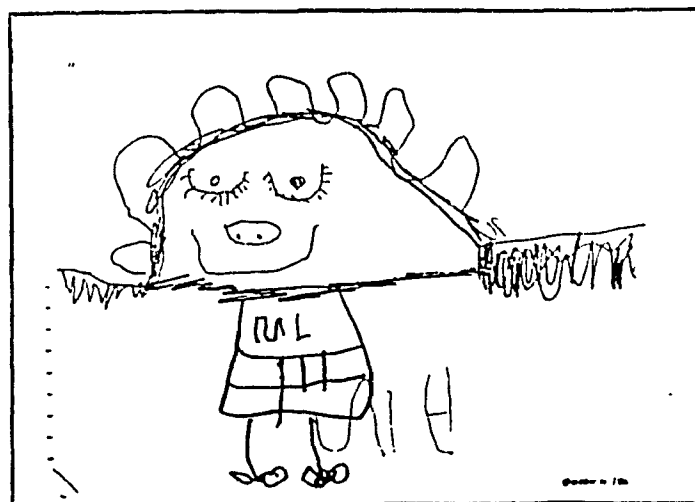


Figure 76. Self Portrait (age 4.1).

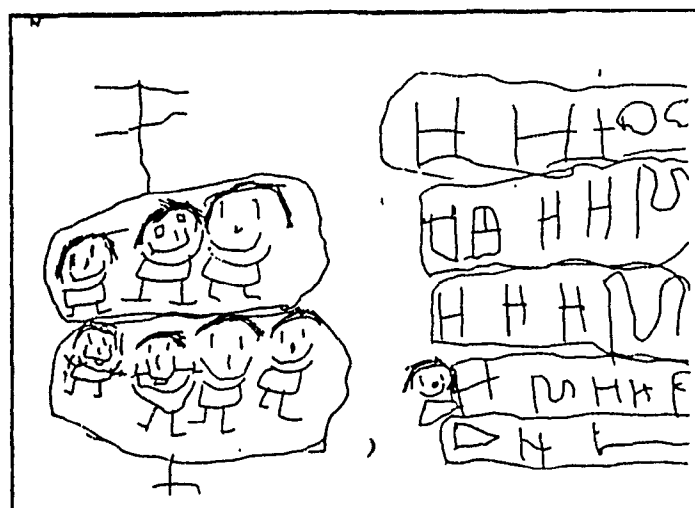


Figure 77. Different People (age 4.1).

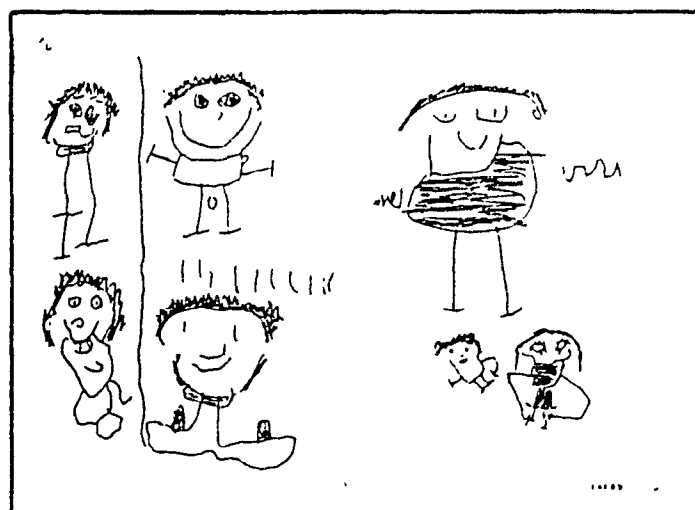


Figure 78. Different People (age 4.1).



Figure 79. Birthday Card (age 3.6).

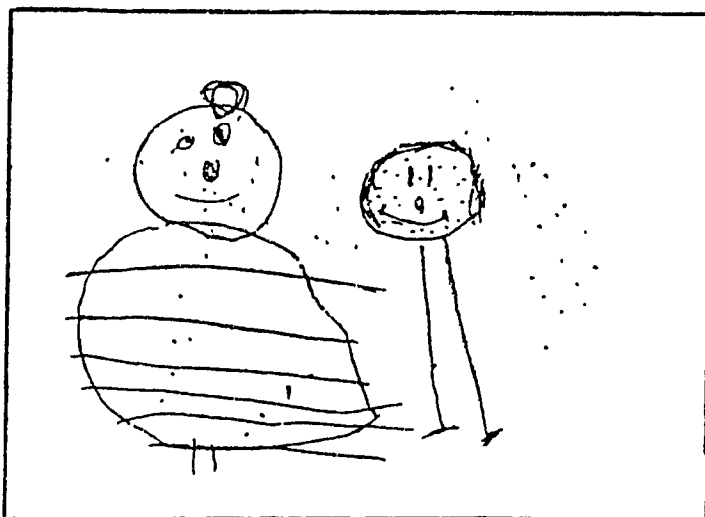


Figure 80. Melissa With a Snowman (age 3.6)

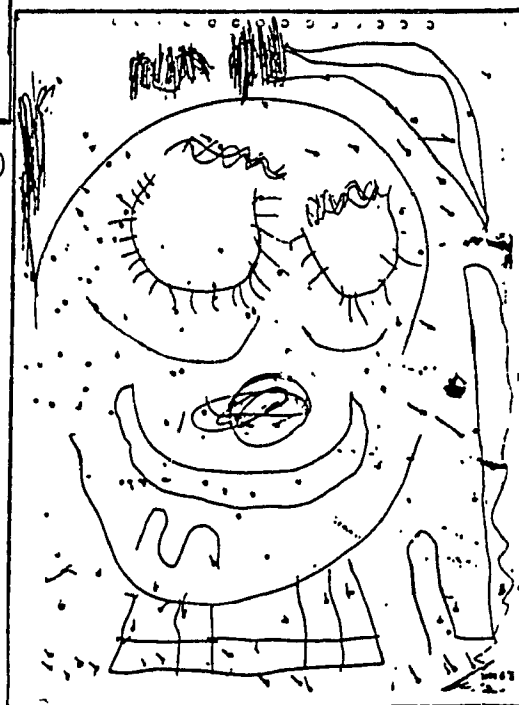


Figure 81. A Face (age 4.2).

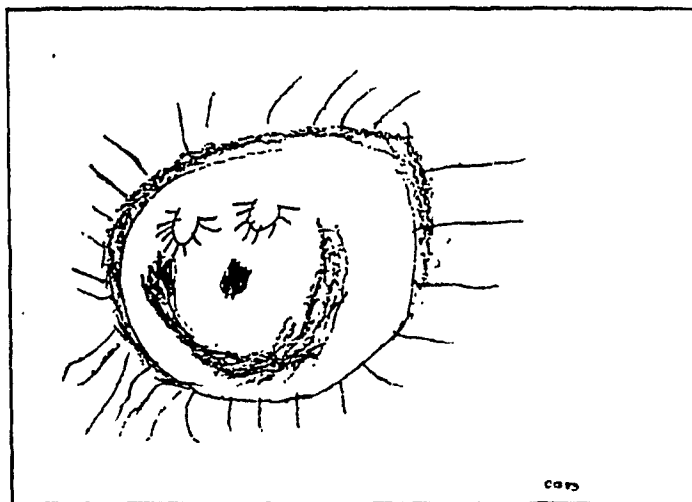


Figure 82. Sun Drawing (age 4.1).

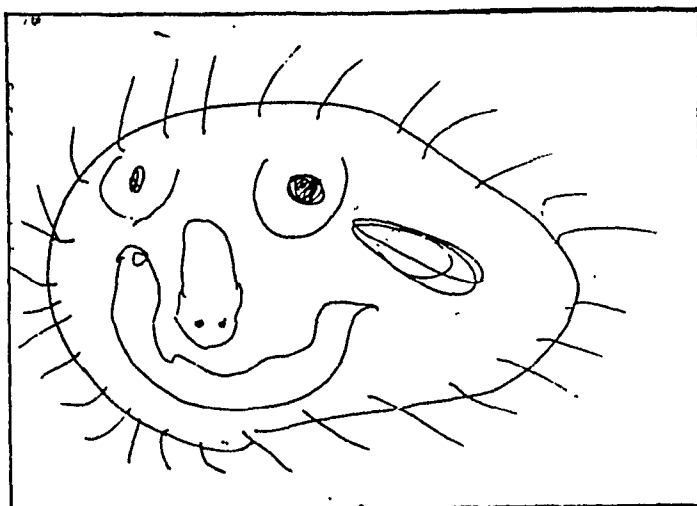


Figure 83. Sun Drawing (age 4.3).

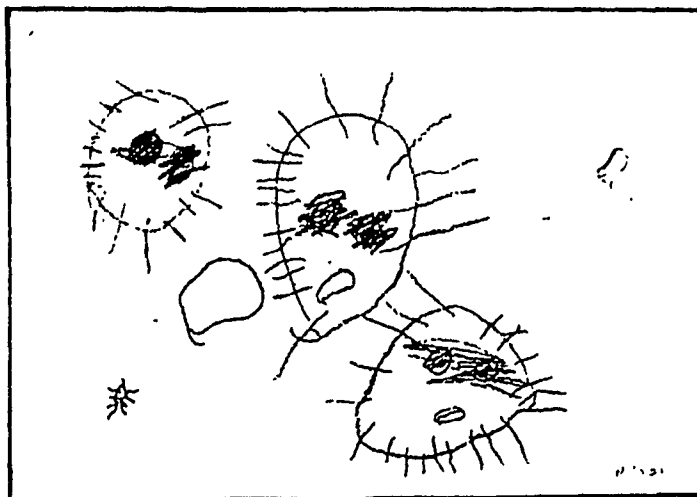


Figure 84. Sun Drawing (age c. 3).

## Chapter 6: The Drawings Done During the Fifth and Sixth Years

The year 1984 marked a turning point in my life. It had been five years now since I had worked outside the home and even longer since I had done any art work. I was feeling the need to release myself from the routine drudgery of housework and the boredom that accompanied it. I followed an advertisement in the local newspaper announcing an opening for a part time teaching position at the local college, to teach painting and drawing. I was offered the position and I accepted even though I was experiencing second thoughts about leaving my children in the care of "another". My only consolation was that my teaching would only be part time and therefore I would not be "abandoning" my children entirely. I enjoyed this new job immensely and I began making art for myself, for the first time in ten years. With access to a printmaking studio at the college, I began to dabble with techniques that I had been familiar with many years ago. In the summer of 1986, I decided to take a printmaking course at Concordia University and consequently travelled twice a week to Montreal from Cornwall. By the Fall of 1986, I had entered my first juried show.

There is a significant decline in the number of drawings made by Melissa during the years when she was five and six years old. I suspect that the decline could be attributed to a variety of circumstances. Melissa had less time to draw. At five years of age, she attended Kindergarten full days and at six she attended grade one. She also spent more time outdoors playing with the new friends she had made in the neighbourhood. While away at work, I was not always aware of the drawings that had been made by Melissa or of their whereabouts. One day I found a number of Melissa's drawings thrown out in the garbage by our babysitter who felt the need to reduce the house of its clutter. I have only a vague recollection of Melissa drawing on

the weekends and on the holidays, and usually when she was bored. Melissa's involvement with activities outside of school also reduced her amount of free time. During her fifth year, she attended Saturday morning ballet classes and at six, she became a brownie and played on a soccer team in the summer.

In the summer of 1985, the family began camping. Melissa and Stephanie learned how to fish for perch while camping at Mew Lake in Algonquin Park (northern Ontario). In that same summer we took a second camping trip to Wildwood, New Jersey, where for the first time the girls saw the ocean and enjoyed many hours of sandcastle-making. The following summer was just as fun-packed with a camping trip to the Adirondacks (New York) and visits to the High Falls Gorge, Santa's Workshop and the Enchanted Forest.

Sixty-one single drawings and a book of five drawings make up the pile representing the drawings done at the ages of five and six years. Crayon (twenty-two drawings), ballpoint pen (twelve drawings) and markers (eleven drawings) were the mediums most often used. Most of the drawings were done on computer print-out paper measuring eleven by fourteen inches.

Half of the drawings use outline and the other half outline and colouring-in. Although colour is not usually used realistically (exceptions include orange pumpkins and yellow suns), it is explored to a much greater extent than in the past. The scribble and shape drawings that I observed years earlier have virtually disappeared and now the majority of Melissa's drawings suggest subject matter to me. Ten drawings represent Christmas (six drawings, mostly Santa), Halloween (two drawings, witches and pumpkins) and Valentine's day (two drawings, hearts) themes. Another eight drawings include animals. However, the majority of drawings (thirty-nine) represent

people drawn with complete bodies (nine of these drawings include animals with people). Three drawings include only the head and upper torso. Generally the heads appear rather large for the bodies (see figure 115) and a variety of schemata is used to portray the torso. Sometimes the torso appears as a rectangle (see figure 89), other times it appears as a triangle (see figures 98, 99), or as a circle (see figure 120). Features on the faces vary in their rendition as do the arms and legs. At five years of age, Melissa depicted arms with volume, and attached ray-like fingers to the hands (see figures 88-91). At six years old, Melissa sometimes drew arms as a single line, reminiscent of sticks (see figures 98, 99). Six drawings look to me like drawings of Strawberry Shortcake (see figures 88, 100-103).

Baselines, skylines or background objects appear only in a few drawings. When figures are included with a background, the figures appear to be coming closer to a baseline and look less as though they are floating. Melissa includes the sun in a good number of drawings and chooses the upper right corner for its location. The sun is one of the few objects coloured realistically, however it is worth noting that its schema changes with nearly every drawing.

As I peruse these drawings one by one in hopes of triggering any recall, I stop and examine a group of three drawings which reveal figures and creatures with what appears to be large M's constituting parts of their bodies and I am brought back to the past (see figures 85-87). Melissa used to love writing her name over and over again and experimenting with various styles of doing so. One day while printing the letter M on a sheet of computer paper, she observed that the letter could be something else and pointed this out to me after she had created rabbit ears from her M. She

began to explore this M further and discovered that the M could serve as a crown, nose and body of a person. This act of discovery somewhat parallels the time when at four years of age, Melissa discovered she could make animals from random scribbles (see figures 46, 47).

Another set of drawings that seem to connect with the past in terms of process can be seen in figures 89 to 91, which depict a person with unusual curls on the head. Very much like the earlier drawings of the sleeping self portraits (see figures 70-74), and the Santas (see figures 20-22), Melissa worked through a series of drawings, repeating the same image over and over.

Among this pile of drawings, I find a book made by Melissa with the word Bambi inscribed on one of the pages within (see figures 92-96). It appears to me that Melissa was attempting to tell a story. However, I am unable to decipher it. This book represents one of the first illustrated stories by Melissa that I have come across.

Another drawing with words that comes to my attention shows a figure sitting on a hill with the name "Sara" included in a speech cloud and below, another figure pictured with the words "a pig", also within a speech cloud (see figure 97). Along the top of the page are the words "to mummy from Melissa Smyth". What I remember about this drawing is that Melissa had been angry with her friend Sara and had created this piece after an argument she had had with her. She wanted me to see the drawing and so addressed it to me. I am not certain which figures represent whom. However, I suspect that Melissa is the figure at ground level and the words "a pig" represent her angry thoughts about her friend. The captioned name "Sara" serves as a label, in this case, to let us know who the top figure is.

Both of these last pieces of work represent to me, Melissa's need to use



more than an image to say what she wants. The use of language is added to elaborate on the idea.

For the interview, I asked Melissa to reflect upon each of the drawings as they revealed themselves from the pile. One by one she meditated on these artworks from her past. Her response to most of the drawings took the form of labeling, in a very objective way, the contents within, almost as though she were describing the work done by someone else. For a small number of drawings, Melissa was able to make some kind of connection with the past. These drawings prompted Melissa to become quite excited and anxious to reveal all that she could remember about them. They included the drawings of Strawberry Shortcake (see figures 88, 99-103), the wizard (see figure 105), the bears (see figure 107), and a self portrait (see figure 108).

Melissa found six drawings depicting Strawberry Shortcake (see figures 88, 99-103) and eagerly described details of their clothing. She pointed out the over-sized hat topped with a strawberry (see figures 99, 100), the polka dots on the dress, and the apron with pocket and strawberries pointing downward (see figures 101, 103). When I asked Melissa to tell me who Strawberry Shortcake was she replied, "a girl who wears strawberries everywhere". She told me that she knew that the figures represented Strawberry Shortcake "because of the hat" and went on to say, "On my Strawberry Shortcake doll, there's a hat exactly like that". Melissa told me that sometimes she'd have the doll in front of her while drawing and added, "it's the hat that makes it". As she continued to view these drawings of the doll, she noticed a cat and informed me that Strawberry Shortcake had a pink pet cat named Custard (see figure 100, 102). Her observation of the cat brought back the memory of some cards she had had in the past, that

pictured Strawberry Shortcake, Custard and a number of other doll characters. She remembered these cards belonged to a game she once had. As she viewed this group of drawings (Strawberry Shortcake), she judged that some of the drawings were better than others because they included more detail.

Melissa was quite eager to tell me about the wizard drawing (see figure 105). She explained that this drawing was done for Halloween. She knew this because of the depiction of a moon and a pumpkin. She added that usually for Halloween she would draw a witch but that this time she had drawn a wizard. She knew it was an angry wizard because of the V-shaped frown on its forehead. The idea of making the V on the forehead for anger came from a character she had seen on the television show Sesame Street. Her words were as follows; "I learned it off the magician on Sesame Street like they played music that always got him mad and he used to go like this [she demonstrated a frown] and his eyebrows went into the letter V [Melissa laughed]". When I asked Melissa his name, she remembered another detail and that was that the character himself, was the one making the noise. She said the following:

I don't know, I think it was Mr. V. or something because he was on a t.v. commercial. He was playing the violin and whenever he'd make a squeaking noise, he'd go like this and then rub his head with a letter V.

About the drawing depicting three bears (see figure 107), Melissa pointed out that you could see inside the house of the bear who was sleeping. She added that the other two bears in front of the house were holding hands. Although she could not tell me much about this drawing, it appeared that she had a very strong attraction to it, almost as if she were being reunited with an old friend.

One drawing that Melissa remembered vividly was a self portrait (see figure 108). About the drawing she had this to say:

Oh, I remember doing that on the kitchen table. You said do one of your best pictures and you'll frame it and remember it was in the living room, I mean the kitchen? I remember that. That's me.

This drawing was eventually framed and hung for three years on the wall over the kitchen table.

There were a few drawings where Melissa had no recall of making them but she could remember how her imagery was influenced. One example of this was the drawing of a stick man with a rainbow and a happy-face sun overhead (see figure 112). She remembered that when she was in kindergarten her teacher used to draw stick men and suns with happy faces, sometimes on the blackboard and sometimes in the students' notebooks to take the place of stickers. I also remember one day Melissa came home from kindergarten with a stick figure drawing she had done and proudly showed it to me for "approval". I was rather surprised since I had never seen Melissa draw people this way before. The following day when I went to pick her up from school, I had noticed hanging on an easel, in the classroom, a drawing done by the teacher of a stick man that resembled closely the drawing Melissa had brought home to me. I later found out that the whole class had copied the picture done by the teacher.

Melissa picked out another drawing where she felt she knew where the idea came from. It was a drawing of a person with something on its head (see figure 114). She explained that the "thing" on the head was "a big bump" put there by a hit on the head. She thought she may have got the idea from viewing various fighting characters on Sesame Street.

Melissa was very certain that a specific drawing of a girl in pink with

pigtails and dimples represented her cabbage patch doll (see figure 116). She added that the idea of including pigtails in later drawings of girls was influenced by her doll.

A few of Melissa's drawings had me puzzled in terms of the identity of various subjects. For these drawings, Melissa could tell me the subject matter represented but could not recall the experience of having made them. For example she could tell me that figure 117 represented a robot and that his buttons could be seen on his chest but could not explain where the idea came from and had no recollection of having made the piece. Melissa informed me that the circles around the Santas in some of the Christmas drawings represented his bag of toys (see figures 119-121) and that figure 118 represented a "crazy ball". I remember that this ball which depicted a distorted face, was purchased for Melissa by her father. It was now being illustrated in a birthday card for her father.

Melissa was amused by the way she had drawn the branches on the Christmas tree in figure 104, as circles projecting out instead of lines. She loved the way she had drawn the flower in figure 109 and stated that this was her favourite drawing from the whole pile.

Very little was said about the drawings that had aroused my curiosity when I had viewed them privately. Melissa told me that the drawings of people with "curly hair" represented me (see figures 89-91). She acknowledged that the M drawings (see figures 85-87) symbolized rabbits but remained very puzzled about them. She couldn't figure out the Bambi story (see figures 92-96) and had only a vague recollection of the drawing she had made resulting from her argument with her friend (see figure 97). She had one thing to add about this last drawing represented by figure 97, and that was that the figure was standing on a cave not a hill.

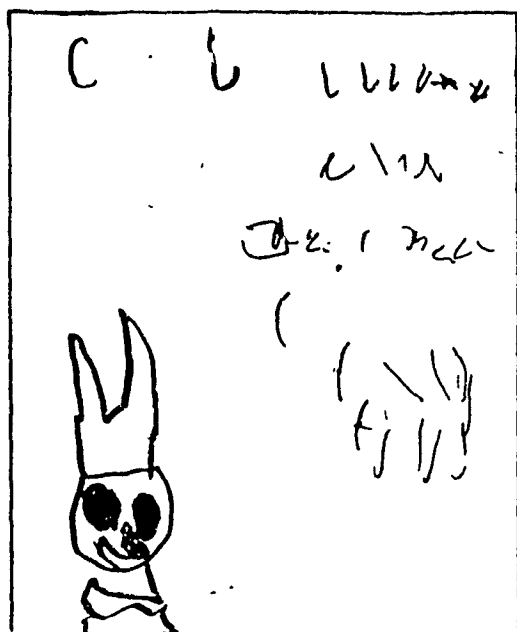


Figure 85. Rabbit (age c.5).

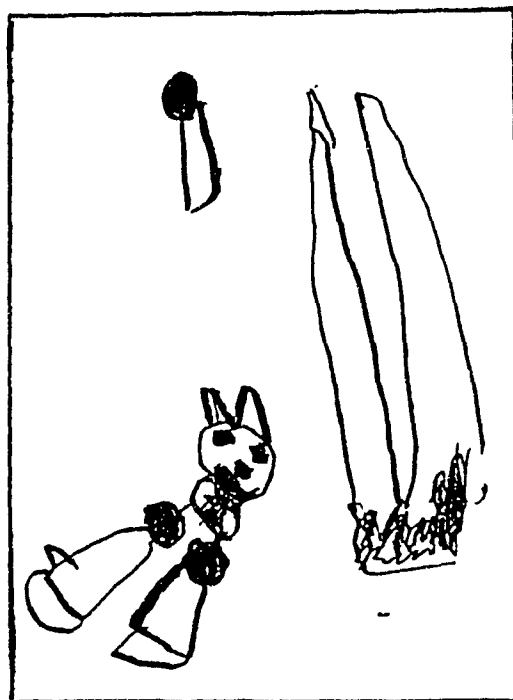


Figure 86. Rabbit (age c.5).

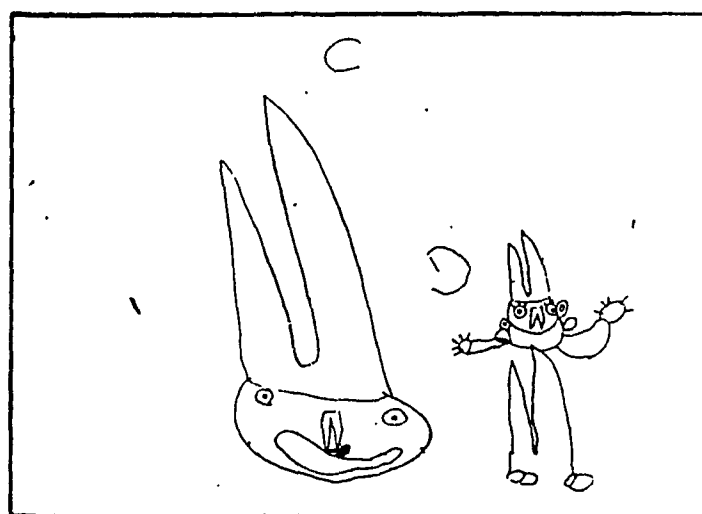


Figure 87. Rabbit and Person With Crown (age c.5).



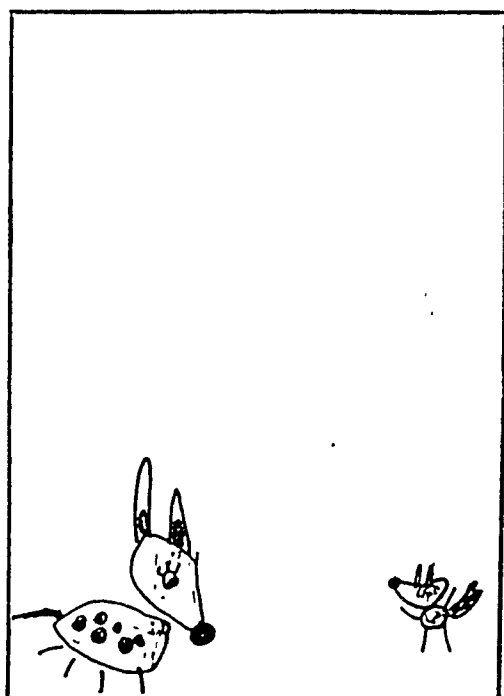


Figure 92. Page from Bambi story  
(age c.6).

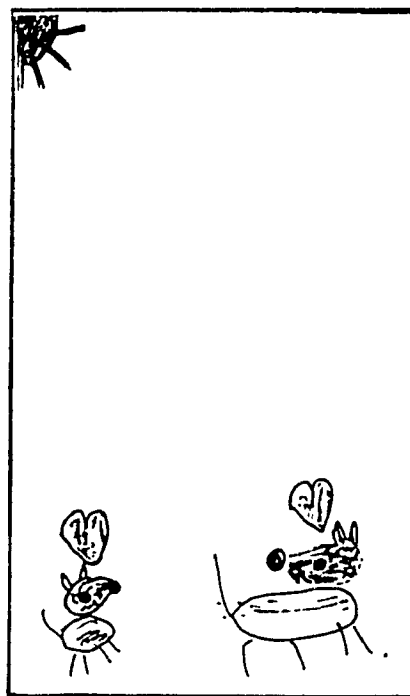


Figure 93. Page from book  
(age c.6).

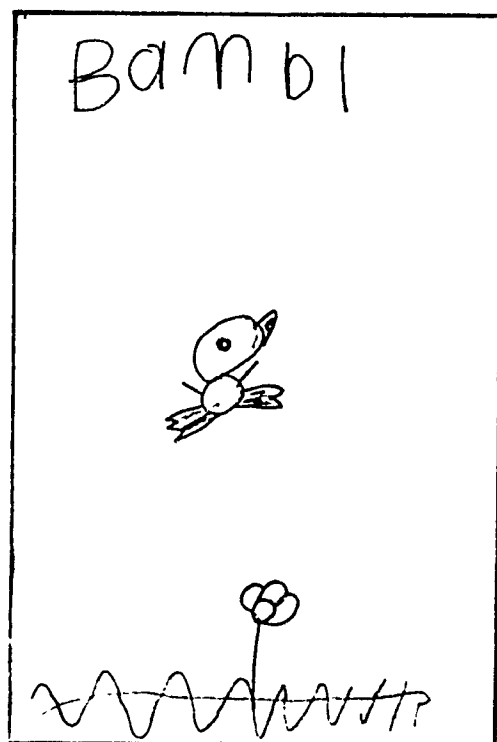


Figure 94. Page from book (age c.6).

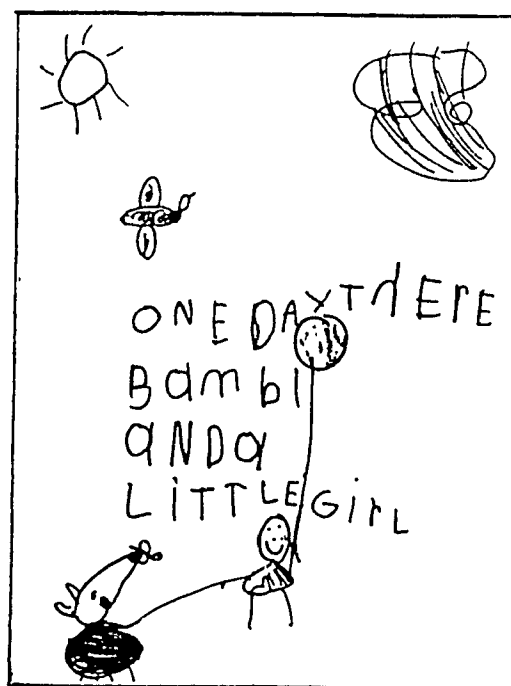


Figure 95. Page from book  
(age c.6).



Figure 96. Page from book (age c.6).

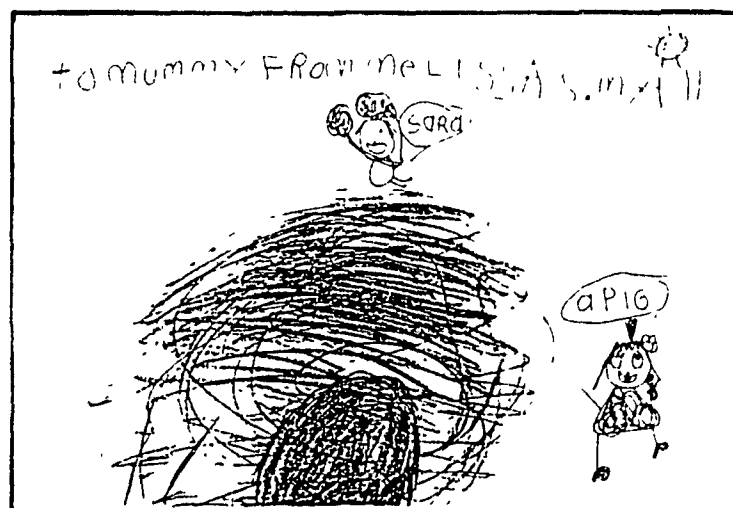


Figure 97. Sara (age c.6).



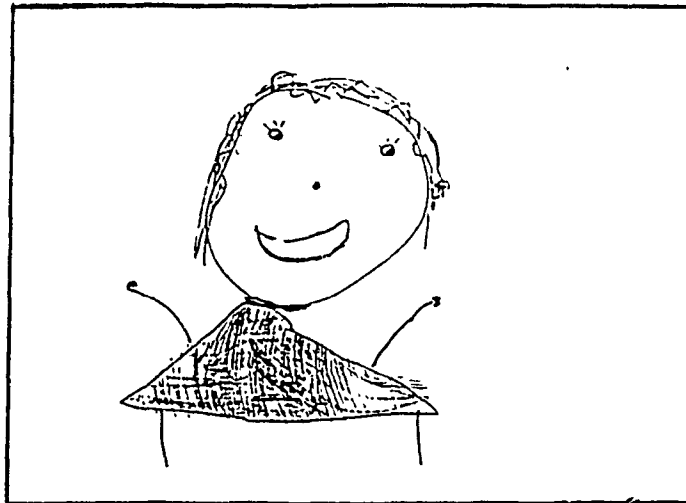


Figure 98. A Girl (age c.6).



Figure 99. Strawberry Shortcake (age c.6).

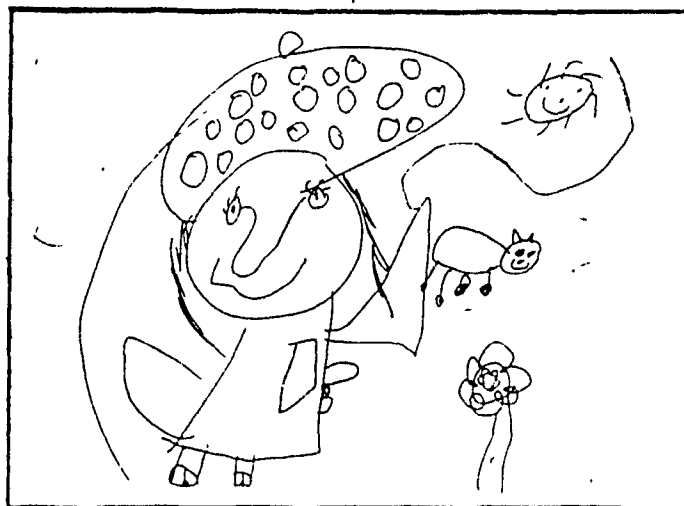


Figure 100. Strawberry Shortcake and Custard (age c.5).

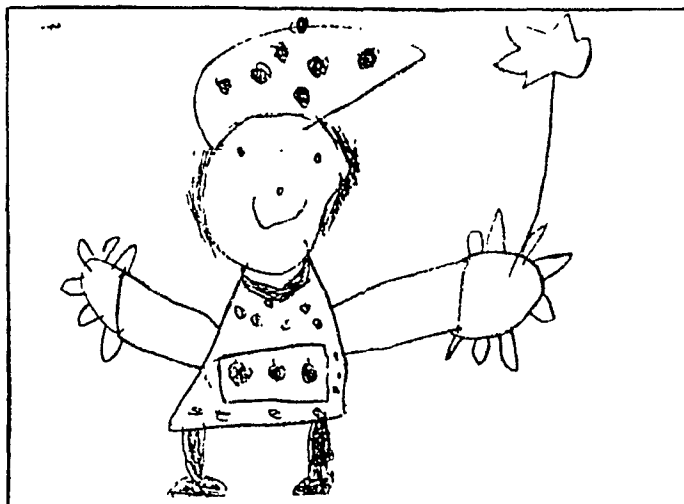


Figure 101. Strawberry Shortcake (age c.5).



Figure 102. Strawberry Shortcake and Custard (age c.5).

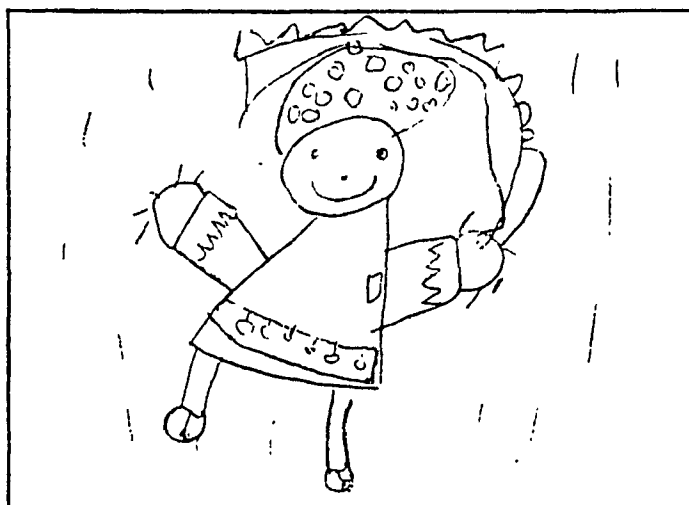


Figure 103. Strawberry Shortcake (age c.5).

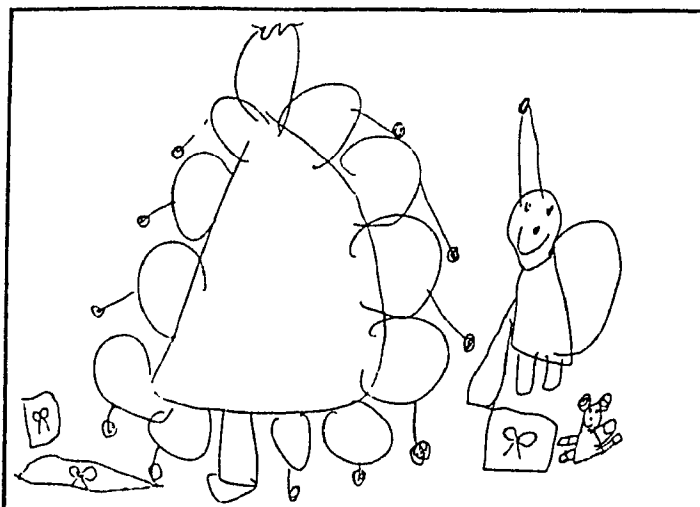


Figure 104. Christmas Tree and Santa (age c.5).

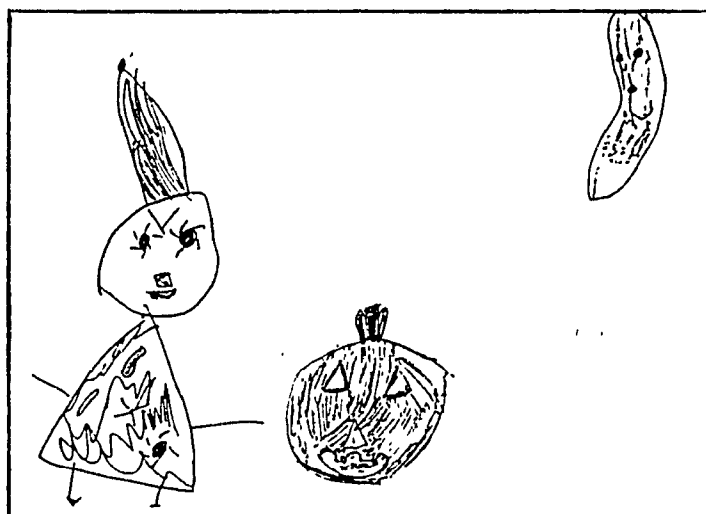


Figure 105. The Wizard (age c.6).

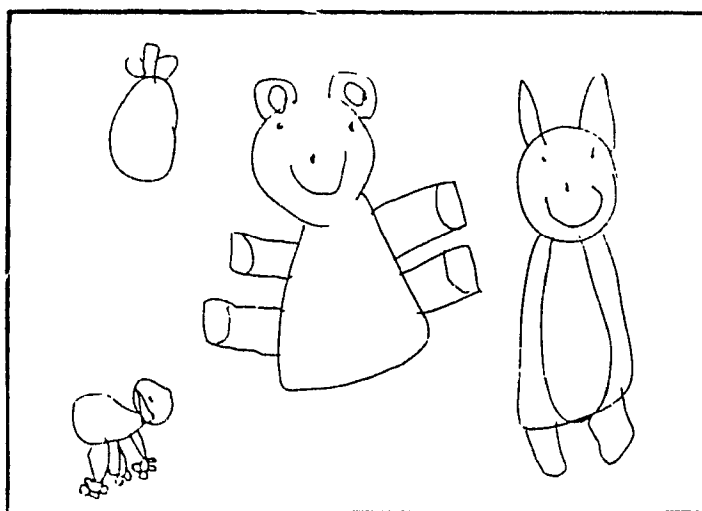


Figure 106. Animals (age c.5).

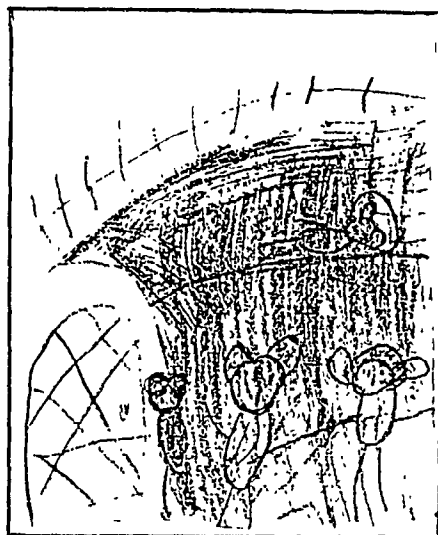


Figure 107. Three Bears (age 6).

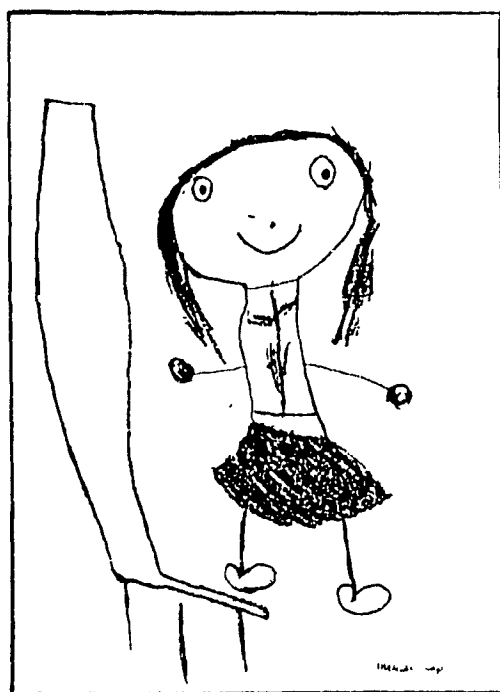


Figure 108. Self Portrait (age 6).

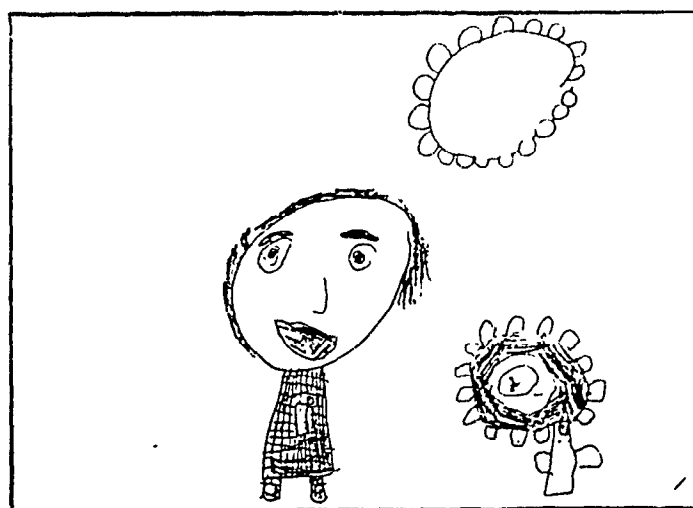


Figure 109. Person With Flower (age c.6).

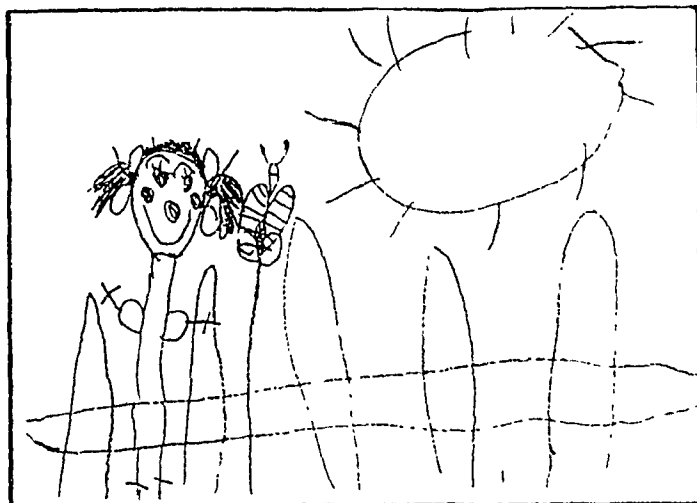


Figure 110. Girl and Fence (age c.6).

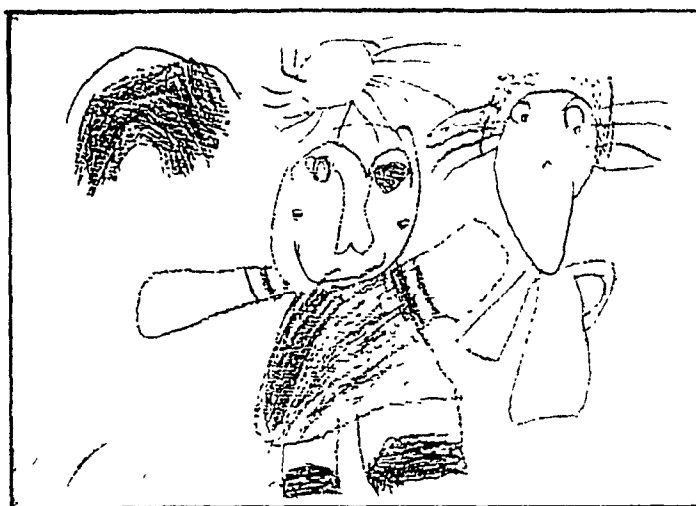


Figure 111. A Person (age c.5).

