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Building A Bridge
*An Exploration of the Development of a
Relationship Between a Child Diagnosed
with Autism and a Drama Therapist*

Susan Heather Ward

A Research Paper
in
The Department
of
Art Education and Creative Arts Therapies

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

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ABSTRACT

Susan Ward

Building A Bridge
*An Exploration of the Development of a
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This paper presents an in-depth case study which explores the development of a relationship, through the use of dramatic play therapy as defined by Jennings (1993), between a non-verbal child diagnosed with autism and a drama therapist.

The paper gives a brief overview of autism. It also attempts to present both the client and the therapist in terms of the personal culture from which each has evolved and in so doing it explores how this impacts on the work in which they engage.

The paper explores the therapist's method of processing the work with the client through her own drawings and reflects on how this action helped in the understanding of the relationship with the client.

This paper concludes that dramatic play therapy was beneficial in this instance and has the potential to effect positive change in children with autism. It further concludes that processing client/therapist interactions through an unfamiliar orientation, in this case art, helped to expand the scope of the relationship between the therapist and the client.

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I owe a great debt of thanks to my husband, Brian Woods and my daughter, Allison Woods, without whose love and support this paper would not exist. It was only in knowing that they would always be there when I returned, that I was able to journey out into the world.

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All sessional drawings were 21cm x 13 cm in size except the collage created after session 16 which was 28cm x 21.5cm.

All summary drawings were 46cm x 30.5cm.

Introduction

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (1994) defines relationship as "the state of being related or interrelated" (p. 618). Having read this, I then turned to the definition of related on the preceding page. It said "1) connected by some understood relationship 2) connected through membership in the same family" (p. 619).

In this paper I intend to document, through sessional accounts, original artwork, and discussion of the preceding, the development of one relationship and the impact that this particular relationship had on my growth as a therapist.

Why and how a relationship takes root and develops has always fascinated me. What are the factors that immediately draw some people to one another while no notice is taken of others? What complex union of variables combine to create a bond between two human beings? Why do some relationships endure over a lifetime and others fade away as circumstances change? What is it that causes us to remember certain individuals who played a seemingly minor role in our lives while forgetting others who have been involved in a much greater way? These questions have interested me for a very long time. As a child I often wondered why I felt connected to certain other children. What was it that drew us to one another and why did our relationship continue to evolve into adulthood? What was different about me or about the other children that allowed these relationships to flourish? Or perhaps more to the point, what was it about us in relation to one another that allowed a deep connection to occur?

I have allowed time for self-exploration throughout my life. One goal of my personal reflections has been to attempt to understand the

elements that create a relationship. When I had before me the daunting task of writing a research paper which explored the efficacy of using drama therapy in the treatment of a child with autism, I decided that this would be a wonderful opportunity to investigate the development of a very specific relationship between a client and a therapist but also between an adult and a child. Bronfenbrenner (1995) writes about "recalling and recording those features of my own life course that may have influenced the form and substance of the kind of developmental theory that I subsequently produced..." (p. 599). Because I believe strongly in self-examination, I felt that I wanted to use the narrative of my own experience with relationships throughout the course of my life to explore the development of one specific relationship with this particular child. In order to accomplish this, I felt that I would have to examine the culture from which I had emerged and how the distinct culture in which I grew up had influenced who I was as a person and who I was becoming as a therapist. In addition, I realized that I would have to investigate how these aspects of who I was revealed themselves in the therapeutic environment. What was I bringing to the space that was affecting the way that the client responded to me? And much more difficult to determine in this circumstance, what was the culture from which the client arrived? What was he bringing to the space which was affecting my response to him, and how could we find a common ground from which to build a relationship?

In researching other work with children with autism, I came to the conclusion that I did not want to create a relationship with the child that placed him in the role of the subject while I assumed the role of expert. Although I readily admit that the work that I had undertaken was new to

me, I did not approach it as a trial run but as a genuine effort to make contact with another human being through dramatic play. Throughout the time that we spent together, I considered us to be 'co-researchers' (Epston, 1999). I saw my role as the container of the space in which the child could explore himself in relation to both himself and an other. I always tried to approach the work as if we were partners.

The difficulties that I encountered centred around the balance of power within the therapeutic relationship. In the institution in which the therapy took place, I was viewed by other professionals as being in charge of the sessions. I discovered, however, that when I allowed this outside perspective to actually enter the space through my hesitations, I became a less effective therapist and my dissatisfaction surfaced in this work and in other areas of my life. When I was true to my beliefs about how this child and I should interact, I found the relationship growing stronger and our ability to communicate with one another progressing. The process that unfolded for me contained many highs and lows. There were days when I believed that we were making tremendous strides and then an offhand remark by someone else who saw the child would send me into a tailspin doubting everything in which I believed. What I seemed to be experiencing was a reaction to the highly structured and program-centred approach which was offered by the institution. Greenspan and Wieder (1998) have observed the following course of treatment as typical when working with children with autism and other developmental disorders.

The traditional prognosis for PDD (pervasive developmental disorders) is based on experience with children whose treatment programs tend to be mechanical and structured rather than based

on individual differences, relationships, affect, and emotional cueing. Approaches that do not pull the child into *spontaneous*, joyful relationship patterns may intensify rather than remediate the difficulty (p. 8).

I hoped that through the pull of the dramatic play this young child would make the choice to enter into a relationship with me and perhaps others.

Autism: A Brief Overview of the Disorder

Although this paper does not attempt to review all of the literature that is available surrounding autism, I think that it would be valuable to the reader to have a brief overview of the key elements of the disorder.

Autism is a developmental disorder which is usually diagnosed before a child's third year. It is most often diagnosed based on delays in three specific areas: reciprocal social interaction, communication, and patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities. Oliver Sacks (1995) refers to the diagnostic criteria as "the terrible triad of impairments—social, communicative, and imaginative—" (p. 271). As reported in Sacks (1995) the disorder was simultaneously identified by two individuals, Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger, in the 1940s. Working in separate parts of the world, these two men developed different views about what the disorder entailed. Kanner tended toward a pessimistic outcome for the child while Asperger focused to a greater extent on the child's potential.

Autism is only one disorder on a continuum often referred to as the autistic spectrum. The DSM-IV labels this group the pervasive developmental disorders and includes within it autistic disorder as well as several other conditions which are considered non-autistic. These include Rett's disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, Asperger's disorder and

pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (Reid & Wise, 1995).

The children who are diagnosed with autistic disorder are often assumed to be unable to make emotional attachments with other human beings (Cohen, S. 1998; Trevarthen, Aitken, Papoudi, & Roberts 1998; Seigal 1996, & Baron-Cohen & Bolton 1993). As this element, autistic aloneness, is seen as almost universal among those who have been given the label of autism, I thought that it would be valuable to investigate the impact dramatic play could have on this behaviour and, at the same time, to explore how a therapeutic alliance is formed from the perspective of the therapist. Temple Grandin (1995), perhaps the most well-known individual who has been diagnosed with autistic disorder, likens relationships to being trapped between two glass windows.

In order to get out without shattering the door, I had to ease it back very carefully. It struck me that relationships operate the same way. They also shatter easily and have to be approached carefully. I then made a further association about how the careful opening of doors was related to establishing relationships in the first place. While I was trapped between the windows, it was almost impossible to communicate through the glass. Being autistic is being trapped like this. The window symbolized my feelings of disconnection from other people and helped me cope with the isolation (p.36).

With this information, both scientific and personal, held firmly in my consciousness I began to meet with Brian (a pseudonym).

The Child

Brian was five years old when we first met. He was attending a day program within a large psychiatric hospital. He had just begun his second

year in the program and would be integrated into a regular kindergarten the following year. He was an only child who came from a loving and supportive family. His family augmented the program which he was presently attending with outside language and recreational programs.

Brian had received the diagnosis of autistic disorder at the age of three. His parents enrolled him in an observation nursery program the same year for a five month period. The focus of the present program was on five areas of development, the goals of which I will summarize.

Communication: to respond to a verbal stimulus with a motor behaviour
to stimulate speech

Behaviour: to indicate a desire to manipulate toys in the
environment
to indicate a recall of class routine by moving to the
next activity

Socialization: to attend to other's behaviours
to respond to a significant adult's request to come to
them

Pre-Academic: to respond to a single stimulus in the environment with
a motor behaviour
to respond, with motor and body responses, to
complex environmental and verbal stimuli
to imitate familiar actions of adults.

I was informed by the language specialist that Brian had an expressive vocabulary of approximately twenty words which were used appropriately but in isolation. He did not form phrases or sentences using the known vocabulary. His receptive vocabulary was assumed to be much more limited as he rarely responded to verbal requests. It was

difficult to accurately assess this element of his knowledge. He did, however, sometimes respond to a verbal request when it was accompanied by a gesture.

In the area of play and social interaction, Brian displayed an interest in certain toys in the classroom and it was reported that he had begun to initiate play with peers. Brian, I was told, rarely expressed himself emotionally and, in fact, had a limited range of affective expression which included pleasure, anxiety, and discomfort.

When I began meeting with Brian, my focus was concentrated on creating an environment, a play space, in which he felt safe. These early sessions are recorded in the first section of this paper. I soon became aware of how the work was drawing me in and how I was beginning to feel connected to Brian on many levels. A relationship was forming and I became fascinated as to how this would impact on the progress we might experience in the dramatic play world. His choice of toys, a puppet, a doll, and balloons, were meaningful both within the play and within our relationship. We used these objects to develop a method of communication and through them Brian shared his needs with me.

In the pause between our series of meetings, I reflected on my role in this relationship. I explored methods of monitoring my development within the context of our work and then bringing what I had perceived as important to the following encounters. In this way, I was able to reach several conclusions about my role as the therapist, how the alliance within a therapeutic relationship developed from the perspective of the client and the therapist, and how the client responded to the therapist and vice versa. A reconstruction of the second series of sessions is presented in a later section of the paper.

In the final section of this paper, I present a series of reflections based on the themes that arose in the sessions and my response to them. I have included some of the original drawings that I created after our meetings and I offer these to the reader as an alternative way of viewing the work. As I used drawing as an alternative way of processing my responses to the sessions, so I present them as a complementary means of understanding my perspective and the choices that I made based on this way of seeing the world. I have included selected drawings as an additional means of supporting the conclusions that I arrived at in my work with this client. These images helped me to focus on what I was bringing to the therapy and how I was processing the material that the client brought with him.

The Therapist

In this paper I am attempting to explore building a bridge between two people in a therapeutic relationship. In order to do this in a meaningful way, I feel that I must present both sides of the chasm. I have introduced the client based on the limited background information that was available to me, and I would now like to briefly introduce myself in a similar manner.

I am a woman who came to this profession and this institution by a very indirect path.

I grew up in a suburb of a large Canadian city, the second child of five brothers and sisters. My parents were traditional in that my father was the wage-earner and my mother remained at home to care for the house and children. The most special relationship that I remember from my childhood was with my mother's younger sister who lived with us most of my life. She influenced me throughout her life and mine just through

who she was as a person. She gave me the gift of acceptance in a family and a world where I felt like "The Ugly Duckling." I felt as if I just did not fit in. Her acceptance of me, at that time, helped me to realize how important recognition of another person's strengths could be. When I began to meet with Brian, who had been given a medical label that told the world he did not fit in, my acceptance of him helped to build our relationship. I had a point of reference from which to begin to establish a relationship with him because of the relationship my aunt had cultivated with me. I had a model of a positive relationship which would serve me well.