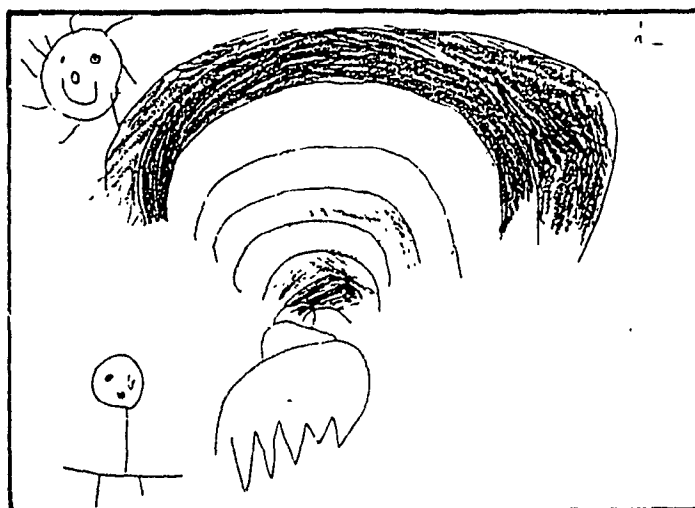


Figure 112. Stickman With Rainbow (age 5).

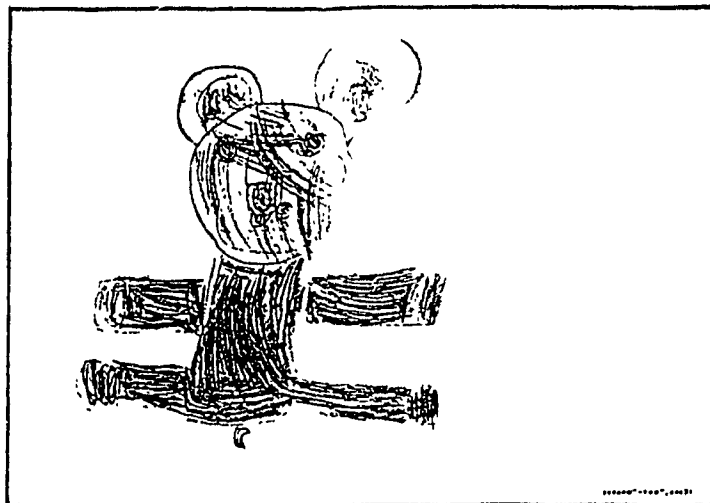


Figure 113. A Bear (age 6).

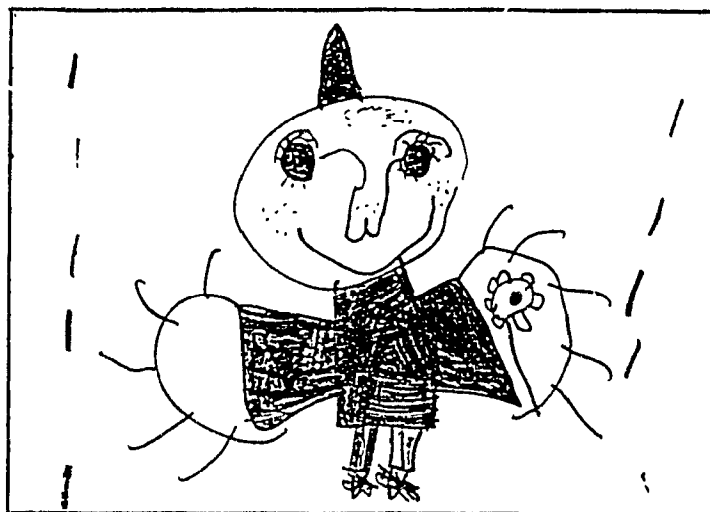


Figure 114. Bump On The Head (age c.5).

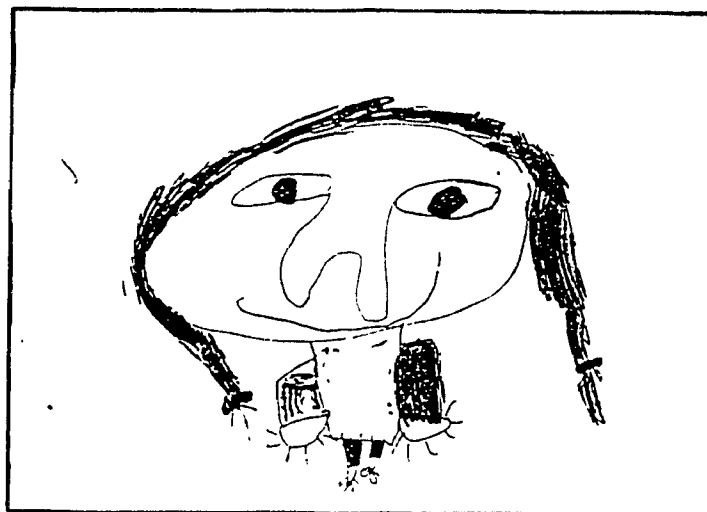


Figure 115. A Person (age c.5).

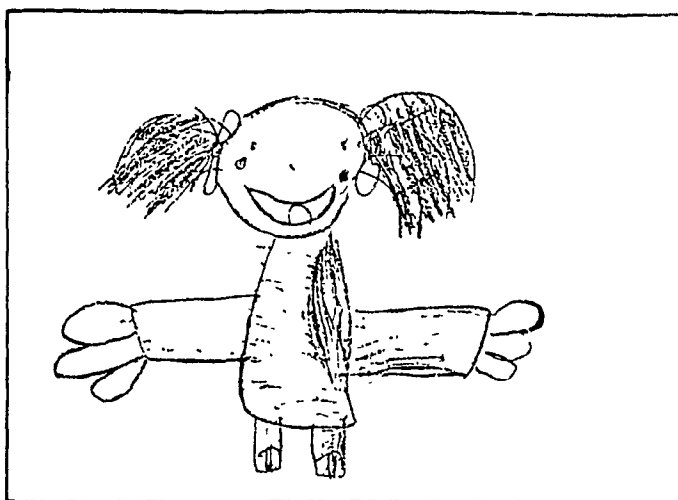


Figure 116. Cabbage Patch Doll (age c.6).

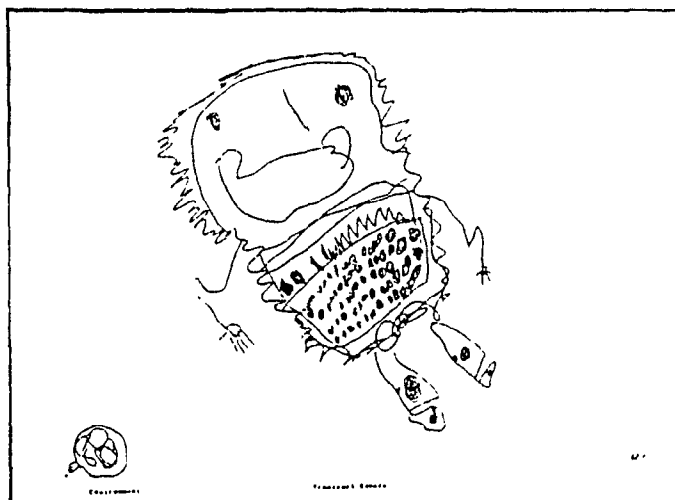


Figure 117. Robot (age c.5).

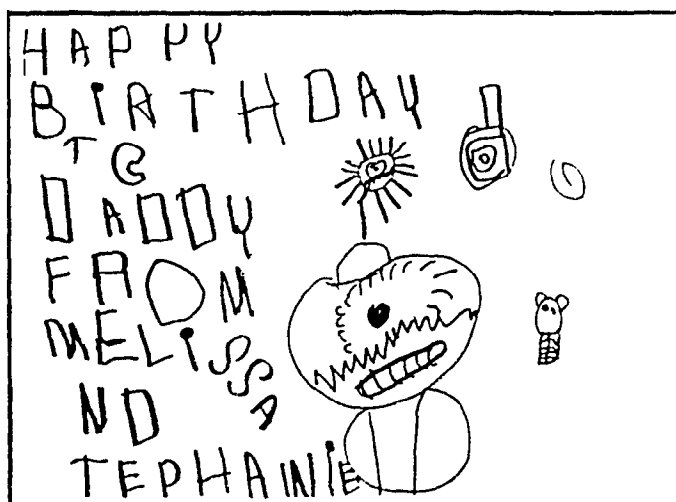


Figure 118. Crazy Ball (age c.6).

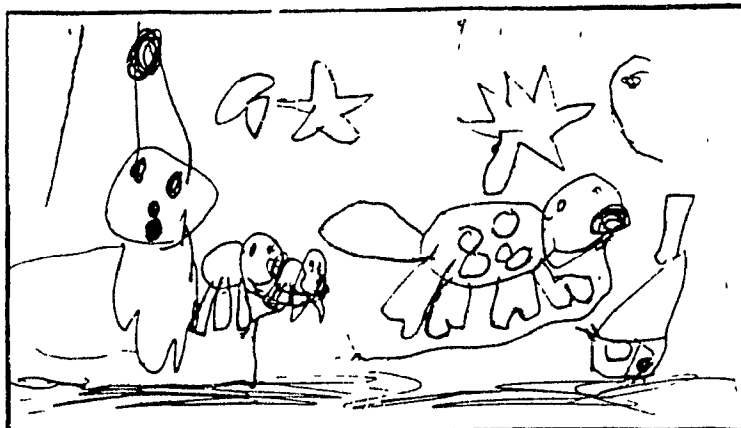


Figure 119. Santa and Reindeer (age c.5).

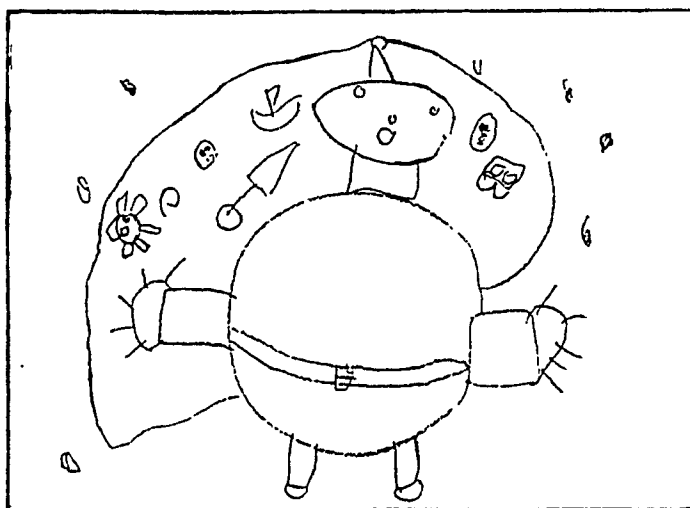


Figure 120. Santa and His Bag of Toys (age c.6).

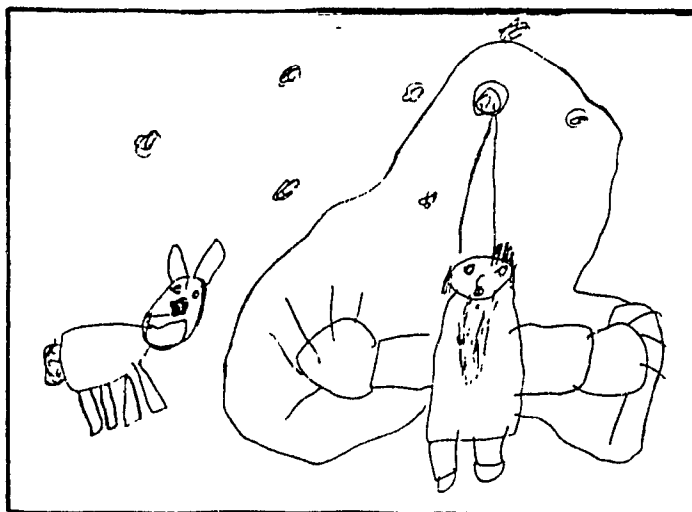


Figure 121. Santa and Rudolphe (age c.5).



### Chapter 7: The Drawings Done During the Seventh and Eighth Years

My part time employment with the college as a painting and drawing instructor continued. The fall of 1986 marked my return to university as a part time student working towards a master's degree in art education. Melissa was in grade two now and Stephanie would be attending pre-school for the first time. The girls' absence from home while attending school, provided me with the uninterrupted time I needed to concentrate on my studies and cultivate ideas and images in my studio work. My choice to pursue various activities and obligations in a part time manner, led me to view my life as multi-layered and somewhat fragmented. I worked with these feelings in my drawings of self and environment which became metaphorically represented as dolls and gardens.

Melissa had never before seen me so engaged in my own art work. I can remember that she would often watch me draw. She seemed particularly fascinated with my drawing of dolls from observation. Sometimes she would ask me if she could draw too, which I interpreted as meaning whether she could draw with me. I would provide her with a wooden drawing board and she would sit for a short while, by my side, and draw one of her toys from observation.

Besides drawing with me, Melissa used to draw while watching television in the family room. She would seat herself on the carpeted floor next to the low coffee table and create drawings that were sometimes based on the television shows she would be watching. One example of such a show was her favourite after school cartoon entitled Jem and the Holograms. This show influenced her to draw numerous renditions of the wild rock star Jem and friends.

Melissa continued to participate in various after school activities such as

Brownies and baton twirling.

Our family grew to include a new Beagle puppy whom we named Pepper. We now had two cats, four goldfish and one dog. We camped again in the Adirondacks for the summer. During the second summer, one month before Melissa's ninth birthday, we moved to the small village of Ingleside, a twenty minute car ride west of Cornwall. This move to a large old Victorian house was a welcome change from our home before, where lack of sufficient space seemed to be a constant problem. The only drawback resulting from this was that Melissa and Stephanie had to begin again making new friends.

Among the saved drawings done during Melissa's seventh and eighth years, I find one hundred and forty-two single drawings, two cards, two notes and one book of story drawings. Nearly half of the drawings are done either in crayon or marker only. Fifty-five drawings are done mostly in ballpoint pen, graphite or coloured pencil. The remaining drawings which add up to twenty-one drawings, represent a combination of drawing mediums. The majority of the drawings are done on computer paper measuring eleven by fourteen inches. However, I note that various drawings have been made on the following: a discarded envelope, pages torn from a sketchbook measuring fourteen by seventeen inches, odd pieces of wrapping paper and cardboard, as well as on pieces of coloured construction paper.

Along with an increased use of pen and pencil in these drawings, I observe that outline supersedes colouring-in. Eighty-two drawings utilize outline only. As well, a combination of outline and colouring-in (in the same drawing), is apparent in other drawings. When colour is used to colour-in, as it is for forty-seven drawings, the colours are usually true to life, when it is used as outline, one colour generally runs throughout the drawing and

is not used realistically.

I note Melissa's continued use of design from years earlier. She decorates her cards and people's clothing with designs and makes use of texture to render fur, feathers, vegetation and exteriors of houses.

As I view the objects and people of Melissa's drawings, I note the introduction of a baseline, generally created by the lower edge of the drawing surface. In a few drawings skyline and additional baselines are included. Rarely do I observe size reduction to indicate perspective. Some overlapping is evident. People and objects that are drawn alone often do not include a baseline and still suggest to me a sense of floating in space. Generally people's heads are becoming more proportional to their bodies and arms and legs are now fused with these bodies and by their placement now appear less rigid. I note also that for a few drawings (see figures 149, 179, 192), Melissa has invented a new way to depict bodies, elongated and narrow, almost resembling toffee that has been stretched.

While some of Melissa's observational drawings may include a fair amount of detail and demonstrate to me a concern for realism (see figures 122-127, 188), there are other drawings which appear to rely on Melissa's memory or imagination for their imagery and lack the concern for realism that these observation drawings exhibit (see figures 130-141, 162, 163, 182, 183). Often the people represented in these non-observational drawings have been rendered simplistically, almost cartoon-like. Added to some of these drawings I notice the use of speech clouds or text to illustrate a situation or event. One drawing shows Melissa asleep with the words "I am sleeping" in a speech cloud overhead (see figure 182). Another depicts a mother and child disagreeing (see figure 131). The child is depicted with large tears flowing from her eyes and written above her head the words, "I dowl wont my milck

mummy" [I don't want my milk mummy]. The mother responds with, "Yes your going to drik" [Yes you're going to drink]. It appears to me that text is used to tell the whole story. Compared to earlier drawings, there is a significant increase in the use of text.

Another way in which Melissa depicts the whole picture is through her use of x-ray drawing. This is evident in her drawing of our new house where Melissa has chosen to leave out the front wall so that all the rooms in the house become visible at the same time (see figure 171). In another drawing of a house (see figure 128), Melissa has drawn a car parked in the driveway but seen from an aerial perspective, again trying to show all. And yet another house has been made into layers with windows and doors that open and close, made in such a way that one must lift the outer piece (house wall) to see the "inside" of the house (see figures 172, 173).

Melissa's choice of subjects to draw still includes mainly people and animals. One of the biggest changes since the previous years' drawings is her development of theme. While in the past a majority of Melissa's people drawings could represent any person, the majority of her people now seem to represent specific people or characters. There is more action and interaction among her people. Some drawings tell a story. I observe twenty narrative drawings with text. There is an increase in the number of drawings from observation as seen by her collection of toy drawings (see figures 122-126).

There are fewer holiday theme drawings depicting Halloween and Christmas than in the past. Although Melissa still depicts the commercial aspect of Christmas (see figures 176, 177, 178), there is now an increase in the number of drawings that symbolize the religious aspect of Christmas (see figures 179, 180). A set of six drawings represent the image of Christ as a

baby in the manger with and without Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. Her interest in repeating an image several times is seen in these Christmas drawings as well as in other drawings of dragons and birds (see figures 151-161).

Various drawings have been made as gifts for family and friends. Melissa has utilized both drawings and text in numerous notes, cards and books that she has made for others (see figures 134-141, 167-169, 194-198).

Among this group of drawings, I see those that appear to me to represent the outward appearance of things and yet others that appear to represent inner ideals and/or confusions being experienced and questioned by Melissa.

Several drawings of toys from observation and a drawing of our new house suggest to me Melissa's concern to capture the likeness of an object as realistically as she can (see figures 122-127). I remember she used to prop up her toys on the coffee table in the living room and with great concentration attempt in her drawing to replicate the likeness of these objects. I recall a day in August when Melissa, Stephanie and myself sat at our picnic table in the back yard (see figure 127). Both girls had decided to draw the back view of our house. While Stephanie relied mainly on memory for her image, Melissa chose to study the architectural features and details of the house as she was drawing.

Other drawings which seemed to rely more on imagination than on observation for their imagery, seem to reveal to me something about Melissa's self and ideals. At seven years of age, Melissa used to tell me how she would like to be a princess one day and she would ask me how to go about making this a reality. I would tell her that she would have to marry a prince. She wanted to know if there were any princes around and

wondered whether she would be living in a castle should she find a prince to marry. I mentioned that there was a Prince William who was slightly younger than she. This motivated Melissa to consider writing a letter to Prince William in an attempt to introduce herself. Two drawings depict the princess ideal (see figures 129, 130). In one (see figure 129), I suspect that Melissa has depicted herself as the princess on the left. The word "hipiyipi" which expresses her joy is included in a speech cloud shared by both the prince and princess. The name Diria included in another speech cloud, is the name of her cabbage patch doll. How this relates to the composition, I am unsure.

Other drawings which comprise of themes of authority figures, of right and wrong, and of good and evil forces, suggest to me that Melissa is attempting to define for herself the meanings of these concerns, confusions and fears. The authority figure is the subject of several drawings. Figure 131 depicts a mother forcing her crying child to drink milk. In another I see a teacher with her class of students (see figure 132), and yet another illustrates a girl who appears to be in control (see figure 133). A small heart-shaped book of fifteen pages, cut in the shape of hearts of varying sizes, contains six short illustrated stories where various interactions exist between a child character (always a girl) and her mother or father (see figures 134-141). In one story, the child named Lindsay hides a cut from her mother. In another, Lindsay wants to keep a cat but her mother says no. Very sad, Lindsay awaits her father's return home from work so she can tell him what her mother has said about not being allowed to keep a cat. Lindsay's father tells her she doesn't have to get rid of the cat. Lindsay reports this decision to her mother and adds that she loves her mother very much. In other stories, one where a girl feels sick, and another where a

different girl is afraid, the mother figure is shown to be protecting and caring for her child. The mother runs out to buy medicine for her daughter in one story and in another helps her little girl by alleviating her of her fears.

A number of Melissa's drawings deal with the influence of a specific after school television cartoon show, entitled *Jem and the Holograms*. This show symbolizes the conflict between the forces of good and evil. Gem is depicted as a good young woman who can transform herself into a rock star. However when these transformations occur, she and her followers, the rock group named the Holograms, always meet with conflict with the evil rock group named the Misfits, who try to undermine the Holograms because of jealousy and the desire to become the "best" rock band. Several of Melissa's drawings depict the evil characters, Pizzaz, Stormer, Clash and Rocksy who make up the Misfit group (see figures 142-146). It is interesting to note the detail in makeup, clothing and jewellery that Melissa has included in these figures. It appears to me that perhaps the detail from these figures may have influenced her later drawings of "pretty girls" (see figures 148, 149). Perhaps Melissa was working out fantasies of the self, how she would like to dress or who she would like to become or not become.

Some of Melissa's drawings relied on her memory and ideas would come from school or various experiences she had had. On two separate occasions Melissa came home from school with drawings of a dragon and bird respectively. She informed me that the other students in her class complemented her on her work. I sensed she was rather proud of this recognition. For a while she continued with the theme of dragons and birds in her home drawings, working on variations of each (see figures 151-161). A theme that had been presented at school and consequently had disturbed

Melissa, was that of Remembrance Day. She had many questions to ask me about why people kill each other and what happens to you when you die, can you wake up from death. Various home drawings depicting conflict and tombstones ensued (see figures 162, 163). Worth noting in figure 163 is the inscription on one of the tombstones, which reads her best friend's name. I wonder whether Melissa was relating to the soldiers' loss of friends by suggesting the possible loss of her own best friend.

A family outing became the subject of a drawing that Melissa created at the age of eight years (see figure 164). The drawing brings back memories for me of the day when as a family we tried out our cross country skills for the first time. Melissa's father had suggested that we all remain very quiet and then perhaps we might catch a glimpse of a rabbit. Contrary to what the drawing tells me, Melissa did not see a rabbit. In fact it was felt by all that we probably would not be seeing one, since Melissa could not stop her chatter. This drawing appears to me almost as a form of wish fulfilment on the part of Melissa who wanted very badly to see a rabbit. Also worth noting is our attire which was totally made up with colours and styles of Melissa's choosing.

Some of Melissa's drawings served as gifts for others. I suppose she knew they would always be well received. I remember the drawing she made of myself and my Siamese cat, Monkey, and how proud she was to present it to me (see figure 165).

When I compare Melissa's recollections of her earlier drawings to her recollections now of her more recent work, it appears to me that the latter recollections include more recall. For almost all the drawings, Melissa can describe the subject matter and for a good number of drawings she can



remember where the ideas for these drawings came from. However, I notice that now Melissa speaks mainly about the subject matter and the sources of imagery for these drawings, rarely does she speak of process.

Before the interview, I chose to simplify Melissa's viewing by arranging the drawings in groups according to subject matter (ie. dragons, birds, Christmas theme, toy drawings etc.). For each of the drawings, Melissa carefully viewed both the front and back, perhaps in an attempt to find clues that might help her unravel any "secrets" the drawing might hold. At one point during the interview, Melissa expressed her surprise that I had kept so many of her drawings. Most of these drawings she had not seen since they were made and I sensed that she was pleased that they were still around.

One of the first drawings that initiated any significant recall was one that had been done on a large white envelope (see figure 166). Melissa explained that this drawing of many heads consisted of girls who wore earrings and hairstyles that were different from each other. The purpose of this drawing she said was to elicit a choice on my part of my favourite girl amongst this group of heads. Melissa's description of the drawing was as follows:

These were the faces that I did a long time ago. Whenever I asked you which one you liked and you said...Which one did you say? I thought you said this one.

Melissa discovered a card with the word Jeme written on its front (see figure 167). She examined this card several times from front to back in an attempt to make sense of its contents. She began with the back of the card and pointed out a heart that contained a pair of sunglasses (see figure 168). The name Jeme appeared over the heart. Inside the card Melissa discovered a drawing of Jem and added that she thought Jem had the "weirdest hair"

(see figure 169). Over the letter J for Jem a star was placed, explained Melissa. She added that in the Jem cartoon the J was written this way with a star over the J instead of a straight line. The figure on the front of the card could be a "Misfit", Melissa said (see figure 167). When I asked Melissa to tell me about the cartoon show, she could only remember a few details. She explained that Jem was a rock star, and that her real name was Jerrica. In the show Jerrica could transform herself into the rock star Jem and become part of a group called the "Holograms". About Jem, her group and the transformation, Melissa had this to say:

She is just a normal person and so are the other girls. They go up to this place and then they say something and then they turn into something like that or [they say] "showtime" [the word that would be uttered so that a transformation could take place] and they all turn into rock stars and then they go against the Misfits and they're [the Misfits] always bad. When I asked why the Misfits were mean to the Holograms, Melissa replied, "cause they want to win the band".

When Melissa came across the group of "house" drawings (see figures 127, 170-173), she pointed out one that had been made as a backdrop for a puppet play she and her sister had made up (see figure 170). Melissa picked out another house drawing, one that had been made in layers so that the windows and door could open to reveal the interior of the house (see figures 172, 173). As she played with opening and closing the parts to this drawing, she remembered that this house had also been made at home by herself, for a play that she and her best friend had planned to put on before their grade two class at school. About the drawing Melissa had this to say:

Oh this is my favourite one and you go like this and like this and then you can open the windows. I did this when me and Apryl were going to

put a play on in front of the class at school but we didn't get to or anything so..

Melissa pointed out her "detailed" drawing of our present house (see figure 127) and remarked that she remembered drawing it while sitting at the picnic table in the backyard of the house. For another house drawing, Melissa commented on her process, by saying that one piece of paper was not big enough for the whole drawing so she had to use three pieces (see figure 171).

Melissa remembered that her drawings of the penguin, tiger and bear represented the toys, Penny penguin, Timmy tiger and the brown bear (see figures 122-124). She remembered that the penguin and tiger were toys won by herself and her sister for selling something for their school, but she did not mention that these drawings were done by observation nor did she remember that she had drawn the penguin at the same time her babysitter was drawing the same.

Melissa noted that a couple of her drawings were influenced by some process or idea that she had picked up from school. She remembered that her grade two teacher had asked the class to draw a person from traced shapes. At home she tried to replicate the method (see figure 174). Another drawing that demonstrates a school influence was her textual piece that included a figure with animals around a tree (see figure 175). Melissa had this to say about the drawing:

The teacher taught me a song. Ah this is, "I fed my cat under yonder tree, the cat goes," and then I'm supposed to make a sound and then the hen goes something, "I fed my cat under yonder tree" like that [Melissa laughs] and it has a picture of them. And this is a person feeding--a farmer, feeding the animals.

Several Christmas drawings portrayed Jesus in the manger and Melissa mentioned that she had included Jesus in most of her drawings because she felt "He was very special, since she had heard a lot of stories about Jesus before Christmas" (see figures 179, 180).

Melissa identified herself in a few drawings. She depicted herself water-skiing in the Adirondacks where we camp (see figure 181). It is interesting to note that Melissa has never water-skied but has often expressed her wish to do so one day. In another drawing, Melissa points out the various family members cross-country skiing (see figure 164). She adds that Stephanie is saying "I see a rabbit" and her father is saying "shhhh". It is interesting to note that my interpretation of this drawing was different from Melissa's in that I thought Melissa was the figure saying "I see the rabbit" and not Stephanie.

Melissa saw herself as the sleeping person in a couple of drawings (see figures 182, 183). As well she is the child who is being told by her mother, to drink her milk (see figure 131).

The appearance of a couple of drawings excited Melissa. One represented two people standing on the ground and holding something in their hands (see figure 184). What was unique about this piece was that Melissa had glued actual pom-poms to the figure's hands. About the drawing Melissa said:

I remember those [referring to the pom-poms]. There's two people and they're eating an ice cream cone. I thought it was so neat cause I found these pom-poms and I was thinking to myself that they would be great for that [to represent ice cream cones] eh?

The drawing of the rabbit in the cage pleased Melissa as well (see figure 185). Although she could not go beyond labeling its contents (ie. rabbits

large and small, carrot, cage), she seemed to be experiencing a strong attachment to this drawing.

For a majority of the remaining drawings, Melissa recalled the subject matter but could not elaborate on them. These drawings included Stacey Q (the idea came from a friend's description of the singer Stacey Q, see figure 186), cabbage patch doll (see figure 187), her aunt Judy (see figure 188), herself and her best friend Apryl (see figure 189), a treasure map (see figure 190), a family portrait (see figure 191), myself gardening (see figure 192), and Indians around a tent and campfire (see figure 193).

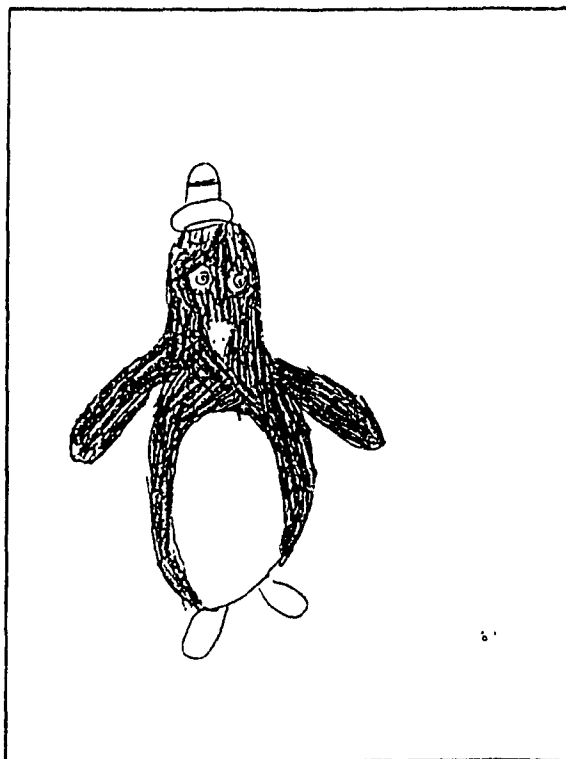


Figure 122. Penny Penguin (age 8).

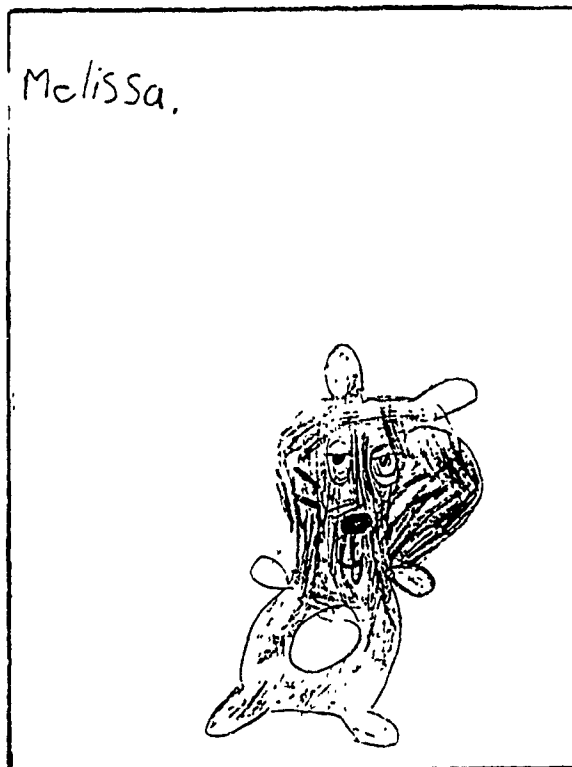


Figure 123. Timmy Tiger (age 8).

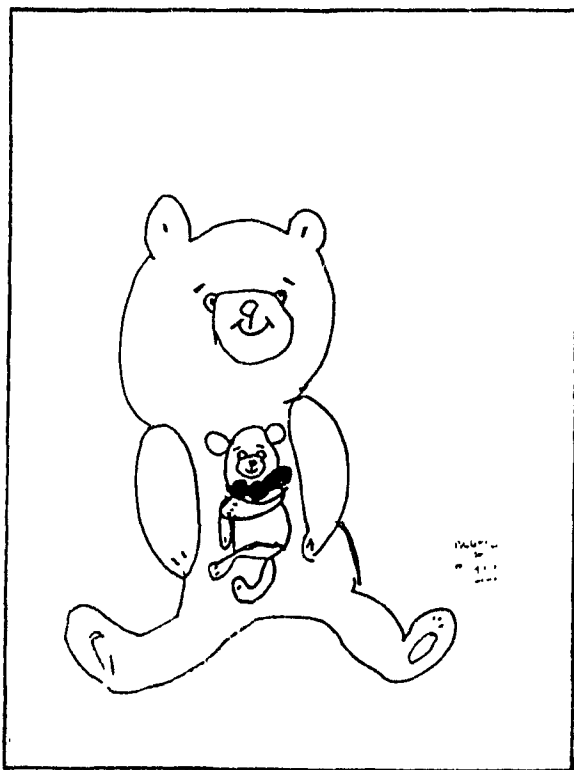


Figure 124. Bear (age 7).

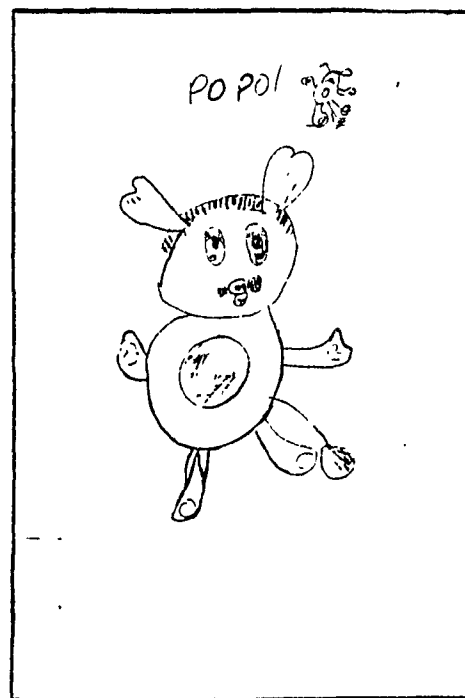


Figure 125. Popple (age c.7).

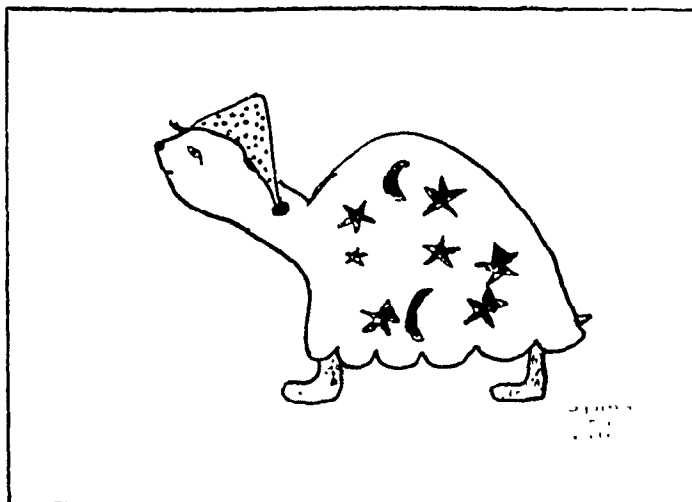


Figure 126. Sleepy-Time Keeper (age 8).

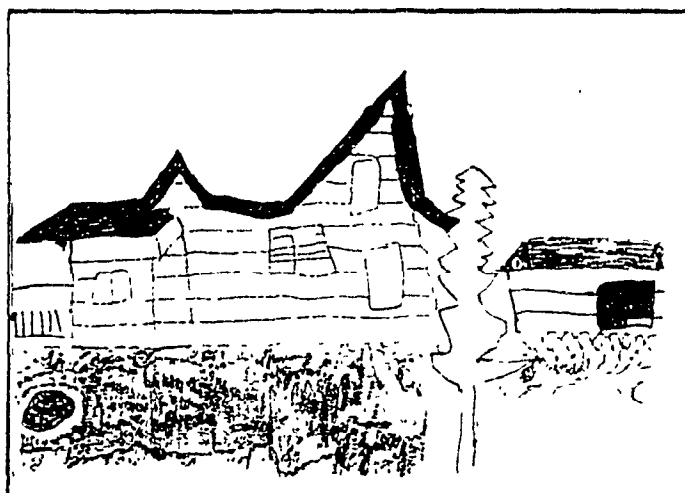


Figure 127. Our House (age 8).

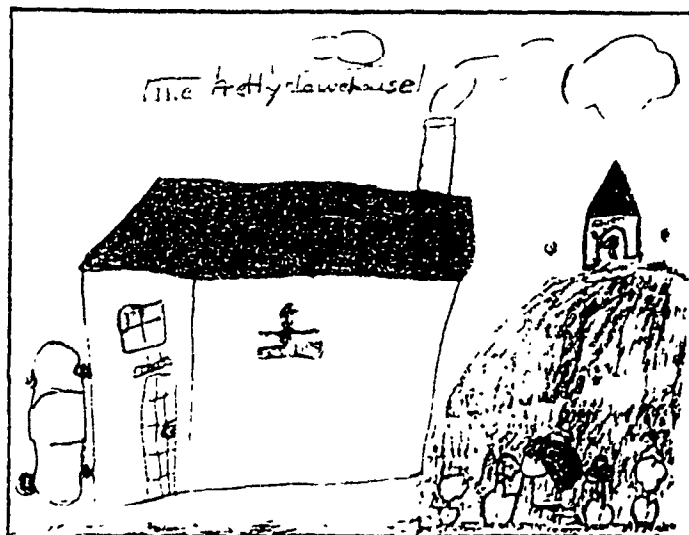


Figure 128. A House (age 7.10).

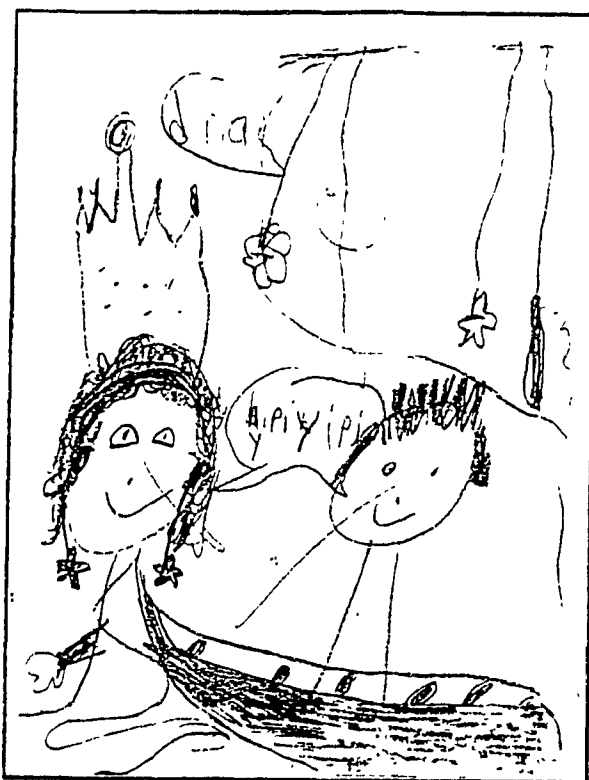


Figure 129. Prince and Princess (age 7).

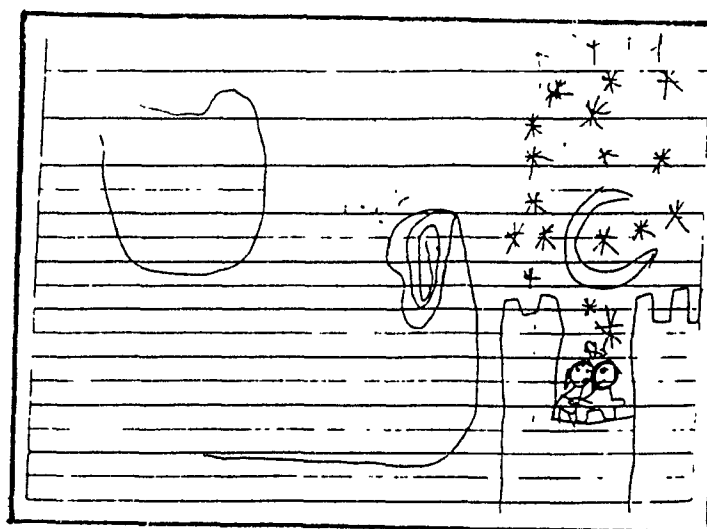


Figure 130. Prince and Princess in Castle (age c.7).





Figure 131. Mother and Child (age c.7).

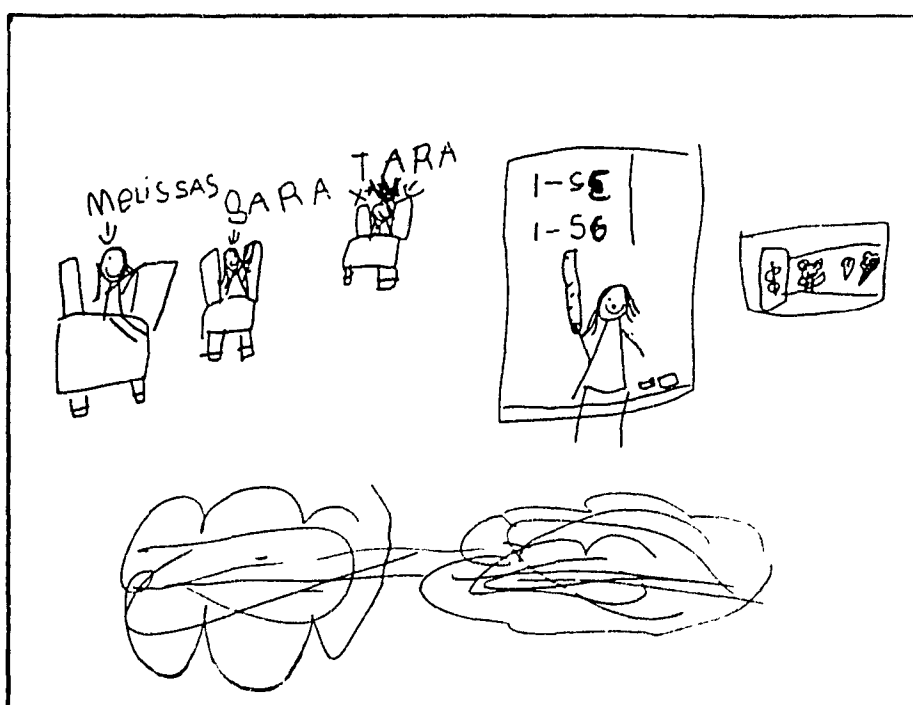


Figure 132. Teacher and Class of Students (age c.7).

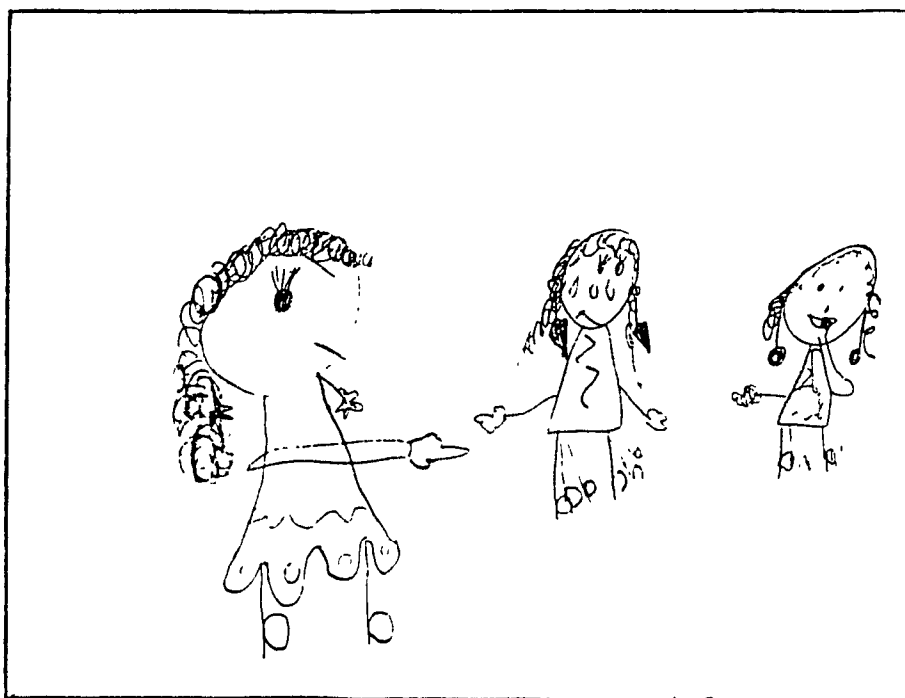


Figure 133. A Small Group of Girls (age 7).

Figures 134-141 represent pages from Melissa's heart-shaped book (age 7).

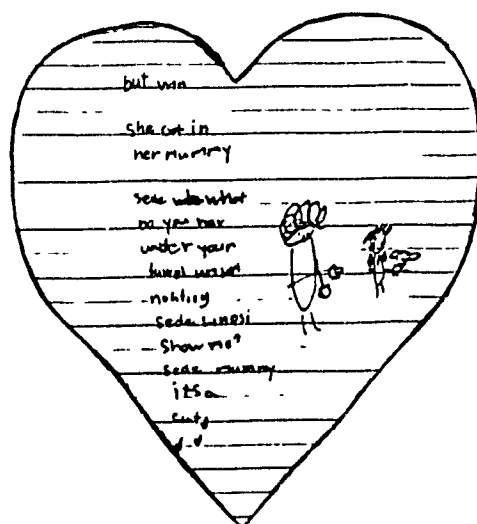


Figure 134.

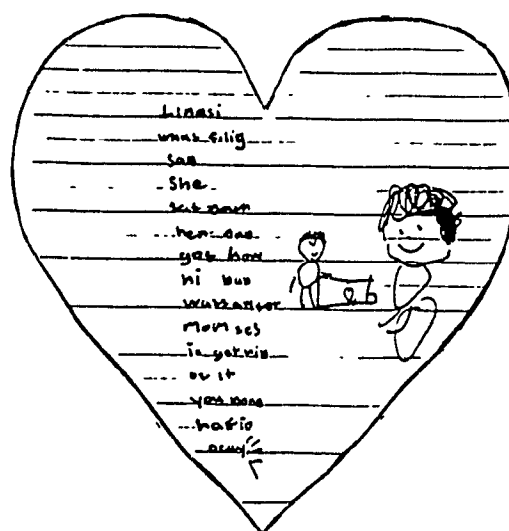


Figure 135.

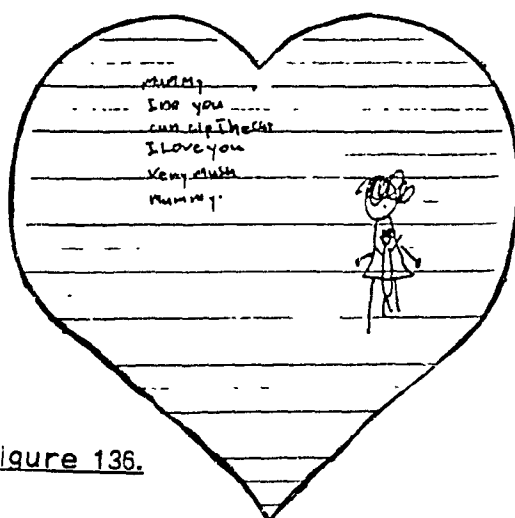


Figure 136.

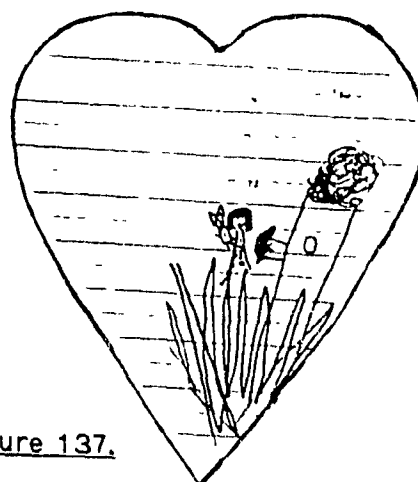


Figure 137.

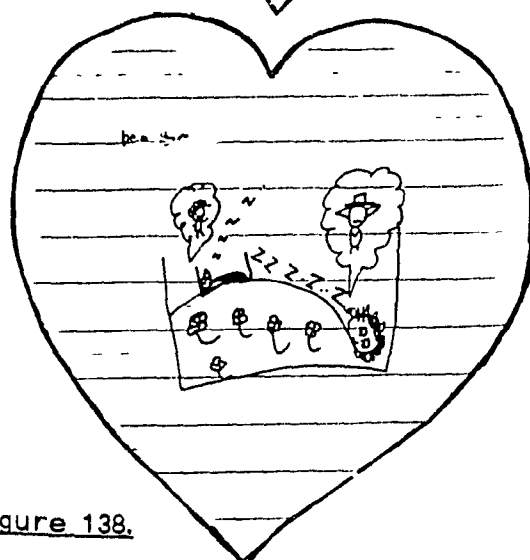


Figure 138.

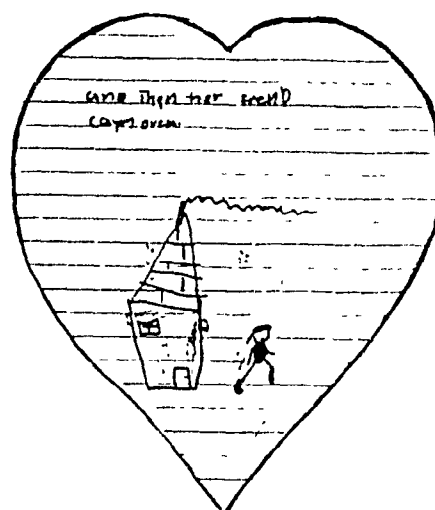


Figure 139.

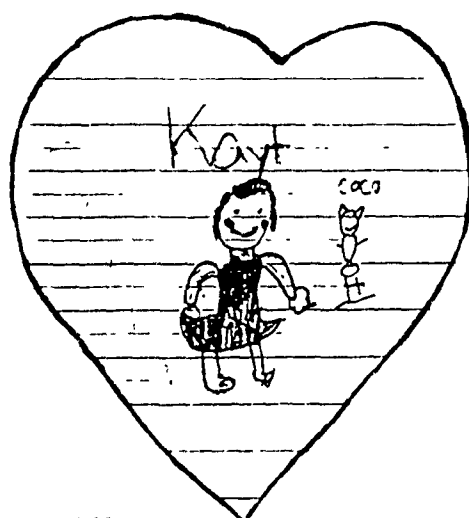


Figure 140.

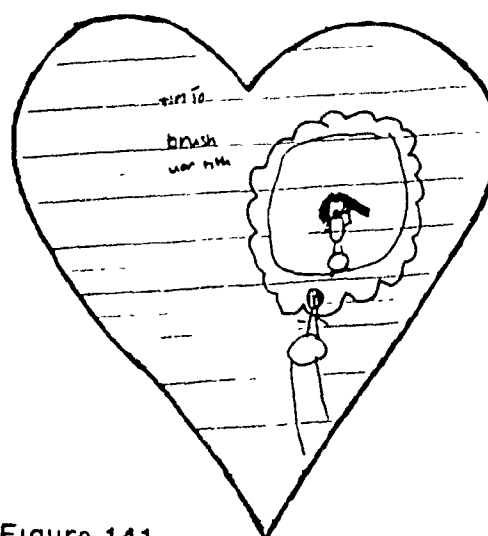


Figure 141.



Figure 142. Pizzaz (age 8).

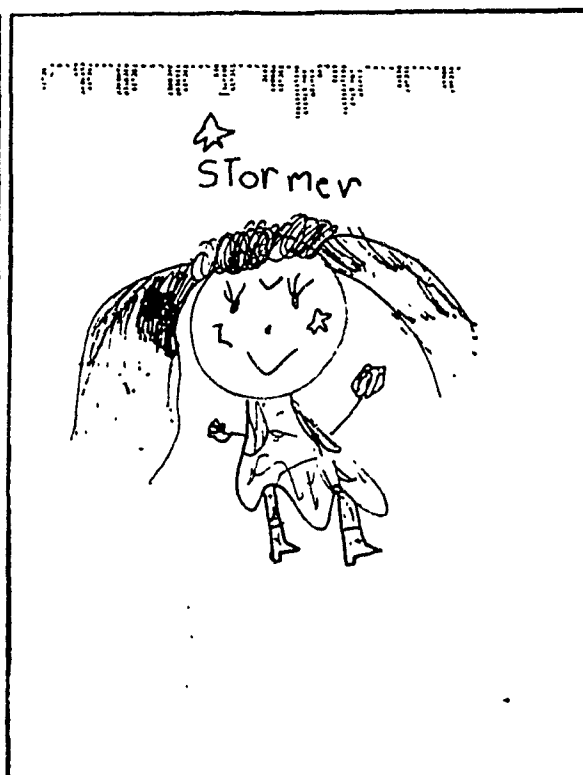


Figure 143. Stormer (age 8).

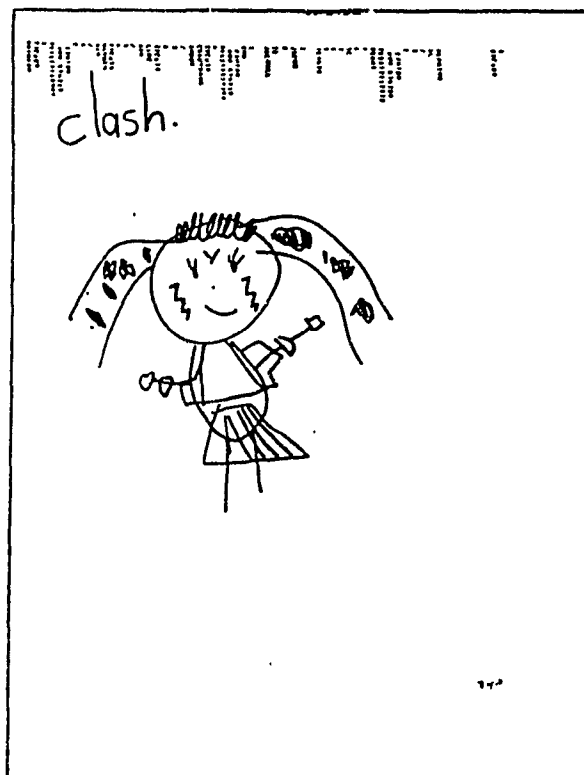


Figure 144. Clash (age 8).

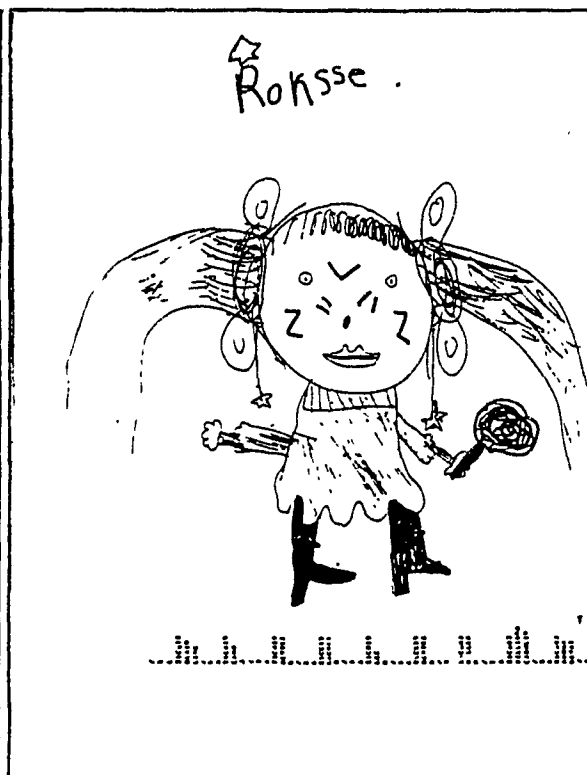


Figure 145. Rocksie (age 8).

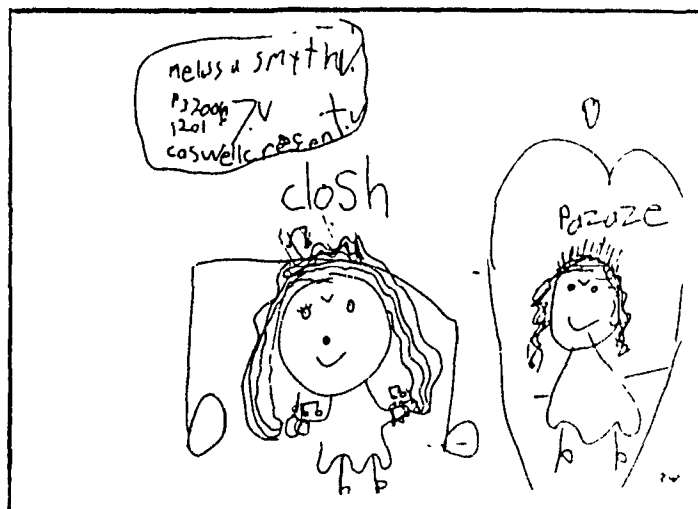


Figure 146. Clash and Pizzaz (age 8).

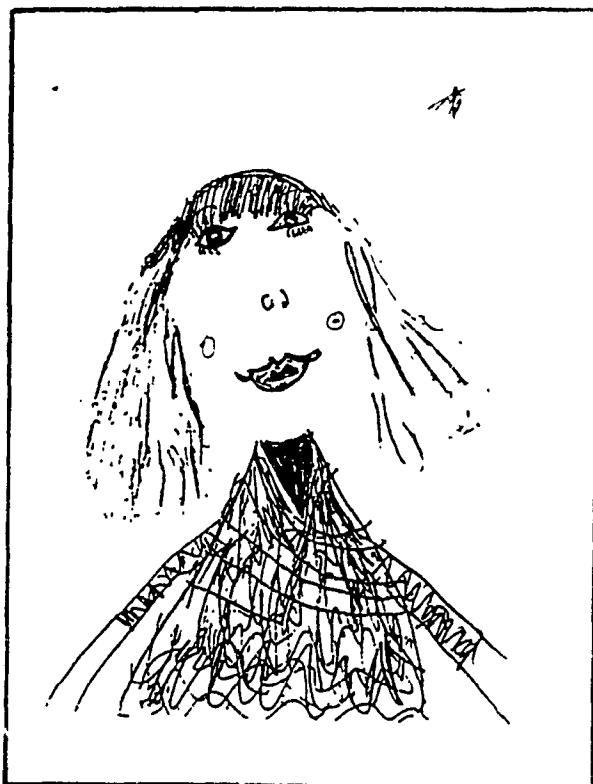


Figure 147. Pretty Girl (age 7).

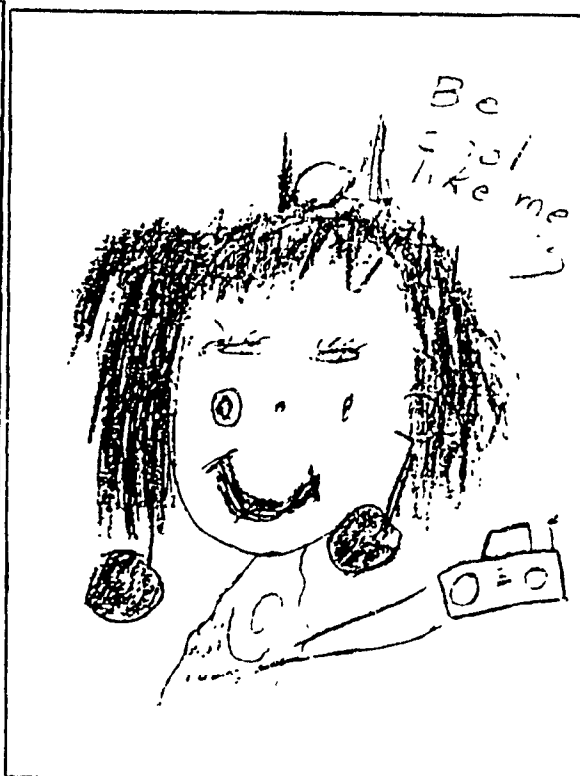


Figure 148. Pretty Girl With Radio (age 8).



Figure 149. Pretty Girl (age 8).

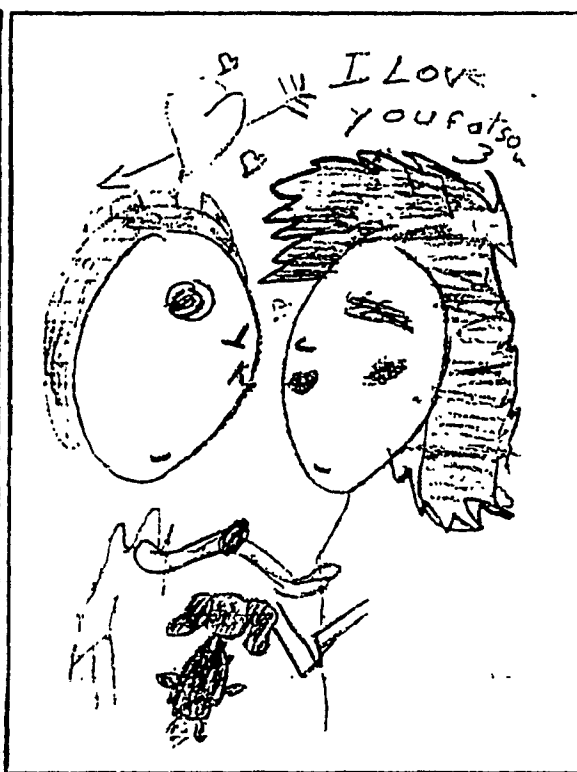


Figure 150. A Couple (age 7).

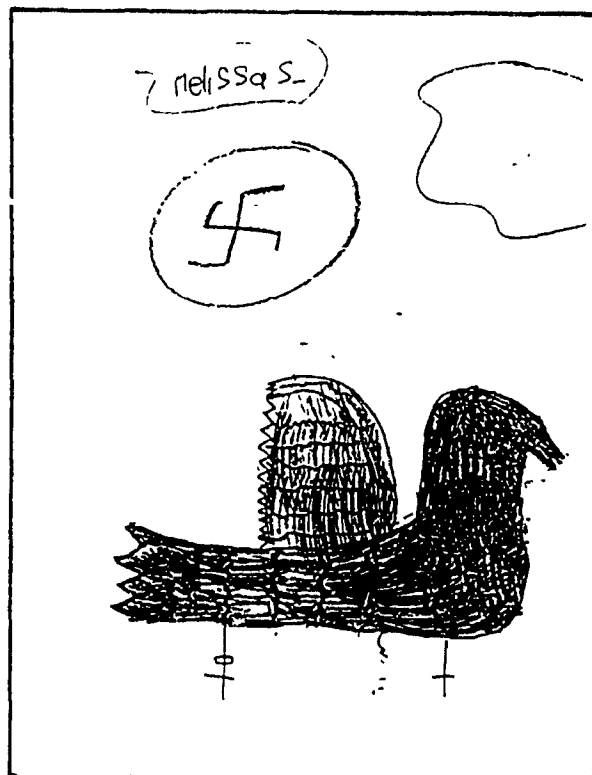


Figure 151. Bird (age 7).

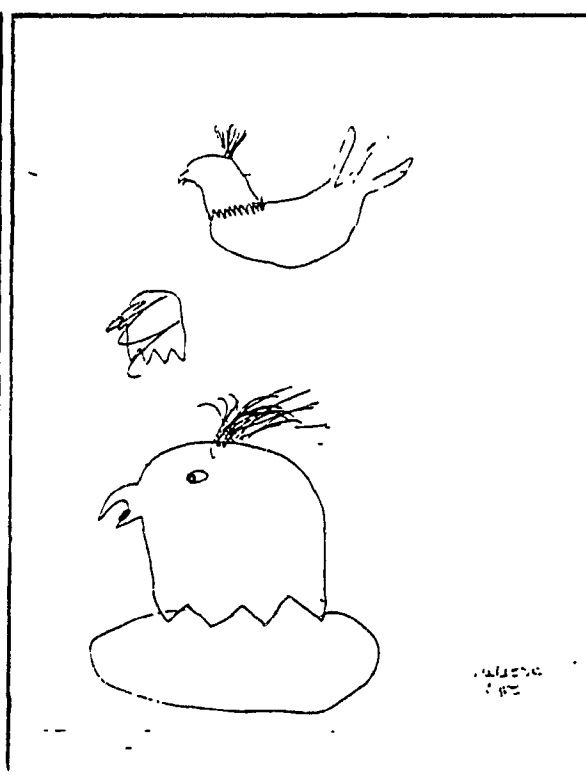


Figure 152. A Bird Study (age 7).

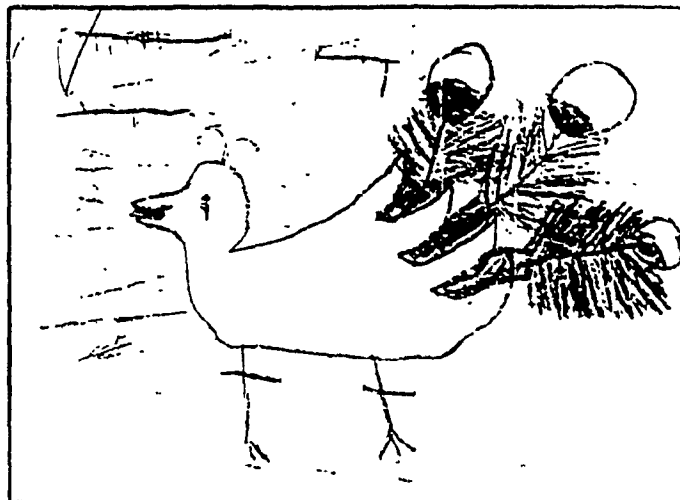


Figure 153. A Peacock (age 7).

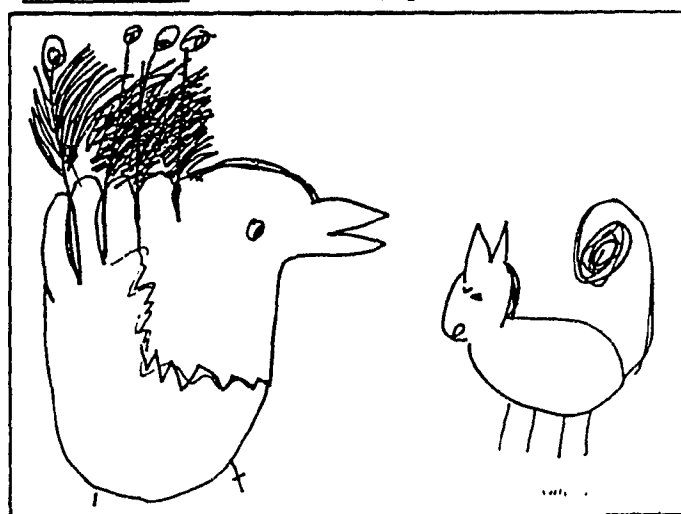


Figure 154. A Peacock and Cat (age 7).

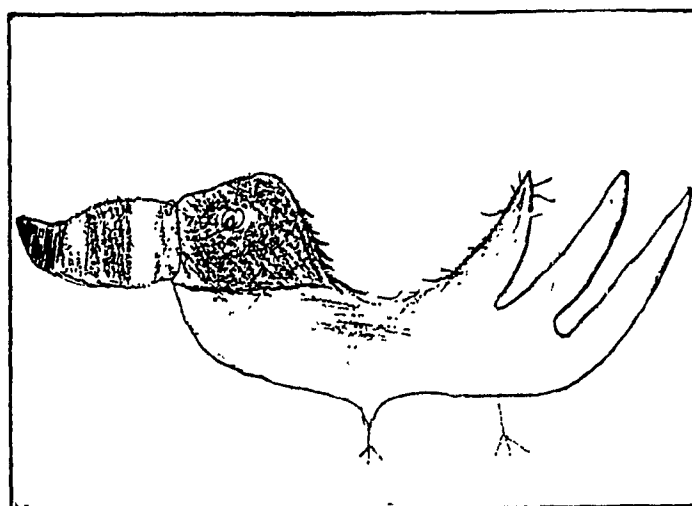


Figure 155. A Tucan Bird (age 7).

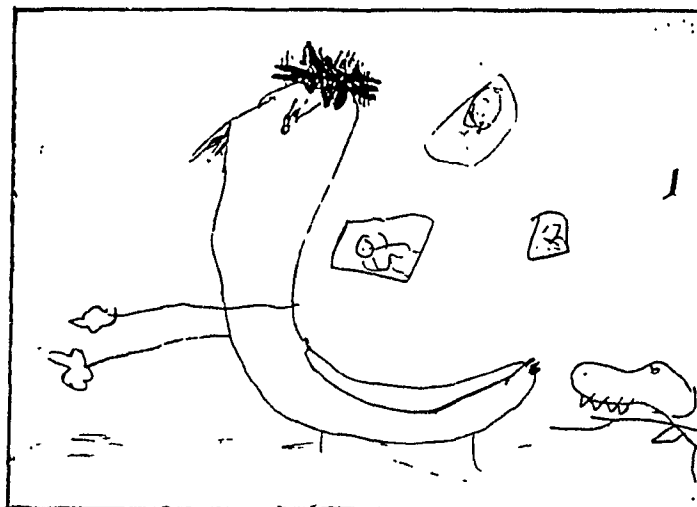


Figure 156. A Bird and Alligator (age 7).

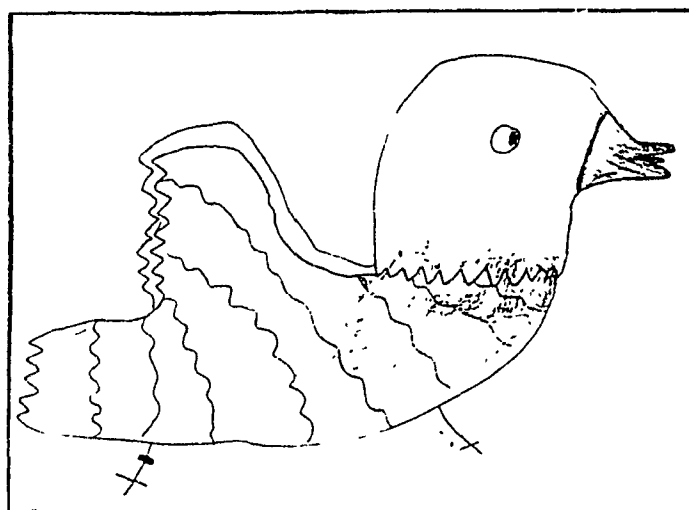


Figure 157. A Bird (age 7).

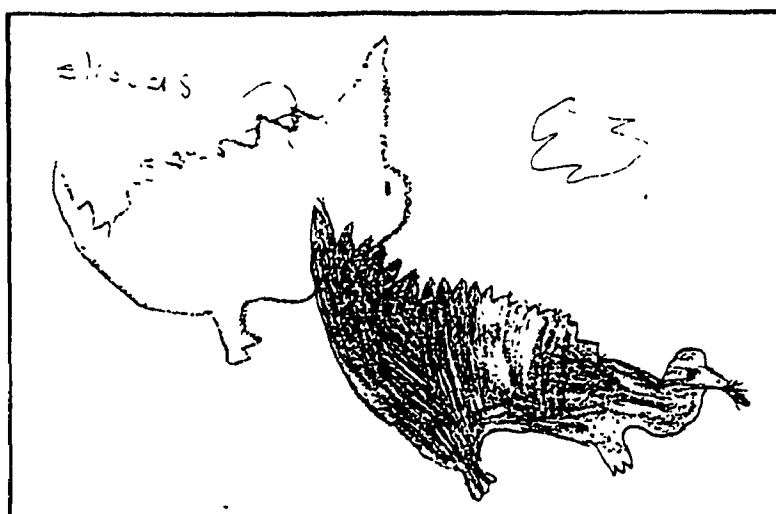


Figure 158. Dragons (age 7).



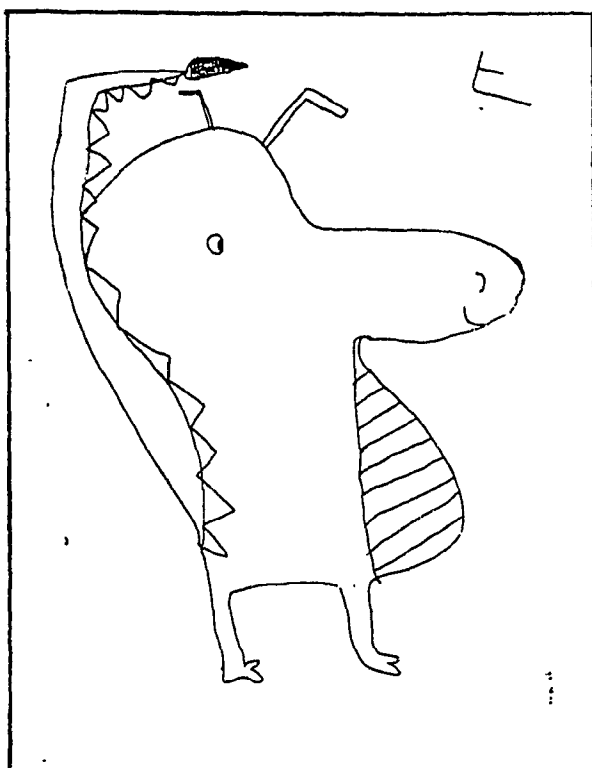


Figure 159. A Dragon (age 7).

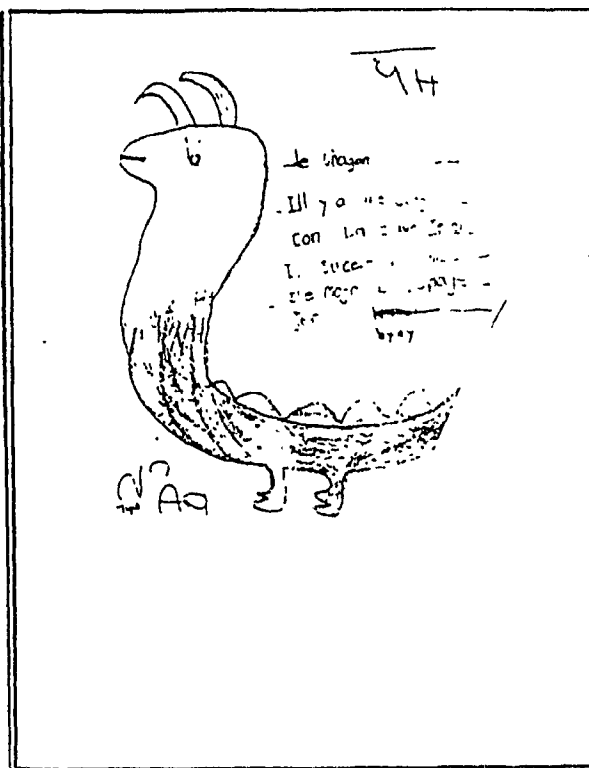


Figure 160. "School art" Dragon (age 7).

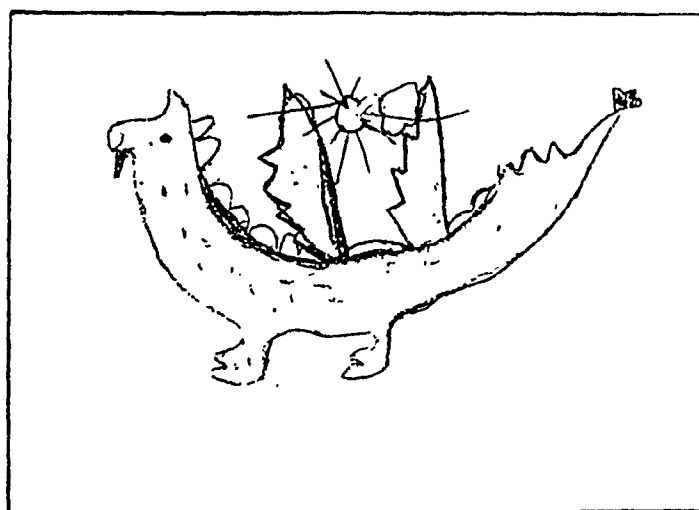


Figure 161. Dragon and Sun (age 7).

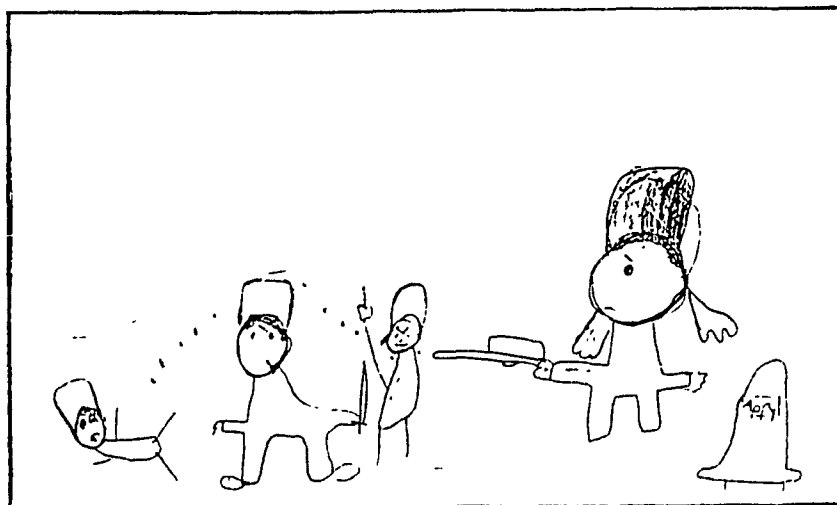


Figure 162. Remembrance Day (age 7).

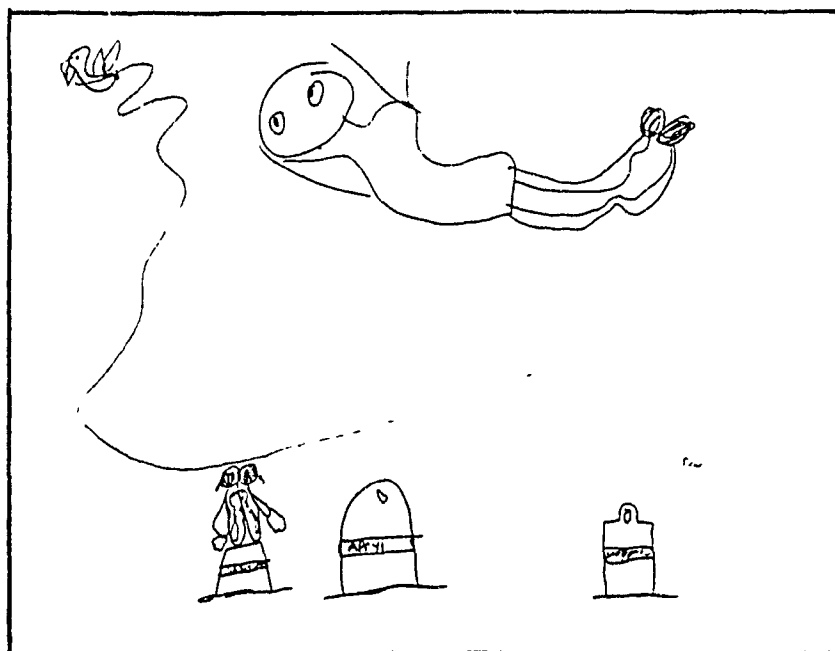


Figure 163. Remembrance Day (age 7).

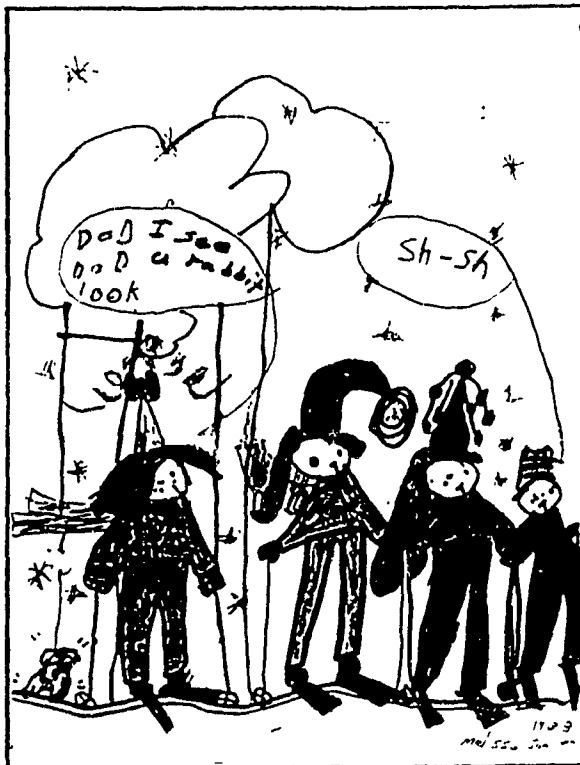


Figure 164. Cross-country Skiing  
(age 8.4).



Figure 165. Mother With Cat  
(age 8).

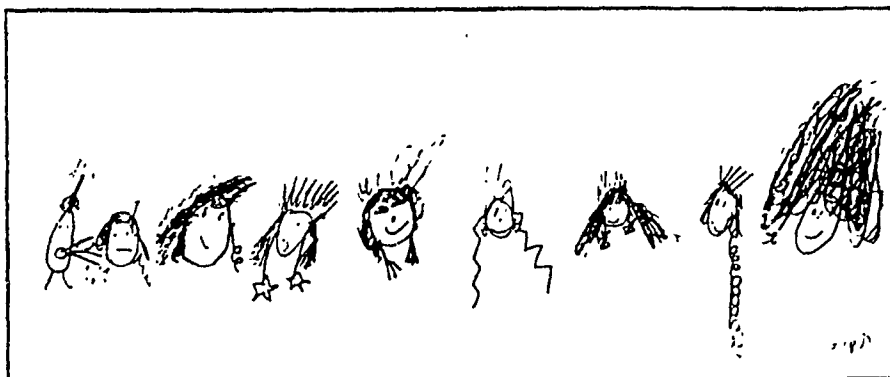


Figure 166. A Drawing of Many Heads (age 8).

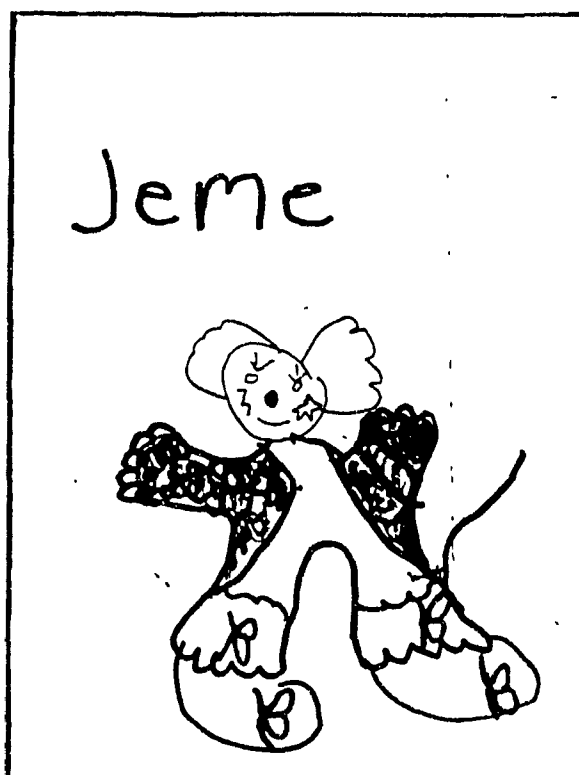


Figure 167. Card front (age 7).

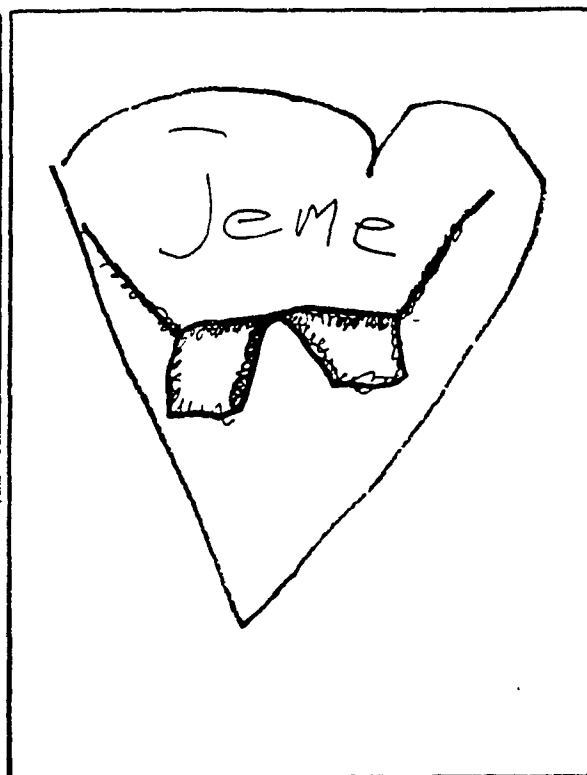


Figure 168. Card back (age 7).

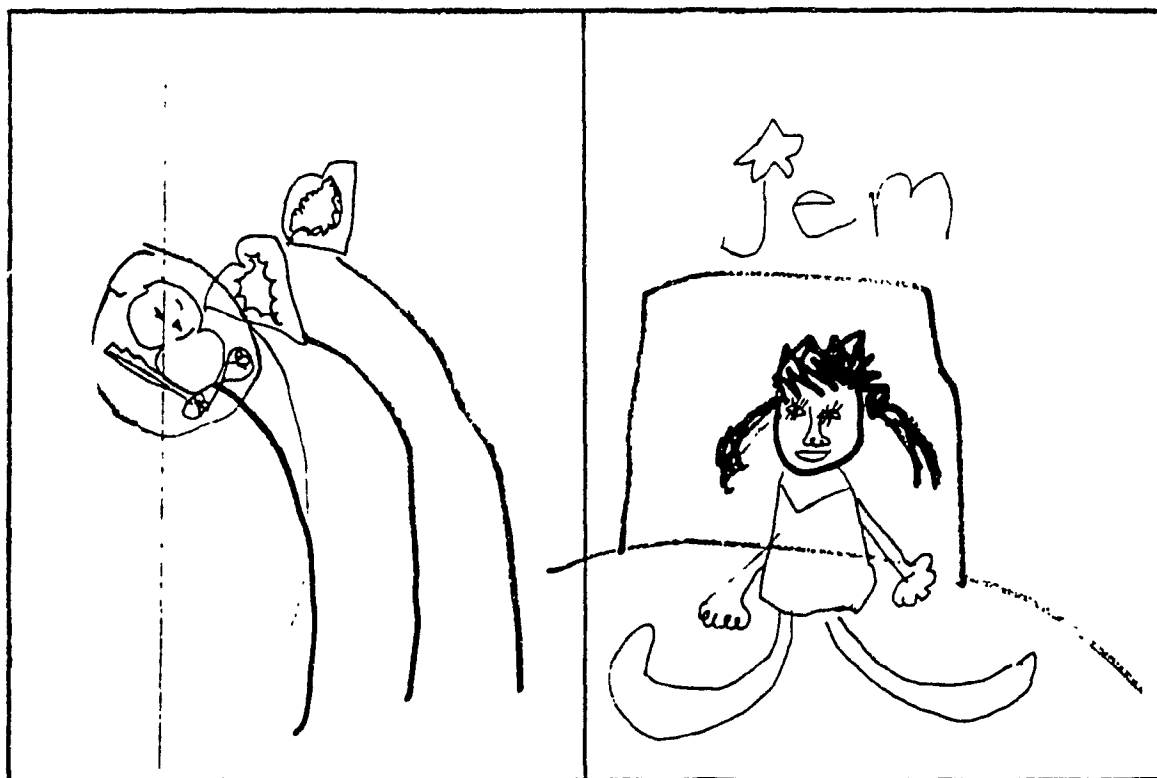


Figure 169. The inside of the "Jem" card (age 7).