I feel that I have been influenced in my life by many events and many people. My mother always helped others. Although we were not well-off, we shared what we had with others. My mother was a strong woman who endured much hardship in her life. From her I have gained an inner strength which helps me to go on, even when overwhelmed, because the work needs to be done. I have also learned self-reliance from her which sometimes becomes, in me, a fear of asking for help. I have often perceived asking for help as a sign of weakness. In working with this client I have, out of necessity, had to discover a balance between these two perspectives. I find I can now both offer and receive from others without feeling shame.

My life was often crowded as a child both physically and psychologically and I see how that developed, in me, a need for space and privacy. This need of mine had a tremendous impact on the work in which Brian and I engaged.

My training as an actor opened me up to the possibilities of my voice and my body. I learned to use them to express myself without

words and this knowledge helped me to be aware of alternative ways of communicating.

My work as a teacher placed me in an environment in which I had to face the pain and the anger of children who were not having their basic needs met. I saw daily the need for advocates for the children and this has given me the strength and resolve to always put the child first in my work. I believe it was this experience which moved me to enter this training program. I did not feel that I could ever do enough in my role of teacher. I knew that I needed to be able to offer more and I felt that this work was a place where I could make a difference. This desire followed me into my relationship with Brian and it was this relationship with him that helped me to sort out what was "enough".

Procedure

The purpose of this paper is to explore the development of a relationship between a client and a therapist. To this end, I divided the work in which we engaged into two parts. The division of the process came at a natural break when the educational component of the client's treatment stopped for a winter holiday period. The first part of our endeavour consisted of fifteen sessions during which we explored the space, learned about one another, and began to engage in play. The second series of meetings took place over four months and comprised twenty-nine scheduled sessions. Of these twenty-nine sessions, nine sessions were missed due to illness on the part of the client or unexpected re-scheduling of other treatments or recreational activities.

I employed two methods of gathering data. In the first group of sessions, I recorded the events of each session in writing directly after its conclusion, and then I recorded my initial reflections as to what I believed was the meaning of these events. Before the next scheduled session, I prepared by reviewing my written notes and the personal processing that accompanied them. Using these materials I was able to chart the development of our emerging relationship. These sessions are summarized in the section entitled, *The Journey Continues*.

The procedure that was followed for the second group of sessions was different in several ways. I gathered information from our interactions and then explored what I perceived the meaning of this material to be through drawing, writing and responding to what I had drawn and written by creating another image. This process was designed in an attempt to minimize the conscious editing of my responses. The purpose of this work was to explore the relationship, as it developed, from both the client's

perspective which I assessed based on his behaviours within the sessions, his level of engagement in the play, and his attitude toward me, and how this impacted on me. As the therapist, I tried to create a structure through which my response to each session would be authentic. I strove to eliminate, as much as was possible, any extraneous distracters from my process. For this reason, I chose to do my primary processing through art. I acknowledge that I entered into this process with the expectation that using art as my first means of expression would allow me to respond with a minimum of self-censorship. In the past my principal means of processing work with clients has been through the written word. I felt that this was a form that I had mastered well and with which I had achieved a level of competency. In this instance, I was working with a child with autism, a new experience, and I was working in a new way, using an adapted version of Jennings' (1993) dramatic play model and Axline's (1989) non-directive play therapy model. With these factors in mind, I wanted to process my work with this client in a way with which I was unfamiliar and, I hoped would challenge me to explore our work in a new way. I wanted to process our material through an orientation that was less comfortable for me.

Silverman (1999) discussed both self and client orientation in examining the creative process in therapy. She demonstrated how she has discovered through much research and personal experience, that individuals tend to have four ways of orienting themselves in the world. These four are the orientation with which one is most at ease, the orientation that one uses to recuperate from the stresses of the world, or how one relaxes, the orientation that one is drawn to as a stimulus, and finally, the orientation that one tends to resist as it creates a sense of

discomfort or dis-ease. In my case, writing is the means of expression that I have always found the easiest. Whenever I need to organize my thoughts or work through an issue or make a decision, I turn to pen and paper to help me sort out the elements of my dilemma. In order to recuperate or relax I have traditionally turned to music as a way to nurture myself as it allows me to receive without having to act. In this way I am soothed. As a stimulus, I usually seek out movement because it seems that through engaging in an activity that involves the use of my physical body, I am energized not only in my body, but in my mind and spirit as well. Finally, the orientation that I have consistently avoided throughout my life, is creating art. Having been told at a young age that I was not talented in this domain, I have resisted engaging in all activities where the production of art was required. Silverman suggested that there exists the potential to learn a great deal about oneself through attempting to immerse oneself in the orientation which is the most strongly resisted. (Class lecture, Concordia University, 1999).

Art is the ability to convey and, one hopes, affect others in that ability to convey. Art is the ability to capture a feeling, an experience, in a way that is more concise than words alone. It takes you inside the experience rather than speaking to you from outside it. It is an indirect language that addresses the senses as well as the mind. Art finds ways through doors blocked by mind. (Williams, 1992, p. 10).

I hoped by processing our sessions through drawing that I would find a path to my role as therapist and become the facilitator that Brian needed. I was trying to learn who I was in this relationship and why I responded as I did to Brian and the work that we were accomplishing.

I drew in a sketch book at the immediate conclusion of each therapy session with the client. The drawings took approximately twenty to thirty minutes to complete. Each drawing was done on a separate page which was then dated. Drawings were also created when a session was canceled unexpectedly so as to reflect the impact that these missed sessions had on me and the process.

The drawings were created using a variety of media. In the beginning only coloured drawing pencils were used. After one particular session at the end of February, I found that I was unable to adequately represent my feelings regarding the session. I felt that my drawing capabilities were insufficient to express what I needed to say about this particular situation and so, I created a collage, using materials from some discarded magazines. After this event, I realized that the use of other materials could expand the experience for me and allow me to express my responses more accurately. When I began this process, I believed that the fewest number of variables would create a more homogeneous outcome. When I was actually working within the process, I found this restriction limited my expression and that some of the beginning drawings did not, in fact, authentically represent my responses to the sessions. At this point, I began to use watercolour pencils, oil pastels, and crayons as well as coloured drawing pencils in the drawing response process.

Once the drawing was completed, I would either write about the session in a journal or dictate my observations into a tape recorder. The writing and dictation were more of a secondary processing as I reflected on the actual events of the session, questioned both my reactions and the clients' reactions within the session, asked myself questions regarding the possible meaning of material that arose in the session, and explored

my thoughts about the therapeutic aspects of the relationship that was developing between myself and the client. The notes and dictation tended to be of a more cognitive nature while the drawings tended to represent symbolically the essence of my response to the preceding session.

The next step in the process was to review the drawings and the writings at the end of each set of four sessions. I was meeting with the client twice each week for thirty minutes. As there were several unscheduled absences due to illness, and two scheduled breaks due to school holidays, I thought that four sessions would be a reasonable amount of time between reviews. Each review consisted of an examination of the four drawings in an effort to identify any key themes and then the creation of a fifth drawing in response to the original four. These fifth drawings were done in order to maintain the idea of a symbolic response to the work as well as to incorporate common feelings, themes or symbols that arose within the individual drawings.

At the end of the therapeutic work, I reviewed all of the original drawings by moving in chronological order through the sketches while recording my thoughts, feelings, and observations about each piece of work.

The next step was to review the eight response drawings while recording thoughts, feelings and observations that arose.

The final piece of this process was to transcribe the taped responses to the drawings and then, through a detailed examination of these documents, the original drawings, the original written process notes and audio tapes, the summary drawings, and the final transcriptions of the taped responses, to come to some conclusions about the relationship

that developed between a non-verbal client and a therapist using dramatic play therapy as the primary intervention.

The First 15 Sessions - Discovering Who We Are

The beginning sessions in my work with Brian were filled with frustration and impatience on my part. For me, the key element that emerged in the early sessions, as I reviewed them, was that they revolved around what I wanted, what I thought should happen, and the strategies and tools that I thought were relevant. As a therapist in training, I wanted to begin; I wanted something to happen. I entered the relationship with expectations about what my role would be and how Brian would respond to my interventions. If I was to be taken seriously by the experienced, professional educators working alongside me, I felt that I would have to bring something concrete to show them. Brian's success, I initially believed, would be a reflection of my success as a therapist. My institution approved goals were to establish a relationship with Brian through play which would foster language and reciprocal social interactions. These goals were presented to the team and were accepted as being compatible with the overall treatment goals for Brian. It was only after several sessions that I discovered that these goals were not in accord with my personal therapeutic goals. I thought that it would be of greater benefit to Brian if we focused on creating a space in which we could relate as individuals and he could begin to explore a larger area of the world.

I tried to follow a plan that I thought was developmentally appropriate for Brian. This plan was based on the material that I had gathered from Brian's medical file, brief discussions with his educators, and my observations of Brian in both the large group activities and his smaller class group. In determining an appropriate place to begin with Brian, I found it helpful to review several developmental theories that have

emerged from the drama therapy literature. Those that I found most germane were the theories of Richard Courtney which are summarized in Jennings (1993), Phil Jones' chapter on play (1996), Sue Jennings' embodiment, projection, role model which is discussed in Jennings (1993) and in Jennings, Cattanach, Mitchell, Chesner, & Meldrum (1994) , and the work of Brian Way in *Development Through Drama* (1966). I have included a copy of Courtney's developmental checklist (see Appendix I) with the behaviours that Brian exhibited, and which were either observed directly by me or noted by educators or highlighted in his chart . I have also reproduced a diagram from Way's (1966) book (see Appendix II) which powerfully illustrates a view of child and personality development that keeps one focused on the whole person. This theory encourages the therapist to assess the client with regard to the various components of personal growth. I found this theory very helpful as I began therapy with Brian. It was a constant reminder of the possibility that various levels of development could be occurring within him at a given time. It also served to prompt me to concentrate on his strengths and through his strengths make a connection with him.

Drawing on all of these sources of information, I assessed that Brian was at a very sensory level of development. He seemed to orient himself in the world predominately through touch and so I began the sessions with embodiment materials which he could explore through several of his senses. Jennings (1993) states "The body and its relationship with other bodies - through touch and the other senses - forms the basis for the development of identity in all human beings" (p. 25). It is a phase which most children experience during the first year of life. However, a child with autism, because of the intolerance for being held or being physically

close to another person, including the parents, often misses the benefits of this stage of development. Jennings (1993) offers an example of what she refers to as "the under-held child" and how this early situation can affect the child in later life. She asserts that this particular child "...develops neither a sense of security and support nor a sense of body-self" (p. 29). Although she characterizes the under-held child as one that has been neglected, the outcomes, I believe would be similar for a child with autism who is reticent to receive nurture. Greenspan and Wieder (1998) discuss the way that "changes creep into the way one relates to the child" (p. 20) both after the diagnosis is given and when the child demonstrates a reluctance to receive affection from the parent. In this way the parents begin to interact with the child on its own terms.

As I planned my work with Brian, it was my intention "...to construct a program based on the child's uniqueness rather than follow a standard program designed for children with the same diagnosis" (Greenspan & Wieder, 1998, p. 2). I wanted to create an environment that would foster Brian's desire to further investigate the world around him through a secure relationship with me. Greenspan and Wieder go on to say "We've found that each child has a unique nervous system and a uniquely developing mind; each child is a class of one" (1998, p. 2). And so with all of what I hoped would be the best elements of these ideas, models, and theories merging in my mind, I began my work with Brian.

In our first session, I offered Brian materials that were malleable such as plasticene and toys that were soft and could be easily manipulated with his small hands. Brian took the plasticene that was offered to him and placed it back on the mat. I tried to show him how to use the plasticene by rolling it out on the mat, by patting it flat and by rolling it in

my hands. He seemed to enjoy watching me do this but did not join in or attempt to mirror my activity in any way. This was my first piece of learning. The alliance would not be formed through me doing and waiting for Brian to follow nor would it be forged quickly. As in any relationship, the path to our association would be shaped by me waiting and accepting his offerings and joining him where he was. I was so eager to connect with him in his world that I forgot to wait until I was invited. I have discovered that it is impossible to force one's way into the world of a child with autism. Either the child must make the first tentative steps to join you in your world or you must wait for the invitation to join the child in his. I have come to believe that this is how the work begins with such a child and this is how a relationship can be formed. Just as he needed adequate time to sense me out and discover who I was, I needed to slowly develop a sense of who he was and what I had to offer him within this new relationship. The key was patience.

The fourteen sessions which followed this initial session helped me to formulate a way of working with Brian that I believe was beneficial to him in expanding his world and was invaluable to me in learning how I wanted to work as a therapist.

Each session helped me to see another aspect of Brian. In my emerging sensitivity to the way in which he was communicating this information about himself and his needs to me, my own awareness of what I was communicating to him was also increasing.

In the second session, I brought back the plasticene and this time Brian would hand me pieces to manipulate and shape. For the most part, I would roll the plasticene into a small ball, either between my hands or on the mat. He would then take the balls, place them near himself and

hand me a fresh piece. Already our relationship had changed. He was no longer assuming a passive, observer role but was adding something of himself to the play. In this way I think he was trying to implicate himself in the play and perhaps he was also trying to satisfy his curiosity about me. He was, I believe trying, through the plasticene, to discover a little bit more about who I was, and how I would fit into or alter his world. He was using the plasticene as a strategy to see what I was all about just as I had intended to use it to discover more about him. I believe that it is often the case that the client employs similar methods of investigation in their quest to know the therapist as the therapist uses themselves. The methods that I chose and the manner in which I introduced them to Brian say volumes about me and my view of the world, in general, and therapy, in particular. It was through this sharing of information through the play, through the metaphor, that Brian and I came to know one another.

Brian began to show me the pleasure he derived from sensory stimulation in the third session. This desire to explore the world through sensitive areas of his body, such as his lips and his cheeks became a constant in our work together. He began to rub a soft puppet on his cheek and when I placed the puppet on my hand, he began to nuzzle it with his face. Brian has a very animated face which shows his emotions plainly. He smiles and laughs when he is pleased and his brow furrows when he is anxious or afraid. Sometimes his eyes open wide with wonder or surprise and sometimes he stares silently ahead when clearly his thoughts are elsewhere. It was in this session that I began to see the variety of feeling of which Brian was capable. I wondered then, as I still wonder now, how important this session was in the development of a safe therapy space and the beginning of trust between us. I know that it was

in this session that I began to view Brian as a child rather than a child with autism.

In the fourth session, I introduced a story, "Brenda and Edward" (see Appendix III for plot summary) to Brian which would become an important element in our work for several weeks. He had been resistant to leaving the class room to come with me for our sessions, preferring to stay at the computer which seemed to be a place where he enjoyed a sense of mastery. According to both his parents and his educators, Brian is very capable in this area. I wanted to prepare him for the drama session ahead and so once we were on our way to the drama space I sang an impromptu song about some of the things we had experienced in previous sessions. Brian seemed to relax slightly and walked sedately with me on the remainder of the journey. Once settled in the space I wanted to offer him something familiar, something which I had sung about in the tunnel. I thought that the dog puppet might serve as a concrete reminder of the previous session which he had enjoyed. I had planned to read him a story about two dogs and I had placed the book on the mat with the puppet in preparation for Brian's arrival. I thought, at this point, that the story might be a way for him to work through his anxious feelings without any expectations being placed upon him. He was free to listen or not and either choice was acceptable within the frame that we had created. I felt that in the institutional environment which operated on a very structured routine, Brian was not often given a choice about what he wanted to do. I also sensed that his emotional state was not often considered or addressed in the activities that Brian was required to perform. I thought that it was important that this space be available for this aspect of Brian's development. Given the opportunity to choose,

Brian took the dog puppet with which he had interacted previously and curled up on a blanket. I read the story which was about two dogs who were devoted to one another, became separated for a very long period of time and then, eventually were reunited. He lay quietly with the puppet looking at me throughout the reading. When the story was over and I had closed the book, he took the puppet and gently gave it to me to put on my hand. He then began to interact with the puppet through gentle petting. He would touch the puppet and then the puppet would pat his hands. He rubbed his face against its soft fur and this seemed to be a very pleasurable experience for him. There was some soft cooing and sighing as he engaged in this activity.

Brian seemed to have connected with the puppet through the story and on some level the two dogs in the story became embodied in this one puppet. I also considered in retrospect that perhaps the two dogs became symbols for he and I in the therapeutic space. The one dog, Brenda, being lost and the other never giving up hope of finding her. Brian seemed to be able to take advantage of the space that the story provided and calmed himself down without any overt intervention on my part. I was beginning to sense that this was a more appropriate manner of interacting with Brian. He seemed to be able to use the space in ways that were well-suited to his needs. I was also beginning to feel that this was a more respectful way of working with Brian and he seemed to be responding to me in a more actively positive manner. He smiled directly at me during the play with the puppet. His eyes followed me throughout the story and the ensuing play and he offered me the puppet and then he petted the puppet and permitted me to interact with him through the puppet. I realized that Brian would either come to me on his

own terms or not at all. At the conclusion of this session, I felt as if Brian was inviting me to participate with him in his play.

The fifth session offered me another aspect of Brian's character which influenced my response to him. He was enthusiastic when he saw me approach the classroom and came to me eagerly as I extended my hand. As we negotiated the tunnel to our space, he pulled me along as if he couldn't wait to arrive and begin. This new enthusiasm was very pleasing to me and I felt my own level of enthusiasm rise as if to meet his. However, once settled at the mat Brian touched none of the familiar toys that were available to him. He waited and looked at me. I prompted him by saying, "What would you like to play with today, Brian?" He continued to look from me to the toys as if he either wasn't sure what to do or he was waiting for me to give him something. After several minutes, his attention was drawn to a small lion whose body was made from a Koosh™ ball. This toy has a great deal of sensory appeal both through touch and visually. The elastic threads of the body are soft and they tickle one's fingers as they brush against the skin. The elastics create a stimulating visual image as they move through touch or shaking. Brian seemed enthralled by this toy and spent many minutes exploring the various sensations. He then put it in my hand and began rocking my hand back and forth. I began to spontaneously sing "Rock-a-bye Baby" as he pushed my hand. He soon took his hand away and began to rock his own body. If I stopped singing or rocking the lion he would give my hand a gentle push as if to tell me to continue. I felt that he was trying to communicate something that had had pleasant associations for him. It was the first time that I had seemed to be a necessary part of his experience. It seemed as if I had a role to play in creating this scene. He

was very much the director of the action. I just followed his instructions and this seemed to be a meaningful experience for him. In retrospect, I wonder if something in the feel or the look of the lion triggered a memory that he then tried to recreate. On the other hand, he may have just found the experience pleasing in the here and now. I was, at this point, beginning to be wary of reading too much into what happened in the sessions. I was trying to be open and aware of what was being communicated to me and how I was accepting it into my consciousness. I must admit that I was not immune to feeling a sense of progress in our work and that what had happened seemed to possess a real significance in our relationship. These offers and the acceptance of them were, I believe, the beginning of the relationship that we would develop.

Session six began in a manner not unlike our previous session together. Brian, upon arrival, focused on the Koosh™ lion and began an exploration of it through his hands and his face. He felt the strands, pulled them with his fingers, and rubbed them on his cheeks and lips. He handed the lion to me and I held it quietly in my hand, awaiting his direction. He did not repeat the request for rocking as in the last session, but began to use his fingers to search through the strands while the lion rested in my open hand. Brian seemed to find great pleasure in this activity. He smiled and laughed as he pulled the individual strands. He bounced the lion up and down in my hand. I began to feel like an anchor, something that was holding the session in place. It felt as though he was able to engage in the play as long as I was available to ground the play. I felt on some level as if I was being used as an inanimate object. I think that this feeling arose out of Brian's absorption in the play with the lion toy. He seemed to be able to play independently today

and I sense now that a part of me felt excluded. I began to wonder if I wasn't a substitute for a table or a shelf on which he could place his toys. After having experienced such positive feelings about the work and our relationship last session, I was feeling a little disappointed that he did not seem to need me to fulfill a role in his play.

I realize now that the play was evolving into something new. In reviewing these sessions, I have begun to sense that I was more than an object in this situation. I felt my acceptance of the role that he had chosen for me and my reflection of his pleasure back to him added another dimension to my function. Eliana Gil (1998) states that it is the job of the therapist to validate, encourage and facilitate the child's process through the creation of a safe environment through her tone of voice, her demeanour, her choice of language, and the set-up of the play space. I believe that is what I had created for Brian although I did not realize it at the time.

This session was also important because it was the one in which I introduced the mirror to our work. Brian used the mirror in a variety of ways but his primary use was to reflect his own image back to himself. It was as if it confirmed his existence. I think that, to some extent, I also performed that function for Brian. I accepted him as he was without needing to change him and I believe that allowed him to be himself and to explore what it meant to be him in relation to both himself and to me.

During session seven I continued to work with Brian using the hand mirror. I had set it out on the table along with other familiar toys from past sessions. Brian demonstrated an interest in the story "Brenda and Edward" that I had read to him. As I opened the book and began to read, "Brenda and Edward were two happy dogs." (Kovalski, 1984), Brian

became very excited. I took the dog puppet and the mirror and held it up to Brian's face. I repeated the phrase "happy dogs" several times and showed Brian his reaction in the mirror. He smiled and laughed and touched the puppet. Brian then looked at the puppet on my hand and said, "happy dog". This was the first and only time that Brian used language in our sessions. All other communication between us was non-verbal. I have wondered about this session since it occurred. I don't know what it was about the puppet and the book which created an environment in which Brian either felt the need to speak or the desire. In either case, I was never able to recreate that environment and I often wondered why. There were many sessions when I felt as if I was pushing him to speak or, perhaps a better image, is me trying to "pull words out of his mouth". I sometimes think that for the next little while I was very focused on coaching Brian to speak.

For a time the words that Brian spoke to me became a symbol of my failure as his therapist. If he was capable of speaking, why wouldn't he speak to me? What was I doing wrong? Why couldn't I achieve speech in every session? What was wrong with me? It was through reflection and supervision that I realized that this was not about me. This work was about Brian and giving him a space in which to explore the idea of a relationship with another person. It was not my purpose to act as a speech therapist. I was not there to improve Brian's oral communication skills. That aspect of his development was being attended to by others on the team. When I came to this realization, it was much easier to return to my previous relationship with Brian, wherein we communicated in whatever way was appropriate within the context

of our work. The work returned to focusing on where Brian was in our developing relationship and where he was ready to go next.