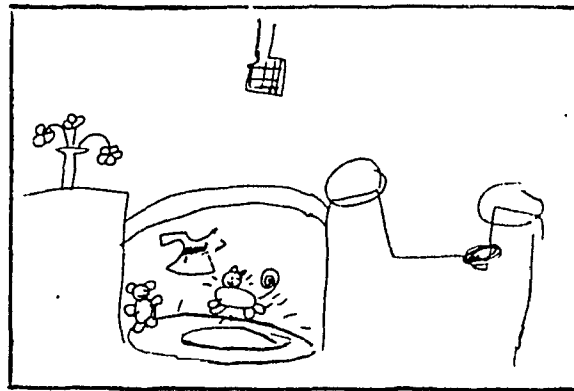


Figure 170. Drawing For Puppet Play (age 8).

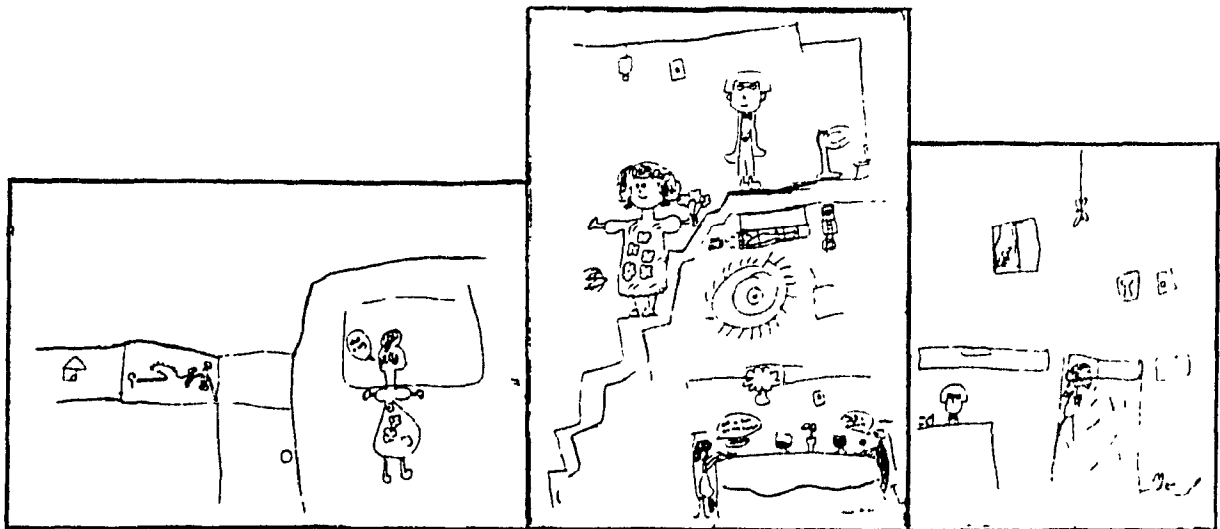


Figure 171. The Interior of Our House (age 8.11).

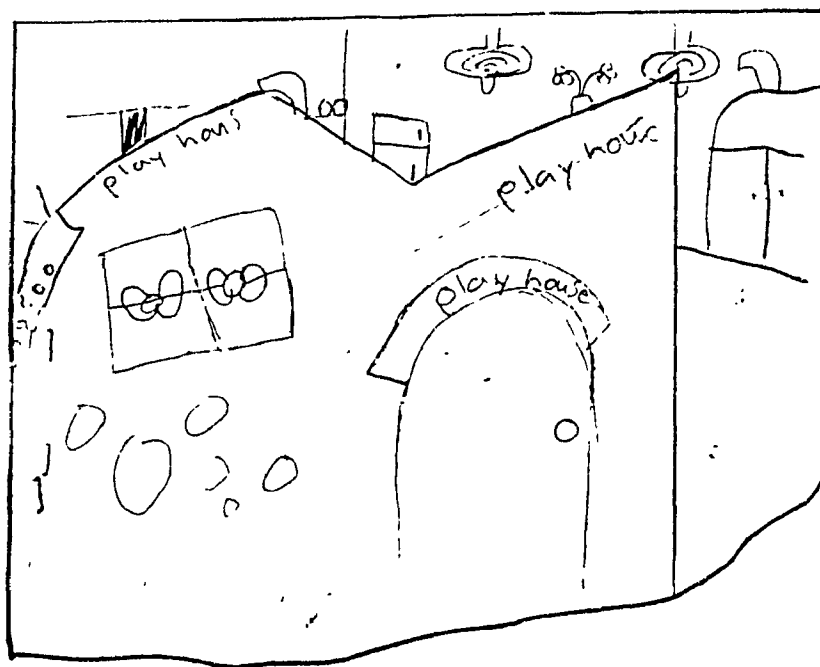


Figure 172. The Outside of the "House Drawing" (age c.7).

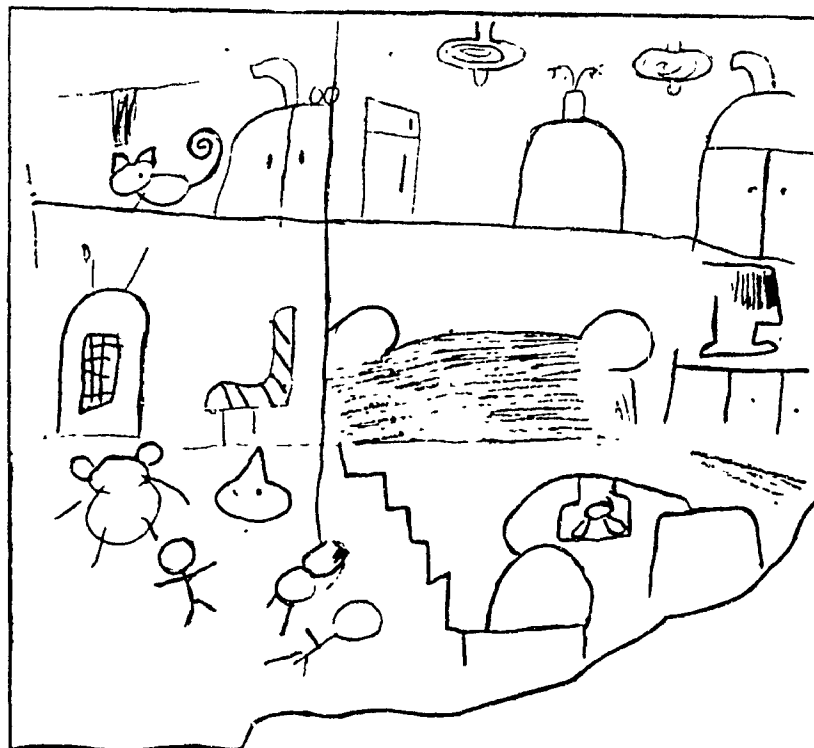


Figure 173. The Inside of the "House Drawing" (age c.7).



Figure 174. Traced Shapes (age 7).

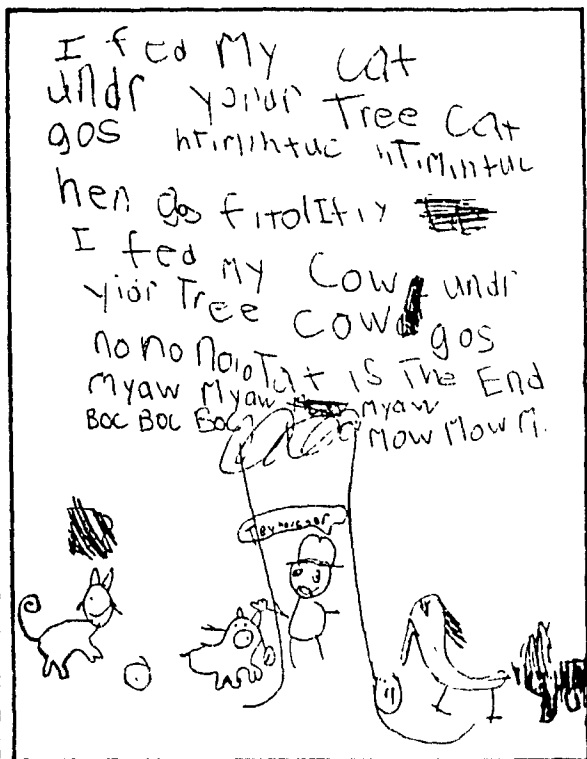


Figure 175. The Song Drawing (age 7).

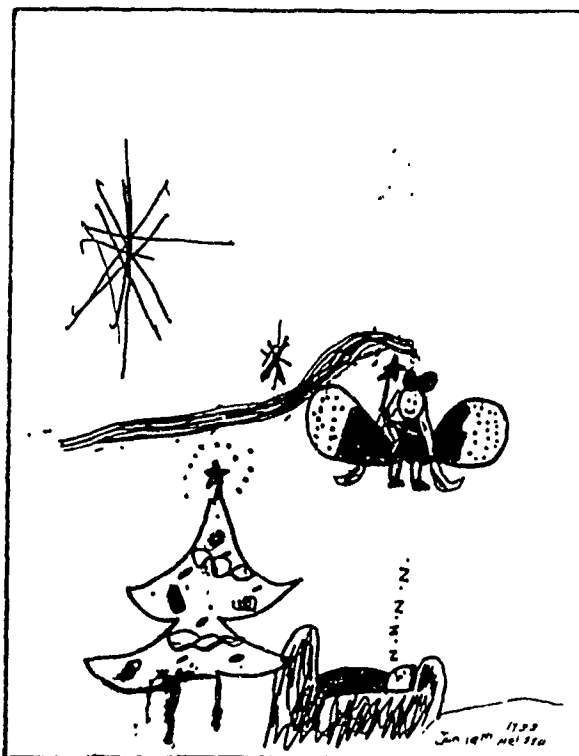


Figure 176. Christmas (age 8.4).

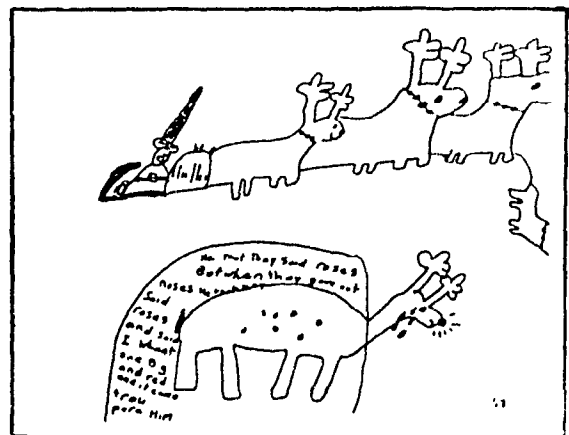


Figure 177. Santa and Rudolphe (age 8).

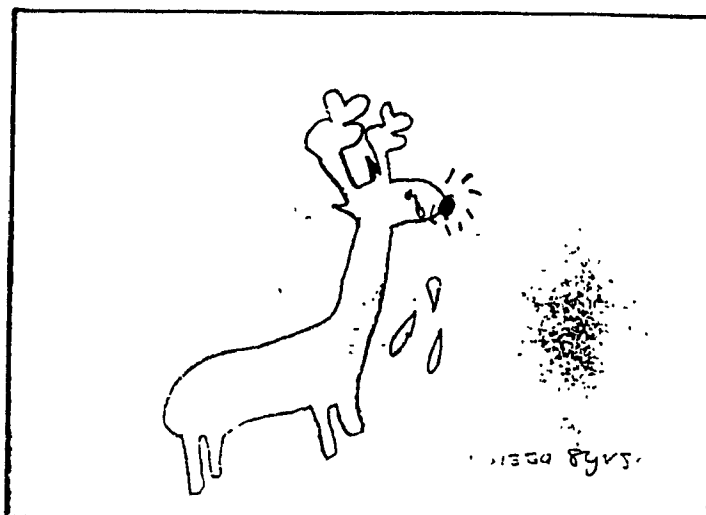


Figure 178. Rudolphe (age 8).

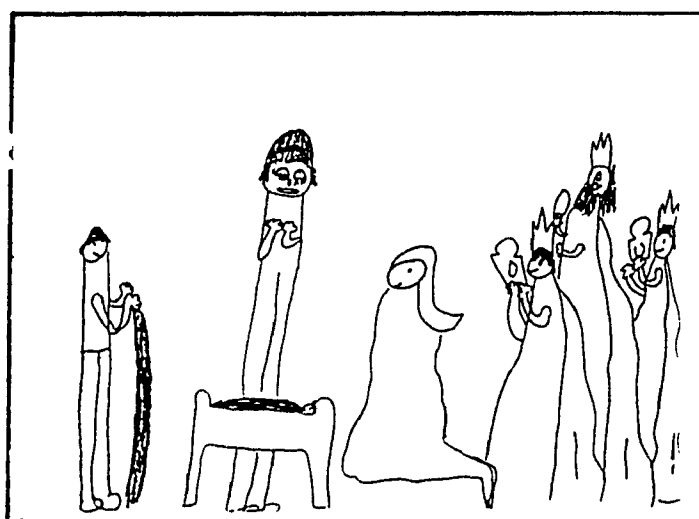


Figure 179. Christmas Drawing (age c.8).

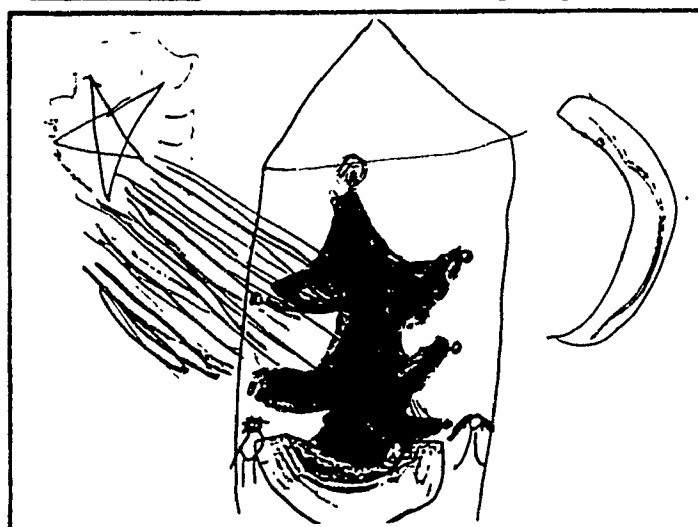


Figure 180. Jesus In The Manger (age c.7).



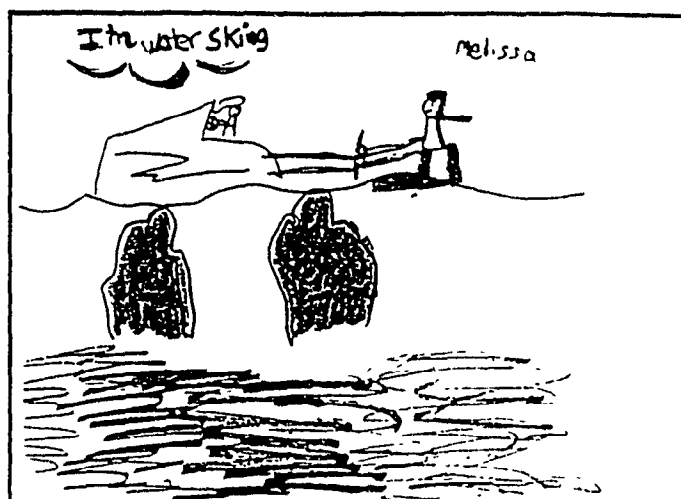


Figure 181. Melissa Water-Skiing (age 8).

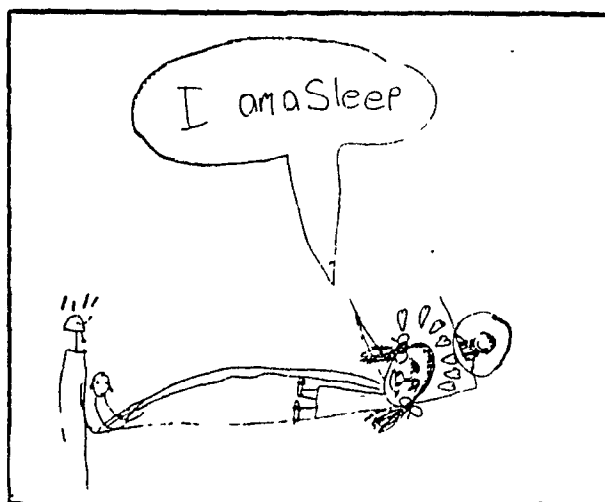


Figure 182. Melissa Asleep (age c.7).

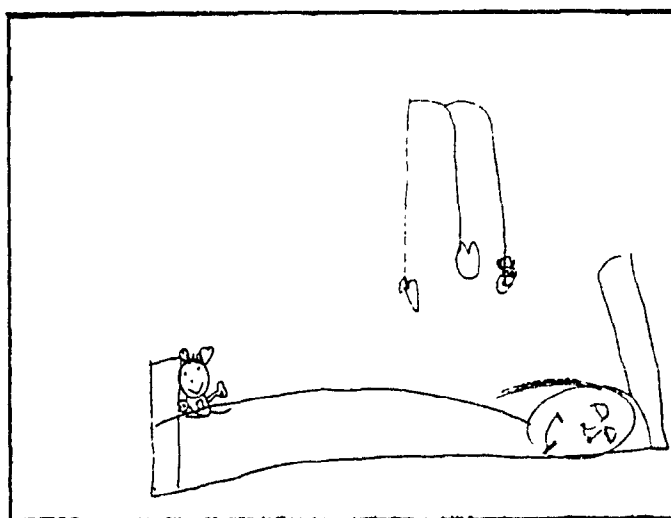


Figure 183. Melissa Asleep With Mobile (age c.7).

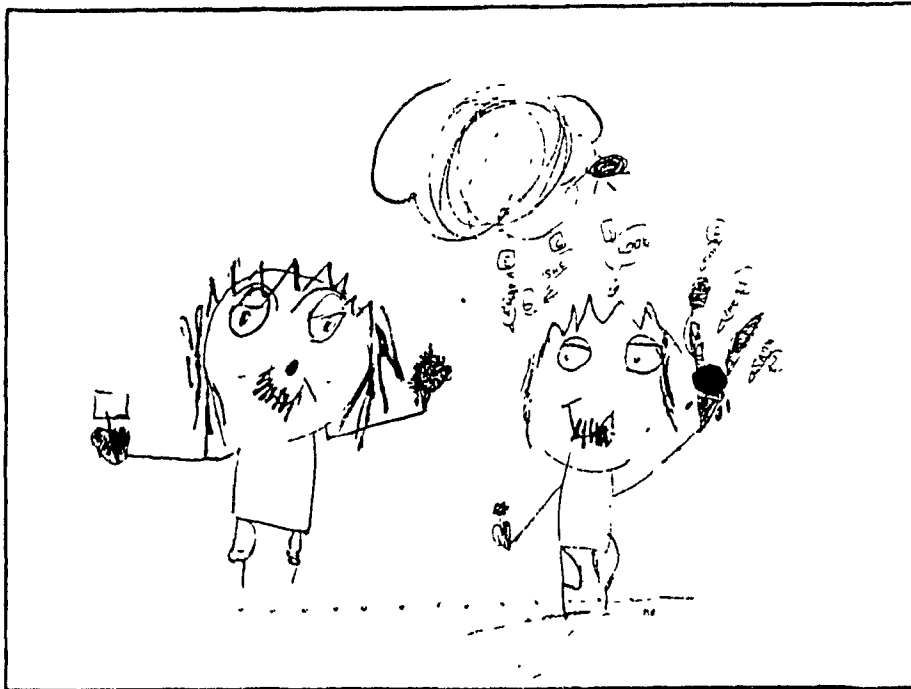


Figure 184. Two People Eating Ice Cream (age 7).

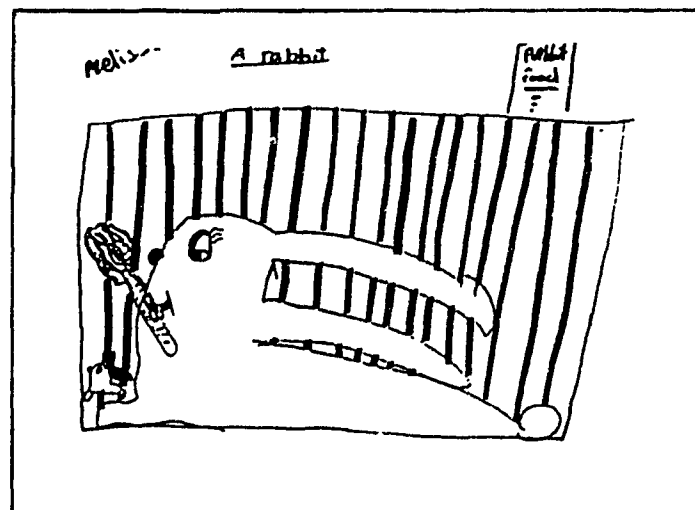


Figure 185. Rabbits In A Cage (age 8).



Figure 186. Stacey-Q (age 8).

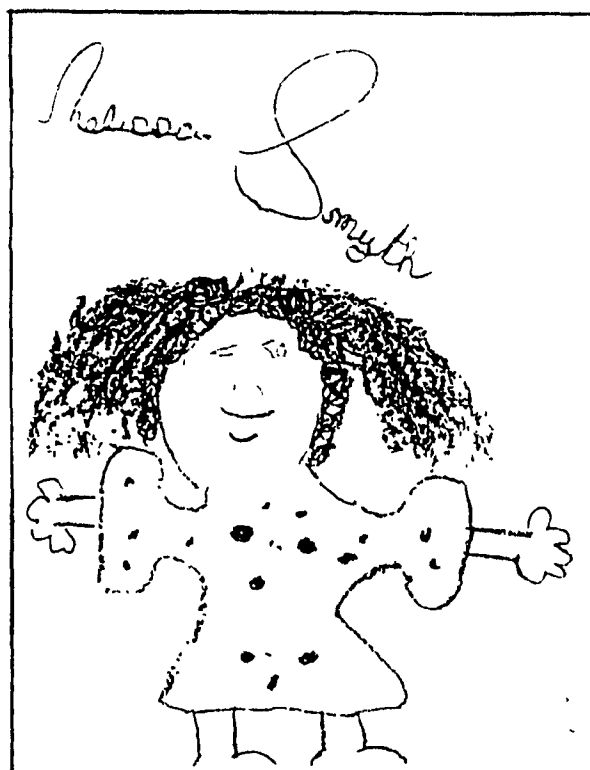


Figure 187. Cabbage Patch Doll (age 8).

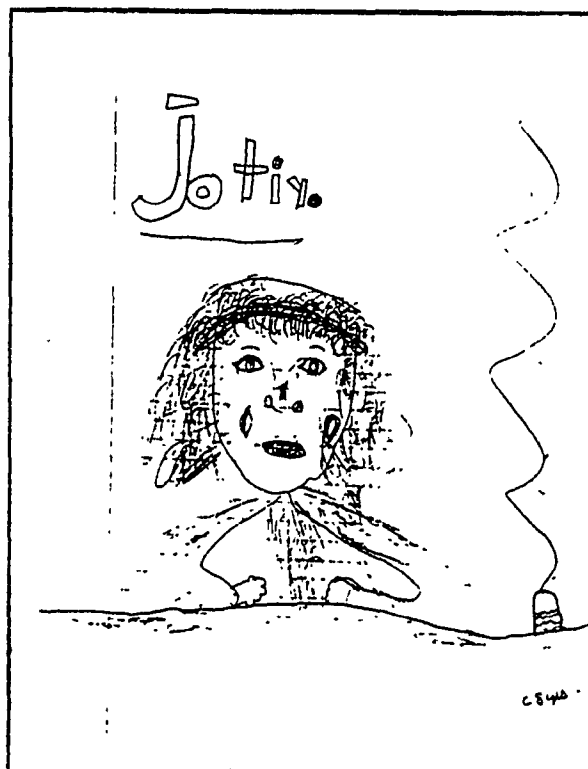


Figure 188. Aunt Judy (age c.8).



Figure 189. Melissa and Apryl (age c.7).

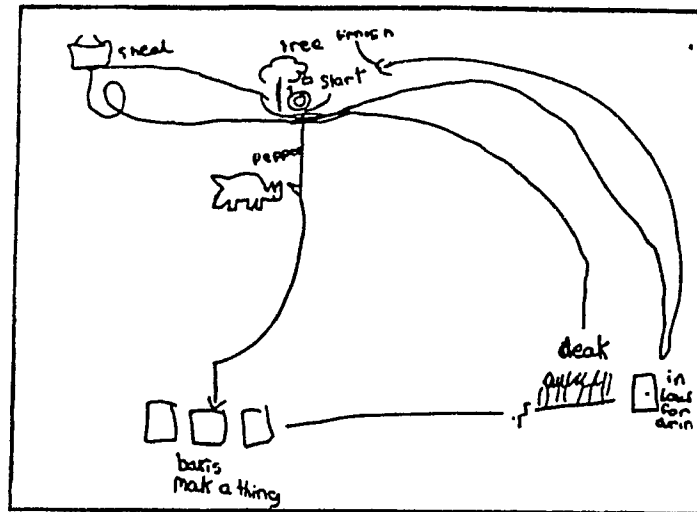


Figure 190. A Treasure Map (age 8.11).



Figure 191. A Family Portrait (age c.8).

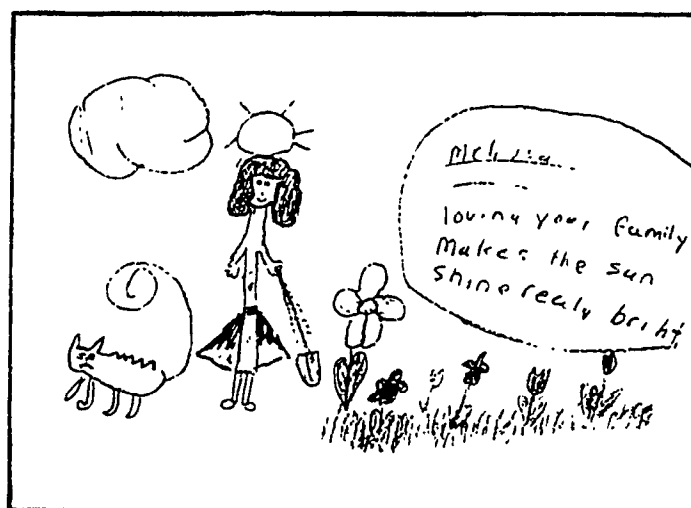


Figure 192. Mother, Gardening (age 7).

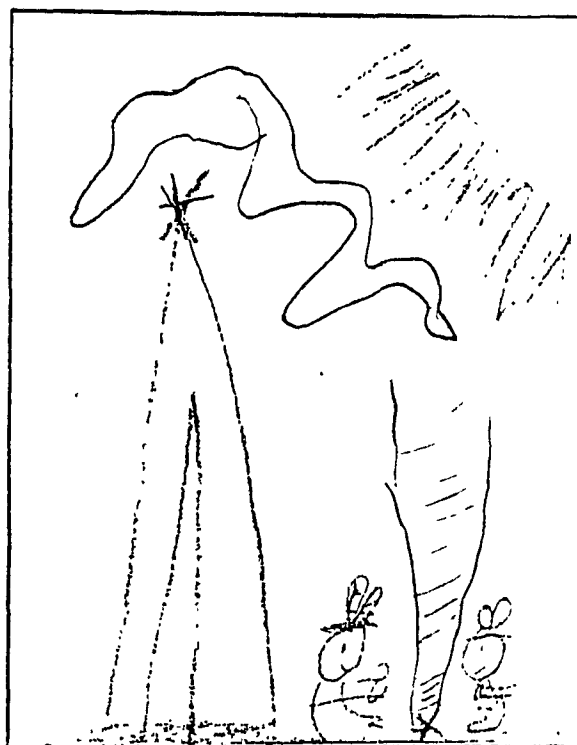


Figure 193. Indians and Campfire  
(age 7).

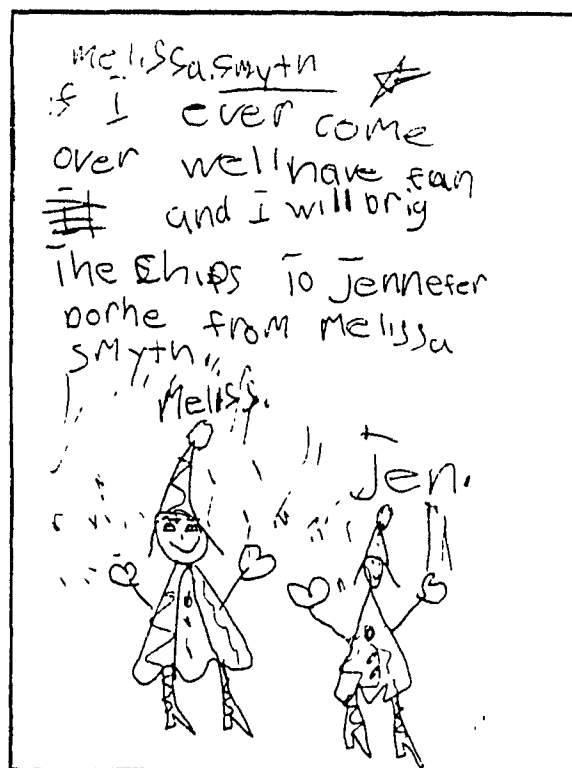


Figure 194. A Letter To A Friend  
(age 8).



Figure 195. A Christmas Card (age 7).

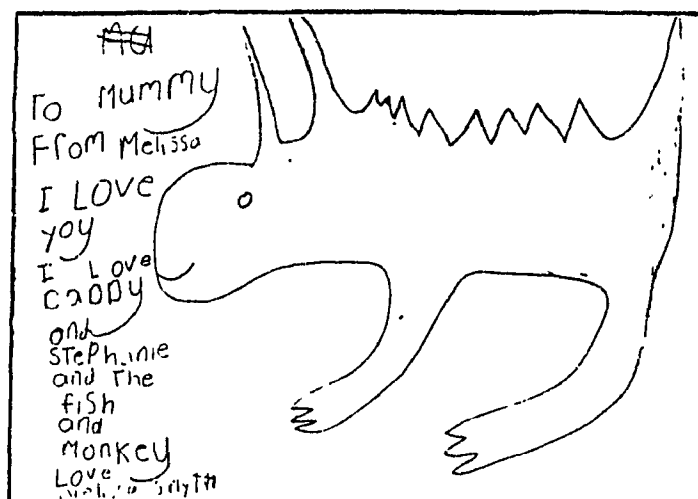


Figure 196. A Card For Mother (age 7).

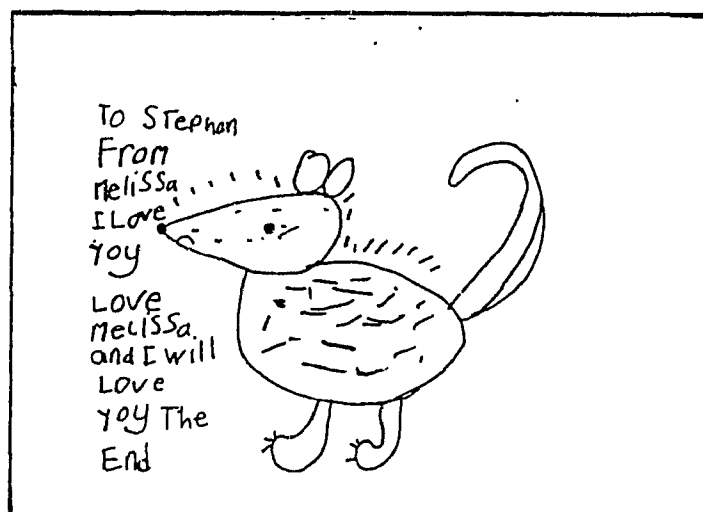


Figure 197. A Card For Stephanie (age 7).

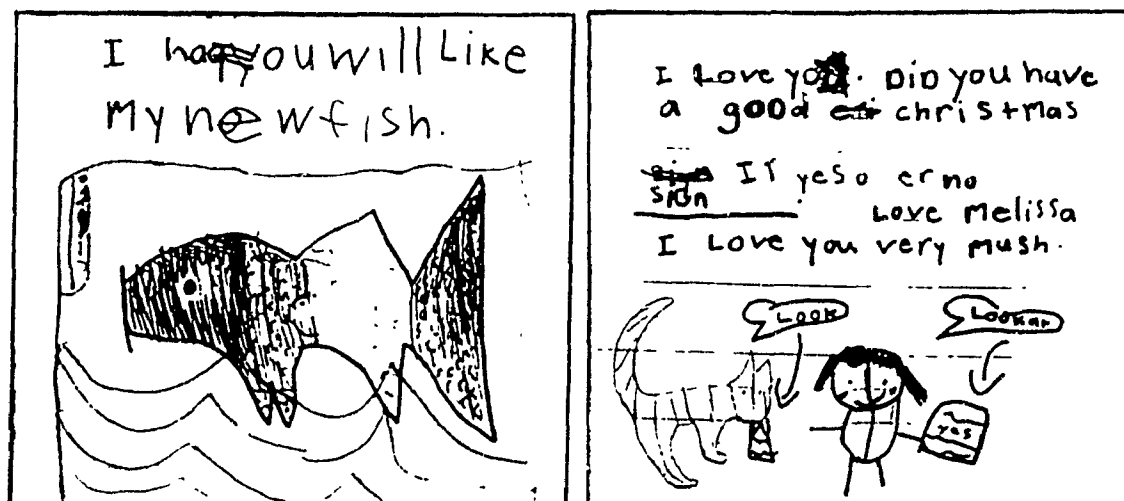


Figure 198. A Letter/Card To A Friend (inside and outside image, age c.8).

### Chapter 8: The Drawings Done During the Ninth Year

The year that marked Melissa's ninth birthday brought with it a number of changes. This was the first year in our new, "old" house and living with on-going renovations took some getting-used-to. My part-time position at the college ended and a new part-time teaching position began at Concordia University. I continued with my own art-making and succeeded in winning a purchase award for a self portrait piece I had entered in a Cornwall-juried show.

This was a difficult year for Melissa. Not only had she left her best girlfriend Apryl behind in Cornwall but at the end of the summer our Beagle dog got hit by a car, a loss that caused Melissa much upset. Making new friends for Melissa was not an easy task. As an outsider coming into a new grade four class, she felt left out of the many small groups of girls whose friendships had developed over the years since kindergarten. Melissa along with some of her new classmates, participated in after school art classes given by myself. I had found out from Melissa that two of the girls in this after school art class were reputed by their fellow grade four classmates, as being the "artists" of the class, recognition they gained for their clever cartoon-like renderings. I sensed that Melissa had a secret admiration for the way these girls could draw and felt somewhat special to be in an art class working alongside these other girls. But I also sensed that she had felt somewhat intimidated. Melissa concerned herself with getting her drawings to look "right" and would often erase or start her drawings over again. This was not the Melissa I knew at home, who without hesitation spontaneously filled pages of her sketchbook with several drawings at one sitting.

Melissa continued to draw on her own at home, sometimes in the large

brown arm chair in the living room, while watching television and sometimes alone in her bedroom. Once in a while Melissa would show me a drawing that she had done in her sketchbook but more often she would keep her work to herself. Sometimes Melissa would make quick doodle-like sketches on small pieces of paper from note pads and in my household cleanups I would find them strewn on the living room coffee table or on the floor of her bedroom (see figures 265-270). I sensed that Melissa did not consider these doodles as "finished" works of art and consequently didn't care where they ended up.

We camped less this summer since staying home to renovate the house became a priority. Melissa joined girl guides and continued with soccer in the summer but even with these extracurricular activities she was bored, she had no friends to play with at home. I noticed she used to draw often when she was bored and now as I view the pile of nine year old drawings, I am impressed with the quantity which exceeds the number of drawings done in previous years.

Among the pile of nine year old drawings, I find one hundred and twenty-three drawings of which forty-three represent small doodle-like sketches, often unfinished. As well I discover five cards with drawings, one story book made as a birthday gift for Melissa's sister (see figure 204), seven tracings, one multiple piece comprised of a drawing of a house interior with many small cutouts of people (see figure 209) and one sketchbook of seventy-eight drawings.

In the past most of Melissa's drawings were done on large computer print out sheets measuring eleven by fourteen inches. Now I find only five drawings are done on this type of paper and only two of these make use of



the full sheet. The remaining three drawings are done on cut pieces from a larger sheet. The majority of Melissa's drawings are done on white typing paper or on pages in her sketchbook. Some of Melissa's quick sketches are done on small note pad papers or on small lined notebook pages. A few drawings can be found on pastel coloured papers (usually typing paper size). Overall I observe that Melissa's preference now is to work on smaller pieces of paper.

The media most often used in her single drawings consist of pencil (forty-nine drawings), ballpoint pen (thirty-nine drawings and two cards), and marker (eleven drawings and one small multiple piece). In Melissa's sketchbook, pencil is preferred (forty drawings), then coloured pencils (fifteen drawings) and finally crayon (eleven drawings).

As I look for colour in Melissa's drawings, I observe that along with an increase in the use of outline, there is little use of colour and colouring-in. In the group of single drawings, ninety-two of the drawings make use of only pencil, ballpoint pen or one colour (marker, coloured pencil or crayon). Thirty-one drawings make use of more than two colours and most of these drawings (eighteen drawings) combine outline with colouring-in and only three of these drawings use colours that are true to life. I see a similar pattern in Melissa's sketchbook where sixty-seven drawings are done in pencil, ballpoint pen or use one colour (marker, crayon, coloured pencils) and where the majority of these drawings use outline only. Only eight drawings make use of more than two colours and use a combination of outline and colouring-in. Overall I see Melissa's preference for working with pencil or ballpoint pen, for using outline in her drawings and for using very little colour, especially for colouring-in. When colour is used for colouring-in, it is used in combination with outlining and rarely represents colours that are

true to life.

In most of Melissa's drawings, I observe a single baseline and in only a few do I find perspective or depth indicated through the use of size reduction, additional baselines or overlapping. In Melissa's tree drawing for example (see figure 200), overlapping and size-reduction have been used to show a tree in front of some mountains. For other drawings however, I note that Melissa makes use of a "folding over" perspective where cars, people and objects are represented from an aerial view so that more of the object can be shown (see figures 242, 257, 258). Another way Melissa attempts to show us all is in her use of "x-ray vision" where front walls of houses are removed to show the contents within (see figures 257, 258).

At nine years of age, Melissa seems to be exploring various styles of drawing and with this exploration comes a variety of schema used to depict the same subject matter. This can best be illustrated by her varied styles of drawing people, for example. The schema that Melissa has chosen to use to depict people include; drawing people with extremely narrow and elongated torsos (see figures 230, 243-246), drawing people with short and stalky bodies and large voluminous legs and/or large heads (cartoon-like renderings may be included in this grouping, see figures 247-249), drawing people with geometric bodies and stick-like appendages (see figures 256-257), and drawing people realistically and more or less proportionally from observation (see figures 259, 260). The figures which have been drawn elongated (see figures 243-246) as well as those drawn from observation (see figures 259, 260) appear to include more detail and look to me as though more time has been devoted to their making. In some of Melissa's observation drawings I note the use of a more feathered line where repeated short line strokes define the figure. This contrasts with the solid continuous contour

line used in Melissa's other drawings (representing other styles).

The short stalky figures sometimes look like cartoon characters, cute and stylized, while the stick-like figures look as though they were done to quickly represent people in a more complex piece, where the people might have been considered less significant. An example of this can be found in Melissa's drawings of a house interior. The drawings show the various rooms and their contents as well as the family members within (see figures 257, 258). However the people represented in these house drawings look very stick-like and lack the detail found in the drawings done in the other "styles". I sense that this lack of detail may be attributed to the fact that the "mapping" of the house, indicating the location of rooms was more important to Melissa than the appearance or representation of the family members within. And for this reason she chose to quickly sketch, in a very stick-like way, the people who served as "props" for the house drawing.

I note also that many drawings exhibit a combination of styles. In figure 264 of a princess with money, the body is drawn elongated while the legs are drawn very heavy. In figures 265 and 266 the figures have been drawn elongated with arms and legs drawn sometimes with volume and other times, stick-like.

There are many drawings that look only half finished and others where several small sketches, again unfinished, exist on one sheet of paper, as though Melissa were trying to work out some problem with technique or schema (see figures 267-270).

The varied styles I observe in Melissa's drawings of people are also apparent to me in her depiction of animals (see figures 236, 238, 271-276). In figure 271 Melissa draws a cat elongated while in figure 276 her cat is drawn from observation and appears to resemble a real cat. The cat in figure 275

is more stylized and cartoon-like. Very little detail is given to the cats in figure 257 where more attention has been given to indicate the location of the various rooms of the house interior.

In Melissa's drawings of houses (see figures 212, 256, 258), I see three styles of drawing: elongated as in figure 212, stylized and cartoon like in figure 256 and cross sectional in figure 258, where objects of the house interior have been made to represent the contents with very little detail.

Among this pile of drawings I also see some tracings, from a Barbie and the Rockers colouring book (see figure 224) and others from a book entitled Spatter and Dash (see figures 225, 226), where a chapter has been devoted to ways of drawing characterized heads (cartoon-like). Only a few of Melissa's drawings represent designs, the majority of which were made with a spirograph toy (see figure 207). Overall, it appears to me that there is an increase, over years previously, of drawings rendered in a "cartoon-like style" (see figures 228, 229, 250-255, 272, 273). Among these drawings I see animals dressed as people (see figure 228; an elephant standing on her hind legs eating peanuts from a bag (see figure 217) as well as numerous funny boy and girl characters (see figures 265, 266).

I can read a variety of subjects in her drawings. Viewing the drawings one by one, I divide them into the following types of drawings according to subject matter; drawings of people (family, friends and fictitious characters, usually female), drawings of people with animals, drawings of animals alone (family pets and others), drawings of houses (usually our own), drawings of landscapes, drawings of holiday themes, design drawings and tracings. Some of these drawings depict an event, activity or carry a message, while others represent a subject void of background, action or interaction.

I notice that text is used less often in these drawings than in the ones

done at the ages of seven and eight years. When text is used, it is usually to indicate the subject of a drawing and less as a vehicle for narration. Exceptions to this include cards made by Melissa for others (see figures 202, 205, 206) and a birthday book made for her sister entitled "My Imaginary [Imaginary] Friend" (see figure 204). In this book, Melissa uses text and drawings to illustrate the story of a little girl and her imaginary dragon friend. Sheets of cut typing paper were stapled together to make the pages of the book. Fabric was taped onto the book to serve as a cover. Following the story, Melissa included several blank sheets of paper and instructions for Stephanie to draw her own imaginary friend.

Animals and people alone and together make up the majority of her subject matter. There is an increase in the number of drawings of her immediate family and family pets. A few drawings represent self portraits and others, drawings of herself with her best friend Apryl.

The subject matter of the single drawings and those found in her sketchbook are common. I note that Melissa begins her sketchbook with numerous holiday theme drawings (see figures 277, 278), many of which appear to me to be stereotypic interpretations. The remaining pages of the sketchbook depict a variety of subjects.

I remember purchasing a sketchbook for Melissa in the fall of 1988. I had hoped that the sketchbook would serve as a means of keeping her drawings together as well as a means of providing her with a constant supply of drawing paper on hand. At the time I was curious as to whether the drawings contained by the sketchbook would differ from those done on loose papers.

As I view the drawings kept in her sketchbook, I recall when Melissa

drew the group of holiday theme drawings found at the beginning of the book (see figures 277, 278). Melissa was anxious to fill the many pages of her new sketchbook and the first thing that came to mind was to represent as many holiday themes as she could think of. She completed seven holiday theme drawings all at one sitting. Melissa would often work this way, completing several drawings at one sitting; rarely would she make one drawing and then put away her sketchbook.

I notice that Melissa handled her sketchbook pages quite differently from most of her loose paper drawings, exceptions being the quick doodle-like sketches done on small notepad sheets. Most of the drawings done on single sheets are more developed than those of her sketchbook and look as though more time was spent making them. I remember feeling at the time that Melissa was filling up the pages of her sketchbook too hastily as though she were running a race to "complete" the book. There are only a few drawings in the sketchbook that look to me as though she spent a great deal of time making them and where she was concerned with including a fair amount of detail. They include the drawing of fairies on stage (see figure 235), the drawings of Stephanie alone (see figures 261, 262) and the few observational drawings of the family and pets (see figures 238, 276). Some of these drawings include star stickers that I had given Melissa to play with. Sometimes these stars served as "stars" within the image (see figure 238), at other times the stars would be eyes for a rabbit, the ear piece of a walkman, earrings in a drawing of Stephanie, or the ears of a toy stuffed animal (see figure 262).

What intrigues me about the overall group of drawings (both single and sketchbook), is the increased appearance of numerous cartoon-like drawings. I am reminded of a specific cartoon-like drawing that Melissa observed at

school and told me about. Melissa came home from school one day and described in detail, a cartoon-like sports mural that hung at the back of the classroom and that had been made by two of her classmates. She went on to say that the whole class loved the mural and that the girls who had made it were "really good artists". She added that she wished she could draw like them. Figure 199 (of a basketball game) depicts Melissa's attempt at drawing a sports related image using cartoon-like characters. I remember Melissa showing me this drawing and telling me that she didn't think it was very good. What I think is worth noting is that before the mural, Melissa used to use the cartoon-style in some of her drawings and since the mural, the number of drawings using the cartoon-style has increased.

The tree drawing represented by figure 200 was drawn with markers and done after Melissa had viewed a television show demonstrating some art techniques. Melissa was curious as to whether I thought the tree looked real or not. She had been quite excited about the way she was able to blend colours by applying water to the lines made with some water-soluble markers.

Two other drawings bring me back to the time when they were made. The crayon drawing "I love you, to Dad, from Melissa" (see figure 202), was done in my workroom one evening while my husband and myself were talking. It was made as a gift for Melissa's father and depicts our dog, Pepper, hiding from a female dog who is calling for him. This drawing is one of the few that utilizes the cartoon-style to illustrate humour.

Another drawing of a lady made of geometric shapes (see figure 203) was made when Melissa was distracted from working on a science project about fish.

As I view this year of drawings, very few trigger any recall as most of

them were done in Melissa's private moments. Sometimes Melissa would show me a drawing and sometimes I would observe her drawing members of the family from observation, but for most of the drawings, I was only aware of them once they had been completed.

Melissa's response to her drawings done at nine years old came from two interviews I had with her; the first looking at her single drawings and handmade cards and the second, at the group of drawings contained in her sketchbook. With very little hesitation, Melissa described the subject matter for almost all of her drawings. Although she could not always recall the actual art-making experience with regards to the various drawings, at times she could describe for me how, for some of her drawings, her drawing style was influenced, borrowed or copied from images she had seen on television, in books or drawn by her fellow classmates.

My first interview with Melissa lasted for a little over one hour. The first piece of art work that Melissa encountered was a book that she had made as a gift for her sister (see figure 204). Melissa explained that originally this book had been made as a birthday gift. Unfortunately while waiting for Stephanie's birthday to arrive, Stephanie had a small accident which required her to receive stitches. Melissa decided it would be a good idea to cheer Stephanie up by giving her this book as an early birthday gift. Although Melissa recalled the purpose in making "the dragon book", she could not remember what the story was about.

During the interview Melissa commented on three cards she had made; one as a get well card (see figure 205) and two as cards apologizing to me, for inappropriate behavior (see figure 206). The get-well card depicts a large cartoon-like dog sitting on the chest of a resting figure. In one "sorry card" Melissa apologizes for being angry with me because I had wanted her



to eat her broccoli and in the other card (see figure 206) she apologizes for saying nasty things to me. Much like the book, these cards seem to represent functional ways in which Melissa chooses to share her art work with others.

Some of Melissa's drawings were done with others. She remembered making a flower drawing and numerous spirograph drawings with her babysitter (see figure 207). About her spirograph drawings Melissa had this to say:

I did that one with Joanne [the babysitter]. She brought a whole lot of things, these little circle things and all you have to do, you get these different shapes and you go round and round with a pencil and then it makes designs.

A couple of bedroom drawings (see figure 208) reminded her of the time she and her sister drew together in their shared bedroom, using a new box of pastels.

A multiple drawing of a house interior with various cutouts of people (see figure 209) took Melissa back to a time when she and her sister had made up a small play. Melissa could not remember what the play was about and added that perhaps her sister would remember.

It is interesting to note that for a few drawings Melissa commented on "parts" of the drawings. For example In figure 210 of a standing girl, Melissa remembered having drawn the high heel shoes. In figure 211 of a seated girl, she recalled drawing the bouquet of flowers. In figure 212 of a house, Melissa informed me that this was not a drawing of our present house but that the window had been drawn to resemble our living room window from our previous home. Melissa pointed out a card (made for myself) that included lipstick prints within it (see figure 213) and explained

that she remembered borrowing my lipstick to make these prints. The idea to use lips, she said, came from a postcard of lips that hung on the wall of my workroom. Another drawing of a figure with an orange head (see figure 214) was described by Melissa as a drawing of her sister. Stephanie's head was drawn as a pumpkin and Melissa had this to say about it, "I was mad at her, that's why I didn't do her good".

Melissa had a fair amount of recall concerning where some of her ideas for her drawings came from, as well how her drawings were influenced. Ideas for some drawings came from viewing various television shows. A drawing of a tree using markers (see figure 200) and two drawings of a setting sun using coloured pencils (see figure 201) resulted from viewing an "artist" on television, painting a sun and mountains, using a technique of smudging. Melissa recalled her experience this way:

Yeah, they were copying off of something and I decided to copy it off [draw from] the tree there [Melissa points to the tree in our backyard] except you know all the leaves and all those details. I got so tired so I just did circles and then I smudged the paint and all that [reference made to the drawing represented by figure 200].

When I asked Melissa what the man on television was painting, she answered: "...It was like a river. They were smudging the river a bit. The sun was reflecting. There were trees." Prior to the tree drawing Melissa had attempted two setting sun landscapes using coloured pencils and had experienced disappointment with the results (see figure 201). Referring to one of these drawings she had this to say:

Oh that was a mistake, you see, that's one of them you see, they had all that reflection over there and then they had colours going out like that. Oh it was nice except I couldn't do it, so I made a mistake, so I had to

throw it out.

It is worth noting that Melissa's tree drawing was her third attempt at replicating what she had viewed on television. She gave up on the idea of using reflections in her drawing and decided to draw a tree from observation instead. I believe that what may have contributed to Melissa's frustration was her choice of media. The artist on television had used oil paints and had been successful with smudging the paint. Using coloured pencils Melissa could not get the same effect. However when she used water soluble markers and added water to the drawing, she cleverly worked out the problem of smudging and consequently felt good about her tree drawing that resulted.

We came across a certain drawing of a dragon (see figure 215) and Melissa was reminded of the difficulties she experienced in its making. She described her experience as follows:

That's a dragon you see, I tried, you see whenever I try to do things they hardly ever turn out. I was trying to do a dragon and I sort of can't. You see. You know whenever you have a picture in your head and you want to draw it? You shut your eyes and you're trying to draw it, except you just can't draw it you know? And that's what happened.

Melissa commented on another television show, one that influenced her drawing of Frankenstein's castle (see figure 216). When I asked which show it was, she replied: "let's do art or something, that guy with the beard with a trunk load of art supplies, yeah let's do art". About the drawing itself, Melissa had this to say, "oh yeah, that I copied it off the t.v. like they drew it so I took a paper and did it too, it was Frankenstein's castle. They did the birds exactly like that too and bats."

A few drawings were influenced by the "subject matter" Melissa viewed on television. The idea to draw an elephant eating peanuts from a bag (see

figure 217) came from viewing the television show Babar, shown on t.v. Ontario. The drawing of a horse with a human head (see figure 218) was done after seeing a Walt Disney cartoon of the same. The Pink Panther drawing was done while Melissa was viewing the cartoon (see figure 219). She had this to say about the drawing: "that's whenever the pink panther was on, I copied, like whenever I was standing, I copied it.....well the show was on whenever he stood still I was copying".

Other ideas for drawings came from books. Figure 221 represents a group of children leaving a shoe store. The idea for this drawing came from a story Melissa had read entitled, *A Bargain For The Brambles*, written by Ursula Moray Williams. A drawing of a mermaid (see figure 220) was influenced by the cover of Melissa's sister's book entitled, *The Little Mermaid*. A couple of drawings of horses (see figure 222) were influenced by a horse drawing, Melissa had viewed in one of my books, a drawing that had been done by a twelve year old. Melissa explained by saying the following:

Oh yeah, a book on drawing that you've got, that you have, like I copied it, I copied every detail, someone like I think it was a twelve year old kid drew it. They did that horse and then I copied every detail and now I can do it.

Other drawings constituted tracings made from the colouring books *Fraggle Rock* and *Barbie and the Rockers* (see figures 223, 224). A cartoon character from the *Fraggle Rock* colouring book was traced from its cover. Melissa gave the reason that she had been "in a tracing mood". Melissa gave me two reasons for choosing to trace the figures from the *Barbie and the Rockers* colouring book; one was that she thought the "Rockers" were very pretty girls and second she could visualize what her tracing would be like

after adding colour. Melissa's words were as follows: "I thought it would be really nice and I'd colour it like paintings you know and it'll [It would] cover the whole page".

Melissa pointed out a drawing which consisted of a group of faces (see figures 225, 226) and explained that it had been made by tracing various facial features from a book entitled *Spatter and Dash*, prepared by Walt Disney Productions. A chapter within this book, entitled *What's In a Face?*, displays a variety of cartoon-like hairstyles, face shapes, eyes, noses, mouths, and accessories (hats, scarves, ties, bows, collars) and the instructions that follow explain how one can choose to trace and construct a face using any combination of features and expressions shown. Melissa explained to me that at the time she had liked the faces and was impressed with the way they had been drawn. She added they were easy to copy.

In my discussion with Melissa, I came across a drawing that depicted Stephanie doing exercises with a radio in the foreground (see figure 227). The lines emanating from the radio suggested sound waves to me and I wanted to know what these lines represented for Melissa and where the idea to draw them, came from. She explained that she had seen the same in a colouring book and that the lines represented music.

Another area of influence in Melissa drawings came from the drawings made by some of her female classmates. In a drawing of a lady (see figure 203) made by tracing around a roll of tape, Melissa pointed out the eyes and informed that a friend of hers from grade three had shown her how to draw eyes this way. Another drawing, this time of a basketball game (see figure 199), also illustrated how Melissa was influenced by a fellow classmate. When I asked Melissa where the idea for this drawing came from she answered the following:

In grade four at the end of the class, Mr. McCleary [Melissa's grade five teacher] well not Mr. McCleary, but we had to do a big board at the back [back of the classroom] well we had to do sports and then there's basketball and Allison in my class, you know how good she is in drawing, well she likes doing cartoon things so she did one of those.

Melissa added that she thought Allison's drawings were better than hers mainly because Allison knows how to draw. She went on to say: "she can do a person that looks exactly like a person and everything and me it looks like.." When I asked Melissa if Allison's people looked real or cartoon-like, she replied:

Well it depends if she wants to draw a real person she will be able to draw a real person. If she wants to draw a cartoon....She can draw whatever she wants and it'll always look good. It's perfect. Her art is perfect.

We viewed several of Melissa's drawings which to me looked very cartoon-like and I asked Melissa to comment on them (see figures 228, 229, 272, 273). Melissa had the following to say about her style of drawing animals:

Well I can't really draw real animals, you see let me do this [Melissa draws eyes for me]. Like this, I can never get the eyes perfect. See, look, they either look mad or weird. See I can't do them. See I do rabbits like this because they're easier.

I asked Melissa where she learned to draw her eyes this way (cartoon-like). She answered by saying: "well alot of girls in my class, as I go by [by their desks] are always doing cartoon animals and that, so I know it off them". Melissa added that her classmates' drawings were usually done all over their notebooks.

On several occasions I asked Melissa to comment on her "new way" of

drawing ladies' dresses with the skirt portion flaring out (see figures 230-233). It was only at the end of the interview while viewing a certain drawing of a queen-like figure (see figure 233) that Melissa recalled "learning how to draw the dress" from a girl in her class. She explained to me how her friend draws dresses : "she sort of goes like that and all that stuff. She draws all these little details all over like this and all that. She's okay but Allison is the best".

Having recognized Melissa's use of different styles (eg. stick-like, cartoon-like, elongated and realistic) of drawing, I tried to determine whether Melissa could also see these different styles and how they were being used. In my questioning, I tried to find out from Melissa her reasons for employing these different styles with respect to drawing people. I received responses such as: "they're different people" or "cause they're in costume" (see figures 243-246). Looking over the drawings represented by figures 243 to 246, I notice that the figures are in fact "costumed" in long dresses and perhaps Melissa's use of the elongated drawing style worked to show that the figures were wearing "long dresses". However Melissa's style to draw in an elongated way is also apparent in other drawings where costumes or long dresses are not depicted such as in some of her drawings of animals (see figures 236, 271) as well as in some depictions of men (see figure 230 and figure 179 from the previous chapter). In figure 179 the kings are robed and drawn elongated but I note that Joseph and the shepherd are also elongated and not depicted "in costume", suggesting to me that the elongated style is a "way" or "style" of drawing not only used to depict a costume. From Melissa's response to the different drawing styles presented, I was left with the impression that either Melissa did not understand my question or else she in fact did not see her drawing as

encompassing various styles.

Concluding the first interview, I asked Melissa what kinds of drawings she liked to do and she answered "cartoons". I asked her if she liked to draw things realistically and she replied: "not really because I can never draw the shadows. I don't know how to draw shadows. You know I don't know how to draw". When I asked if cartoons were easier to draw she answered: "yup cause I don't need to do shadows for cartoons".

My second interview with Melissa (concerning her sketchbook drawings), was much shorter than I had anticipated. Overall she had no problem indicating to me the subject matter for all the drawings contained in her book, in a labeling kind-of-way. Additional comments concerning process or source of imagery were supplied for only a few drawings.

Melissa made reference to "mistakes" she had made for the drawings of a house interior (see figure 234), a fairy (see figure 235) and a horse (see figure 236). I asked Melissa to explain what she meant by mistakes. For the house interior (see figure 234) she explained that she had drawn the kitchen section of the house too quickly. For the drawing of the horse (see figure 236) it was considered a mistake because Melissa "didn't like it". Although Melissa did not comment on why she believed the fairy drawing (see figure 235) was a mistake, I assume that perhaps the reason was the same as that given for the horse drawing.

Two drawings, one of a bookcase with books (see figure 237) and another of a brick wall with a cat seated on top (see figure 238) were done after viewing two art shows on television. Melissa explained that she had seen someone on television draw books and decided to do the same. On another television art show Melissa observed an artist use pencils to smudge and decided to do the same for two drawings (see figures 238). Melissa had this



to say about what she had observed:

and you know how tney usually have? I copied off the t.v., things they had. You know the pencils and you take an eraser and smudge the brick? And then you have the cat on top and then I put those stars.

Melissa pointed out a few drawings that were made by copying or observation. A drawing of a hen was copied from an eraser (see figure 239). The wreath drawing (see figure 240) was done as an observational drawing from a grapevine wreath Melissa had made. The drawing of a fairy and little girl dancing on stage (see figure 235) was done from copying the figures from a colouring book about fairies. The fairy and little girl were copied from different pages of the book. Melissa's drawing was different from the original mainly because she had added some of her own details as well as having changed a few details from the original. With the colouring book to make reference to, I could see that the hairstyle and positioning of the legs of the fairy Melissa drew, differed from the original. The fairy on the cover of the colouring book was dancing with a group of fairies surrounding a May pole. Melissa's fairy danced with a little girl. The little girl from the colouring book appeared inside the book and was shown as dancing on a stage with another little girl. Melissa copied the stance of one of the little girls, but had changed the costume and added wings to create her own little girl. A stage was drawn in and a few stick figures representing an audience were added.

Melissa came across a drawing that she described as representing "a person jumping on the bed with a blanket in his hand" (see figure 241). About the drawing she had this to say:

it's supposed to be better except you know ... I thought of it, you know how you think of something to do and it doesn't turn out the way you

thought it would? Like that? Cause it's too tall. I didn't have hardly any room for his head or anything.

Referring to a certain drawing of a house (see figure 242), Melissa made the following comment, "that's the kind of house I do now except a bit better". When I asked her why her houses now are better, she answered, "you can [now] see the side of it".

To conclude our interview, I asked Melissa if she could explain to me whether she could see any differences between her single drawings and those contained in her sketchbook. She informed me that the sketchbook was made up of sketches and that these kinds of drawings didn't have to be perfect. When I asked what she meant by perfect she answered by saying that one did not have to "add [include] all kinds of colours and details".

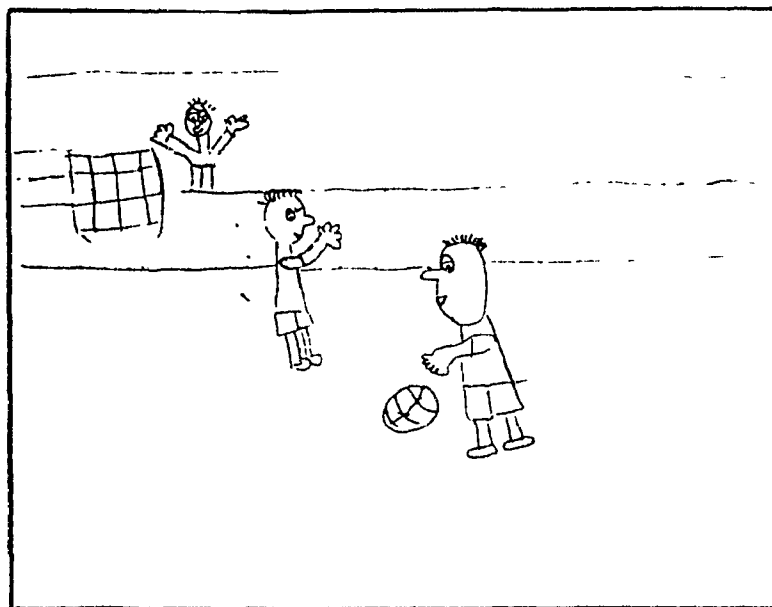


Figure 199. A Basketball Game (age 9.8).

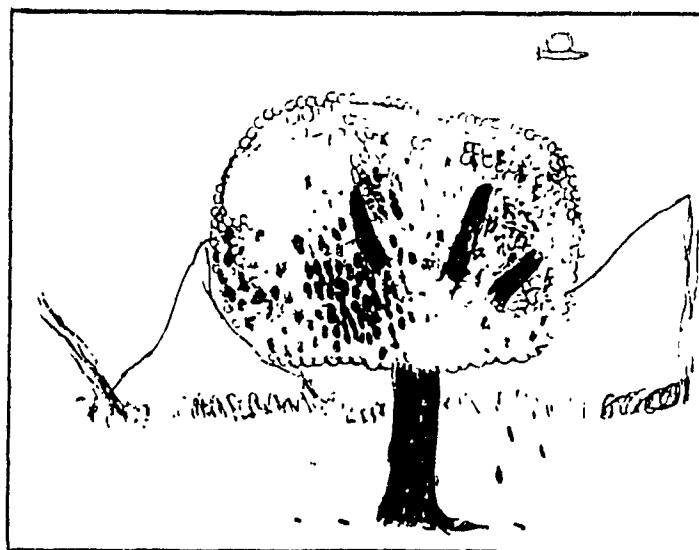
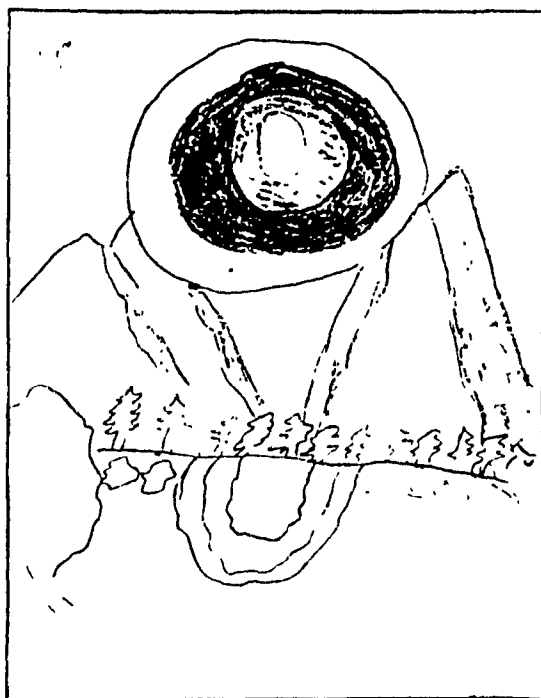


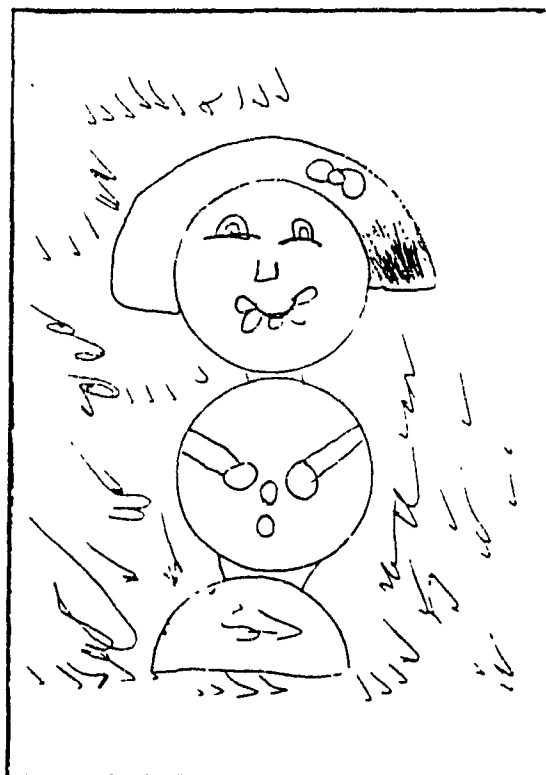
Figure 200. Tree Drawing (age 9.10).



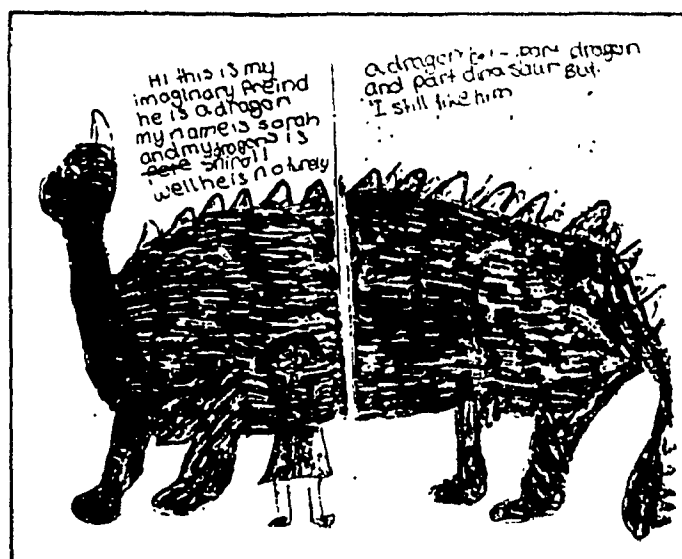
**Figure 201.** Sunset (age 9.10).



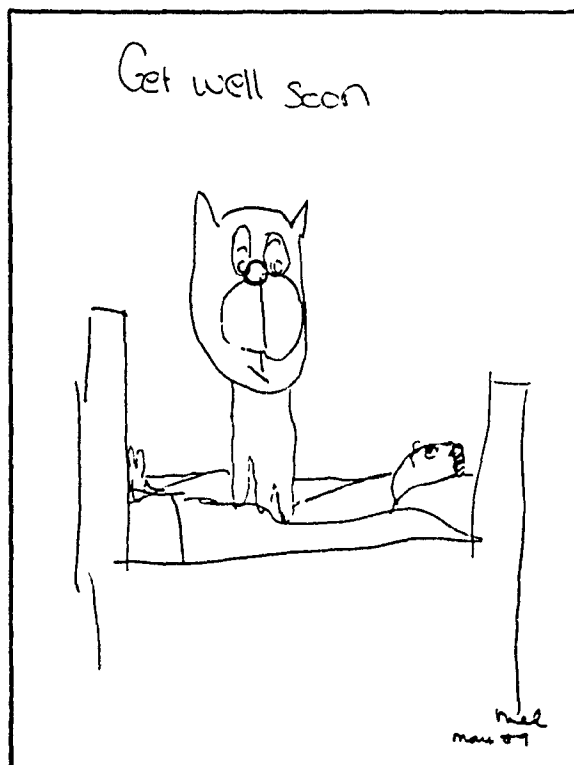
**Figure 202.** Our Dog Pepper (age 9.5).



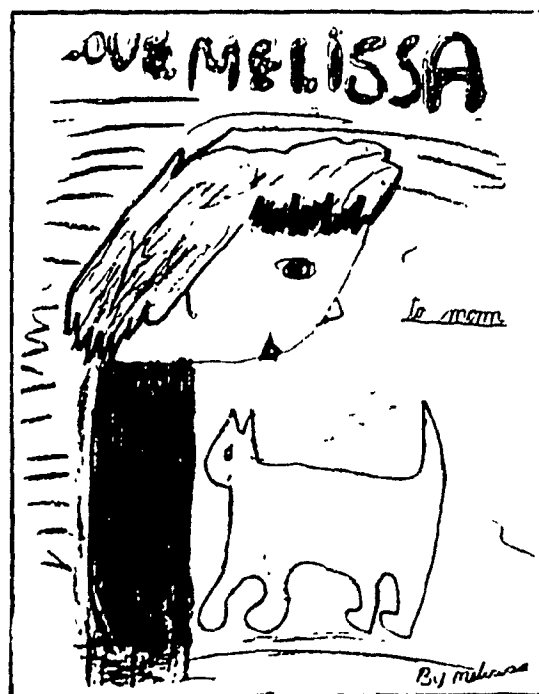
**Figure 203.** A Lady (age 9.4).



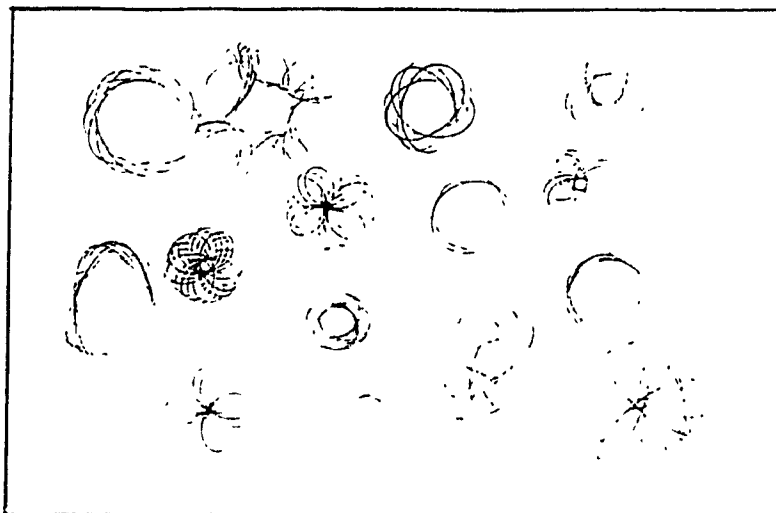
**Figure 204.** Inside Page of Stephanie's Dragon Book (age 9.10).



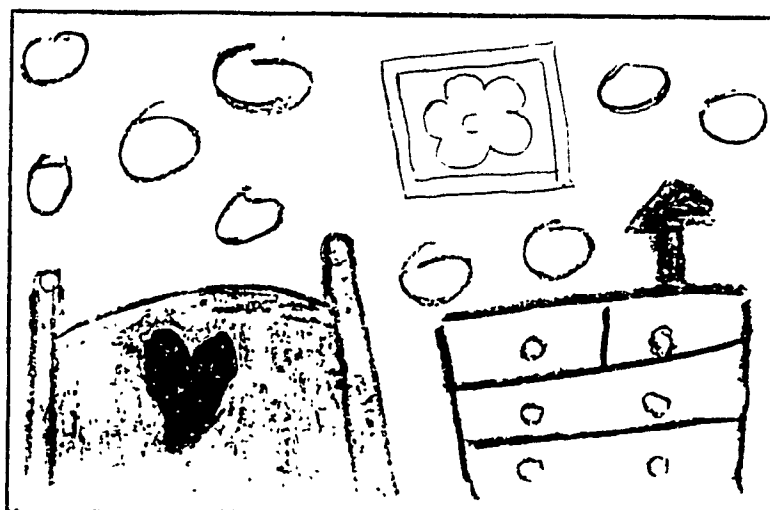
**Figure 205.** Get-well Card (age 9.8).



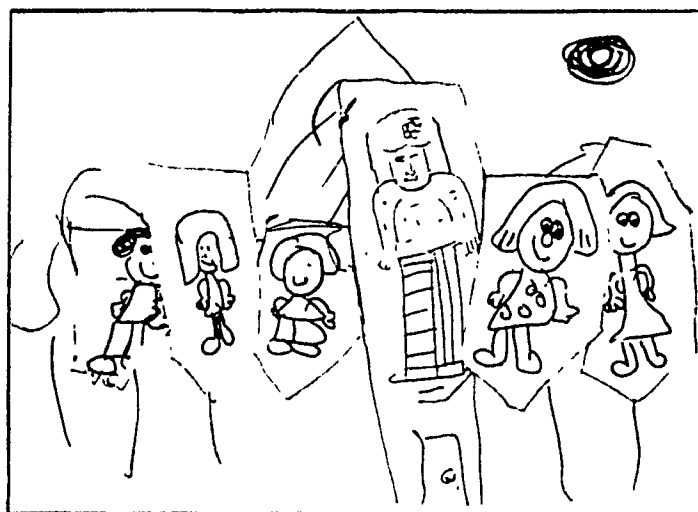
**Figure 206.** Sorry-Card (age 9.9).



**Figure 207.** A Spirograph Drawing (age 9).



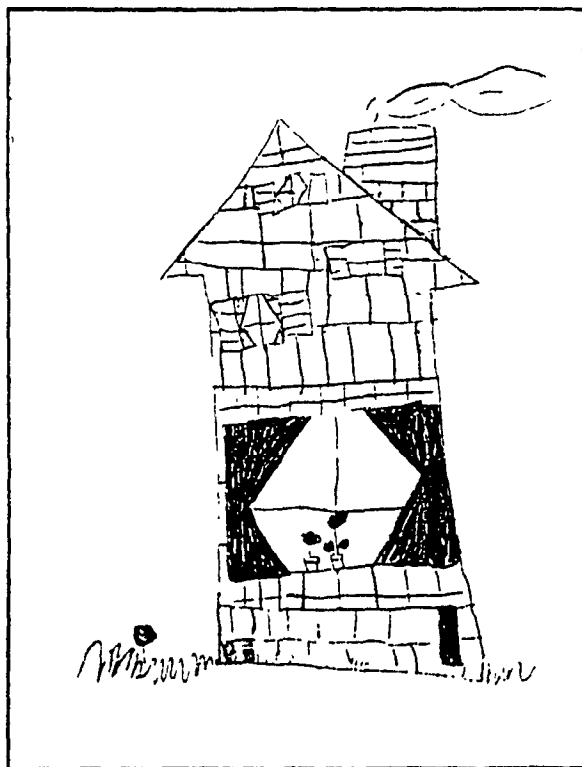
**Figure 208.** Bedroom Drawing (age 9.9).



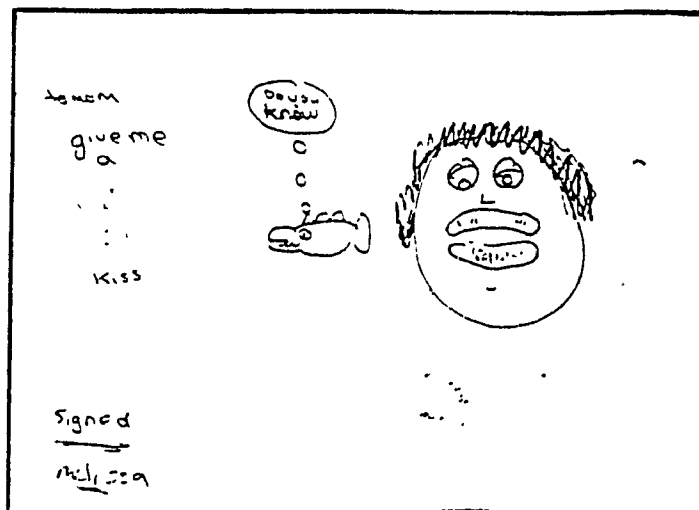
**Figure 209.** House Interior With People Cutouts (age 9.9).



**Figure 210.** A Girl in High Heels (9). **Figure 211.** A Girl with Flowers (age 9).



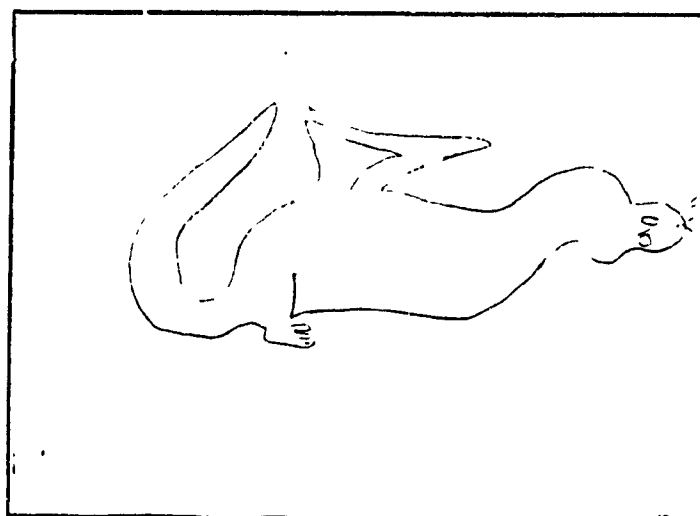
**Figure 212.** A House (age 9).2



**Figure 213.** Lipstick Prints (age 9.8).

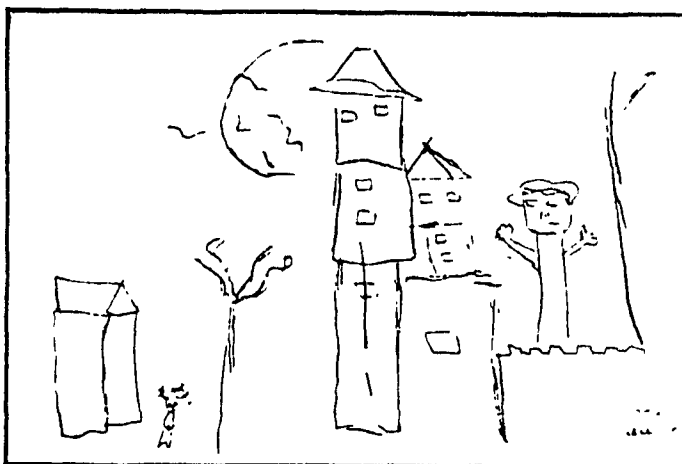


**Figure 214.** Pumpkin-Head Stephanie (age 9.8).



**Figure 215.** Dragon (age 9.8).





**Figure 216.** Frankenstein's Castle (age 9.1).



**Figure 217.** An Elephant Eating Peanuts (age 9.6).



**Figure 218.** A Horse With A Human Head (age 9.9).

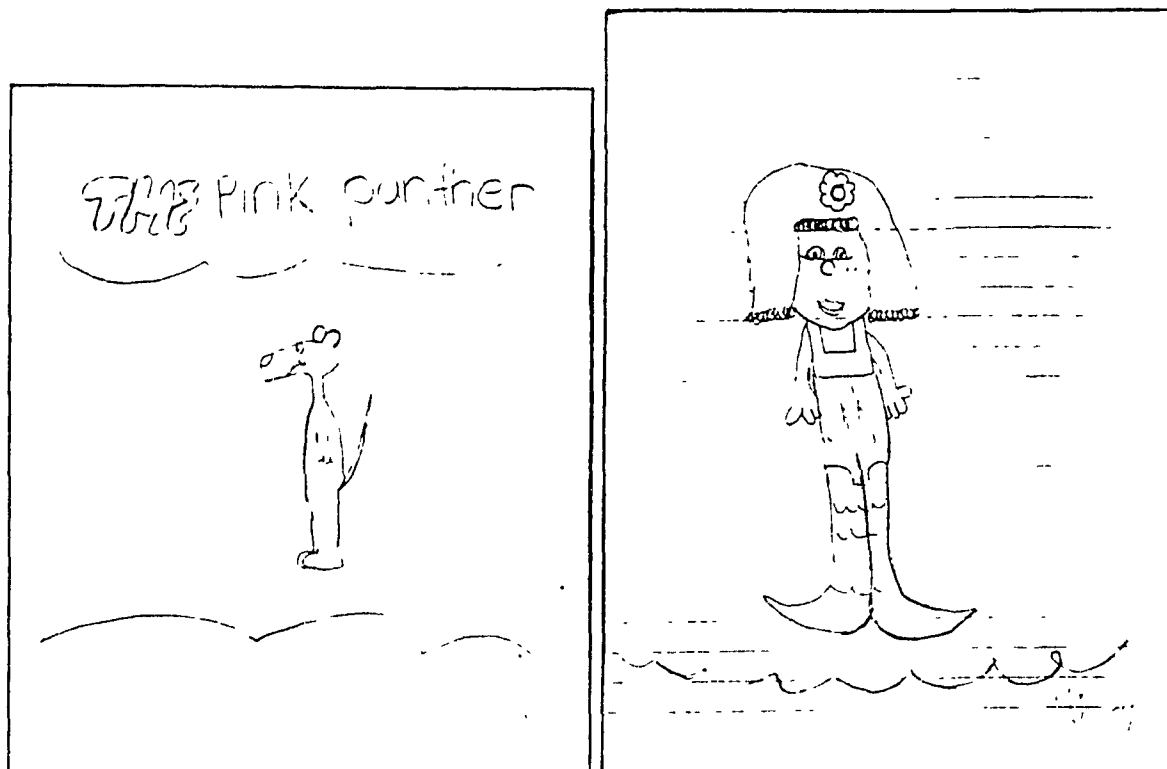


Figure 219. Pink Panther (age 9.10). Figure 220. Mermaid (age 9.11).



Figure 221. Children Leaving A Shoe Store (age 9.2).

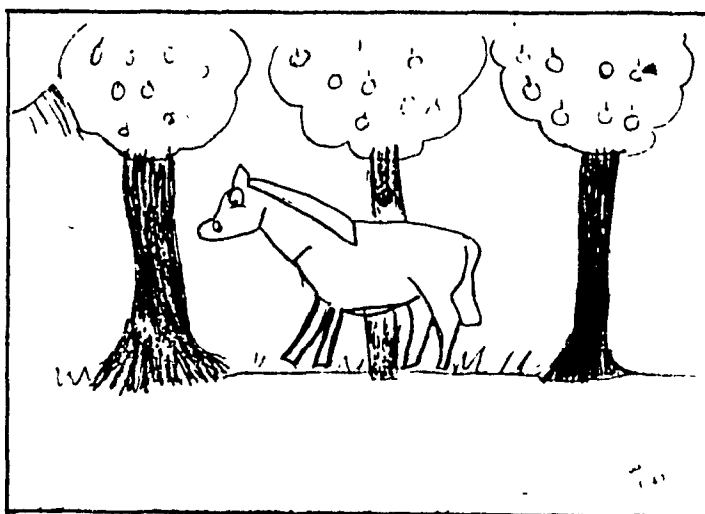


Figure 222. Horse Drawing (age 9.8).

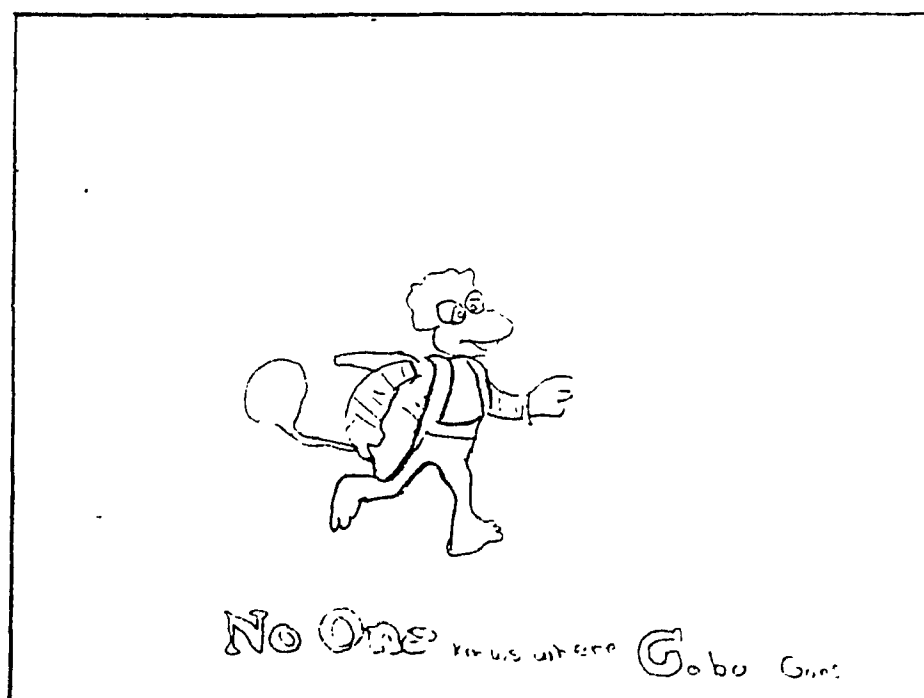


Figure 223. A tracing made from a book (age 9).

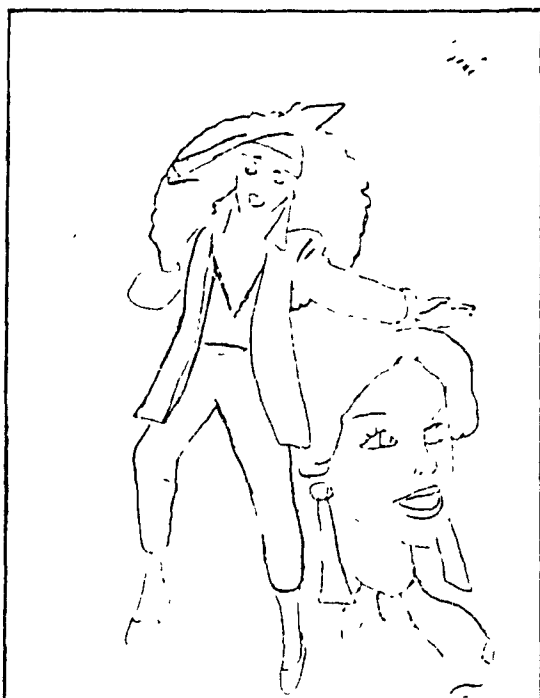


Figure 224. Barbie And The Rockers  
(age 9.8).