Once I was back on track, I became more aware of what was happening within our sessions because I was more open to what Brian was communicating to me. I was not waiting for the moment when he would speak. I learned through this experience to be more attentive to the events of our sessions. I was surprised at the ease with which I became oblivious to what was happening for the client because I was waiting and watching for an expected outcome. Casement (1985) expressed these feelings in this way:

Patients benefit from a therapist's willingness to find out, even that which is already "known", through working clinically with them. This feels better by far than using short-cuts to understanding, based on what is borrowed from others - and which patients also borrow. Fresh insight emerges more convincingly when a therapist is prepared to struggle to express himself within a patient's language, rather than falling back upon old thinking. (p. 26)

The tone of the next two sessions was different from what I had experienced thus far in our work. I became acutely aware of how little I knew of Brian and how much I still had to learn. At the same time I was continuing to explore my own reactions to our developing relationship and to examine my role in this process. During the eighth session Brian was very distracted and seemed to be anxious. A motor behaviour which I had seen in several other situations, hand-clapping, was a major element of today's session. Brian had clapped previously in our sessions in an excited manner at appropriate moments, i.e. when he was excited or pleased. In these instances the hand-clapping did not seem

pathological. In this session, the hand-clapping seemed to be serving a purpose other than the expression of pleasure. Brian seemed to be using it as a way of dealing with his anxiety. The clapping seemed to be urgent, his body was tense and there was no accompanying smile or laughter. It seemed almost as if Brian had to engage in this activity in order to remain in the space. During this time I sat beside Brian and accepted his behaviour as a necessary beginning to the work. I did not try to distract him from what he was doing but I acknowledged where he was and let him know that I would stay there with him. Bruce Moon recounts an interchange with a client wherein he was asked if he could make the journey into therapy less painful. He responded, "No, but I will be there with you." (1990, p. 12). I felt that was what I had to offer Brian in this session. I could be there with him.

When the clapping stopped, Brian picked up "Brenda and Edward" and opened it to the first page. At this point, I put the dog puppet on my hand and gently patted Brian's hand. He responded positively to this gesture by holding out his hand and allowing the puppet to hold his hand between the two paws. The session came to a close with the dog puppet holding Brian's two hands between his two paws. On the way back to the class room Brian held my hand and I hummed quietly as we walked. He seemed calmer and more relaxed. I wondered if he had permitted the puppet to take over the job of soothing him. If this was the case, perhaps this was a way for him to connect with something in the external world. He was not making direct contact with me but he was making a connection with the puppet which could be seen as an extension of me.

In the ninth session, Brian's mood initially seemed quite withdrawn and quiet. He did not come to me in the class room but waited until I came to seek him out. He came with me willingly but with no apparent energy. The image that I had as I walked with him was of a soft, shapeless form without distinct edges. Everything about him seemed to be without intention. When we arrived at the drama room, Brian touched several of the toys in a desultory way but did not seem to focus in on anything in particular. We looked at "Brenda and Edward" briefly and then he closed the book. He handed me the dog puppet and he began to be slightly more animated as he began to pat it. I placed the puppet on his shoulder and held the mirror up so the he could see both himself and the puppet reflected at the same time. This was pleasing to him. He seemed to enjoy seeing the two faces in the mirror together. He also seemed to enjoy the sensation of the puppet's fur on his cheek as he began to rub his face gently on it. He had initiated this interchange and I was more convinced that if I waited, accepted his offers, and responded to him in a positive manner, he would continue to initiate and might begin to realize that he had the power to make choices and that in this space those choices would be honoured.

I believe that the knowledge that a choice is available is liberating because it opens up possibilities other than those that are familiar. The understanding that there exists a range of possibilities outside the known world can be discovered through the creative process. In therapy with Brian, I believed that the creative process would evolve through his play. Winnicott (1971) says that:

If the therapist cannot play, then he is not suitable for the work. If the patient cannot play, then something needs to be done to

enable the patient to become able to play, after which the psychotherapy may begin. The reason why playing is essential is that it is in playing that the patient is being creative. (p. 54).

I felt that if I could create a space where Brian experienced play and the personal choice of deciding what the play would be, we would be able to achieve a relationship through the choices that he made within the framework of the play.

In this ninth session I had brought along a new toy which I thought Brian might find attractive. The toy was a boy doll who was similar in appearance to Brian. It was not a baby but a doll which could have been between three and five years old. The doll was dressed in blue jeans, a red and white striped T-shirt and he wore blue shoes. It also had a haircut which resembled Brian's and its eyes were big and wide-open like Brian's eyes. Brian showed an interest in the doll once his focus fell upon it. He picked it up and the first thing that he did was to remove its shoes and line them up beside one another. Brian, I had been told, preferred not to wear shoes and socks and whenever the opportunity presented itself, he would remove his. I had also been informed that this was a behaviour that the staff was trying to eliminate as it was not socially acceptable. Brian had attempted, once or twice, within our sessions to remove his shoes, but had not persisted when I asked him to keep them on. I found it curious that the first thing he did with the doll was to remove its shoes. Did he see the resemblance of the doll to himself? Was he trying to have the doll experience what he would have liked for himself? I don't know for sure but I did observe that whenever the doll was implicated in his play, the shoes were removed.

Once this was completed, he then included the doll in our play. He handed the doll to me and took the puppet off of my hand. For a brief moment he placed the puppet on his own hand. Brian seemed to be trying to create a scene, a story or perhaps an interchange between the boy and the dog. This was, in my opinion, a first attempt at creative dramatic play. He was giving me a role and taking one for himself. These two toys would continue to be an important part of our work together.

The session ended shortly after this episode, as I informed Brian that it was time to go. He took the doll from me and attempted to replace the shoes on the doll's feet. He was not able to do this independently and I offered my assistance. Brian held the doll while I replaced the shoes. He then stood the doll back up against the wall and prepared to leave. This, too, would become a ritual ending whenever the doll was included in the play.

The tenth session of our initial series began on a very energetic note. Brian was very animated as we walked through the tunnel and this level of energy was sustained throughout the session. Brian began the session by removing his shoes and the shoes of the doll. I permitted this as a way of assessing the importance of this behaviour for Brian and I wanted to evaluate how difficult it would be to have him put on his shoes before returning to the class room. I did not want to undermine the work that was being done in the class room but I reasoned that there were occasions in life where it was appropriate to remove one's shoes. If I could help Brian to understand that he could remove his shoes in drama but that it was not appropriate at other times, then I felt it would be acceptable. Being a therapist in training, I was also very anxious about the reaction from others on the team to my decision. I did not feel that I

had the expertise or the experience to really appreciate how my decision could affect other areas of the work with Brian and yet, I also felt at an intuitive level that this was important in the development of trust in our relationship. I must report here, that I was never made aware of any negative repercussions from my decision and Brian seemed to be able to manage the transitions. In fact, it became very rare for him to take his shoes off even within our sessions and it seemed as though the removal of the doll's shoes was sufficient for his needs.

Brian became visually focused on the book "Brenda and Edward". I picked up the book and handed it to him. He accepted it and then he returned it to its place on the table. Each time I said the names Brenda and Edward, Brian would become very animated and he would clap his hands excitedly. I took the boy doll which was on the table and began to reflect back to Brian his actions and affect. When Brian clapped, the doll clapped. When Brian laughed, the doll laughed and vocalized a few words such as "That was funny!" or "I'm excited!" Brian responded to the doll's actions by continuing to show his pleasure. He seemed to enjoy being mirrored and I took his positive response to the words that the doll spoke as validation that I was reflecting his experience back to him accurately. Brian did not interact with the puppet until the end of the session. When I informed him that it was time to go and he needed to put his shoes back on, he resisted slightly. First we put the doll's shoes on and then I gave him his shoes. He seemed to be postponing the moment when he would have to put his shoes back on by picking up the puppet and handing it to me. I decided to try and use the puppet to help him succeed at the necessary task. The puppet took his hand, helped him to

sit down on the chair and then handed him his shoe. In this manner, Brian was able to successfully put both of his shoes on without further ado.

I see the use of each of these two toys in their own specific way as the beginnings of imaginative play. The toys are being used in both appropriate and imaginative ways. They are being endowed with qualities that make them each unique in the way that they are used by Brian in the play. The doll seems to represent an active little boy who is, perhaps, able to do things that Brian is not. Having the doll reflect back what Brian offers validates him while enhancing or altering slightly these behaviours allows Brian to be exposed to other choices of which he may or may not have been aware. The puppet, on the other hand, seems to serve a soothing function when Brian is confronted by incomprehensible or overwhelming information or stimuli. The gentle sensation of the dog's fur on his face or the paw on his hand seems to calm Brian and give him room to focus on what is happening around him. Perhaps it also serves the function of grounding him within the drama space.

Another interesting observation that I made during this session was that with both of these toys, Brian spontaneously implicated me in the play. He did not become absorbed in a solitary exploration of either toy but, instead, handed me the puppet when he needed it, passed me the shoes when it was time to go, or responded to my words that were offered through the doll. I thought that these were signs of progress and I was becoming confident that dramatic play therapy had something to offer Brian at this stage of his development.

Brian was absent for three of the next five sessions. Twice he was ill and his parents decided to keep him home from school. In both of these instances the staff neglected to inform me of the absence. The other

absence was the result of a holiday outing of which I was not notified in time to reschedule our session. Each time I went to pick him up and he wasn't there my heart sank. I felt an enormous hole in my day when we were unable to meet as scheduled. I was becoming aware of how much the time spent with Brian meant to me. I felt I was learning a great deal from the sessions but I was also building a very special relationship with a wonderful little boy. I looked forward to seeing Brian and being a part of his life. I decided to take the opportunity during each of these missed sessions (sessions eleven, thirteen and fourteen) to review some of the insights I have had about the role of the therapist and the therapeutic relationship. I also spent some time coming to terms with how the work that I was doing with Brian fit into his total treatment plan. As we would be stopping work over the Christmas holidays, I also wanted to find a way to explain this pause to Brian.

At this point I will include a brief description of the plan I developed to explain the break to Brian. I will share my reflections on being a therapist in the section describing my work during the intermission.

In deciding how to approach explaining the holiday recess, I first sought out the advice of the treatment team and it was suggested that it was highly unlikely that Brian would understand what I was telling him. I wondered if I should explain it to him verbally and if he would understand the significance of the words. I thought about this for a long time and finally decided that I had no way of knowing for certain what Brian did or did not understand. I further concluded that it would be disrespectful to not offer some explanation of my planned absence so, I began, in session twelve to tell him that we had a finite number of sessions left and then we would have a holiday. I explained verbally and showed him the dates on

the calendar. I will discuss his reaction in the appropriate sessions. Suffice it to say, I believe that I made the right decision.

Session twelve seemed to be a continued exploration of Brian's relationship with the boy doll. He picked up the doll as soon as we arrived, removed its shoes and then stood it up in front of him on the table. Brian smiled at the doll and clapped his hands. I responded by clapping the doll's hands in reply to Brian's pattern. Brian seemed pleased by this response and he smiled and began to move excitedly in his chair. I think it is important to mention at this point that Brian rarely left his chair. Although we had a fairly large room in which to play, all of our work was done seated at a low table in child size chairs. I thought at the time that the table may have given Brian a sense of containment for the work. Perhaps he felt that he could manage the play as long as the play had boundaries. As will be discussed in a subsequent section of the paper, boundaries were an important theme within the work for both Brian and I.