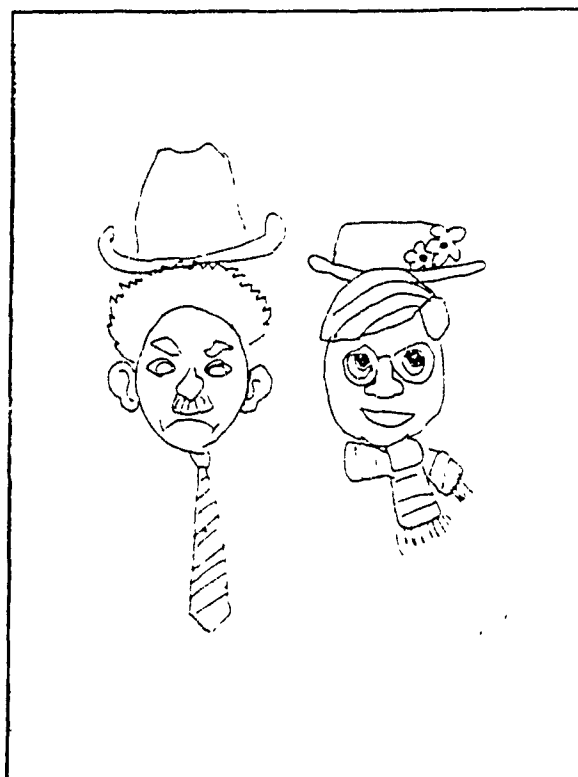


Figure 225. Faces (age 9.10).

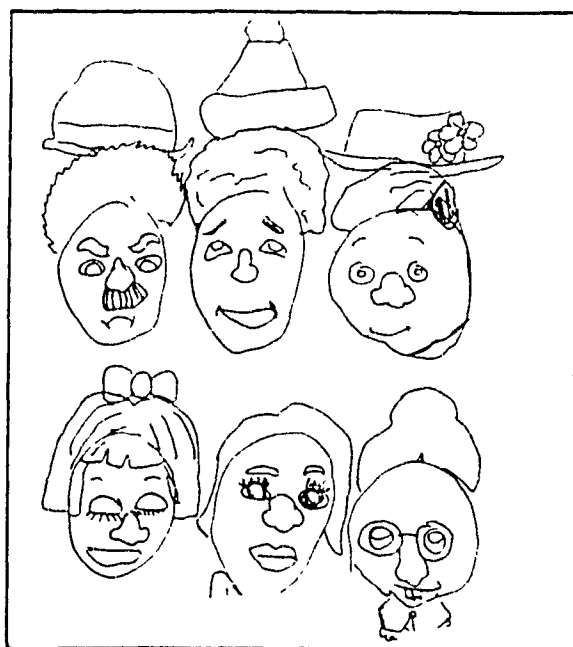


Figure 226. Faces (age 9.10).

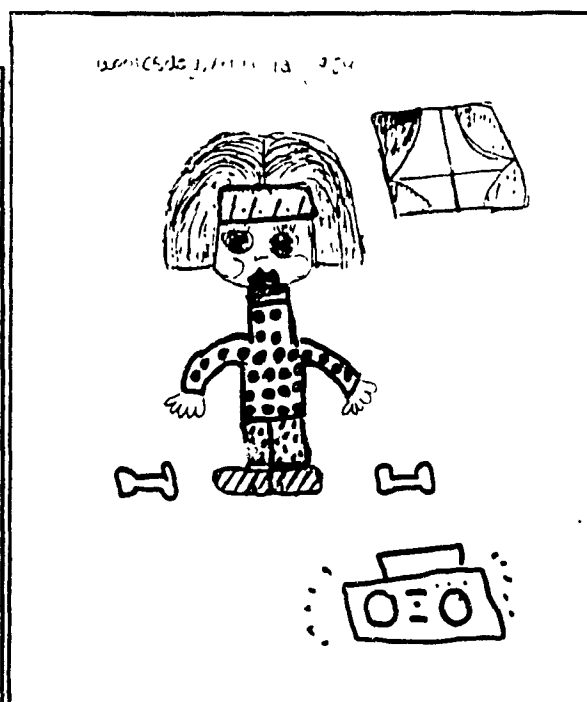
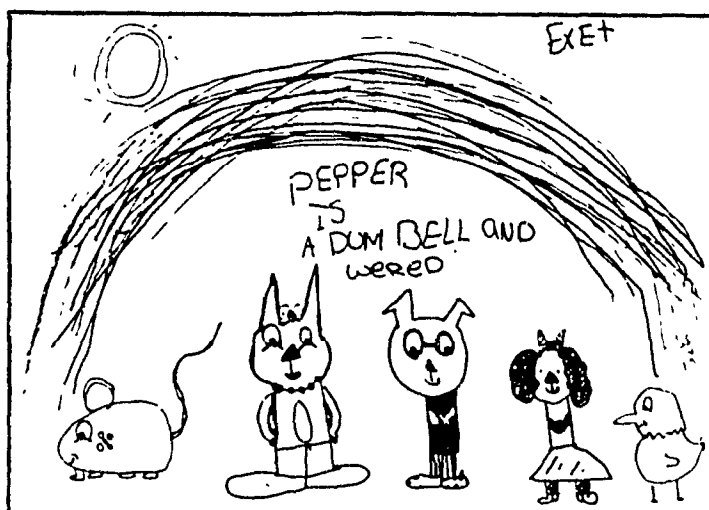
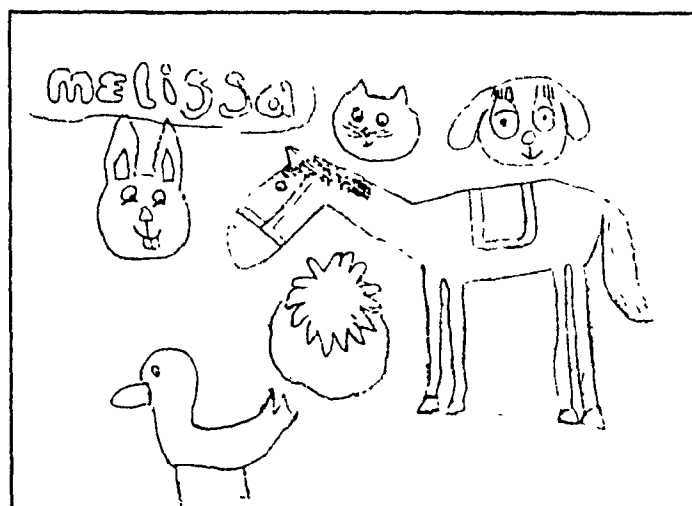


Figure 227. Stephanie Doing  
Exercises (age 9.7).



**Figure 228.** A Group of Animals (age 9.8).



**Figure 229.** Drawing of Animals (age 9.11).



**Figure 230.** Princess and Prince (age 9).



Figure 231. Girl With Telephone (age 9).



Figure 232. Melissa Roller-Skating (age 9).



Figure 233. A Queen (age 9.8).

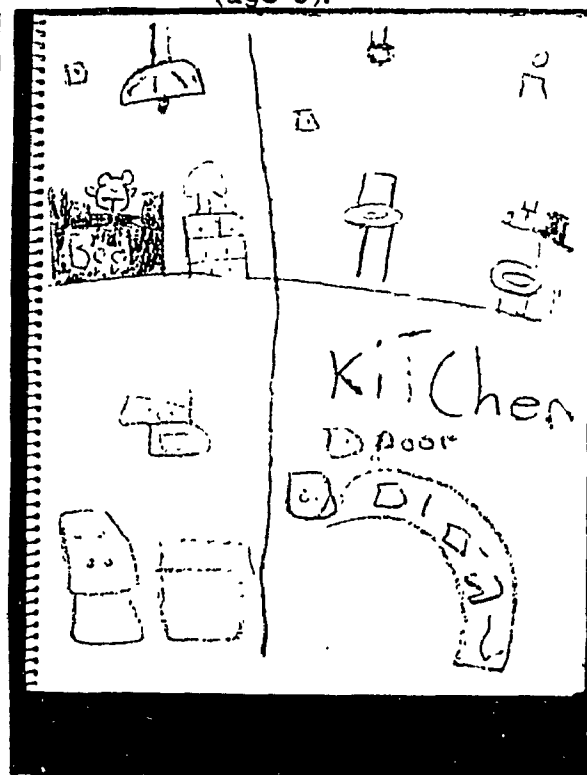


Figure 234. House Interior (age 9).



Figure 235. Fairies (age 9).

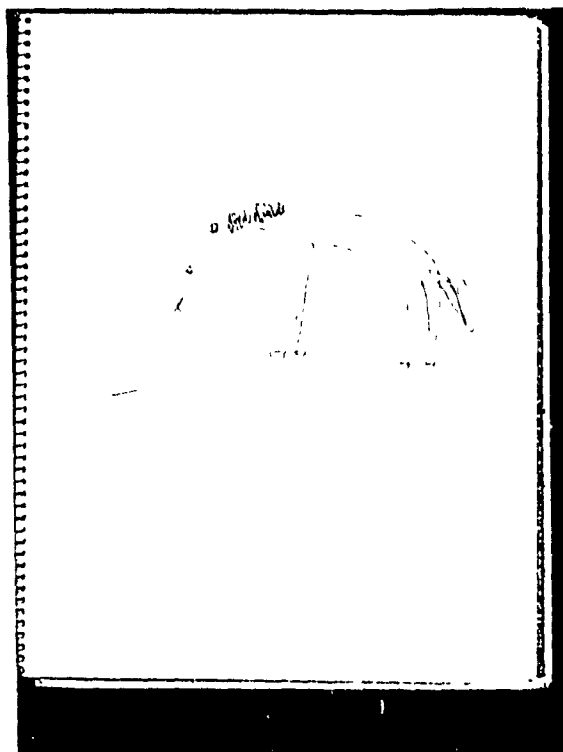


Figure 236. A Horse (age 9).

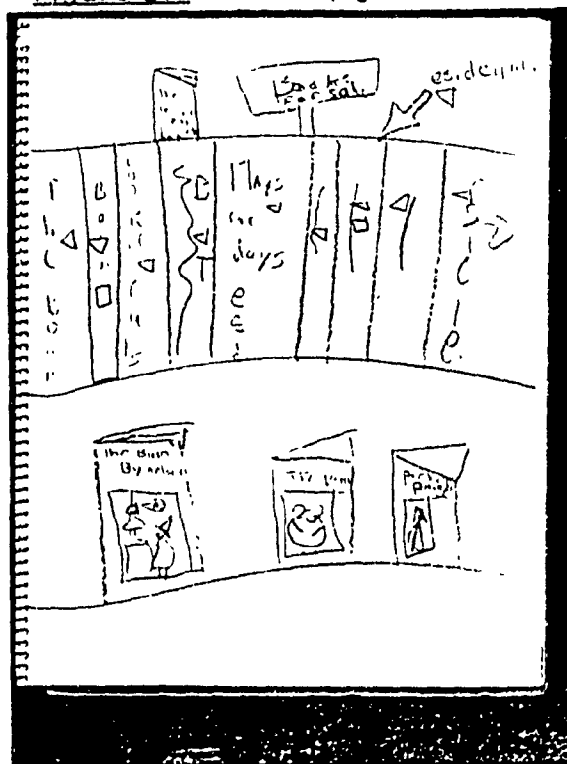


Figure 237. Bookcase (age 9).

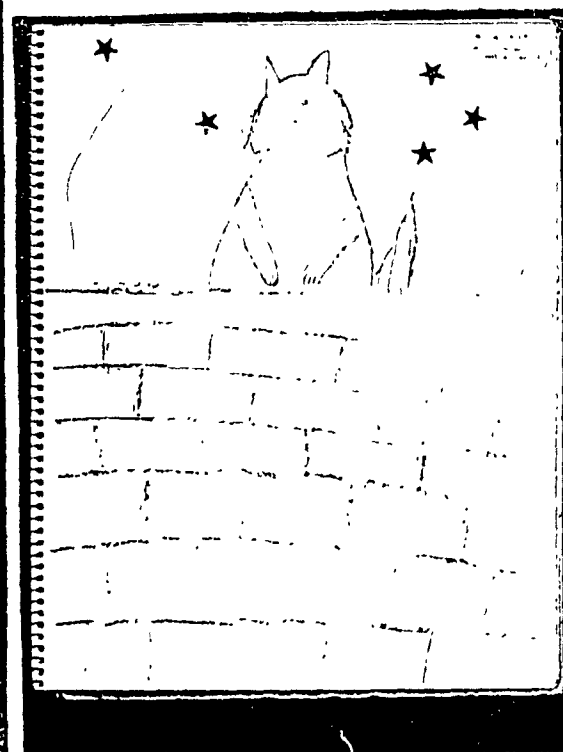


Figure 238. A Cat On The Wall (age 9.3).

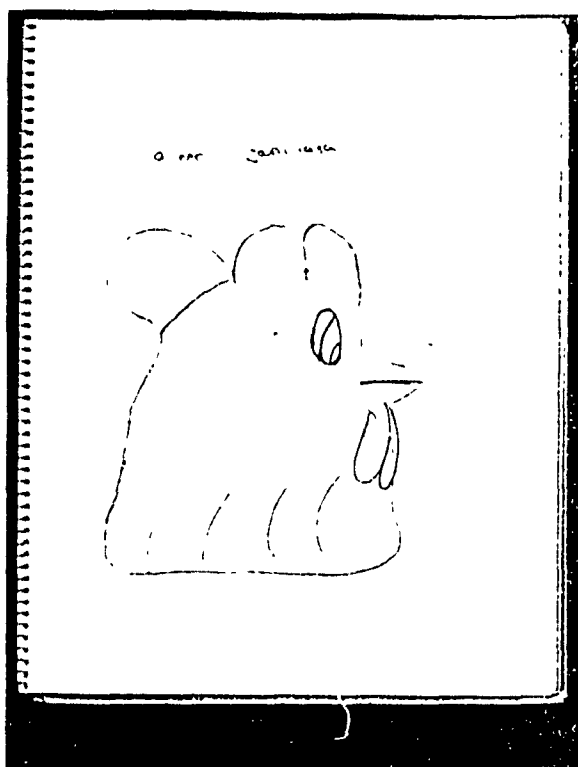


Figure 239. A Hen (age 9.4).

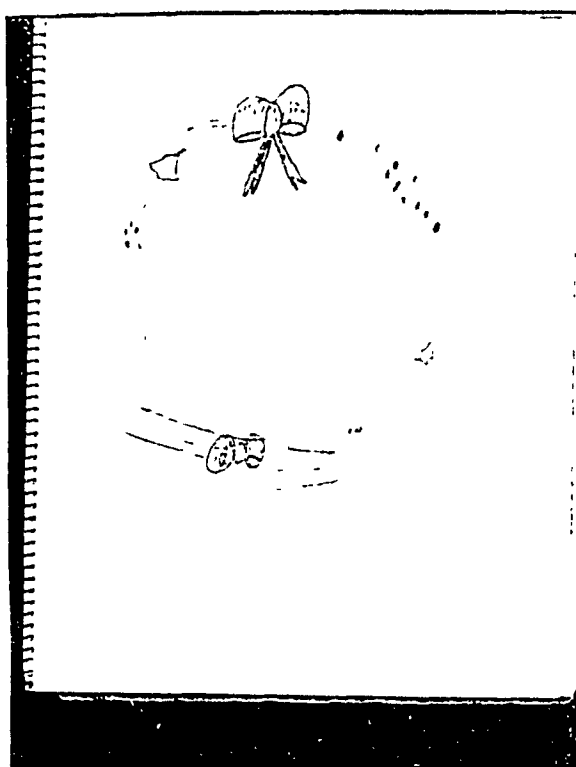


Figure 240. A Wreath (age 9).

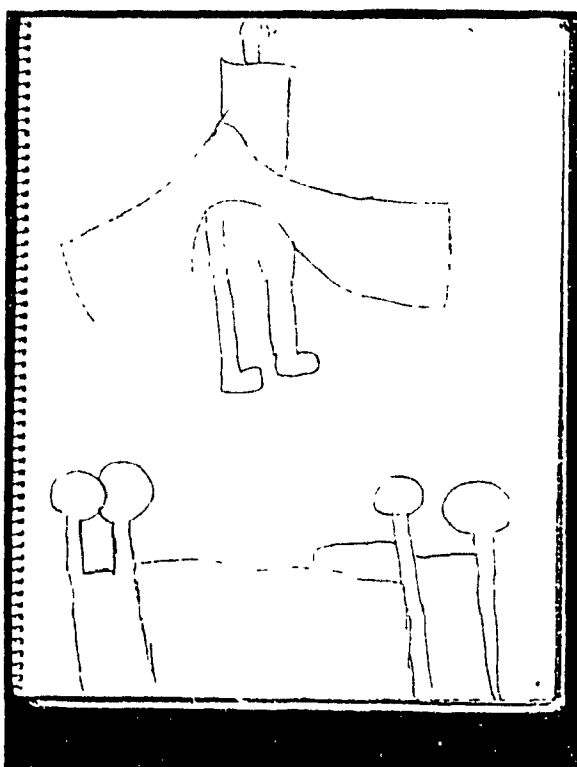


Figure 241. A Person Jumping On A Bed (age 9).

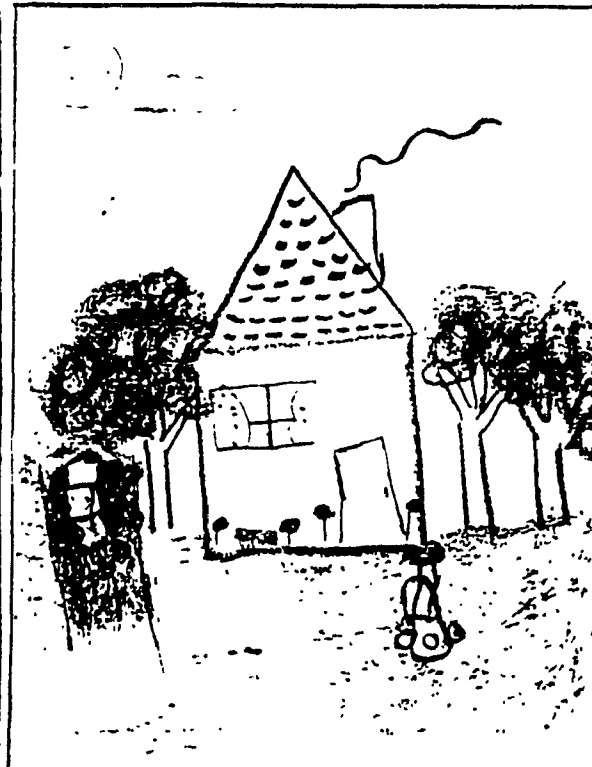


Figure 242. A House (age 9).



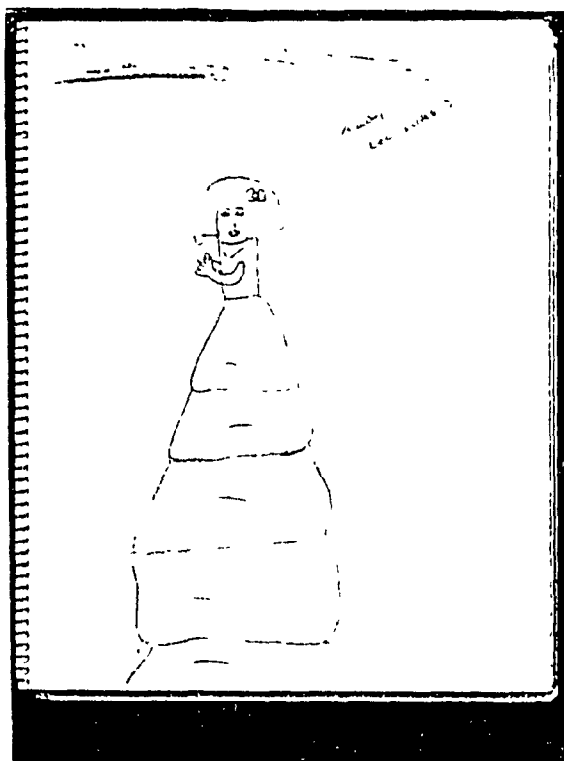


Figure 243. A Lady (age 9.3).



Figure 244. Melissa and Apryl (age 9.9).

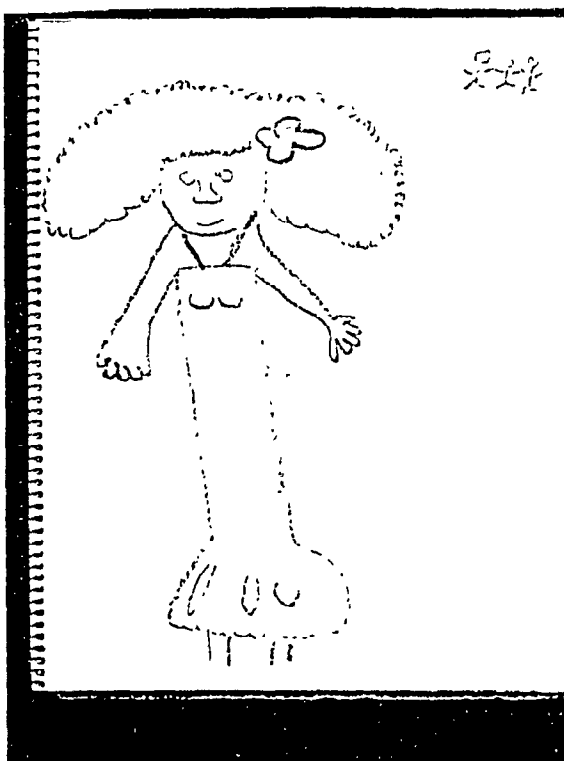


Figure 245. A Girl (age 9).

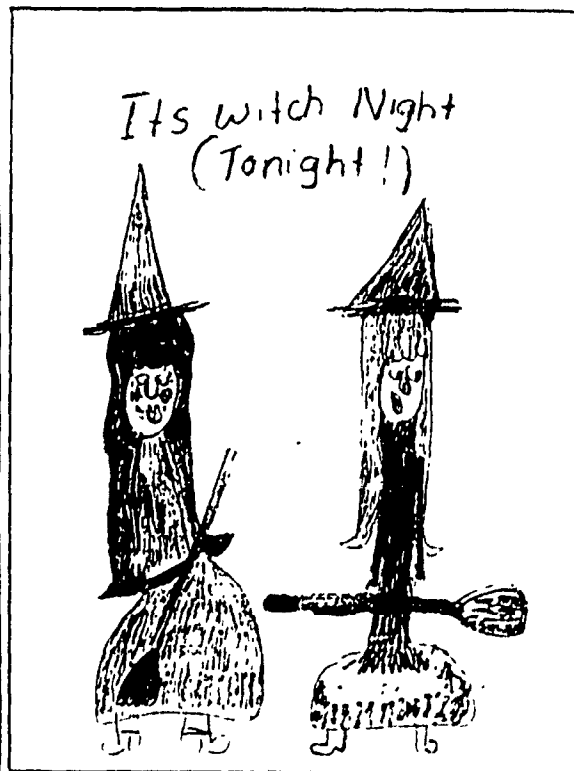


Figure 246. Witches (age 9.11).

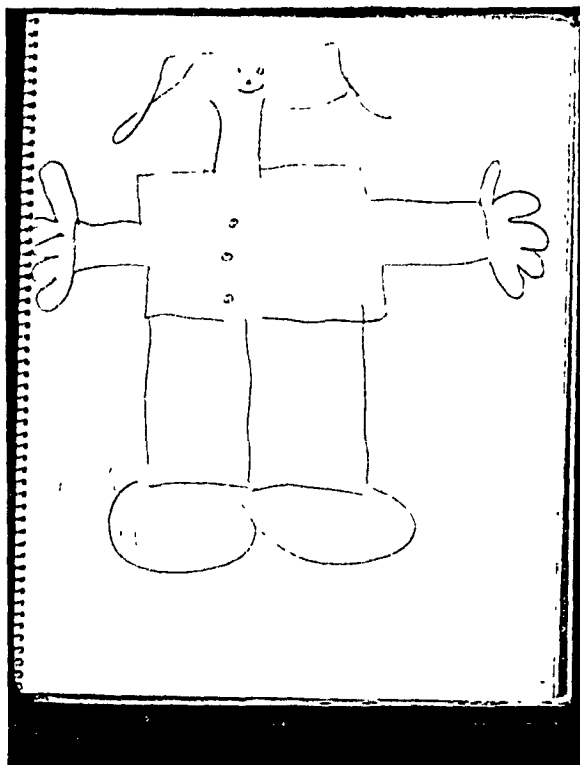


Figure 247. A Person (age 9).

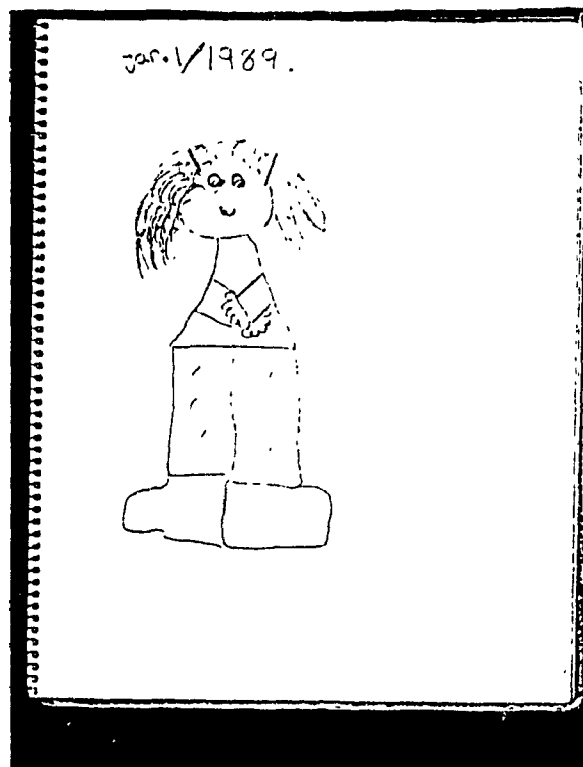


Figure 248. A Girl (age 9.4).

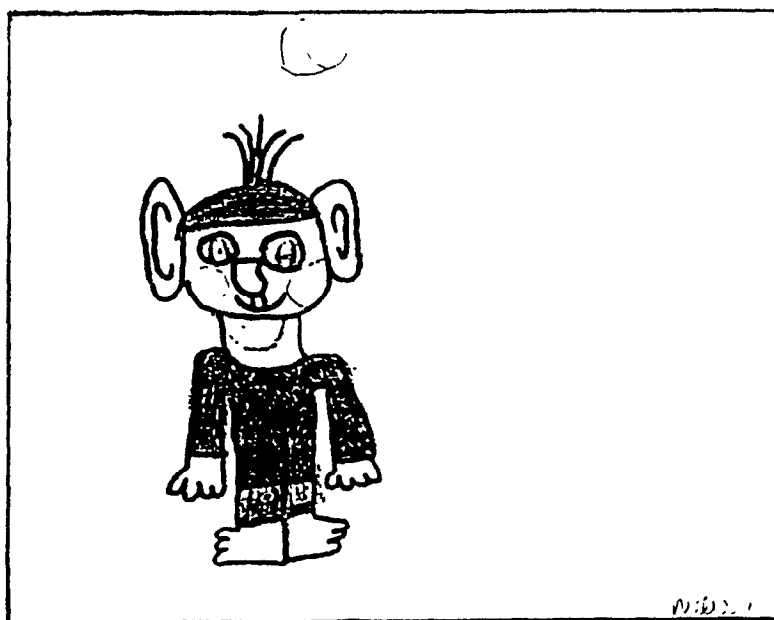
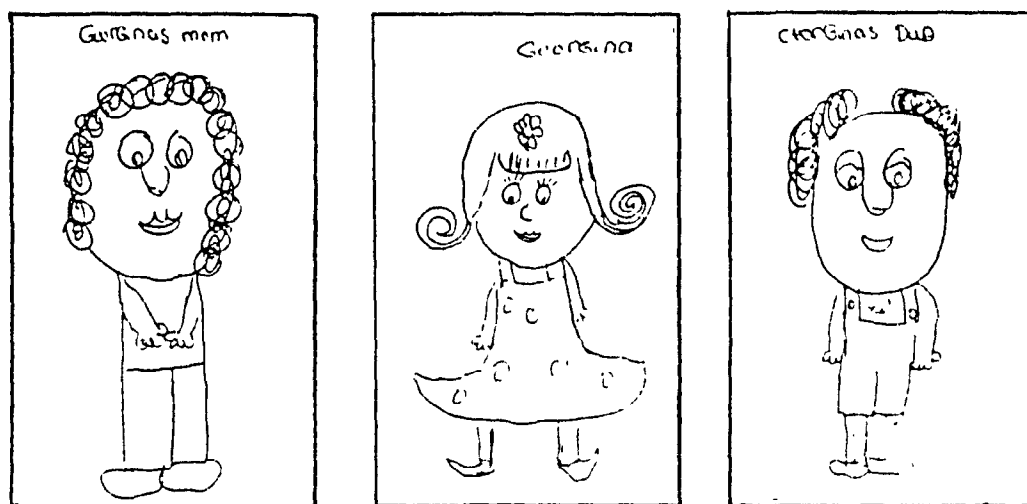
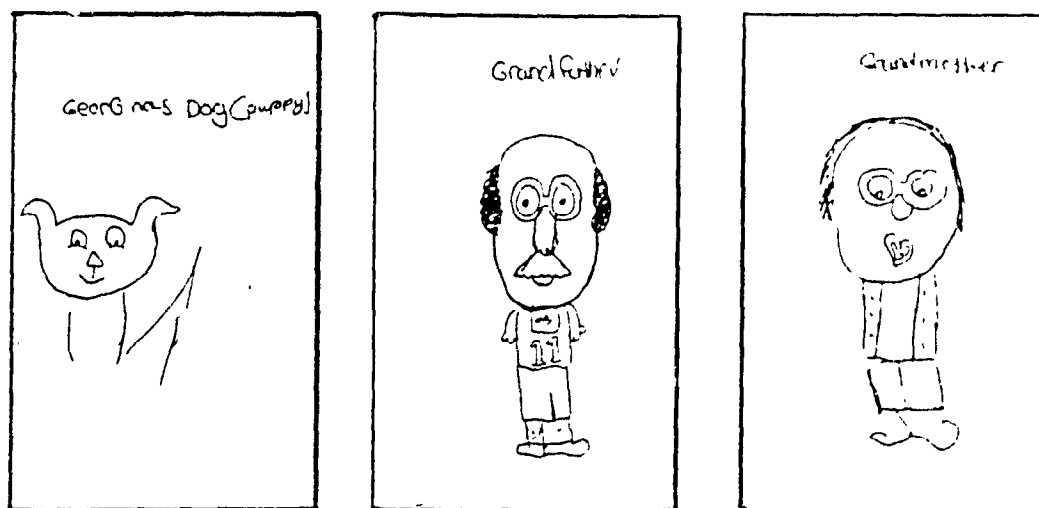


Figure 249. A Martian (age 9.4).



Figures 250-252. Cartoon Characters (age 9).



Figures 253-255. Cartoon Characters (age 9).

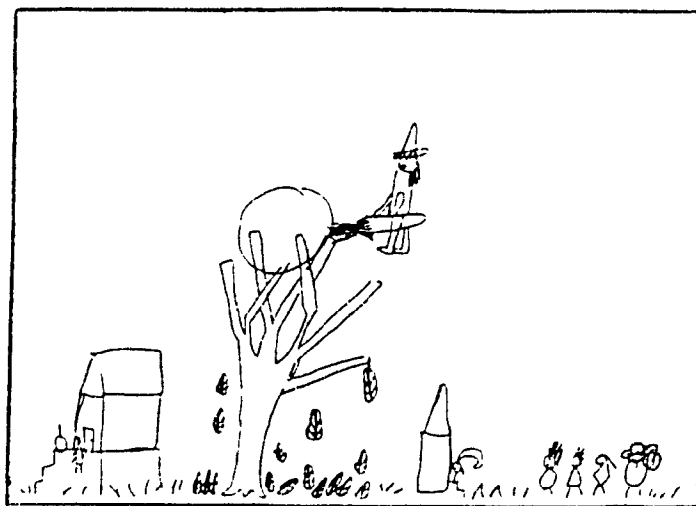


Figure 256. Halloween (age 9.1).

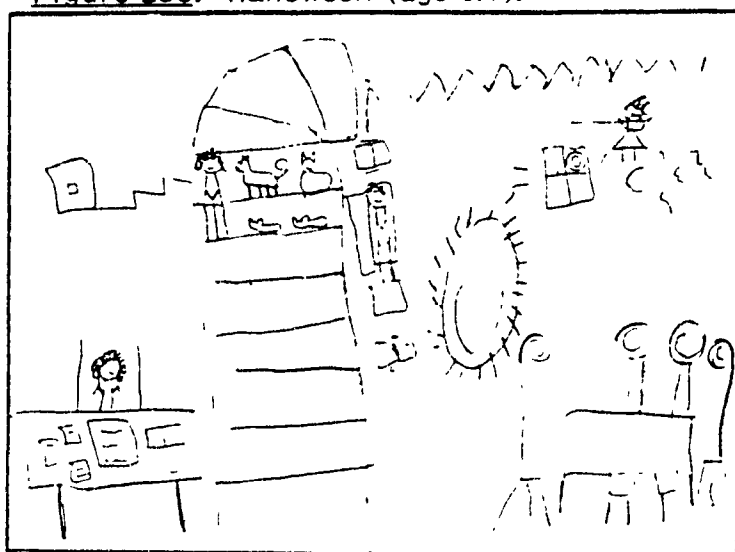


Figure 257. Our House (age 9.2).

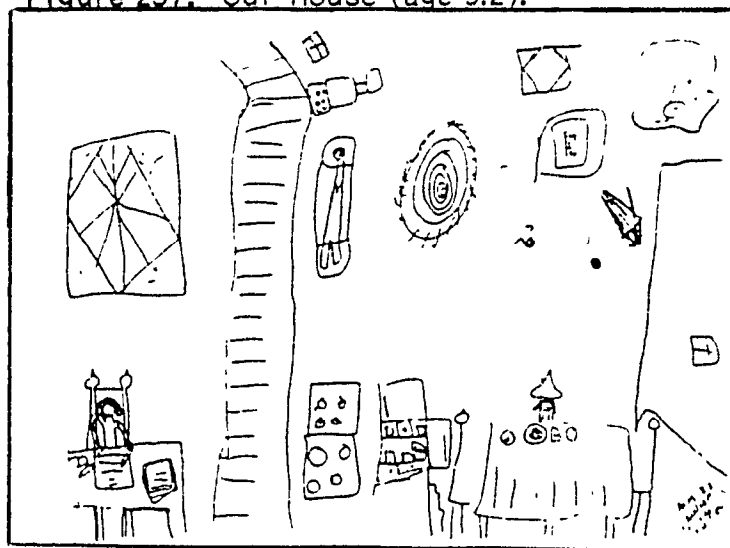


Figure 258. Our House (age 9.11).



Figure 259. Stephanie (age 9.11).

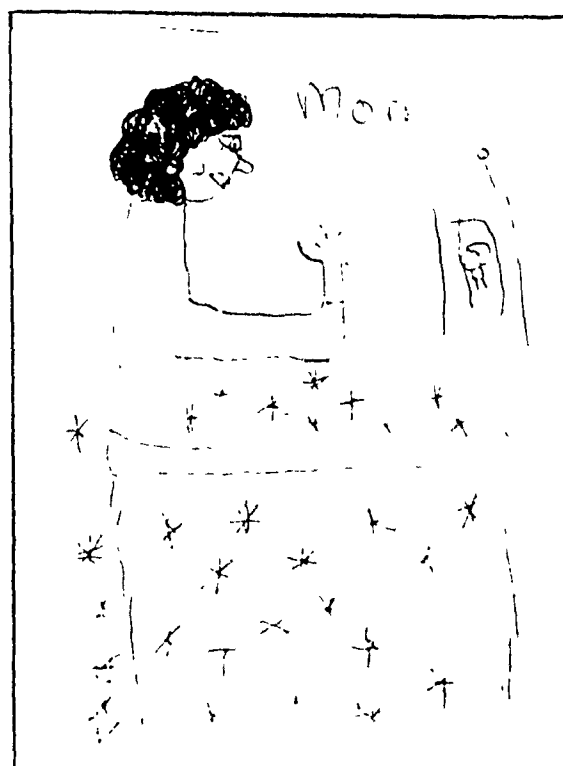


Figure 260. Mother (age 9).

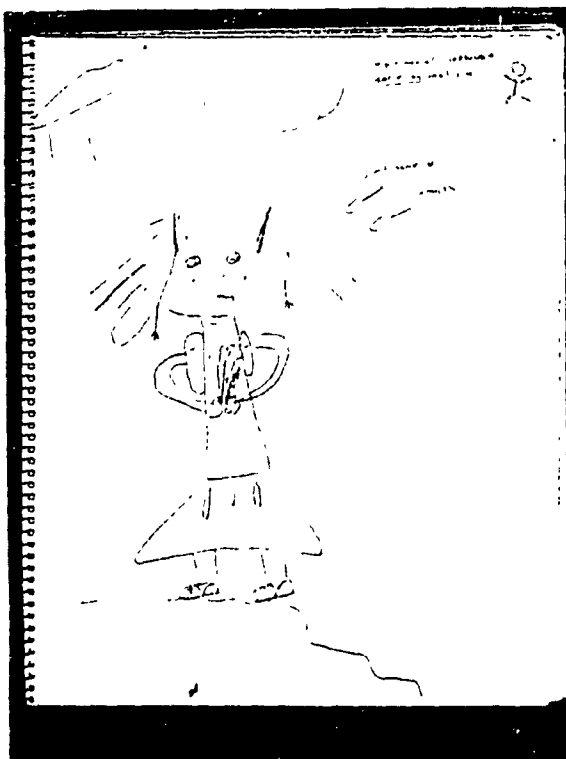


Figure 261. Stephanie (age 9).

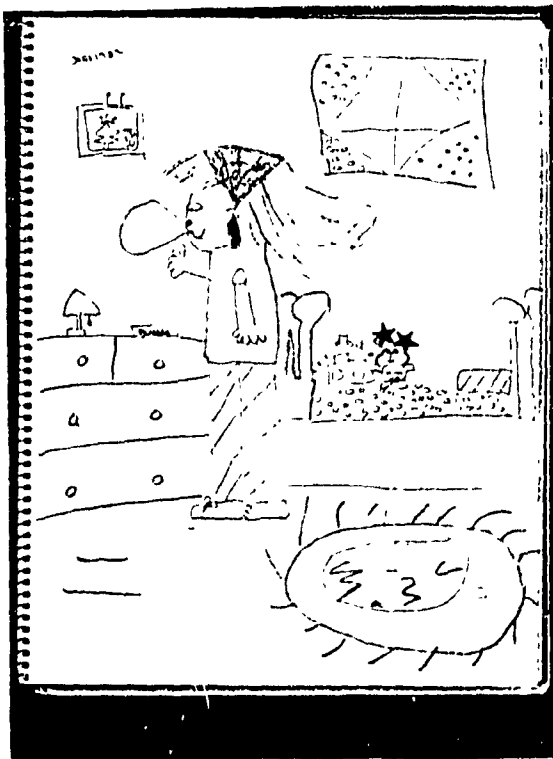


Figure 262. Stephanie (age 9.4).

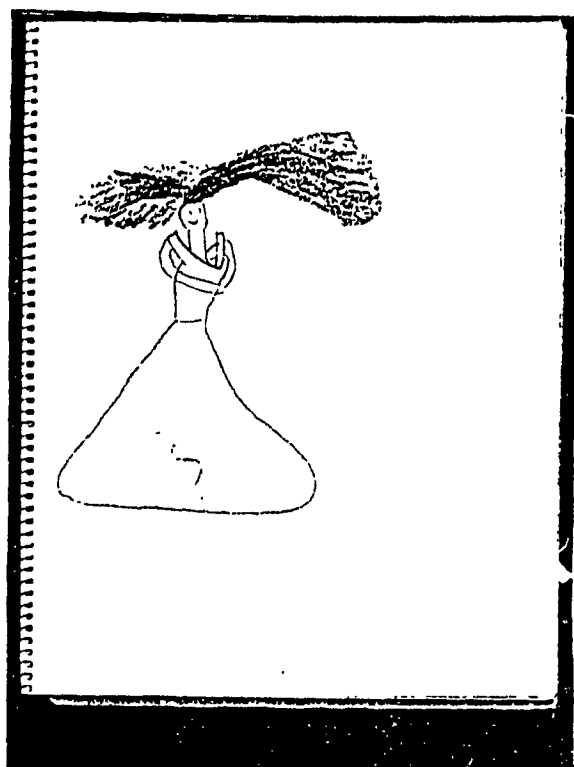


Figure 263. A Girl (age 9).

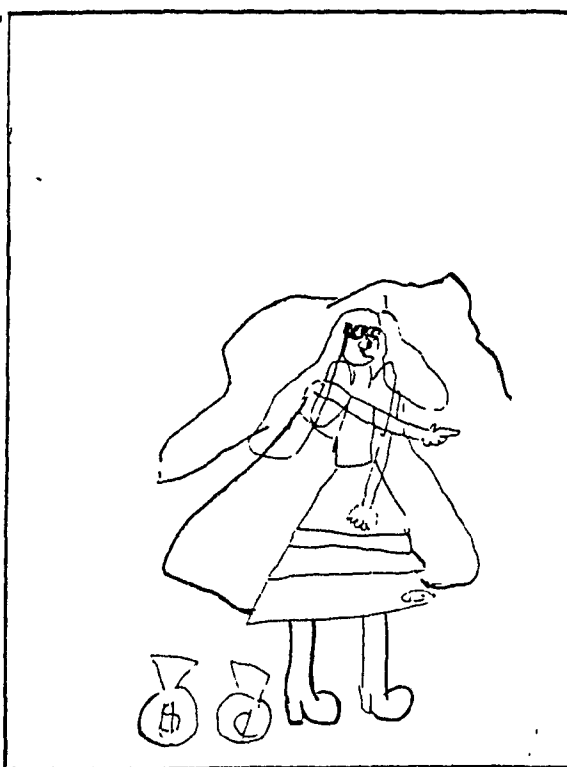


Figure 264. Princess With Money (age 9.1).



Figure 265. Funny Girls (age 9.1).

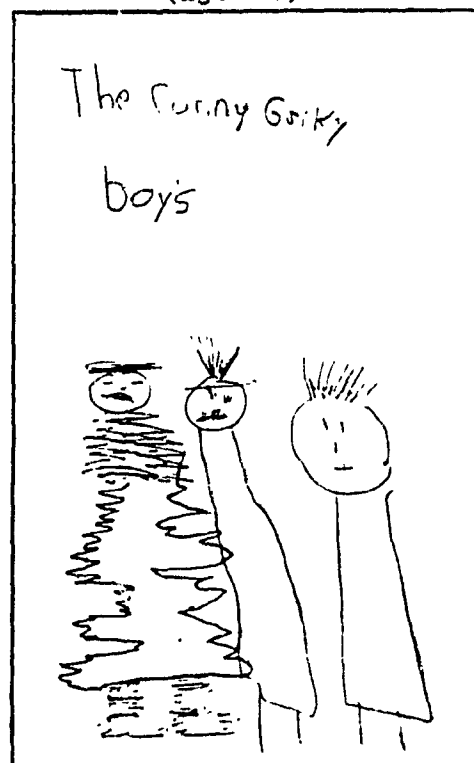


Figure 266. Funny Boys (age 9.1).

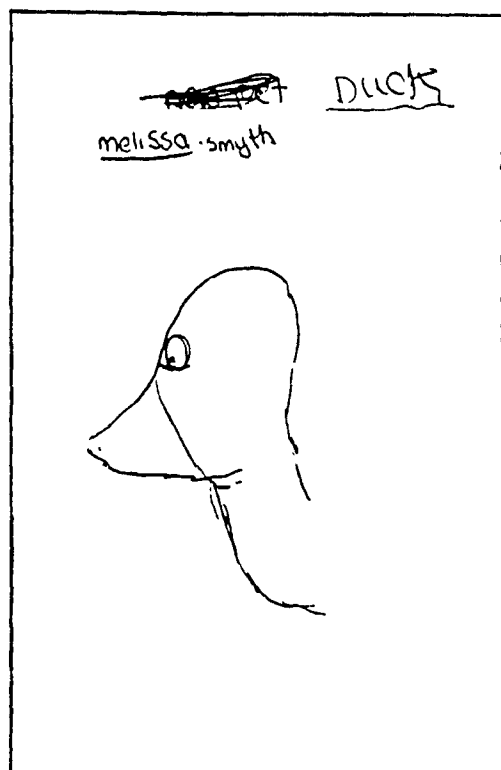


Figure 267. Duck (age 9.9).

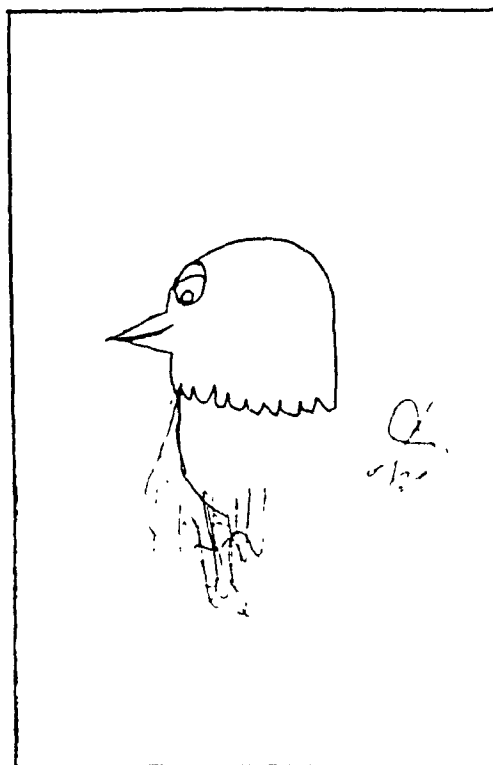


Figure 268. Bird (age 9.9).

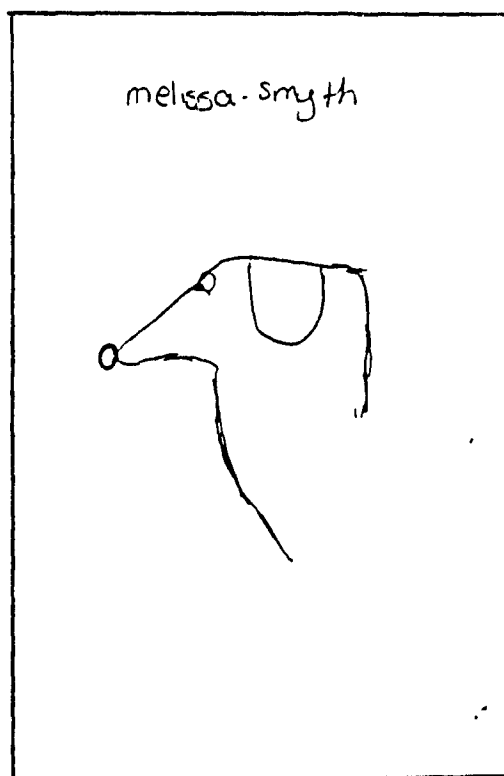


Figure 269. Dog (age 9.9).

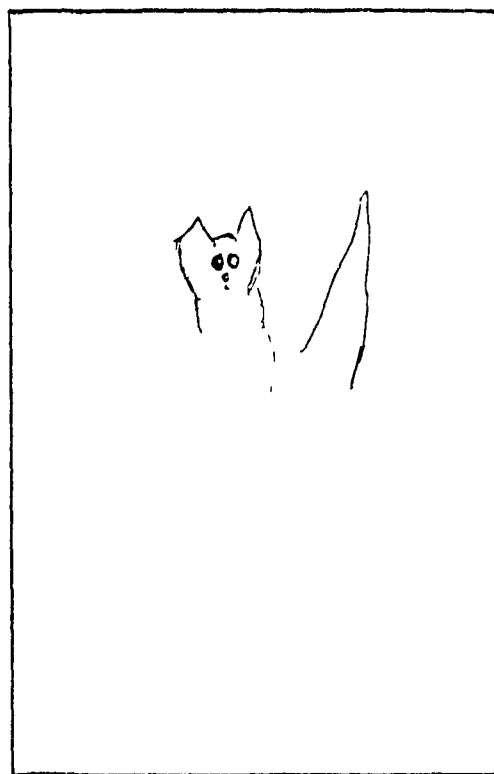


Figure 270. Cat (age 9.9).

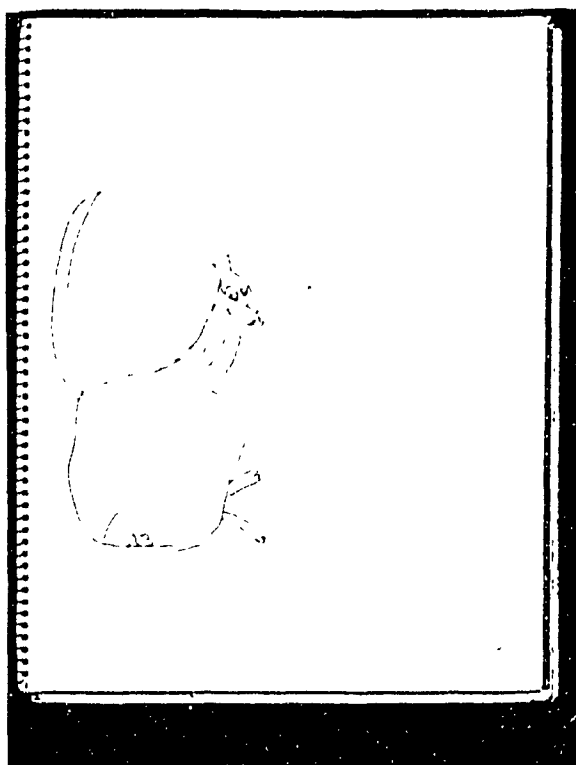


Figure 271. A Cat (age 9).

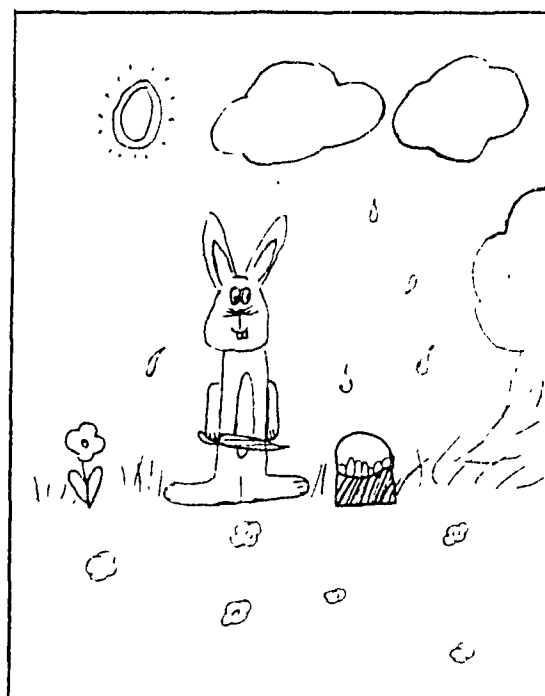


Figure 272. A Rabbit (age 9).

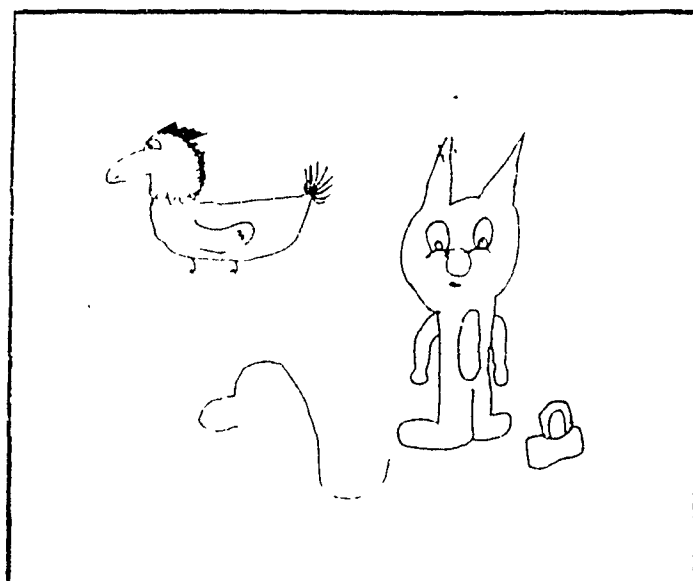


Figure 273. Bird and Rabbit (age 9.8).

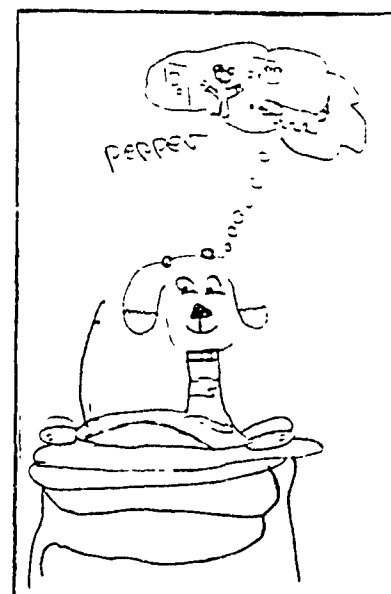


Figure 274. Pepper (age 9).



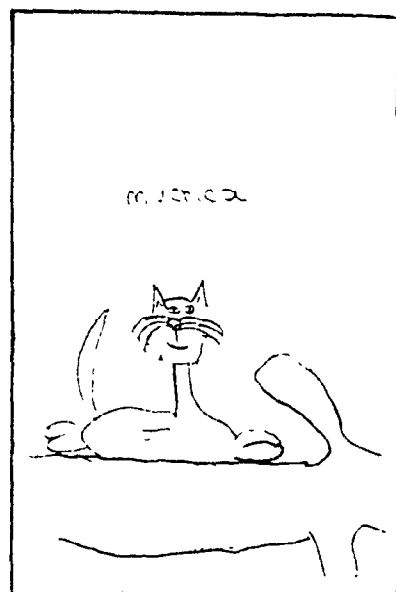


Figure 275. Muchka (age 9).

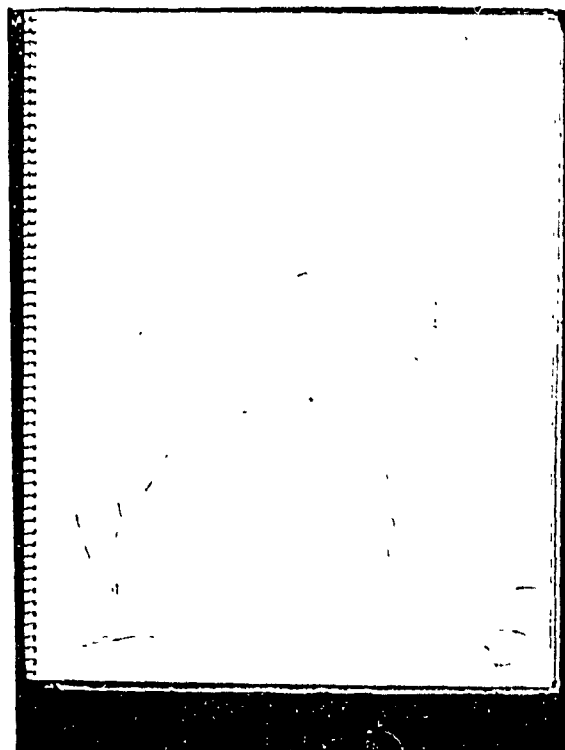


Figure 276. A Cat (age 9.3).

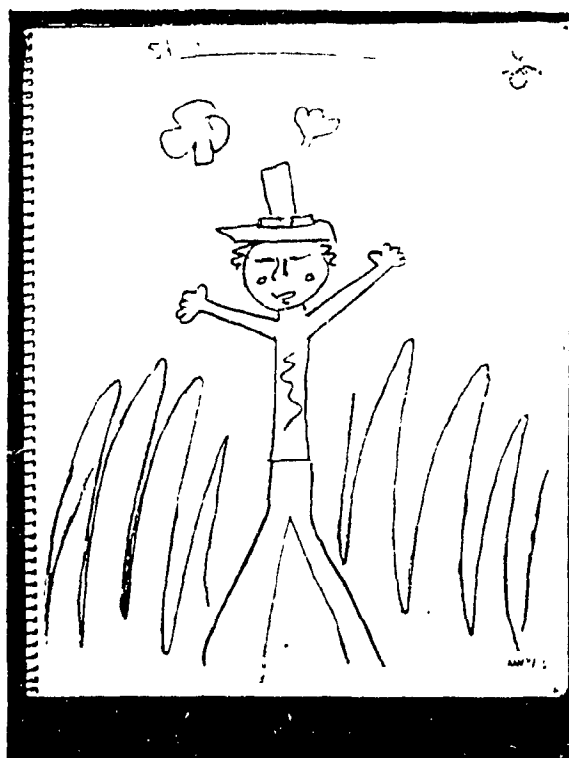


Figure 277. St. Patrick's Day (age 9.2).

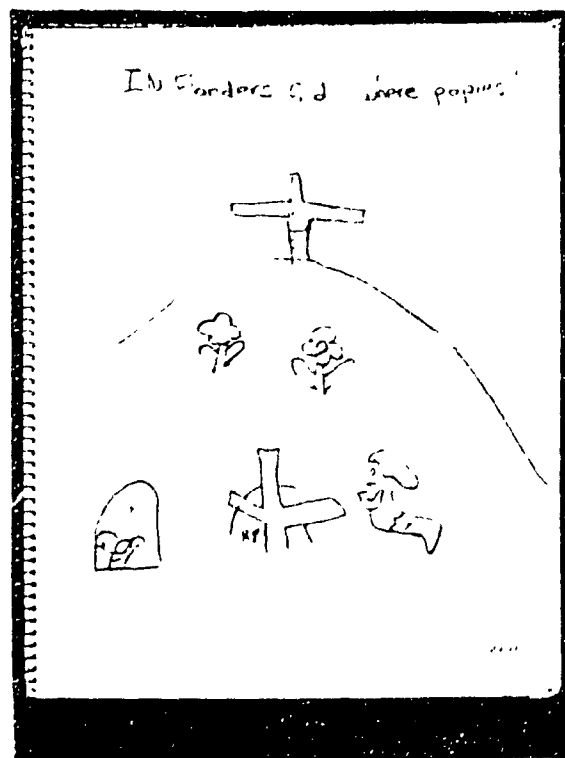


Figure 278. Remembrance Day (age 9.2).

## Chapter 9: Analysis of drawings.

### Method of Analysis--overview.

For the purpose of this thesis my research constituted both a quantitative and qualitative approach to analyzing the style and subject matter of Melissa's spontaneous drawings. The quantitative method was used to count the total number of drawings made, as well as estimate Melissa's preferences for media and subject matter (with respect to the various "age clusters" studied). Qualitatively, style and subject matter were investigated further through various dialogical encounters that both Melissa and myself had with the drawings as well as with each other. These drawings then, were viewed in two ways; one as "exteriorities" or artifacts, the results of past art-making processes, and two, as "interiorities", significations of memorable past experiences related to the drawings under study.

Following my analysis of Melissa's drawings with respect to style and subject matter, I have addressed various theories related to child development in art as they appeared appropriate to the findings I had made of my daughter's drawings.

### The Drawings--An Analysis.

#### Quantity and Media

This research led me to discover that over the years (from 1979-1989) I had saved a total of 714 spontaneous drawings. As well, I had saved seven cards, two notes, seven tracings and three books, which contained additional spontaneous drawings. Melissa's most productive year in terms of quantity was reflected in the 201 drawings produced at the age of nine. At the combined ages of five and six, Melissa produced the least amount of drawings, a total of only sixty-one.

Melissa's choice of media, throughout the years, varied preferentially. Until the age of nine, crayon and marker were her preferred media. Marker was preferred over crayon before the age of three; crayon was preferred over marker until the age of six and at the ages of seven and eight, the number of drawings in crayon equalled those done in marker. A fair number of works done with ballpoint pen were discovered in Melissa's drawings done at five and six years and at seven and eight years there was a significant increase in the number of drawings done in ballpoint pen and pencil (graphite). Finally at nine, the majority of Melissa's drawings were done in ballpoint pen and pencil (graphite) and only a few were done in crayon and marker. This significant change in media from using crayon and marker to pen and pencil, occurred at the age of nine.

The size of the papers used for Melissa's drawings varied over the years as well. A majority of the drawings done before the age of three were done on letter pads measuring 8"x 10" or 9"x 12". Shortly after turning three Melissa began to work on discarded computer paper measuring 11"x 14". Until the age of seven, Melissa usually worked on papers and pads that had been provided by myself. However, at seven, Melissa began to make her own choices about the paper surfaces she would work on. Consequently, her drawings began to appear on discarded envelopes, on torn pages from sketchbooks, and on pieces of wrapping paper, cardboard and coloured construction paper. At the age of nine Melissa discontinued working on the large computer sheets used years earlier. Instead she chose to draw on typing paper, in small notepads and in a sketchbook (that measured 11"x 14") that had been purchased by myself for her ninth birthday. I noticed as well that at the age of nine, Melissa seemed to have an overall preference for working on smaller pieces of paper.

### Visual Language

Melissa's first drawings (those done before the age of three) reveal to me, a continuous exploration of line and line-making. These drawings often appear somewhat random in their making. By the age of two, the line drawings begin to suggest subject matter to Melissa and receive titles. Lines eventually lead to the invention of forms, mainly circles, which in turn come together at first to define various heads. Later heads begin to sprout legs and become "tadpole" drawings.

The drawings done at the ages of three and four years demonstrate a continuation of line and form exploration. Lines appear more controlled as she starts using them to create designs alone or with text or as a compliment to drawings of tadpoles or heads. Numerous other drawings reveal the use of outline to define tadpole figures, heads and the details therein.

At the ages of five and six years, Melissa's continuous use of outline is evident. However, it is worth noting that a large number of her "outlined" drawings now include colouring-in. Although not always used realistically, colour is being used to a greater extent than in the past. At this time, Melissa is also becoming aware of space and environment. Figures in her drawings appear to be coming closer to a baseline and often find themselves surrounded by people or objects that become part of a description of who they are. Melissa's drawings of people now include complete body depictions while a variety of schemata is being explored. As well, figures now feature individualizing characteristics and details that set them apart from the figures drawn years earlier where gender or identity could not easily be determined.

At the age of seven and eight years the number of coloured-in drawings has decreased and outlining appears to be dominant. When colour is used for colouring-in it now represents colours that are true to life. Texture is now visible in Melissa's depiction of fur, feathers, vegetation, detail on clothing and on the surfaces of houses. Melissa's drawings now reveal a greater awareness of environment and space. This is evident in her attempts to reveal what is inside, outside, above and below (x-ray vision and folding-over). The use of text is at its peak at this stage and serves as a narrative device to reveal what is now going on among the various interacting characters being depicted. As well, Melissa makes use of conventional ways of depicting light through the use of rays or dots. In figure 176 dots are used to signify a glowing star at the top of a Christmas tree and rays around Rudolphe's nose (see figures 177, 178) tell us that his nose is glowing. In figure 182, the rays are again used to illustrate the glow from the lamp at the end of the bed. The use of the letter z in figure 176 tells us the child is asleep. I view the use of text and the conventional use of lines to show rays of light as devices that parallel the use of x-ray vision to show us what is hidden and what Melissa believes to be important enough to reveal. I note the beginnings of a repertoire of drawing styles emerging, each one making use of its own individualizing components of visual language. For example, Melissa's observational drawings (representing one "style") exhibit proportions, details and colours that are true to life while some of her imaginary drawings include only outlines of simplified cartoon-like figures, often stylized and stereotypic (representing another style).

In Melissa's drawings at the age of nine years, colour has virtually

disappeared as ballpoint pen and pencil outlining predominate. The narrative component of her earlier drawings (those done at the ages of seven and eight years) has disappeared as well and now text, when it is used, serves only to title the subjects of her drawings. Melissa's treatment of space and perspective with respect to figures and background, includes baselines, x-ray vision and some overlapping and size reduction. What is most characteristic of Melissa's work at this point is her growing use of various drawing styles, the evidence of an expanding repertoire.

Melissa's use of visual language over the years can be viewed as a series of acquisitions. Exploration of line and form dominate her earliest drawings, followed by the discovery of colour, texture, space and perspective in subsequent years. I believe that at nine, Melissa has acquired an understanding of and an ability to access whatever components in her repertoire of visual language she believes most appropriate for her drawings. Although her drawings at this time exhibit a primary concern for outline, I see this as a choice on her part. Melissa's energies seem to be directed at exploring a variety of drawing styles (at the age of nine) and the use of outline appears to serve this purpose best.

### Subject Matter and Influences

Some of the earliest drawings to indicate subject matter (to me), include Melissa's "scribble-like" drawings where the following titles have been inscribed on the drawings themselves: a sun (see figure 5), a weatherman (see figure 6), a clown (see figure 7) and a spider (see figure 8). There are numerous other "scribble-like" drawings without titles and as to whether Melissa did have a subject matter in mind at the time of their making, I am

unsure. In my interview with Melissa concerning the first cluster of drawings (those done before the age of three), I was informed by Melissa that the title for figure 27 was "mummy with spiky hair". As well Melissa interpreted various subject matter for other drawings (from her ten year old point of view); dog or cat (see figure 9), bird (see figures 25, 31), elephant (see figure 26), fish (see figure 28), and ladder (see figure 29). From what I can remember about Melissa's earliest drawings, her subject matter was sometimes conceived of once the drawing had begun, and at other times after the drawing was complete. There were yet other drawings of heads and Santas where her announcement of subject matter preceded the drawing (see figures 11-24). These latter drawings are viewed by myself as Melissa's first attempts at "planned representation". As well, I see a possible connection on my part to Melissa's choice to draw numerous Santas, at the age of two. Around this age, Melissa would often ask me to draw Christmas trees with presents as well as Santa himself (see figures 33-35). She would sit on my lap and add her own marks to my drawings. Melissa's skill at drawing heads and tadpole figures coincided with the advent of Christmas and this, combined with our practice of making joint drawings, I feel, may have influenced her choice to draw Santa.

At three and four, Melissa's "scribble-like" drawings continue but this time some appear more design-like in their nature. As well Melissa plays with repeating her name and letters of her name to create other designs (see figures 52-54). Some drawings combine scribbles with tadpole figures and demonstrate what I view as an overlapping of two styles of drawing (see figures 50, 51). Some drawings that combine scribbles with forms have been given titles such as "Car on the road with the windows open" (see figure 44),

"Elephant and zebra at the zoo" (see figure 45), and "Frog eating a bug" (see figure 48). Other drawings that began as random lines closing in to create forms reminded Melissa of various animal forms which she later named rabbit, elephant, turtle, gorilla and bear (see figures 46, 47). Melissa's overall preference for subject matter at this time includes people and animals, usually void of any background. With the exception of her tadpole drawings, Melissa's drawings of people rarely include bodies, as her main focus is on drawing heads. Melissa's choice to explore the Halloween theme gives way to the creation of numerous pumpkin and unicorn heads (see figures 37-39, 65). Sun heads (see figures 82-84), self portrait heads (see figures 70-73), and a many girls' heads (see figures 61-64, 67-69, 74, 75) are also explored. Characteristics and details found on these heads have been largely influenced from Melissa's observations of her own dolls (Raggedy-Ann), puppets (seen on Sesame Street television show), as well as from observations of people that she had seen on the street and on television. Melissa's reasoning for repeating the same subject over and over is that she was attempting to "make them look different" (interview, March 17, 1989).

Almost all of Melissa's drawings done at ages five and six years suggest subject matter to me as I look at them now. People, animals and toys are the subjects most often depicted. It appears to me that Melissa is becoming more aware of space and environment as her figures now seem to be coming closer to a baseline and often find themselves surrounded by additional people, animals or objects that serve as props to tell us more about the characters being illustrated. For example in Melissa's drawings of Strawberry Shortcake, this doll is seen holding a magic wand in one drawing (see figure 101), an umbrella in another (see figure 103) and with her cat, Custard at



her side, in yet another drawing (see figures 100, 102). Santa is often depicted with his bag of toys (see figures 120, 121) and with Rudolphe, his faithful reindeer (see figure 121). Melissa's drawings of people now go beyond just drawing heads; full bodies are portrayed using a variety of schemata to define torsos and appendages. While it is difficult to ascertain the gender of some of Melissa's people and at times who they are, some drawings of people wearing dresses or with long hair that is curled, braided or in pigtails seem to suggest that they are female (see figures 98, 99, 110). A few drawings depict myself with curly hair (see figures 89-91). In addition to finding drawings of people (mainly girls) and toys (ie. Strawberry Shortcake and Cabbage Patch dolls, teddy bear), I find drawings of birds, deer, cats, bears, rabbits and dogs, depicted alone, together or with people (see figures 85-87, 92-96, 100, 102, 106, 107, 113, 119). As well I find Valentines' Day hearts, Halloween witches and pumpkins, Santas and Christmas trees. Text is being introduced as a narrative component in one drawing of an argument Melissa had with her friend (see figure 97) and in a story of Bambi and a little girl (see figures 92-96). In the past it seemed that the use of text acted as an element of design; now it appears to serve a different purpose, that of story-telling.

A continuous depiction of people, animals and toys as subject matter is apparent in the drawings made at seven and eight years of age. Worth noting is an increase in the number of drawings depicting houses (see figures 127, 128, 170-173). What has changed from previous years, is Melissa's manner of attending to her subject matter. Now people and animals are identified and usually represent specific people or animals. The people Melissa chooses to draw include herself (see figures 181-183), her family (see

figures 164, 165, 188, 191, 192), her best friend (see figure 189), stylish girls (see figures 147-149, 166), characters from the television cartoon show, "Jem and the Holograms" (see figures 142-146, 167-169), as well as people who partake in various narratives (people I read as participants in themes related to Melissa's inner thoughts and concerns, see figures 129, 131-141). Melissa's animal drawings consist of her own pets (cat, dog, fish, see figures 191, 198), Rudolphe for Christmas (see figures 177, 178), a caged rabbit (Melissa has always wanted a pet rabbit of her own, see figure 185), numerous birds and dragons (see figures 151-161), a unicorn, snake, penguin, and turtle. Melissa is becoming aware of verbal and physical interactions that exist between figures and the space and environment that surrounds them. Baselines, x-ray vision and folding-over are ways Melissa is beginning to situate her objects and characters (see figures 128, 171-173, 180, 182). Many drawings now tell a story and exhibit an increased use of text in the form of speech clouds (see figures 131, 164, 181, 182). With the exception of her observational drawings (see figures 122-126) Melissa concerns herself with showing us more than the outward "appearance" of her subjects. She takes us into her thoughts and reveals to us some of her ideals, fears, and concerns. Evident in her drawings are themes relating to authority figures, right and wrong, good and evil and wish fulfilment. What is worth noting is the way she has included tears to show us Rudolphe's sadness (see figures 177, 178), thus revealing more than an outward appearance. In figure 182 of Melissa asleep, in addition to using a speech cloud to tell us what this drawing is about, she has included numerous small hearts and a picture of a person (perhaps a boy) in a small cloud, again hinting at her innermost thoughts (maybe a secret love). Melissa still draws holiday theme pictures depicting Christmas (the religious and the

commercial, see figures 176-180) and Halloween.

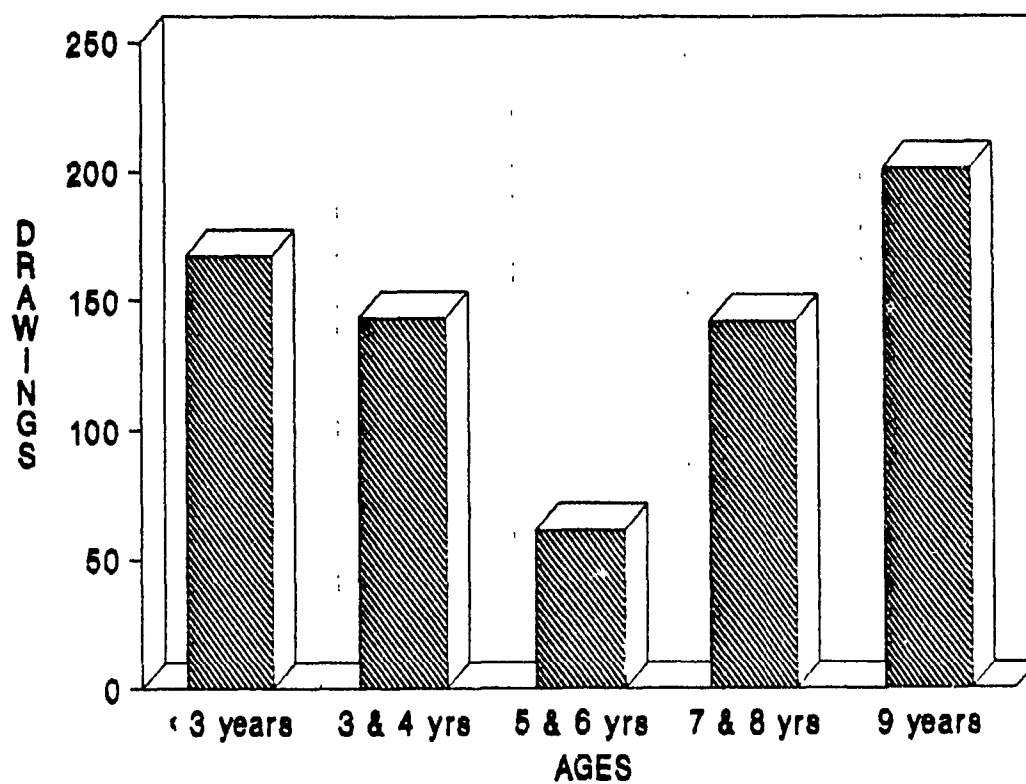
I observed that subject matter for some of Melissa's drawings (drawings done at the ages of seven and eight years) came from outside influences. Numerous observational drawings of toys were done at the same time I was drawing dolls from observation (see figures 122-126, 187). The television cartoon show "Jem and the Holograms" influenced Melissa to represent the various characters from the show (see figures 142-145, 167-169). Serial drawings of birds, and dragons ensued following praise from fellow classmates at school (see figures 151-161). The theme of Remembrance Day was introduced at school and became a subject pursued in Melissa's drawings at home (see figures 162, 163).

At the age of nine years, Melissa's drawings continue to include people and animals as her main subject matter. Toys are now virtually excluded from her repertoire of subjects to draw. Among her drawings of people and animals, there is an overall increase in the number of drawings depicting family members, pets and friends (see figures 202, 244, 259-262, 274, 275). Most of Melissa's observational drawings are of family and pets, unlike a year earlier, where most of her observational drawings were of toys. Some drawings of people represent queens, princesses, and pretty girls with long elaborately decorated dresses, revealing to me Melissa's increasing interest in socially oriented outward appearances. Some action and interaction exists among other characters she portrays; however, I note the use of text in the form of speech clouds has almost disappeared (with the exception of some cartoon-like drawings). It appears that Melissa is becoming more concerned with including details on the figures themselves and less concerned with background information. Drawings of animals include dogs, cats, fish, birds,

rabbits, ducks and horses. House drawings, usually of our own house, still persist and a new subject matter, that of landscapes, emerges. Holiday themes rendered stereotypically continue, most of them to be found in her sketchbook.

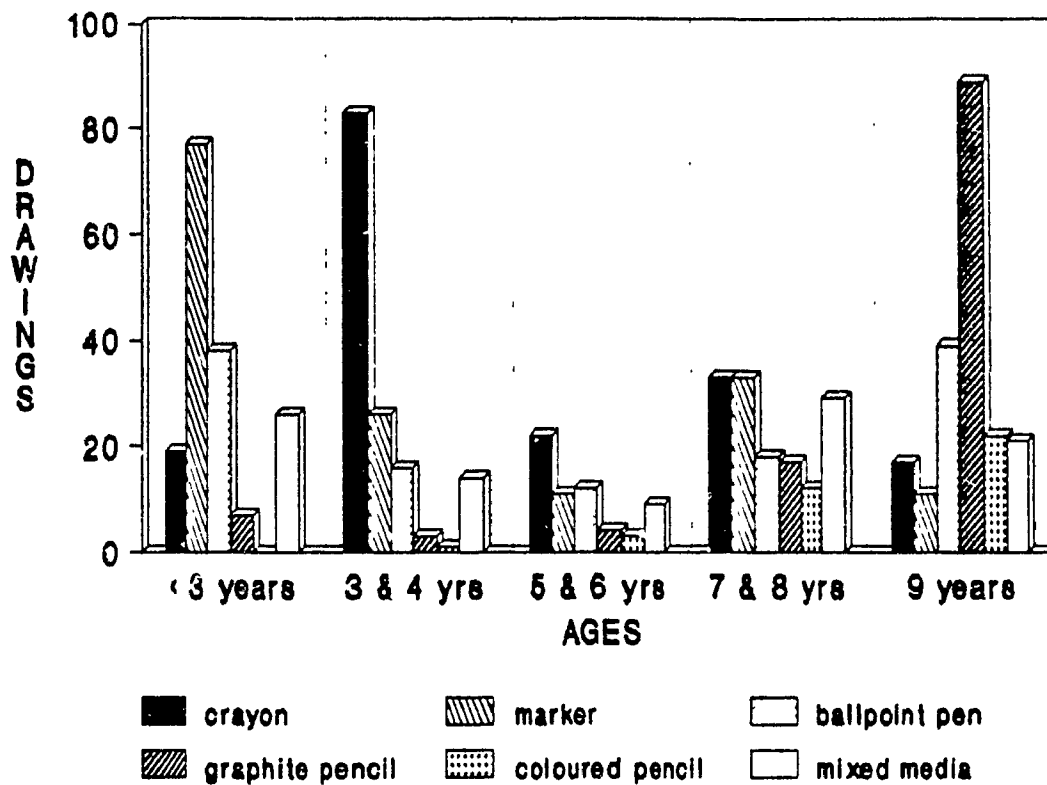
Melissa's drawings (at the age of nine years) reveal numerous outside influences. At nine Melissa appears to be searching out technique and style and borrowing from others. Tracing, and copying from books, television shows and fellow classmates are ways she is attempting to learn about "how to" draw. At this time her drawings reveal that a variety of styles are emerging, each style representing its own characteristics. Most of Melissa's drawings appear to suggest that cartooning is her preferred style and perhaps a way to avoid the frustrating uncertainties of drawing realistically.

When I analyze Melissa's drawings in terms of style, as I have done, I am drawn to those characteristics of image and process that reflect Melissa's distinct choice of, and manner of, attending to subject matter. I view Melissa's style as that which uniquely distinguishes her drawing from others, both in terms of process and product.

TOTAL DRAWINGS

This graph represents the total number of single and sketchbook drawings produced at the ages indicated.

### QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA



This graph indicates the quantity of drawings done in various media at the ages shown. Crayon, marker, ballpoint pen, graphite pencil and coloured pencil are the media most often used. Drawings that make use of more than one media are referred to as mixed media.

## Chapter 10: Theoretical Analysis of Melissa's Drawings

### Introduction and Preview

An analysis of Melissa's drawings from a theoretical perspective, led me to consider three varying viewpoints or theories concerning children's artistic development; stage theory according to Viktor Lowenfeld, Dennie Wolf's theory of drawing systems, and Brent and Marjorie Wilson's theory of cultural influences.

In my research I discovered the existence of many variations on the theory of stages in artistic development (with respect to children). However for the purpose of this thesis I chose to limit my focus on one stage theory, that belonging to Viktor Lowenfeld. My reasons for this choice were twofold; first; after viewing the hundreds of drawings Melissa had made over the years, I could see that a good number of these drawings did in fact fit (in a very general way) into the various stages as prescribed by Lowenfeld, and second; I viewed this research as an opportunity to challenge my past beliefs and acceptance of Lowenfeld's theory, a theory that had been widely accepted during the years I had studied as an undergraduate student of art education.

Although Lowenfeld's theory could explain what Melissa's drawings signified developmentally, this psychological viewpoint could not explain the personal characteristics of, and changes in style and subject matter that I had found in many of her drawings. Consequently, I became interested in the research done by Dennie Wolf which viewed children's drawings in terms of the drawing strategies and styles employed by individual children in their art making. Unlike Lowenfeld's approach which looks at the drawings to learn about the child's growth and development, Wolf's approach focuses on the drawings themselves in an attempt to discover the child's own process

of art making.

Children's spontaneous choices of subject matter were not given much attention by either Lowenfeld or Wolf. Brent and Marjorie Wilson, however, did significant research in this area. Looking at the spontaneous drawings of children and adolescents, they discovered that cultural influences play a significant role in influencing the subject matter and style of these kinds of drawings. I too, observed the existence of cultural influences in Melissa's drawings and felt the need to compare my findings with those of the Wilsons.

In my analysis to follow (of Melissa's drawings) I have addressed each of these theories as they explain or make sense of the drawings under study.

#### Viktor Lowenfeld's stage theory and Melissa's drawings

Viktor Lowenfeld believed that the art work of children could reveal the creative and mental growth of the child from a variety of perspectives: emotional, intellectual, physical, perceptual, social, aesthetic and creative (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953). Less importance was placed on the art products themselves as Lowenfeld was more concerned with what the art work could say about the child's growth. According to Lowenfeld, "the final product is only a result of what goes on in the child " (Michael, 1982, p. 50). Lowenfeld had developed a theory of developmental stages in art where he stressed that "children draw [drew] in predictable ways going through fairly definite stages, starting with the first marks on paper and progressing through adolescence" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 47). About this theory of development he also said the following:

It seems clear that these developmental stages are not merely developmental stages in art, but are developmental stages in the whole growth pattern and that the art product is merely an indication of this



total growth. Actually the art activity may be growth in itself (Lowenfeld & Brittain 1953, p. 55).

Lowenfeld stated repeatedly that he did not wish to categorize or label children but rather preferred that children be viewed as individuals (Brittain, 1968; Michael, 1982). As well as believing in "general developmental characteristics" in the art work of children, he recognized that "individual characteristics" existed as well (Michael, 1982). The following quotation from Lowenfeld elaborated on this belief:

In developmental stages, children at the same stage have certain things in common. For instance, we know that at a certain time in their lives, all children scribble. But it would be neglecting the individual child if we would not look at the scribbles in a differentiated manner. Children scribble differently. But all of them scribble (Michael, 1982, p. 41).

His stage theory details the sequence of characteristics to be found in the art work of children at their various stages of growth. All children are presumed to go through all these stages but may do so at varying chronological ages. Lowenfeld claimed that:

....developmental stages are not confined to absolute age levels, chronological age levels and do not change abruptly; but rather we see that they change gradually from one level to the other (Michael, 1982, p. 303).

Lowenfeld stressed often in his lectures (Pennsylvania State University) that in order to analyze a child's growth or stage of development, one should view at least three drawings done by the child (Michael, 1982). He emphasized, "we never evaluate one drawing alone-and that refers to spontaneous drawing not teacher dictated drawing" (Michael, 1982, p. 193). According to Lowenfeld, spontaneity was a sign of creative growth reflected

by the child's choice and use of subject matter and art materials in or out of school (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953; Michael, 1982). My reference to Melissa's drawings as spontaneous also refers to independent choice of subject matter and media, however none of Melissa's drawings were done outside the home and the choice to make them was always her own.

There is little evidence that Lowenfeld conducted longitudinal studies of "normal" individual children's art work but rather it appears that he studied groups of children and their drawings. He did however, work with deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed, and mentally retarded individuals in sessions where he initiated the execution of drawings (Michael, 1982). The drawings that were done by these individuals were sometimes done in therapy sessions, collected by Lowenfeld and served as short term longitudinal studies (Michael, 1982).

Lowenfeld had very definite opinions concerning subject matter, technique and media. In a very general way, Lowenfeld describes the subject matter choices of children as related to growth:

The very young child begins to include people in his drawings as soon as he leaves the scribbling stage. Usually in fact, the first recognizable object drawn by a child is a person. As the child grows, his art reflects his growing awareness of his social environment. As he develops a greater awareness of people and their influences on his life, these assume a large percentage of his subject matter content (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 39).

He redefines subject matter by saying the following:

In a sense there is no subject matter in art, only different ways of portraying the artist's relationships to objects, people, feelings, and emotions about the world around him (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 45).

Lowenfeld did not view art as a representation of an object but rather a representation of one's experience with the object (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953).

Regarding teaching art to children, Lowenfeld disapproved of adults teaching them "correct technique" or "design fundamentals" claiming this would be "detrimental to the spontaneity and freedom typical of children's drawings because they would interfere with the innate urge for expression" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 207).

Concerning media Lowenfeld recommended that the selection of art materials for children be made with the child's developmental stage in mind (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953). He had the following to say about art materials:

It is not the material itself that needs emphasis, for art materials must be seen as avenues for expression and not as ends in themselves (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953. p. 118).

The most valuable contribution Lowenfeld made with respect to understanding children's artistic development as I see it, was his detailed sequential analysis of how children make use of visual language as they progress through their "stages": the scribbling stage, the preschematic stage, the schematic stage, the age of dawning realism, and the pseudo-naturalistic stage. Melissa's drawings were compared and analyzed according to Lowenfeld's theory of stages; similarities and differences were pointed out.

#### The scribbling stage

Lowenfeld placed the scribbling stage as beginning anywhere from one and half, to two and a half years of age and continuing until the age of four years. He categorized scribbling into three types: the disordered scribble made as a result of kinesthetic motions, the controlled scribble where the

child used his/her eyes to control the marks made, and the named scribble where the child demonstrates his/her ability to relate to the outside world (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953). This move from random lines to named lines represents a change in thinking "from the kinesthetic to the imaginative" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953). Melissa began scribbling "randomly" at the age of fifteen months and there is evidence of both "controlled and named scribbles" beginning at age two and continuing until the age of four (see figures 5-8, 27, 44). Lowenfeld claimed that the naming of scribbles usually begins between three and a half and four years of age. About the progression in scribbling Lowenfeld had this to say:

These random marks become much more organized and controlled but it is not until about the age of four that youngsters make any recognizable objects in their drawings (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 48).

It is worth noting at this point that shortly after Melissa's second birthday she had begun naming her scribbles (see figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 27) drawing faces, (see figures 15, 17, 18, 19), drawing head-feet representations (see figures 11, 22, 24) and had begun early representations of Santa (see figures 13, 14, 16, 20-24). Concluding from both Lowenfeld's statements and my observations, it may be said that Melissa's drawings at two years were advanced for her age perhaps by one and half or two years (according to Lowenfeld).

### The preschematic stage

Lowenfeld identified the preschematic stage as representing the stage of artistic development typical of children aged four to seven years. It marks the beginning of a change from a "kinesthetic way of thinking" to a thinking where the child can relate his/her "mental picture" with his/her drawing (Michael, 1982). Lowenfeld stated that the first representational attempts

are made during this stage where the child is consciously aware of forms that he/she is making. Melissa began her first representational attempts at the age of two while still continuing to create scribble-like drawings until the age of four. In fact, during the ages of three and four years, Melissa had made drawings that combined both scribbles and representations of "people" (see figures 50, 51, 59, 60).

One of the main characteristics that identifies the preschematic stage, according to Lowenfeld, is the ever changing way children represent their subject matter, thus exploring a variety of schemata. This has been a common characteristic of Melissa's drawings beginning at two years of age and continuing until the age of nine. At the age of nine her exploration of schemata took the form of developing various styles each displaying their own schematic characteristics. In reference to both the preschematic stage and the schematic stage, Lowenfeld had the following to say:

Yet, at some point or another, all children arrive at this stage which we call the schematic stage, but some children arrive rather late, because they continuously and flexibly search and search for new symbols, concepts. Those who arrive late at this stage have a very rich concept, because they have enriched it over a longer period of time (Michael, 1982, p. 217).