As the session progressed, I began to clap a response to Brian directly without using the doll as an intermediary. He accepted this change and continued clapping. The doll remained standing on the table in front of Brian throughout the next exchange. When Brian stopped clapping, I would wait, and then respond with a simple clap which consisted of a 1-2 beat. I was interested to know if Brian would alter his pattern to match mine or if he would continue the random pattern that he had been using till now. He did not mirror my pattern but continued his own, and so slowly I changed my pattern to mirror his. As this interchange continued, Brian began to place his hand into mine as I clapped. This gesture on his part, opened up a strong sense of

connection within me. I was a little overwhelmed by the intensity of the feeling. Brian left his hands nestled within mine and I continued to clap out the rhythm that he had initiated. The session ended in this way. Before returning to the class room, I showed Brian a calendar on which I had drawn red circles around the dates of our sessions, beginning with the present. I told him that we had three more times together before the holidays. I then crossed out the current date to demonstrate that this session was over. He maintained eye contact while I spoke although he did not look at the calendar. During the walk back to the class room, Brian seemed pensive. He walked quietly beside me, dragging one hand along the surface of the wall which is made of painted, concrete blocks and has a rough texture. When we arrived Brian entered the class and sat down. He waved good-bye to me when prompted by the educator.

I felt as though the beginnings of a relationship were forming. I believed that Brian felt safe with me and was able to interact with me in a new way. The placing of his hands in mine seemed to be an indication that he trusted me, at least on a symbolic level, with part of himself. I felt honoured, but more than that, I became determined not to betray his trust. I was now even more convinced that the way that I had chosen to work with Brian could be effective in facilitating his emerging self-expression. Already, after only six weeks, he was responding to me in ways that had not previously been observed within the institutional environment. He was playing with toys in an appropriate and imaginative manner, he was responding to our interactions with suitable emotional affect, and he was beginning to make choices about what we would do in the sessions. I was greatly encouraged, at this point, to continue in this manner.

Brian was absent for the following two sessions (thirteen and fourteen) so, the next session would be our last before the holiday break. I was disappointed as I really did not have the opportunity to count down the sessions using the calendar as I had planned. Brian seemed unaware that this would be our last meeting.

Brian began with the doll but in this session he added a new element to the play. Brian took the doll, removed its shoes, stood it up on the table in front of me and then gave it a gentle push until it began to fall over. I caught the doll in an exaggerated manner, swooping it up into my arms and ensuring that it was all right. As I caught the doll, I said, "Don't worry, boy, I'll catch you." As I did this, Brian looked at me and then began to smile and clap. Brian replayed this scenario many times during this session. I'm not sure what was going on, but I had a feeling that Brian may have been testing me to ensure that I would be there for him. I don't know if this behaviour was related to the ending of our work for a few weeks or if Brian was at a point in our work where he needed to be reassured that I would be coming back. In either case, I think it is worth noting that Brian was able to express something which concerned him through the play. It seemed that he was making use of the therapeutic space to explore an issue that was on his mind.

Continuing the session, Brian next offered me the dog puppet. I put the puppet on my hand and began to mirror Brian's movements and to reflect his facial expressions with the puppet. Brian responded positively to this activity and tentatively extended his hand toward the puppet. The puppet caught his hand between its paws and Brian began to laugh. This became a game in which we engaged for the balance of the session. Brian would try to catch the puppet's paws, the puppet would catch his

hands, and he would begin to laugh. At the end, Brian very gently patted the puppet's paws and then we ended the session.

To summarize the work of these first fifteen sessions, I believe that a foundation of safety and trust had been established between Brian and I. I feel that it was important that this trust was reciprocal because, it was as necessary for me to trust him and all that he is capable of, as it was for him to trust me. It is only through this mutual trust that the work had evolved and Brian had begun to explore other aspects of the world. I feel that as he realized that there were choices and possibilities available to him, and that he had the ability to choose among the many possibilities, he would begin to take advantage of what the world had to offer.

Brian had made it clear to me that boundaries are important to him, as they are to me, that familiarity is preferable but he will accept change if he is given sufficient time to explore the new situation, that he likes to laugh, that he has an imagination, and that he uses his senses to understand new things.

As this part of our work drew to a close, I hoped that I had made it clear to Brian that I liked him for himself and whatever he offered would be accepted in our space, that I had patience and he could take as much time as he needed to become comfortable, that he was in charge of the work that we did, and that I was there to keep him safe.

Intermission

During the winter break Brian and I did not meet for three weeks. During this time I wrote a preliminary case study which served as the starting point for this present document. At that point in our relationship, I was uncertain where Brian would next take me and I was still not entirely comfortable operating from a place of not knowing. I began to read personal narratives of people who had been diagnosed with autism. I was attempting to gain a sense of what the experience was like from the inside. This desire to understand led me to explore the lives of those who reached a level at which they were able to explain, in their own words, what it feels like to live with autism.

Before beginning my work with Brian I had read a number of texts which examined autism from a medical,(Frith, 1991; Mesibov, Adams & Klinger, 1997; Schopler, Mesibov & Kuncze, 1998; Trevarthen, Aitken, Papoudi & Robarts, 1998; and Tustin, 1981); psychological, (Frith, 1989; Happe, 1995; Sigman & Capps, 1997; and Tustin, 1990; Wing, 1975) or educational (Cohen, 1998; Schopler & Van Bourgondien, 1993; Siegel, 1996; and Simons & Oishi, 1987)perspective. These texts tended to focus on the physiological deficiencies of people with autism and the treatment approaches that seemed to offer the best outcomes in terms of integrating the child into a regular elementary school. Although several of these texts, Siegel (1996) and Trevarthen, et al (1998) in particular, gave a more complete picture of the world as seen through the eyes of a child with autism, I found myself seeking the first-hand narratives of those who had lived the experience. Challener (1997) writes of the relationship between two brothers whose lives took very different

paths. He points out the inherent disempowerment in allowing one's story to be related by another. He writes "...but (this) also demonstrates the power that those who can command the dominant culture's language have over those who must let their story be told by others" (p. 164). I wanted to know what the experience was like for the person that had lived it rather than from the relating of it in the third person. Challenger (1997) continues, "In this light, *Brothers and Keepers* reaffirms the power of language and the negative consequences when one person speaks for another" (p. 164). Each person brings to his or her story the totality of their life experience. When it is told from another's perspective something of the teller's truth is lost.

My reading focused on Temple Grandin and Donna Williams, perhaps two of the more well-known people with autism. These two women are recognized for their achievements which include the documentation of their early memories of growing up as children with autism.

What I learned from each of these women's stories was the extent of the differences which exist within the disorder labeled autism. What emerged was a picture of two very distinct human beings who both happened to be diagnosed with the same disorder. This came as somewhat of a revelation to me having read the pertinent literature. It seemed that although the three characteristic symptoms; social withdrawal, communication and language deficits, and rigid stereotypic behaviours, were present in varying degrees, the similarity ended at this point. Greenspan and Wieder (1996) report "We've found that each child has a unique nervous system and a uniquely developing mind; each child is a class of one" (p. 2). Although I was experiencing the differences of

the children within this institution, the program in which they were enrolled seemed to address each child's needs in a similar fashion. The overall goal of the program in which Brian was a participant was to prepare each child to enter a regular academic program. In the case of certain children within the program, it was acknowledged by the professionals that this goal would not be attained easily, if at all.

Lawrence Bartak states in the introduction to William's (1995) *Nobody Nowhere* that "...autism is not the sole characteristic of the person afflicted with it" (p. xvi). I know that I sometimes became so consumed with the autistic symptoms that I would miss out on the normal responses of Brian to the play. Bartak goes on to add "Much of the behavior shown by people with autism consists of normal reactions to an environment that seems decidedly odd to them and that indeed may be odd in reality" (p. xvi). It was easy for me to forget that Brian did not experience the world in the same way that I did and that his self stimulating behaviours, as they were called, served a purpose for him. It was not something done to irritate others but to help him to find order in a seemingly "chaotic and confusing" (Grandin, 1995 p. 58) world. Grandin (1995) writes that "Many of the behaviours of people with autism seem strange, but they are reactions to distorted or overly intense sensory input" (p. 79). She goes on to present her views regarding the role of mentors in her own development and discusses how trying to understand the fixations of an individual with autism can be a way to stimulate learning. Rather than trying to eliminate these behaviours, teachers and therapists could be using them to the individual's advantage.

Although the following reflections took place during the sessions from which Brian was absent before the break, I would now like to present

the thoughts that I had and how they influenced the manner in which I would work with Brian when he returned.

I began to realize that part of a therapist's role must be to "hold" the client. This is not a new concept but I truly felt in my work with Brian that I had been a boundary, a structure and a support for him as he had negotiated what meaning he had found in our play. I experienced days when our session ended with a sense of accomplishment; I felt as if I had done a good job in this "holding" role. There had also been moments when a feeling of inadequacy overwhelmed me and the notion that I had let him down permeated my thoughts.

In the beginning I was uncomfortable because I was placed in the position of not-knowing and it made me feel vulnerable and unprepared. I have since come to a place where I can "not know" with less fear and more awe. When I looked back on this time in our work, I realized how much like the client I was. The client, especially a child, enters into the therapeutic domain in a state of unawareness as to what will transpire within the space. As a therapist, I was loathe to accept that I, too, entered the space completely unaware. I had access to what had previously been discovered about the client; I had notes concerning what kinds of interventions had been made in the past; and I had studied the disorder with which the client had been diagnosed. I had the background, but until I had come face to face with the other, I didn't know who this person was and he did not know me.

I have come to realize that a therapeutic relationship is a process whereby each member comes to know the other. I had to come to terms with the fact that in this relationship I would never know for certain what Brian had come to know about me. It was not within the frame of

our association for me to be told explicitly what the client had gained from his connection to me. It was for me to listen to the client tell me what he needed and to facilitate his personal discovery of what he needed within himself. I "listened" to the way that Brian chose toys, the way that he entered the space and the way that he conveyed his feelings to me through his face. Brian was non-verbal in our sessions so I had to learn to listen in new ways. Bruce Moon (1990) spoke most eloquently on this subject. He said:

Whenever I meet a new patient I remind myself that I am in the company of not only a diagnosed cluster of symptoms; I remind myself that I am in the company of not only a manifestation of developmental patterns and pathology... I remind myself that I am in the company of a fellow human being whose life has a meaning all its own. (p. 7).

He went on to say concerning the role of the therapist:

...I believe that we can be genuinely attentive (therapeutic) to the patients in their journey by (1) doing with them, (2) being open to them, and (3) honoring their pain. These three tenets form the basis of my encounters with patients. (p. 32).

And finally his thoughts on the role of the patient in the therapeutic relationship:

I use the principle *seldom initiate, always respond*. I trust that the patients will bring to the session all that they are and take what they can from it. (p. 39-40).

I knew that at the outset of our work together I was not ready to accept this advice. I was not sure if this approach would hold true for a young child with autism and I feared that we would sit in silence and accomplish

nothing. Perhaps he would not yet have developed the resources to use the session in a way that would be of benefit to him or even worse, in my estimation, perhaps he was satisfied in his internal world and felt no desire to leave it behind. That does not rule out the possibility that the child is drawing from the work something which is harder to name and more difficult to understand. A young man with autism explained what communication was like in his experience, "Someone who has much better inherent communication abilities than I do but who has not even taken a close look at my perspective to notice the enormity of the chasm between us tells me that my failure to understand is because I lack empathy" (Cesaroni & Garber, 1991). I do believe that a child, even a child with developmental delays, is able to communicate their needs in some manner. It is, I believe, my responsibility to make sense of it. I think that Brian was bringing to the sessions all that he was at this point in his life and I do believe that he was taking away what he needed and was able to use.

The goal of the total treatment plan for Brian was to ameliorate his verbal communication skills. The staff were working to help Brian attain an appropriate level of ability in this area. Drama offered Brian an opportunity for self-expression and also a choice as to how he would express himself. As I mentioned previously, Brian did not express himself verbally, save for on one occasion and after a brief attempt to encourage language, I left this area of Brian's treatment to other members of the team. I realized that it was not my function to "train" Brian to communicate with language but rather I was there to facilitate his development in the domain of making choices for himself and about

how he would communicate. It was my role to develop a relationship with Brian in which he felt validated and accepted.