Characteristics that typify the way space is handled in drawings of the preschematic stage include: at first; a sense of objects floating in space, followed by; the development of spatial relationships between people and things. Until the age of five, Melissa's representational drawings exhibited subject matter that appeared to be floating. At the age of five and six, Melissa's drawings seemed to suggest the beginnings of a baseline, a sense of space was beginning to develop related to environment (baseline) and the

relationships of people to objects. Until the age of seven colour was not used realistically by Melissa, a characteristic that was typical of the preschematic stage, according to Lowenfeld.

Several individualizing characteristics of style and subject matter were apparent in Melissa's drawings during this "preschematic" stage. Beginning at the age of two and carrying on into her ninth year, Melissa displayed a way of drawing in serials where she would repeatedly draw the same subject matter over and over again, making some changes with each subsequent drawing. Most of the time these serials were done at one sitting (see figures 13-24, 37-39, 46, 47, 61-69, 70-76, 82-84, 89-91, 99-103, 142-145, 153-156, 158-161). At the age of four, a majority of Melissa's drawings consisted of heads where a variety of schemata for facial features and hair were explored. About repetition in drawing, Lowenfeld had the following to say:

When they want to gain an experience more definitely, they engage in repetition. Repetition is an important learning factor, but this does not take place before children are probably seven years of age (Michael, 1982, p. 165).

At the age of four Melissa made "letter drawings" (see figures 52-54), at five she incorporated letters with a drawing of Strawberry Shortcake (see figure 88) and at the ages of six until nine, Melissa made use of text sometimes in the form of a label describing the subject matter, at other times to narrate a story. Lowenfeld had made very little reference about the way children use text in their drawings except to say the following:

But if the letter writing is done at the cost of other things, such as free engagement in scribbling or the naming of scribbling or whatever, then we should know that it is introduced at the wrong time or it is forced upon the child and is, therefore, harmful to the child (Michael, 1982, p.

121).

### Schematic stage

Lowenfeld identified the schematic stage somewhere between the ages of seven and nine years. His description of the child's way of drawing at this stage was as follows:

As a child gets closer to the achievement of a form concept he gradually develops a symbol for a man that is repeated again and again as long as he has no particular experience to influence him to modify his concept (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 187).

Lowenfeld added that a child's schema could be "flexible" and "undergo many deviations and changes" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 185). These two statements seem to suggest two opposing definitions of schematic development. The latter seems to apply in Melissa's case. Beginning at the ages of five and six, and continuing until the age of nine Melissa constantly explored a variety of schemata to represent the people she drew. Lowenfeld added that clothing rather than "body" was typically represented at this stage and this characteristic was apparent in Melissa's drawings beginning at five years.

Other characteristics that were described as belonging to the schematic stage included: the use of baselines, the technique of folding-over where objects are sometimes drawn upside-down to indicate "the other side" (as in the houses across the street) or where the child wishes to show all of the object at the same time (as in a parked car in the driveway shown from an aerial perspective), space and time representations where in one drawing several events occurring at different times are represented, and x-ray images where both the inside and outside of a house, for example, are shown simultaneously (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953). The use of baselines was evident

in Melissa's drawings beginning at seven years of age (see figures 127-130, 175, 180, 193, 195), folding-over, space/time representations and x-ray images were beginning at eight years of age (see figures 170-173) and continued into Melissa's ninth year (see figures 256-258).

Another characteristic of this stage according to Lowenfeld, was the child's developing perceptual awareness, where the child begins to draw what he/she sees about an object and less what he/she knows about the object (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953). Melissa's first observational drawings began at the age of six years (see figure 113) and the choice to draw observationally continued and became one style of drawing among her repertoire of styles at the age of nine (see figures 122-127, 200, 239, 259, 260, 276).

At the ages of seven and eight years, Melissa had made use of text to help narrate her stories. Lowenfeld mentioned that at this stage children like to tell stories and describe events that take place over time (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953), however, he makes no reference to children's use of text in their images.

#### The dawning realism

Between the ages of nine and twelve years, Lowenfeld described some changes that take place in the drawings of children at this stage. He described the child's concept of the human figure in the following way:

The concept of the human figure as expressed during the earlier schematic stage was a generalized expression of man. Now the child is eager to express characteristics of sex to show differences in clothing; the schematic generalization cannot suffice (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 231).

Lowenfeld stated that "the drawing is not an outcome of the child's visual



observation but rather his characterization of what he sees" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 230). According to Lowenfeld, the child's drawing moves from being a geometric "generalized" depiction to a "characterized" depiction where numerous details are included in the drawing (Michael, 1982, p. 268). At seven and eight years of age, Melissa "characterized" her drawing of girls by including such details as earrings, makeup, fancy hairstyles and pretty dresses (see figures 129, 133, 142-149, 230-233, 243-246, 253-255, 261, 262). Even her birds and dragons exhibited characterization by the details Melissa had decided to include (see figures 151-161). Design is common in drawings at this stage, according to Lowenfeld. Melissa's use of texture at the age of seven and eight years was very design-like when used to depict fur, feathers, vegetation and detail on clothing and surfaces of houses.

According to Lowenfeld, the child's concept of space has changed. He mentions that: "the space between the baselines becomes meaningful and the plane is discovered" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1953, p. 236). He added that when the baseline continues to be used the space below it is now seen as ground. At this time the child has become aware of the horizon and has begun including overlapping. In figure 164 which was done at the age of eight Melissa had made use of the space below the curved baseline to signify the snow-covered "ground". As well her figures had been drawn to overlap the trees, thereby creating a sense of depth. Most of the drawings done at nine displayed this greater concept of space (see figures 199-201, 210, 212, 222, 238, 242, 262, 272).

My analysis of Melissa's drawings according to Lowenfeld's stage theory, led me to view Melissa's work in terms of the general characteristics one could discover at the various ages and stages of artistic development, with respect to the average child. Lowenfeld's analysis of the sequential order in which children develop their visual language was very accurate with regards to Melissa's drawings. However, his analysis matching age with developmental characteristics did not hold true for Melissa's drawings before the age of nine years; her drawings showed characteristics that were advanced for her age. Lowenfeld made little reference to Melissa's way of working in serials, her combined use of text and imagery and her use of culturally influenced subject matter. Perhaps because Lowenfeld's theory focuses primarily on the child and less on the drawings themselves, his theory fails as well to pay much attention to the child's unique approach to process and subject matter.

### Dennie Wolf's theory of drawing development and Melissa's drawings

Dennie Wolf's approach to viewing drawing development is quite unlike the stage theory approach of Viktor Lowenfeld's. Wolf criticizes many developmental theorists for focusing on realistic drawing as the ultimate goal and "endpoint for graphic representation" (1988, p. 18). Instead she proposes that drawing development should not be limited towards one type of drawing but rather drawing development should be seen as encompassing "a repertoire of visual languages" (1988). She includes in this repertoire: "varied drawing systems", many "genres", as well as the ability to create diverse "renditions".

Wolf's definition of early representation is not limited to graphic representation but rather also includes behaviors that are representational such as "the use of drawing materials in symbolic play; verbal labeling of tools, paper, or marks; or representational pointing and gesturing with a marker or crayon" (1988, p. 19). For this reason the earliest drawing systems may be seen to occur with children as young as twelve to fifteen months. Wolf defines drawing systems in the following way:

...a drawing system is a set of rules designating how the full-sized, three-dimensional, moving, colored world of ongoing visual experience can be translated into a set of marks on a plane surface. At least implicitly, any drawing system contains two types of rules: (1) rules specifying the kinds of information it is crucial to represent (e.g., characteristic motions, position, size, etc.); and (2) rules regarding which aspects of the individual drafter's behavior (e.g., his motions, speech, marks, etc.) are entitled to carry meanings.

Wolf stresses that although the systems first occur at different times, they are not meant to represent stages on the way to realism nor does graphic

development rely on their "staggered onset". She adds that drawing systems continue to "evolve" and more drawing systems may develop. Wolf's list of drawing systems includes the following: object-based, gestural-based, point plot representations, relative shape and size representations, lookalike pictures, and the representation of objects as they are situated in a larger space (1988).

According to Wolf, genre represents another type of visual language where forms other than "pictures" express one's "visual experience"; other such forms may include graphs, maps or diagrams (1988). Wolf adds that "each genre focuses on a characteristic kind of information, level of detail, and format for display" (1988, p. 24).

The making of renditions is Wolf's third general classification constituting visual language. She defines rendition in this way: "...the idea that an individual maker can vary not just what he draws, but the very texture of how he draws (1988, p. 28).

Melissa's drawings were viewed at first in terms of how they could relate to Wolf's drawing systems, and then whether they had exhibited the use of renditions and genres.

#### Dennie Wolf's Drawing Systems and Melissa's drawings

The earliest drawing system that Wolf makes reference to is the object-based representation, where the child's actions or behavior with the medium or the medium itself could constitute early representation, representation that might not necessarily be graphic. According to Wolf, these early representations could begin as early as twelve to fourteen months. My earliest record of Melissa's drawing experiences began with the collection of graphic markings she had made at fifteen months. No record was kept of

Melissa's actions or behaviors related to her drawing experiences and for this reason it is difficult to assess how she may have made use of object based representations at a very early age. However, certain later drawings exhibited characteristics of perhaps a more developed object based system. At the age of seven years Melissa had made a drawing of a house which consisted of both the exterior of the house drawn on one sheet of paper with a door that actually opened, and the interior of the house drawn on a separate sheet. The exterior drawing was made to overlap the interior drawing to make the complete house (see figures 172, 173). This serves as an example to show how the drawings themselves have been physically brought together as building blocks or objects to construct the house. In another drawing done at the age of seven, of two people eating ice cream, Melissa had made use of actual woollen pom-poms to serve as scoops of ice cream in the cones (see figure 184). At the age of nine years Melissa drew a house interior and many people cutouts, props for a play she and her sister had made up (see figure 209). These drawings became moveable objects that could be played with. Object-based representation was also evident in the use of star stickers in her sketchbook at nine years of age. The star stickers became objects or parts of objects (see figures 238, 262) as she invented new uses for them.

Gestural representations are described by Wolf in this way, "In these instances, children focus on representing characteristic motions, using the modality of gesture, often in combination with naming" (1988, p. 20). Again, because I had not documented this type of representational behavior at the time that Melissa had made her early drawings, I had to rely on my memory to determine which drawings could be classified as gestural representations. I recalled the drawing that Melissa had made of the "weatherman" at the age

of two (see figure 6). She talked about the wind as she twisted and looped her lines to signify the changes in the wind, made by the weatherman. There is very little evidence of gestural representation in Melissa's later drawings.

Point plot representation is described by Wolf as a drawing system which usually begins at twenty months, where "children manage to record the number and location of an object's features, using the paper surface to integrate these parts into a whole" (1988, p. 20). She adds that "only existence, number, and position-not shape or colour or volume-are being inscribed" (p. 20). Wolf adds that later children may use this system to draw graphs or maps. Some of Melissa's early drawings of people and Santa (see figures 15-19, 23) at the age of two reveal a more advanced point plot system where shapes instead of slashes have been used to suggest the location of various facial features. Melissa's treasure map drawing done at the age of eight years signifies another example of the point plot representation (see figure 190) but at a more developed stage.

Wolf points out another drawing system that occurs in the latter part of a child's second year; **relative size and shape representations**. With these kinds of representations the child "reads" meaning from the marks he/she has made, very much like the named scribbles outlined by Lowenfeld. According to Wolf, "it is a discovered geometry rather than one children can use to generate whole drawings" (1988, p.21) and "it is largely the result of perception and accident" (p. 21). Melissa's drawings done at two years of age, of a sun, a clown and a spider (see figures 5, 7, 8) seem to suggest this system of relative size and shape has been used. Later drawings, done at three years of age, of a car on the road with its windows open (see figure 44) and of an elephant and a zebra at the zoo (see figure 45) and at four

years of age, of a rabbit and elephant (see figures 46, 47) represent a more developed version of this system. In all of these drawings the subject matter titles were given once the drawings were done. Influence of this system reappears at the age of five years with Melissa's drawings of rabbits (see figures 85-87). Beginning with the printed letter "M" Melissa discovered that this letter could "become" or "transform" itself into various things; a crown, rabbit ears or a body. This was a type of accidental discovery, perhaps a more developed variation on the system of relative size and shape representation that Wolf makes reference to.

Wolf suggests that the beginning of "representational drawing" or "lookalike pictures" usually occurs after a child's third birthday (1988). She adds that, "it is then that they construct a system for recording visual-spatial information that includes rules about representing outside contours, surfaces, and relative sizes" (1988, p. 21). Later, between the ages of five and seven, Wolf mentions that children begin to develop yet another drawing system, one "that requires the representation of objects as they are situated in a larger space" (1988, p. 21). At this time children work out rules about distancing of objects, size reduction and overlapping (1988).

Having viewed Melissa's drawings in terms of Wolf's drawing systems, I discovered that Melissa had made use of some of the earlier systems as described by Wolf, namely; object-based, gestural, point-plot and relative size and shape representations. However, what I discovered about Melissa's overall drawing style beginning at the age of two, was her preference for working schematically, to make "lookalike pictures" (Wolf, 1988). Beginning at the age of six and continuing into her ninth year, Melissa's use of several schematic drawing systems became evident. I observed that by the age of nine years Melissa was making use of the following drawing systems: drawing

from observation (see figures 122-127, 200, 239, 259, 260, 276, 200, 238, 259, 276 ), simple schematic drawing (see figures 130, 133, 142-145, 179, 182, 183, 209, 221, 236, 247, 248, detailed schematic drawing (see figures 147-149, 153, 154, 164, 165, 204, 210, 212, 230, 244, 246) sketch-like schematic drawing (see figures 132, 134-141, 234, 257, 258) and cartoon-like schematic drawing (see figures 178, 202, 219, 220, 228, 229, 249, 250-255, 272-274). What distinguishes each of these systems one from the other, is the manner by which each system makes use of different drawing strategies as well as the resultant variations on the "style of rendition" (Wolf, 1988). In Melissa's drawings from observation, great care and time were invested in replicating the likeness of her subjects. Melissa's first observational drawings made use of a contour line; eventually her line became more feathered where short line strokes began to define her subject matter. The simple schematic drawings represent a very basic contour depiction of subject matter where very little details within the figures or in the background are included. These drawings are usually inspired from memory or imagination. The sketch-like schematic system can be seen to make up parts of drawings where people, animals, or other subject matter are drawn quickly and appear very stick-like. This system is commonly used in Melissa's narrative illustrations. The detailed schematic drawings represent renderings rich in designs, colours, and textures. This system is often used to depict "pretty girls" and relies on memory and imagination for inspiration. Melissa's cartoon-like schematic drawings represent subjects that are "cute" and "stylized". Various animals are personified and people are drawn in distorted proportions. In the cartoon drawings, schemata is often copied or borrowed from "others". Drawings that are copied completely or traced, rely totally on another's image and their schematic replication can change from one drawing to the



next depending on the drawings from which the copies are made from. What is worth noting is that one system would not necessarily lead into another but rather these systems sometimes co-existed and sometimes within the same drawing. For example in figure 256 entitled Halloween, the witch figure is drawn in a simple schematic style while the children at the bottom are drawn in a stick-like manner.

Perhaps Melissa's method of working in serials, of repeating and modifying her image, drawing after drawing, could be seen as a drawing strategy embraced by all her drawing systems.

### Renditions

According to Wolf, renditions represent another aspect of visual language where the same subject matter, for example, may be drawn in different ways (1988). This concept of renditions was evident in Melissa's drawings and at times served to characterize some of the drawing systems she employed. Her drawings of people for example included various renditions: people drawn realistically from observation, people drawn in contour with short stalky bodies and large voluminous legs and/or large head, people drawn as cartoons, people drawn with geometric bodies and stick-like appendages, and people drawn with narrow and elongated torsos. These renditions could also been seen in Melissa's drawings of animals and houses. During one of the interviews I had had with Melissa (May 7, 1990), she reasoned that she had employed these various renditions because, "they're different people" and "cause they're in costume". She had appeared puzzled when I had asked her whether she could recognize the different "ways" she had drawn people.

### Genres

Wolf mentions that visual experiences can be expressed in genres or forms other than pictures. Included in these genres would be diagrams, maps and graphs. Figure 190 of a treasure map and figure 234 of a house interior both combine mapping with small drawings and serve as examples of alternative genres. In addition to creating single drawings, Melissa had also worked on making cards, letters and books combining text with illustrations. Because these serve neither as "pictures" alone nor as forms other than pictures, it is difficult to ascertain where these may fit according to Wolf's theory of drawing languages. I question whether these kinds of "functional" pieces could be viewed as additional examples of genres or whether they could be classified as separate drawing systems.

Having viewed the drawings from Wolf's theoretical approach, I became more focused on observing how Melissa as a unique individual had made use of style and strategies that were her own. I had experienced some difficulty when I had tried to assess Melissa's earliest drawing system use according to Wolf, since I had not kept records of her behavior related to the making of these earliest pieces. Wolf's method of viewing drawings in terms of how drawing systems grow and evolve according to the "individual" sharply contrasts with Lowenfeld's very general theory of progressive stage development. Not unlike Lowenfeld however, Wolf does not include in her description of drawing development, much reference to children's subject matter choices.

### The Wilsons' culturalist point of view and Melissa's drawings

In their research into the drawings of children, the Wilsons focused primarily on spontaneous drawings, "the art that comes from the child's own desire to create" (Wilson, 1982, p. XV). About spontaneous drawings they had the following to say:

Spontaneous drawing discloses a set of symbols through which the child might present and experiment with personal and developing ideas about himself [herself] and about his [her] world—ideas that once recorded on paper, leave a perceivable record (Wilson, 1982, p. XV).

Regarding children's graphic development, they define the use of seven principles; the simplicity principle, the perpendicular principle, the territorial principle, the fill-the-format principle, the conservation and multiple-application principle, the draw-everything principle, and the plastic principle, and seven developmental steps; irregular scribbles, regular scribbles, combining simple configurations, figure drawings, achievement of body, the development of characters, and the fusion of limbs to bodies (1982). These principles and developmental steps resemble closely the stage theory as defined by Lowenfeld, however the Wilsons stress that no ages have been indicated to suggest when these various steps occur (1982). Also they view development in a "linear way" and add that it is not uncommon to see children "jump ahead or return to an earlier type of depiction for reasons and purposes that are her [his] own (Wilson, 1982, p. 49). As well they view a "natural unfolding" taking place until the age of eight (1979c).

Having investigated the themes in children's spontaneous drawings, the Wilsons conclude that through their drawings, children are attempting to deal with four realities. The idea of four realities was borrowed from Hans and Shulamith Kreitlers, two Israeli psychologists. The four realities include

the common reality, the archeological reality, the normative reality and the prophetic reality (1982). The common reality refers to "the reality that we all share in common" (Wilsons, 1982, p. 159). The Wilsons elaborate with the following:

Hardly a drawing produced by children is without at least some aspects that relate to depictions of, or the making of models for, the common reality. At times, these depictions are symbolic of relations between people, of growth and other seemingly unfathomable mysteries; at other times they are an attempt to show details, to understand actions and the working of machines, or even to depict the unseen, such as the image of sound (1982, p. 24).

The archeological reality refers to "the reality of the self" (Wilsons, 1982, p. 159). The drawings depicting this reality represent self portraits although the child may not be aware of this. The child is dealing with images of who he/she might like to be or not like to be, how he/she would like to behave or whom he/she would like to become (1982). The Wilsons add:

...the child may safely experiment with even adverse feelings and ways of being that he [she] wishes to understand, so that he [she] might hold them up for examination, and accept or reject them as possibilities for himself [herself] (Wilsons, 1982, p. 29).

The normative reality represents "the reality of good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust-rules by which an individual or society behaves " (Wilsons, 1982, p. 29). The Wilsons add:

Young children must reinvent for themselves the standards of right and wrong-which kinds of behavior are proper and which improper-in spite of the fact that they are continually being told to behave in ways perceived to be desirable by adults.

...symbolically engaging in this improper behavior through drawing makes the exploration of the normative reality a relatively safe pursuit (Wilsons, 1982, p. 29).

The prophetic reality deals with the future as the child sees it in terms of the self growing up, the anticipation of future events, of possible danger, death or romance (Wilsons, 1982).

The Wilsons mention that in children's spontaneous drawings these realities can at times co-exist or fuse one into the other (1982). They add that spontaneous drawings of most children deal with themes related to these realities. These drawings which often tell stories, describe events or objects are viewed by the Wilsons as visual narratives (Wilsons, 1979a). Sometimes these narratives or story drawings are depicted in several frames, at other times "the entire action of a narrative is played out in a single frame" (Wilsons, 1982, p. 110). The Wilsons mention that often children depict only parts of their stories, but in their minds they retain the "whole story" (Wilsons, 1979b). About the way children make use of story drawings, the Wilsons have the following to say:

We believe that the child, in his [her] own stories, is creating situations that are suited entirely to his [her] own needs and desires, that deal directly though symbolically, with his [her] own immediate concerns (1982, p. 102).

Melissa's spontaneous drawings were viewed as visual narratives and analyzed in terms of how they reflected the four realities as defined by the Wilsons. First the common reality of Melissa's drawings was examined. The Wilsons mention that almost all drawings produced by children represent some part of this common reality (1982). This I found to be true of many of

Melissa's imaginary, memory and observational depictions of "people", family, friends, toys, animals and houses. Observational drawings for example, represented Melissa's attempts to capture the detailed likeness of her house, family, pets and toys (see figures 113, 122-127, 259, 260, 276), revealing a common reality of the people and objects that make up her immediate physical environment. Certain other drawings gave evidence to another aspect of the common reality, that of how Melissa viewed herself as a child having to deal with parental authority (see figures 131, 134, 135, 141). As well Melissa explored the reality of teacher authority and peer control (see figures 132, 133). These drawings which depicted various aspects of control and authority could also be viewed as Melissa's unconscious attempts at defining who she is, (although the "child" was played out by other characters) and consequently could be seen as representative of the archeological reality as well.

The archeological reality could represent the present or future self directly or indirectly (Wilson, 1982). Certain drawings stood as direct self-portraits (see figures 70-73, 76, 108, 182, 183, 189, 232, 244) while others suggested a self that Melissa might or might not like to become as well as ways that she might like to wear hair (see figure 166), makeup or clothes in the future. There were drawings of pretty girls, queens and princesses (see figures 147-149, 210, 230, 231, 233, 243, 245) as well as the Misfit characters from the television cartoon show, Jem and the Holograms, who costumed themselves in wild outfits, makeup, jewellery and hairstyles (see figures 142-146). At the age of seven, Melissa had expressed a desire to become a princess one day and this princess ideal was apparent in some of her drawings (see figures 129, 130, 230). Many of these drawings, since they depicted the future of the archeological self, could also be viewed as

belonging to the prophetic reality.

The normative reality represents what is good and evil, right and wrong (Wilsons, 1982). Melissa had depicted various characters from the television cartoon show entitled *Jem and the Holograms* (see figures 142-146). On the show these characters signified the forces of good against evil but were not drawn by Melissa as interacting in any way. Perhaps as the Wilsons suggest, the whole story or possible narrative remained in Melissa's mind, only the representation of the characters was important to depict at the time. Other drawings suggest ways Melissa chose to deal with negative feelings through the drawing medium. In one drawing of myself, Melissa chose to draw me with "spiky" hair, a way to express her anger at me at the time (see figure 27). Upset with her sister, Melissa drew her with a pumpkin head (see figure 214). An argument with a friend led to the drawing in figure 97 of one little girl calling another, a pig. Bothered by her dog, Pepper, she drew a group of animals with the text that read "Pepper is a dumbbell and weird" (see figure 228). The "bad" feelings that Melissa had experienced had found an outlet in the drawing medium.

The last reality, the prophetic reality, deals with the future, both short and long term. Short term anticipation of events was depicted in Melissa's holiday theme drawings. Halloween, Christmas, and Easter drawings usually preceded the holidays they represented (see figures 37-39, 65, 104, 105, 119-121, 176-180, 246, 272). Several drawings served as examples of wish fulfilment; to become a princess one day (see figure 129, 130, 230 ), to water ski (see figure 181), to own a rabbit (see figure 185) , to see a rabbit (see figure 164), to visit with her cousin (see figure 194). Certain drawings also dealt with the notion of death (see figures 162, 163) and of romance (see figure 129, 130, 150). The dragon book Melissa had made for her sister was

intentionally written as an incomplete book so that her sister might add her own ending to it (see figure 204). The many drawings of pretty girls (see figures 147-149, 166, 186, 243, 245) as well as the cartoon "Misfits" characters (see figures 142-146) also seem to suggest a certain look into the future.

I discovered that certain characteristics which related to Melissa's drawing process were also explained by the Wilsons. For example, I had observed that Melissa used to draw often when she was bored and several drawings with variations on the same topic would be done at one sitting. Brent Wilson had mentioned that drawing could serve to alleviate boredom and tensions (1974) and supported the following quotation made by Kreitler and Kreitler (B. Wilson, 1976b):

The theory of tension relief applied to artistic production would hold that when individuals are in a general state of tension brought on by such things as under-stimulation, interrupted actions, uncertainties, conflicts, boredom, and curiosity they may expose themselves to art or engage in artistic activities (among other options) in order to increase incoming stimuli and thus assist the individual in returning to a satisfactory state of arousal (Kreitler and Kreitler, 1972, p. 16).

The Wilsons give the following explanation for why children may draw "serials" or numerous drawings of the same subject:

For Picasso and other artists and for children who wish to draw more and better, the goal is sometimes the perfection of a single object, sometimes of many. In order to accommodate a developing process of reality making in drawing, it is necessary to acquire correspondingly increasing drawing skills both in the number of things that can be drawn and the accuracy and variation with which those drawings are executed (Wilson, 1982, p. 83).



The many drawings of heads (see figures 61-75), suns (see figures 82-84), Strawberry Shortcake dolls (see figures 88, 99-103), cartoon characters from the cartoon show, Jem and the Holograms (see figures 142-146), birds (see figures 151-157), and dragons (see figures 158-161), as well as the small sketches of birds, dogs, and cats (see figures 267-270), all represent examples of ways Melissa was exploring variation on the same theme. Her many drawings from observation could be seen as ways she may have been attempting to replicate her subjects with accuracy, thereby perfecting her drawing skills (see figures 113, 122-127, 239, 259, 260, 276).

Melissa borrowed and copied from various sources: art books, colouring books, postcards, friends' drawings, television shows, and cartoons. The Wilsons support the "existence of influenced or borrowed images" and claim that "virtually all images are borrowed or influenced to some extent" (1981, p. 5). The Wilsons suggest that the reason why children borrow is because:

As they get older, children develop a need to draw with greater accuracy and complexity. The reason is both personal and cultural; the child's maturational patterns and his [her] personal desires as well as the culture dictate that he [she] draw with higher and higher degrees of realism (Wilson, 1982, p. 77).

At the age of nine, Melissa had become more conscious of the way she drew and concluded that she could not draw as well as some of her peers. She observed how these "others" could draw cartoon characters and began to draw cartoons of her own. The Wilsons mention "that when he [she] fails to see his [her] own drawing as satisfactory, he [she] turns to the graphic images of other children, of adults and the media" (1982, p. 66). Perhaps cartoon drawing provided Melissa with an "acceptable" alternative to having to draw only realistically.

The Wilsons provide a comprehensive analysis of the themes found in children's spontaneous drawings, themes that serve to reconstruct for children the various realities they may be experiencing or anticipating in their everyday life. Comparing Melissa's drawings to the analysis made by the Wilsons, I discovered that the majority of Melissa's spontaneous drawings seemed to suggest a preference for depicting "the common reality"; a reality of herself and the people, animals and objects from her immediate environment. Drawings done after the age of seven, revealed increased depictions of the "archeological and normative realities"; identity of self and queries into good and evil, right and wrong. Drawings reflecting the future were present at all ages. The Wilsons stress that most spontaneous drawings represent "visual narratives"; they tell stories. While this may be true, this emphasis on the narrative appears to ignore the presence and importance of individual style with respect to children's drawing development. Although a good number of Melissa's drawings suggest that a story component may be present, I have found as well evidence of various drawing "styles" or strategies appearing. This omission on the part of the Wilsons almost parallels the tendency of Lowenfeld's theory to overgeneralize or categorize children's artistic development.

### Conclusion

This analysis which addressed the varying view points of Lowenfeld, Wolf and the Wilsons, led me to discover Melissa's unique approach to style and subject matter. Although each of these theories did not always complement one other, each seemed to stress a different aspect of children's graphic development. Borrowing from these different aspects I was able to make sense of the drawings I had before me. Viktor Lowenfeld had detailed the acquisition and development of visual language and had focused primarily on the child himself/herself. Dennie Wolf had concerned herself with the process and the individual styles employed by individual children in their drawings. The Wilsons had emphasized the importance of the visual narrative and had analyzed the subject matter found in children's spontaneous drawings.

All three theories had recognized characteristics that typified children's early drawings but each had their own names and ages for the classifications they had developed. Both Lowenfeld and the Wilsons had agreed on a linear approach to children's artistic development while Wolf believed that drawing systems were on-going and could appear and reappear at different times. I viewed Melissa's drawings as somewhat linear with respect to her use of visual language but less so in terms of the drawing systems she had employed. Like the Wilsons, I chose to describe those drawings that could be characterized as spontaneous. I observed that the descriptions of drawings, outlined by Lowenfeld and Wolf did not appear to emphasize only spontaneous drawings as had the descriptions made by the Wilsons.

Lowenfeld's theory had explained the general changes and characteristics of visual language that I had observed in Melissa's drawings. Wolf's theory pointed out for me Melissa's unique use of a "schematic drawing system"

which grew to include additional sub-schematic systems. Finally the Wilsons' analysis of children's themes led me to observe a preference on Melissa's part, to depict her "common reality", a reality of herself and the people , animals and objects that make up her immediate environment.

Overall I view Melissa's drawings as representative of an interplay of these three theories. Alone each of these theories would fall short of explaining what I had observed. Together they made sense of Melissa's spontaneous drawings in terms of visual language acquisition, individual process or drawing strategies and choice of subject matter or idea development.

## Chapter 11: The Role of Response and Dialogue

The use of dialogue and response in this study led me to discover meanings about the drawings beyond the image alone. This dialogical study included the voices of both Melissa and myself as we reflected on the drawings from the past and dialogued in the present about the past. My interviews with Melissa about her drawings gave me insight into her process, style, subject matter and outside influences in a way that could not be disclosed to me by the imagery alone. As well, I discovered what she viewed as successes and mistakes, giving me a sense of what she valued in a work of art from her ten year old perspective.

Kenneth Beittel, in his research into the drawing serials of some college undergraduate students (1973), had also made use of dialogue between the researcher and the "artist". In addition to utilizing time-lapse photography of the drawings in progress, the "artist" would be asked by the researcher, questions regarding what took place; an attempt was being made to discover the individual's unique drawing process. About accessing the "artist's" memory of "making", Beittel had the following to say:

The privileged access of the artist intent upon reflection on his own unique drawing situation is essential to the grasping of aesthetic experiential phenomena (1973, p. 15).

Although Beittel's study looked at the immediate responses of college students following their art-making experiences and my research looked at one child's response to her drawings made years earlier, these differences did not change the outcome of both studies which found that through the use of dialogue some personal insight into the individual's process could be obtained.

Cathy Mullen had made reference to an eleven year old boy's (Aaron)

response to his past artworks (1987) made from the age of two, onward. It is interesting to note that Aaron's responses were not unlike those of Melissa's at the age of ten. He did not recognize all his past pieces, nor could he recall the subject matter of some of his drawings. However, Mullen noted that Aaron knew the work was his own, in some cases even without memory of the subject. As well, his body could remember the gestures involved in the making of some pieces. He viewed some works with a critical eye, others with embarrassment.

Melissa had been interviewed at the age of ten about the drawings she had done from the age of fifteen months onward. The purpose of this study was not to test the authenticity of her responses but rather to find out how Melissa would verbalize about the way she had made art, why she had made art and what she had made art about.

Melissa's first encounter with her earliest drawings of "people" evoked the following comment: "I don't think I did this because Stephanie [Melissa's sister] made men like this" (interview, Nov. 5, 1989). At a later date she said the following: "there's so many, why did you keep all those drawings, they're just scribbles" (May 4, 1990). At first Melissa seemed almost embarrassed by her earliest drawings. But once she had accepted the fact that all the drawings saved were her own, she became curious and began to carefully examine each piece, much like the archeologist who carefully studies a found object from the past. This experience stimulated a variety of emotions and responses from Melissa. Melissa quickly dismissed the drawings that she could not recognize. Other drawings would bring a smile to her face and she would view these for longer periods of time as though she were cherishing a moment of being reunited with an old friend. Melissa's recall of her past drawings took on a variety of forms; there was gestural recall, process

recall, subject matter recall and recall of how her work had been influenced. Sometimes only one form of recall would be used, at other times a combination of forms. Gestural recall was apparent in the drawings of the "weatherman" (see figure 6), "mummy with spiky hair" (see figure 27), "Melissa with a snowman" (see figure 80) and "a face" (see figure 81) where Melissa could remember the gestures used to make holes in the paper through to the carpeted floor (see figures 80, 81) and in others to denote swirling winds, or messy hair (see figures 6, 27).

Most of Melissa's comments about process were directed at her drawings before the age of six. She had noted that for some drawings of "people", she hadn't included feet and in other drawings of the same, she had drawn only three legs instead of four. She added that in her sun drawing only one ray was depicted (see figure 5) because at two she didn't know what the sun really looked like. In a few "Santa" drawings only two strips of hair were included she explained, because at two she had never seen Santa's hair. Looking over the cartoon drawings done at nine, Melissa mentioned she had preferred and still prefers to draw this way because it is easier than having to include shading. About her sketchbook drawings Melissa said these kinds of drawings were sketches and this meant they did not have to be perfect; by perfect Melissa meant one did not need to add colour or details.

Subject matter recall was the recall most often used and mainly directed at drawings which were representational. Melissa had been strongly attracted to certain drawings (see Strawberry Shortcake: figures 88, 99-103), the wizard: figure 105, self portrait: figure 108), some of which she could not elaborate about beyond the subject matter title (see the bears: figure 107, the pom-pom people: figure 184, rabbit in cage: figure 185). For yet other drawings Melissa could remember parts of the drawing, for example

the high heel shoes in figure 210, the bouquet of flowers in figure 211 and the window in figure 212 which she said had been drawn to resemble the window from our previous house.

Melissa had recalled how her work had been influenced. She commented on some early influences from school with her drawing of a stick man (see figure 112) and a drawing of animals around a tree to illustrate a song she had learned at school (see figure 175). Television shows such as Sesame Street, Jem and the Holograms, and how-to-draw shows also influenced her subject choices (see figures 142-146, 216-219) and ways of handling technique (see figures 200, 201, 237, 238). Finally Melissa had commented on the great many drawings done after the age of eight which had been influenced by pictures (see figure 213), storybooks (see figures 213, 220, 221, 222), colouring books (see figures 223-226, 235) and fellow classmates (see figures 199, 228-233).

My own response to Melissa's drawings was made from two perspectives: one; as researcher responding to quantity, media, subject matter and style, and two; as mother relying on my memory to recall the particular situations in which the drawings were made and any dialogue between Melissa and myself that had gone on pertaining to these drawings. As well, in my response as mother, I had attempted to situate the drawings in the particular time/space in which they were made by including details about family, friends, and pets as well as events I believed to be influential in Melissa's drawing experiences.

Although my responses had included a fair amount of detail about the drawings from a variety of perspectives, it was Melissa's response as "maker" that I viewed as being most meaningful in terms of finding out what



the drawing experience had been about. By way of response Melissa had identified subject matter, told stories about her drawings, explained process and had discussed problems and frustrations she had encountered. Worth noting was Melissa's overall critical view and embarrassment concerning her earliest drawings. Asked about how she viewed these earlier works she replied: "really weird compared to what I am doing now" (interview, Nov. 5, 1989). Comparing the way she worked then and now she had commented on how free she used to be:

When I was little, I could do anything I felt..just like freeing my arm and doing anything I want..you know.

I didn't care if I made a mistake because when I was little, a mistake was nothing. If I was making a face and whoops..oh well, I could just scribble over it. I could do anything I wanted with it, just make it into something else.

[About my drawing now] it does matter if I make a mistake. like if I make a little line by accident..someone bumps my arm and I make a line..like where an ear would be, I'd have to start over again 'cause that wouldn't make sense to me or anything (interview, Nov. 15, 1989).

These comments made by Melissa seem to imply two things; one, that she has very little knowledge or understanding of "artistic development" and two, that her approach to drawing used to be free and now has become much more rigid and shows concern about making "mistakes". Because Melissa didn't understand how children's work goes through developmental changes, she viewed her earliest drawings with a critical eye believing that these works were inferior to her present work, that drawings only get better as one gets older. These early works held little value for her and she wondered why I had chosen to save them. Her critical view has extended into her present

artwork in terms of process where mistakes must be avoided and where a certain sense of freedom is no longer acceptable.

Worth noting is that although Melissa had initially been embarrassed by her past works and continued to view them with a somewhat critical eye, the experience she had had of responding and dialoguing about her past artwork, finally proved to be satisfying. The importance that had been placed on these drawings, developed in her, a sense of importance in herself and finally a pride in ownership of these artifacts from the past.

## Chapter 12: Conclusion

This longitudinal study looked at Melissa's spontaneous drawings as well as the reflective responses (from a dual perspective; Melissa's and myself), that were made about the drawings. The longitudinal study as a method of research, proved to be an effective way to view the subtle changes that had taken place in Melissa's drawings over a long period of time. Focusing on her spontaneous drawings only (drawings that Melissa made on her own, without any adult intervention), I was able to observe the individual choices made by Melissa with respect to style, process and subject matter. My interviews with Melissa about her drawings, gave me insight into her drawings in a way that the drawings alone could not have. I had learned what Melissa's drawing experiences had been about based on her recollections at ten years of age. Through her responses she had: identified subject matter, revealed various influences in her work, told stories about some of her drawings, explained process, and had discussed the various problems and frustrations she had encountered. In my own response to the drawings as researcher, I had looked at quantity, media, subject matter and style. As mother, I recalled when some of Melissa's drawings had been made. As well, I had attempted to situate the drawings in the particular time/space in which they were made by including details about home, family, friends, pets, significant events in Melissa's life as well as the kinds of things that Melissa loved, feared, or had hoped for.

The purpose of my research was to investigate the changes or shifts in drawing style and subject matter that had occurred in Melissa's spontaneous drawings between the ages of fifteen months and ten years. Prior to this study into Melissa's drawings, I had held the belief that children's artistic

development proceeded in a linear way and I had hoped that I could discover more about the changes that had occurred from early to middle childhood with respect to the journey towards "realism". However, as I became more involved in my research, I soon learned that this "linear perspective" was too limiting and didn't allow me to look back at styles or strategies that had begun at an early age and could be seen to reoccur again later. Consequently, I began to challenge my acceptance of Lowenfeld's stage theory from which I had adopted this linear perspective, and looked towards Dennie Wolf's theory of drawing systems to make sense of Melissa's unique approach to style. I viewed Lowenfeld's stage theory as a framework to explain the "general" changes and characteristics of visual language that I had observed in Melissa's drawings. Dennie Wolf's theory revealed to me Melissa's on-going use of various drawing systems (object-based, gestural, point-plot, relative size and shape, and lookalike pictures) as well as her preferential use of a "schematic drawing system" that grew to include (at the age of nine years) a repertoire of five schematic drawing systems (which I named: observational schematic, simple schematic, detailed schematic, sketch-like schematic and cartoon-like schematic). Each system had made use of different drawing strategies and had exhibited variations on the "style of rendition" (Wolf, 1988).

Both Lowenfeld and Wolf had made little reference to the choices made by children with regards to the subject matter found in their drawings. The Wilsons however, had analyzed the subject matter or themes found in children's spontaneous drawings and found that through their subject matter, children are attempting to deal with four realities (the common reality, the archeological reality, the normative reality and the prophetic reality). Looking at Melissa's subject matter I concluded that although

Melissa had dealt with all these realities, most of her drawings seemed to suggest a preferential choice to depict her "common reality"; a reality of herself and the people, animals and objects that make up her immediate environment. Overall, I view my theoretical analysis of Melissa's drawings as representative of an interplay of these three theories which look at: children's artistic development through visual language acquisition (Lowenfeld), children's individual artistic process or style (Wolf) and children's expression of ideas viewed through their spontaneous subject matter choices (Wilsons).

As an outcome of this study I have gained a new perspective regarding spontaneous art as well children's responses to their own art. In viewing Melissa's spontaneous drawings which reflected her own personal choice of subject matter, style, and media, I discovered that which was unique about her process and expression of ideas, hopes and fears. Unlike school art-making where teachers typically initiate theme, media and/or time allotment, spontaneous art-making encourages children to work out their own personal ideas and processes with less concern for both the end product and for satisfying the teacher. Numerous small sketches, narratives and works done in "serials" all exemplify Melissa's attempts to explore theme and process on her own. I see the value of incorporating spontaneous art-making into the curriculum and perhaps redefining "school art". At school, children could be encouraged to keep journals, make books, create narratives and at home they could continue to explore themes and process in their sketchbooks. Perhaps these kinds of activities could influence the quality of expression in the children's school art. As well children could be asked to talk about both their own art as well as about the work done by others in the class. These kinds of discussions would allow children to identify their subject

matter, tell stories about their work, explain processes, discuss problems or frustrations and point out preferences of style and subject matter. This in turn might assist the teacher in developing lessons centered on techniques or themes related to the children's preferences and needs.

In my interviews with Melissa where she was asked to respond to her drawings from her ten year old perspective, I discovered that Melissa had been very critical about some of her recent pieces and almost embarrassed by her earliest drawings. Perhaps embarrassment about artwork that was done at a younger age is "natural" for pre-adolescents; I had noticed that Aaron (Mullen's study) had responded in a similar way to his earliest work. However, I believe that this kind of response may be largely influenced by the "linear" way that some teachers and parents view artistic development. This view holds that children's work improves with age as it becomes more "realistic". Maybe if children from as early as kindergarten onward, could learn about "artistic development" by viewing the works of children younger and older than themselves as well as those works done by artists, and if they could observe the kinds of changes that take place in artistic development over the years, then by the time they would reach adolescence they might be less embarrassed by their earlier work. Discussing one's work also gives it importance and a certain sense of value. As well there may be some validity in feeling discouraged or challenged by a piece of artwork. Through response experiences, sharing difficulties with the teacher and/or the class can be made in an atmosphere that is supportive rather than competitive.

Melissa often criticized her current work for not attaining the level of perfection she had wished for. Added to this was her need to seek out ways of drawing by borrowing and copying from others. While on the one hand

I view the benefits of encouraging spontaneous art in the curriculum, I also see a possible need to teach technique to children who wish to learn.

This study looks at only one individual's drawings over time and therefore makes no inferences or generalizations about the drawings of other children. Each child's work is unique and there is yet much to discover about the way each child approaches style and subject matter in his/her spontaneous artwork. Perhaps more longitudinal studies of individual children's spontaneous drawings could influence a re-definition of school art to include a greater focus on the child's individual choice of style and subject matter. Several questions for further research could include the following:

1. What additional drawing styles could be discovered through additional longitudinal studies of individual children?
2. What would longitudinal studies in other media reveal in terms of individual style?
3. What are the differences between school art and spontaneous art with regards to style and subject matter?
4. What role does text play in the art work of children?
5. Are there differences between boys' and girls' spontaneous art in terms of style or subject matter?
6. What are the many kinds of cultural influences that appear in children's artwork?
7. How does one's memory of past art-making experiences change over time?
8. How does one's critique of one's past artworks change over time?

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