I found it curious that I had taken on this active role of creating a relationship with another person. In my experience I was never the person who would initiate first contact with another person. I was shy and I would wait to be noticed by someone else. I can recall vividly sitting in a classroom, standing in a hall or waiting in line beside someone I was eager to meet and saying nothing. I would stand mute hoping against hope that the other would make the first move. I was disappointed by my silence more often than I was rewarded. Here I was taking most of the risks and making the effort to establish a connection with this small stranger. I wondered if he felt rewarded by my attempts. I was amazed at how completely I was able to assume the role of the initiator in this relationship and I found it remarkable that I was now working with a child who aroused such strong memories of my own childhood.

The Journey Continues

Brian was reluctant to leave the class room when I arrived for our first session. The excitement I had felt in anticipation of seeing him again was tempered by his refusal to come with me and my worries about what we would be able to accomplish replaced it. I wondered if we would have to begin again and if he remembered any of the activities in which we had engaged just a few weeks ago.

I was surprised by my own calm as I negotiated this uncertainty. He seemed to not recognize me and I believed that this sense of strangeness contributed to his resistance to accompanying me. I recalled my own aggressive resistance to attending kindergarten as a child of five. I vividly recollect sneaking out of the class room and running home to hide under the stairs, believing that any punishment would be better than returning to school. I tried to place myself in Brian's shoes and understand his anxiety through my own experience. I wondered if his unwillingness was related to not remembering who I was, as my not wanting to attend school was connected to my own fear of the unknown. Was Brian's reaction coloured by these same fears? I did not want to force him to come with me as I was forced but I also felt a pressure to succeed as the eyes of both of his teachers were clearly on me. I wonder sometimes, looking back, how many of my decisions regarding Brian were influenced by this need to succeed in the opinion of the "experts". On a larger scale, I occasionally consider how many choices I've made based on my perceptions of what is required to please others. I became determined, in this instance not to waver from what I considered a reasonable course of action. I talked quietly with Brian and showed him my picture which was part of his structured routine. Each activity in which he participated

throughout the day had a photograph associated with it so that Brian would know what was coming next. It is thought that many children with autism respond to picture associations better than verbal labels. Siegel (1996) states "For many autistic and PDD children, a stronger channel is the visual one. Therefore, pairing auditory stimuli with visual stimuli helps information be received and stored differently" (p. 243). After several minutes of calmly sitting with Brian and offering him my hand, he took it and we began our first journey through the tunnel to our drama space.

Temple Grandin (1995) has used the symbol of a door to help her to make transitions throughout her life. She would often discover an actual door through which she would pass as she entered a new phase in her development. She would then keep the symbol of this door in her mind until she no longer needed it. She found the combination of the concrete reality and the mental symbol of the door assisted her in managing the changes that she experienced. The tunnel from Brian's class room to the drama room became such a symbol for me. The tunnel grew to be the transitional space where I moved from the reality of Brian's disorder and the deficits associated with it to a place where the focus was on celebrating his strengths and accepting and encouraging his efforts to make a connection with me and, I hoped, to the world outside of his autism.

Brian became animated when we approached the drama space. It seemed as if he remembered this place. Again I refer to Temple Grandin (1995) who writes about her ability to develop strong emotional bonds with places and objects although she was unable to replicate these feelings with people. Perhaps Brian was not able to connect my

physical body with the drama but he clearly was able to recall positive memories regarding the space.

Within the framework of the session, he engaged with familiar toys and he engaged in behaviours which I had observed before. He first took the boy doll and removed its shoes, he then removed his own as well. Once these tasks were completed, he took my hand and guided me to the doll. I sensed that he wanted me to initiate the falling and catching play with the doll that we had begun before the break. I stood the doll on the table and Brian gave it a gentle push. As the doll began to fall forward, I caught it and said, "Don't worry, boy, I'll catch you." As I caught the doll, Brian began to laugh and clap his hands. I responded by having the doll clap his hands in rhythm with Brian. I was aware that I was trying to recapture some of the playful quality that we had established before the holiday. Now, as I reflect on this session, I wonder if Brian was not attempting to do the same thing. By beginning with the familiar, we were able to make contact in the known and from there, I believed that we would be able to move toward the aspects of our relationship that we had not yet explored.

The level of engagement in the play remained high for both of us. The session began to feel like a joyous reunion and we continued to revisit objects and activities that had held pleasant memories for both of us. Brian initiated a communication with me through sounds and facial expressions and we conversed in this way for several minutes. I mirrored his sounds and expressions at the outset, but at several points in the conversation, Brian mirrored my sounds. This was a very exciting moment, as I began to feel our relationship developing into a reciprocal alliance. This was the first of many "conversations" we would share through sound.

Brian also engaged in a fairly extensive exploration of the doll's hair and scalp. He pulled at the strands of hair, examined the way in which the hair was secured to the head and he rubbed the doll's hair on his cheek and lips. I knew from his file and from information supplied by his teachers that Brian had a hypersensitivity to having his own hair brushed, combed or cut. I wondered if he was testing the doll's hair for any kind of reaction. I observed his interaction and occasionally asked a question which related to his activity. He did not respond to my questions but did acknowledge my presence with eye contact.

At the end of our time, Brian attempted to replace the doll's shoes, and he was able to do so with my help. He then put on his own shoes without prompting from me, stood up from the table, and took my hand for the return.

I was conscious of my own level of engagement throughout the session and I was paying close attention to the manner in which I used my voice and my facial expressions. I was concerned with overwhelming Brian with too much sensory information, especially verbal, and I wanted to moderate the intensity of my interactions with him. I felt that it was necessary to be solidly present within the session, but I did not want to allow my enthusiasm to cause Brian to withdraw from me. I was striving to find a balance between being present and overpowering him. This endeavour would remain a theme for me throughout our work.

Brian was absent for our second meeting and I felt a profound sadness when I was informed that he was not there. I had approached the session with excitement and anticipation and then I felt a tremendous sense of loss. I responded to these feelings through drawing and as I look at that drawing now, I feel again my sense of loss and disconnection. I

felt then as I do now that each missed session was a missed opportunity for me to know Brian better. I was beginning to experience the limited nature of our time together and realized that I resented each absence.

The third session began in a very positive way. When I arrived to pick up Brian, he seemed ready to come with me. I was able to experience success in this area without the assistance of his teachers and I felt very competent. I felt as though Brian and I had our own relationship and I no longer needed to rely on others to convince him to accompany me. It appeared as if he wanted to join me in the play space and as if I was a part of his world. Brian walked through the tunnel holding on to my leg. This roused some very poignant memories for me both as a parent and as a child. When I was very small, my father used to take me for rides on his foot. I would stand with both of my tiny feet on his big foot, arms clenched around his leg and he would walk with me in this way. As a parent I have given my daughter this same experience and I have given her my legs to hide behind when the world became overwhelming or she just needed something solid to hold on to. Siegel (1996) writes about the atypical attachment patterns in children diagnosed with autism. She points out how even when distressed they rarely seek physical contact from a parent or caregiver. Usually the presence of a familiar adult is sufficient to give comfort. I felt that Brian was seeking contact with me in this instance although I am uncertain of the purpose. I do not know whether he was seeking physical closeness or a firm foundation but in either case he seemed to want what my leg could provide.

On entering the space, Brian immediately took the doll and removed its shoes, even before sitting down. I had provided a small brush and a pink comb for Brian. He focused on the comb as his eyes scanned

the table. The exploration of this small plastic comb consumed a good part of our time. His investigation was thorough and complete. He employed his hands, his finger tips, his lips, his cheeks, and even his eye lids. Grandin (1995) suggests that for many children with autism, touch is the most reliable sense. As they cannot trust either the auditory or visual input they are receiving because it is often jumbled and incoherent, they rely on touch to provide them with the information that they need to understand the environment in which they find themselves. Brian gently ran the comb over his lips and then pressed it more firmly against his cheek. At the conclusion of this sensory process, he took the doll and began to rub the comb back and forth against its head. I held up the mirror for him and he began to rub the comb against his own hair. I was quite amazed by these developments because of my knowledge of Brian's extreme sensitivity in this area. He became visibly agitated if I made any move toward the comb but when he did put it down on the table, I picked it up and began to comb the doll's hair. He took the comb from me and started to rub it through his hair while looking at himself in the mirror. His fascination about what was happening in the mirror grew more intense and he initiated a sound conversation with me. I continued to hold the mirror beside my face so that he could see his reflection and my face simultaneously. As he started to add facial expressions to his sounds, I mirrored these back to him. At this point, his focus seemed to be split between his own face in the mirror and my face to the side. Brian turned away from me so I lay the mirror on the table face down as it usually was. Brian turned back and picked up the mirror and continued where he had left off. This was the first time that Brian had taken control of the mirror and manipulated it himself. I felt that he was beginning to

realize that he had choices within our time together and that he did not have to wait for me to initiate. I sensed that there was a shift in the tone of the session and that Brian was discovering the possibilities for him within our relationship.

In my drawing after the session there are two strong images that stand out (see figure 1). The first is the plant with its roots going into the ground and the stalks covered with emerging buds. In retrospect I believe that this image represents my sense of growth and the feelings that I was experiencing with regard to the changes occurring within me and what I believed was happening for Brian. I see an impression of hope in my drawing and I see our relationship expanding to encompass the new things we are learning about one another.

The second image is the path. I truly felt after this session that Brian and I were on a path together and that it was clear to me that I did not know where it was leading. I think that I was becoming more at ease with the idea that I was not directing this journey and, more than that, I did not even know where we were going. The symbols of roots, paths, and the unknown recur in many of the drawings that I completed after our sessions. I believe these themes of stability and exploration are at the heart of the relationship that Brian and I had.

During the fourth session another theme emerged in my drawing which would also illuminate some of the unconscious processes that were at work within me as Brian and I expanded our knowledge of one another. This symbol was of a wall which also appeared in the form of a cage (see Figures 2 & 3). It inspired me to investigate my need to feel secure in our work and know that there were firm boundaries established. I wondered if these were, in fact, boundaries or barriers that were erected

between us. This image also brought to my attention my sense of how difficult it was to communicate with someone who was locked in his own world. "Autistic children will remain in their own little worlds if left to their own devices" (Grandin, 1995, p. 96). I wanted Brian to know that he had a choice.

As our sessions continued, I began to realize that understanding what Brian was "saying" to me through nonverbal means was not as difficult to grasp as I had first imagined. Although I in no way claim to have perfectly understood Brian, I feel as though I was able to respond to his way of reaching out to me in a manner which was sufficiently honest and open to engender his trust. I also believe that together we created an atmosphere in which I was able to question the validity of my comprehension of the "facts" and I tried to be flexible and patient enough to wait for him to provide more information without imposing my own interpretation. I think that I learned to take in what was offered to me, present it back to Brian as I understood it, and then wait while he either confirmed my version or offered me new information with which to work. Marlo Morgan, writing about her experience among a small Outback nation in Australia writes

The Real People don't think the voice was designed for talking. You do that with your heart/head center. If the voice is used for speech, one tends to get into small, unnecessary, and less spiritual conversation. The voice is made for singing, for celebration, and healing. (Morgan, 1995, p. 64)

I was trying to grasp the meaning and intention of what Brian was offering me and not focus on the inadequacy of the available language.

The events of the fourth session unfolded in a very low-key manner. Brian seemed very tired and his usual energy appeared exhausted. He made a half-hearted attempt at engaging with his favourite toys but there was no enthusiasm. I resisted a strong impulse to try to create a more upbeat mood. I contained this urge and sat with Brian at the table and waited for an indication from him of what he wanted to do. His interest became piqued by the story of "Brenda and Edward" which I had placed on the table. I picked up the book and began to read. Brian leaned his head against my shoulder and did not move for several minutes. As I read the story I offered Brian two small dogs which resembled the dogs in the book. He took the "Brenda" dog and rubbed it on his face. He is such a sensory boy. His exploration of the world began so often through touch. The sensation of the soft plush on his cheek seemed to stimulate him and his mood became more lively. He began to clap his hands and laugh.

I was acutely aware during this session of how little I knew or understood about this child. The more I read and studied autism, the less close I felt to him. I wondered if he felt as ignorant of me as I did of him. My feelings were so confused. On the one hand I believed that I was offering Brian a very positive experience in which he could explore himself and his surroundings within the safety of the play space and yet, on the other hand, I felt as if I was grasping at straws in my attempts to establish a connection with him. I felt such uncertainty about our relationship and I rarely believed that I was reaching him on any meaningful level. These doubts emerged in many of the drawings I created in trying to process my reactions to our play (see Figures 4 & 5).

I have come to believe that these feelings of doubt are an important part of working with children with autism and perhaps any client. I never felt as if I knew what was going on in Brian's world. I had clues, I developed working hypotheses based on observations of his behaviour, and I had glimpses of what he may have been experiencing through a gesture or a facial expression. The unknown is a core component of any developing relationship. Each person moves forward with small steps until there is a sense of trust established and then perhaps greater risks are taken. In my association with Brian, I experienced trust, I believe that we both took risks, and yet I never felt sure. As a therapist, this was a very bewildering feeling to stay with week after week. Irwin (1986), however, focused on the benefit of allowing the client to lead the therapist as the relationship is formed "...that if I followed Jeremy into the unknown, no matter how bizarre or unsettling the experience, eventually we could join forces and work together in what began to look like an alliance" (p. 192). I believed that Brian and I had "joined forces" and I was prepared to have him lead me on the next part of the journey.

I would like to present the next four sessions (five, six, seven, and eight) as a unit because they were very similar in content, in mood, and in the issues that arose in my processing of them. The four meetings were light and playful although my reaction to them was not equally so. I felt as though these sessions were especially important because I was able to maintain a presence within them even when it became difficult. I felt, on some level that our relationship had moved forward and we were now interacting in a new way.

I took a risk at the beginning of this series by moving our play mat from the table to the floor. I thought that Brian might be interested in

exploring our space in a more physical way. I hypothesized that he might expand his repertoire of play given a greater amount of space. I thought that the play would still be contained by the mat and yet Brian would have more room to move about. I felt that perhaps the table and chairs set-up that we had been employing so far was confining. Although this seemed like a rational idea, I badly misjudged the situation and I wonder now what I was really trying to accomplish with such a radical change. Was I striving to impose my will on him? Was I in some unconscious way wanting to establish my presence in this space? I am not sure of the answer to these questions but it seems now as though I was feeling the need for Brian to accept something that I offered him. Space has always been important to me. Growing up in a large family in a too small flat gave me a great appreciation of something I never experienced until I reached adulthood - a room of my own. Perhaps I was attempting to present Brian with a gift of physical space without really first considering its implications for him.

Brian was dismayed by the new arrangement and made it very clear to me that it was not acceptable. He immediately began to pull the mat with all the toys on it toward the table. I spoke calmly to him and assured him that we could set up the toys on the table together. I was surprised by his confidence and the clarity with which he made his desire known to me. This display of self-assurance renewed my faith that Brian was able to express himself, convey his needs, and that I was able to understand him. This interchange motivated me to relax a little and be present for Brian without worrying about what I might be missing or misunderstanding.

Once we were reestablished at the table, Brian initiated his opening ritual with a feeling of playfulness and joy. He explored with enthusiasm and humour, using his own face as a canvas and my face and the mirror as a reflection of himself. There was a sense of reciprocity in his exploration. He would offer an expression or a sound and I would offer it back to him. As the "conversation" continued subtle changes would occur in the tone of voice, the rhythm or the pitch. It was as if we were creating something new together that contained a little of each of us and yet somehow it was neither one of us.

The next two meetings (sessions six and seven) were less energetic but still held an air of playfulness. Brian engaged in some solitary exploration and at several points I felt very excluded from what was happening. This contrasted so strongly with the connection I had felt in the previous session, that I experienced a difficult time not feeling personally rejected. In retrospect, I believe that I tried a little too earnestly to include myself and regretted it later.

In processing these encounters, some very intense images arose in my drawings. I was returned to a period in my childhood when I was often rejected by my peers and my siblings. I was not capable in those areas where it seemed essential that a child have mastery. Revisiting those times and those feelings helped me to prepare myself for possible further exclusion. I believe that my ability to be truly present for Brian was strengthened by my awareness of my own sense of vulnerability to feelings of perceived rejection.

In my readings of personal accounts of growing up with autism, I was struck by the consistent revelation by the various authors that each experienced a sense of knowing that he or she was different from other

children. "...knowing something was different but not knowing what it was" (Grandin, 1993, p. 78). "Both Jim and Albert, however, did express a growing awareness of being different from their peers..." (Cesaroni & Garber, 1991, p. 310). "The years following this homecoming were extremely painful for Jerry as he began to perceive that he was different from other youngsters" (Bemporad, 1979, p. 187). These insights on the part of these individuals and my own memories of being different helped me to maintain a sensitivity to what Brian might be feeling.

The last of these four sessions (session eight) began with laughter. I was greeted by a smile and an eagerness to begin. There was no hesitation when I came to collect Brian. It seemed as if we had successfully negotiated that obstacle and now there was not only recognition when I arrived, but an excitement and a sense of anticipation.

We began with the doll play and Brian seemed to want to remain with this play for a long while. I did not try to move him from it but I questioned whether this was perseverative activity or if he had made a conscious decision to stay with this play. I wondered what sort of security Brian found in this play. Was it the certainty that I would always be there to catch the doll or perhaps he experienced the sensation of falling through the doll. I recalled his reactions to the doll's shoes, his response when the doll clapped, and his testing of the comb in the doll's hair before trying it in his own. Brian seemed to derive some sense of validation from the doll.

I had some difficulty keeping focused on the events as they were unfolding. Although I was able to sustain my attention to what he was doing, my mind began to wander as he played with the doll. I began to

speculate how Brian was benefiting from the therapy. I pondered possible outcomes, tried to see into the future and my mind began to imagine a series of what ifs.

I offered Brian the mirror as a way of making contact with him. He took it and continued the exploration of his face which seemed to radiate from his mouth. The mouth was the focal point of his expressions as he stretched it wide and then puckered his lips together into a tiny bow. He made few sounds and did not seem to need to draw me into his investigation. I had to consciously fight the urge to be hurt by Brian's lack of interest in me. Grandin (1995) reports that Asperger found that "autistic children see themselves as an object of interest" (p. 137). It was difficult for me to comprehend Brian's fascination with the possibilities that his own face offered and yet it was me who offered him the mirror. Again my expectations, making contact with me through the mirror, had interfered with the "here and now" event of Brian's self-exploration.

At the conclusion of this session I told Brian that we had to go and he tried to put the doll's shoes back on its feet. He was unable to accomplish the task today. I helped him and was impressed by the manner in which he allowed me to do it for him. He is a compliant child and his passive acceptance of my help reminded me of my own daughter when she was two or three. Her independence and search for autonomy was emerging. Everything became "I can do it myself". She seemed to be in such a hurry to separate herself from any feelings of dependence she held for me. Brian seemed content to have things done for him and I wondered if he was treated like this in his home. I reflected on what his life was like outside of the treatment program and

how he contributed to his family unit. I contemplated what might be expected of him in other environments.

In reviewing these four sessions, I was particularly moved by the summary drawing (see Figure 6) that I completed in response to the four processing drawings. In this picture there exist two images separated by another image that seems to be exploding. I was struck by how contained each mass was and how each seemed to be reaching for the other. In my mind I had assigned each symbol a name. The pink was Brian enclosed in a box and the blue was me, not being able to reach him. I realized that I had projected my desires onto the Brian image but I sensed that on some level this represented what was happening at this point in our relationship. I was trying to make contact with Brian and I felt that some of the time he was reaching out to me. Surrounding us both was a green border, a colour which in my experience had usually symbolized hope. In this case, the hope was surrounding us both and holding us within the same space. The blackness outside of our limits seemed significant to me as well. I know that I was feeling pressure to produce a concrete change within Brian. I was not sure if the pressure originated from within me or was externally created but I know that I felt it very strongly at this period in our relationship.

The next four sessions (nine, ten, eleven and twelve) inspired a great deal of soul searching on my part. I was at a place in our relationship where I felt as if I needed to know more and was unable to find the information that I felt was required for me to continue the work and have it be of value to Brian.

Brian missed session nine unexpectedly and when I returned to the drama space I spent what would have been our time reflecting on the

articles that had been meaningful in our play. As I explored each object, I recalled how he had used it in the play and speculated on what it might possibly have signified, what it might have given him. The objects on the table, the dog puppet, the story of Brenda and Edward, the boy doll, a hedgehog puppet, the mirror, and the brush and comb, had all attracted Brian's attention at one time or another. What did these pieces offer Brian?

I began to view each toy as a piece of a puzzle that I had been charged with solving and I felt incapable of finding the meaning within it. I sensed that I had everything I needed before me and yet when I viewed it as a whole it did not amount to a complete image which I recognized. Again I was forced to immerse myself in the unknown and learn to be contented there. I came to understand that there would be no known picture emerging from this set of puzzle pieces. I would have to accept each one as a whole and not try to link them together to form another image. I began to grasp that each moment of Brian's play may have been a complete entity and it was up to me to gain what insight and information was possible from it as it occurred.

The next three sessions (ten, eleven and twelve) centred around a balloon which I introduced to our play. Brian's reaction to the balloon amazed me as in his play with it he became a very active boy who moved freely around the space. This change in his physical demeanor gave me cause to rethink my conception of who Brian was; perhaps more accurately my misconception of who he was.

I came to the realization that I had seen only a small part of Brian - the part of himself that related to me in this particular space. I became aware, as I tried to integrate the new information with the knowledge

that I believed I already possessed, that many relationships develop in this way. I was learning small bits of data about Brian each time we encountered one another. I would then make an effort to put these small pieces of information together until I thought I had a real sense of Brian. I wondered now how much of my picture was of my own construction and how much was actually Brian. He had presented me with behaviours, preferences, choices, and attitudes and I had pieced these bits together in an attempt to know Brian and provide the things which I believed he needed. It was I who had given these indicators meaning and made decisions based on them. This session helped me to internalize the dangers of making too many assumptions about the person with whom I am working. I began to suppose that I knew more of Brian than I did and as I reviewed these sessions, I wondered if I was not treating him as I thought he was rather than allowing him the time and space to show me who he was. The qualities that I had attributed to him were only part of the picture and it was the introduction of an orange balloon that made this clear to me.

In the following two meetings (eleven and twelve) I offered him a transparent blue balloon through which I could see him as he held it in front of his face. His exploration of this balloon took place on many sensory levels. He rubbed it, stretched it, lay his head upon it as a pillow, threw it, drummed on it, tasted and smelled it. Most of his investigation was conducted in a solitary manner except the throwing in which he included me. I began to experience feelings of being left out of the play but this time I was able to focus my thoughts on his activity and be attentive to what was taking place. Brian was not excluding me but, in fact, he was including me in subtle but clear ways. He looked at me as

he played with the balloon, he stretched out close to me when he lay on the floor with his head on the balloon and, when I played with the balloon he watched intently and would, on occasion imitate what I had done. When I was able to stand back from the encounter and truly examine what was going on, I felt less separate and I gathered the courage to continue to gently interact with him and create a presence for myself within our space.

The final aspect of these four sessions that I wish to touch on is the intensity with which Brian conducted his explorations. As I witnessed him during these encounters with the balloon, I was amazed at how his interest was completely absorbed by the task at hand. I thought of instances in my own experience when I was so engrossed with an object or even an idea that I became oblivious to what was happening around me. I tried to reconstruct what it was that held my attention so strongly. I felt that on these occasions I was most often looking for something - a solution to a problem, a way to accomplish something, or the answer to a perplexing question. I wondered if Brian was engaged in any of these activities - was he searching for something? Perhaps he was just enjoying the different sensations or perhaps he was trying to assemble the different properties of the balloon in his mind to put a name to it. Often children with autism experience objects as parts of a whole rather than as a totality (Grandin, 1995, Siegel, 1995 & Williams, 1992). I wondered if he saw the blue balloon as different from the orange one. Did the change in colour confuse him; did he recognize it as the same object or did he perceive it as a new thing altogether? I felt that I needed a map to navigate this fragile terrain and yet the only map I had was the one I was

creating as we went along. I did not want to add to Brian's confusion or overwhelm him with too many stimuli.

I wondered when this twelfth session had ended and Brian had returned to his class room what he was feeling about our relationship. Did he feel as confused about me as I sometimes did about him? Did I baffle him with my words, the questions that I asked, and the materials I offered him? What did he think we were doing together and who did he think I was?

I then asked myself who did I think he was and what did I think we were doing together? Perhaps we were both in the same place and I just had not realized it yet.

The next four sessions (thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen) were very exhausting for me. I found that the material that Brian was offering was puzzling and I was having difficulty making sense of it. He seemed so changeable over these two weeks. To further add to my concerns about the work, there was a week-long break scheduled after session sixteen. I was feeling a pressure to make sense of where our relationship was headed before the break. I realized, as this break approached, that my time with Brian was drawing to a close and that there remained only thirteen sessions.

In the thirteenth session Brian kept very much to himself. He seemed to need time and space for self-reflection and I assumed the role of holding that space for him. He seemed to be self-involved and there was no invitation offered for me to join him. I worried that the tenuous connection that had been made was being broken and that Brian was retreating back into his own world. The self-doubt continued to plague me and it had a great influence on our work. Although intellectually I was

able to appreciate the reality of the situation, emotionally, it was often difficult not to be hurt by his apparent self-sufficiency. It seemed in his exploration that he was receiving sufficient validation from his own image in the mirror and he did not turn to me.

The only activity that we shared was a brief interlude with a balloon. Even here the energy and focus that Brian had shown in earlier sessions was missing. I held the balloon and he drummed on its surface, sometimes creating a pattern of sounds which he then repeated. There was no response to any of the changes that I initiated in the rhythm. I seemed to need only mirror back what Brian offered. It was challenging to stay in the moment and I worked diligently to maintain my focus and concentration. I wondered how hard it was for Brian to maintain a focus outside of himself. If it was this much of an effort for me to remain present for him within our session without my mind wandering, how difficult was it for him with all of these new stimuli being presented to him? I knew that I sometimes would retreat into myself when the events of the world became overwhelming, I wondered if Brian was not doing a similar thing. He was, perhaps, trying to tell me that what he had been experiencing was overpowering and he needed some time to recuperate before continuing. I contemplated on why I assumed that time spent in self-reflection was a negative event. As I looked back over these sessions in the totality of our work, I saw that Brian was, perhaps, taking care of his own needs and I was then able to view these sessions as a positive period. At the end of our work I was able to see this with greater understanding, but while I was immersed in the process, I found that I was unable to regard Brian's behaviour as self-nurturing or as an indication of growth in our relationship. I tended to assume that I was not picking up

on the cues that he was giving me. I believed that this was in some way my fault or due to my failure to be a good therapist. This has been a recurrent theme in my own life, the feeling of not being good enough, and it was interesting how it was now presenting itself in my relationship with Brian.

This realization of how profoundly the issues that were important in my development as a therapist impacted on the sessions with Brian caused me to step back and evaluate what I was bringing to this work. In order to do this I returned to the drawings and the reflections that I had used to process our mutual undertaking thus far.

As I reviewed the material, the same themes emerged as before - boundaries, containers, hope and the unknown - but I think that I began to experience them in a new way. I had begun to recognize how who I was could shape Brian's responses and this recognition encouraged me to reevaluate my role in the therapy for a second time. There were moments when I felt as though Brian was teaching me the lessons that I needed to learn in order to be able to understand his needs. I had a deep sense that this lesson had been presented to me before but that I was not ready to receive it. Brian seemed to have endless patience when it came to waiting for me to understand him. I, however, was often in a hurry for something to happen, and, in my haste, would miss the events of the moment we were living together.

I believed that my role was to be present for Brian, provide him with materials from which to choose, and ensure that he was safe. I now felt that I had another role to play. I perceived that I must be an active participant in our relationship. It no longer seemed enough to witness Brian - I began to acknowledge now that I had to be dynamic in the way

that I contributed to our sessions. I sensed that I was losing him to his involvement with his interior world and I had to admit that I was unable to recreate the space in which he had been able to explore the world outside of himself.

I was again faced with the problem of balance which had been a constant struggle in negotiating our relationship. How could I embody a vital, growing role in this alliance while at the same time providing Brian with the space and support that he needed as he continued to emerge?

I resisted the urge to intrude too greatly in Brian's exploration during the sixteenth session because, as in the preceding encounters, he seemed to need to spend time with himself. He also gave me strong indicators that my presence was necessary in order for him to safely examine those areas which were of interest to him - the movements and potential of his own face, the sounds that he was able to create with his voice and his freedom to choose to include me or not. He demonstrated his validation of my presence by a look in my direction, a pause in his sounds as if waiting for me to respond, the proximity which he permitted me to maintain, and the way in which he gently placed his hand in mine when it was time to go. Because I was able to focus on these measures of our relationship, I was able to assuage some of my frustrations and fears. I believe that Brian gave me these signs to quietly convey his need for me as a companion on his journey even though I was not always able to actively participate. Perhaps he was trying to advise me that, on this particular part of his journey, he had to travel alone.

When Brian returned after the break, his energy had also returned and his desire to interact in a more direct way with me. The following series (sessions seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty) consisted of

three very animated sessions which incorporated balloon play and the reintegration of the boy doll into our play and one session for which Brian was unexpectedly absent.

The first three of these four meetings were very positive from my perspective. Brian engaged enthusiastically with the objects in the space and was able to relate with me through the play. Perhaps my feeling, during the session before the break, that he needed time to withdraw into himself before having the capacity to continue the work had held some truth. I began to feel a growing sense of confidence that the connection which Brian and I had created was stronger than I had imagined. I also began to believe that the work that happened in our sessions was continuing for Brian, as well as for me, long after the actual encounters were ended.

The focus of the seventeenth session was balloons and the myriad ways in which we could connect through them. The play that we engaged in revolved around the rhythm that existed and could be created between us.

Brian was drawn to the package of balloons and as I blew up one and then another, he became very excited and began clapping his hands. Our initial play was individual but together. We began by bouncing the balloons up in the air and catching them. After a very brief period of time, Brian began drumming on the balloon and shaking it back and forth. The play progressed quickly from this point and we moved from one activity to another with '...rapid transformations of time and place' (Irwin, 1986, p. 192). I spontaneously started singing a repetitive song about making music which seemed to please Brian as he laughed and drummed on his balloon. I continued singing and began to tap parts

of my body, and then corresponding parts of Brian's body with my balloon. This interaction developed over several minutes and then Brian added his own variation. He slapped the floor with one hand while tapping his foot in time with my singing. In response to his contribution, I began clapping the balloon between my hands.

I was overwhelmed by the complexity of the play and the manner in which each of us had been able to build on the previous offering of the other. Together we had developed an intricate series of musical rhythms and actions through which we were communicating. Brian, during this session, seemed to be attempting to construct a dialogue with me and I with him.

When I returned to the drawing that I had created after this session, I was disturbed. Although there is a beautiful, pink balloon floating serenely in the picture, the focus of the piece is a red bird diving head first into a fire. (see Figure 7) I wondered what it was about this interaction that troubled me so. I thought perhaps that I was still experiencing feelings of inadequacy with regards to my ability to understand Brian's communications and I knew that I would have to explore these emotions before I would be able to continue. Irwin (1986) addressed the issue in a way that inspired me to more thoroughly examine my own state within the therapeutic relationship.

If the therapeutic duo cannot make music together it may be that something was missed in the material and/or that there was some disturbance in the capacity to listen empathically with an attitude of neutrality. This may be a signal to look inward, for the therapist may not have been able to quiet the noise within, making it difficult to observe and hear the other. (p. 193).

In looking to myself and what may have been blocking my authentic ability to feel that I heard Brian, I concluded that one of the elements that was disturbing the work was my need to succeed in the eyes of those who were watching me. This red bird represented me and my career, not yet begun, going down in flames. I needed others to approve of what I was doing and to validate the changes that Brian was achieving through our play together. I believed that it was appropriate to seek the support of those whose opinions I valued, but not when the attainment of that approval interfered with the relationship that was being established with Brian or any other client.

This realization of how greatly I relied on the convictions of others in order to feel successful, opened my eyes as to how I was limiting my availability to Brian within the session. If part of my mind, however small a part, was taken up with worry about how others would perceive my methods and my choices, how much of my attention, then, was available for Brian and the events that were transpiring within our encounters?

It was this single drawing, coming when it did, and the enormous discrepancy which existed between the images of the balloon and the diving bird that assisted me in developing an awareness of this aspect of myself and how it impacted on my work.

I am still uncertain what it was that transpired within the session which provoked such a strong reaction through the drawing. I think that it may have been related to the different definitions that the team and I held for Brian's progress. I believed that we were making great progress and yet I felt that this would not be validated by the team because it did not seem to fit with their expectations. I believe that these fears emerged

through the drawing because I was unprepared to acknowledge them openly.

During the next two sessions (eighteen and nineteen) we continued to 'converse' using the balloons, our bodies and the drama therapy space as the conduits for our messages to one another. We clapped our hands, drummed out rhythms on the balloons, and hit the floor. When I began to sing the song that I had composed last time, Brian laughed as if he knew what was coming next. I continued singing the song while starting to tap different parts of our bodies - the head, the knees, the feet. Brian beamed and giggled enthusiastically when I tapped my head and then his.

Brian added a new element to the balloon play in the third session (nineteen). He began to vocalize the syllables di di di da. I mirrored these sounds back to him and then he to me. A gradual evolution occurred as the sounds became louder, quieter, faster, slower, and the emphasis was placed on various syllables. Brian began to anticipate when the balloon would be thrown to him. I would say the four sounds and as I said da, I would push the balloon to him. This aspect of the interchange pleased Brian immensely. On occasion, I would prolong the period of time between when I said da and when I released the balloon. Brian's excitement, as he awaited my freeing of the balloon, was palpable. Significant to me, however, was the tremendous joy that I felt as Brian's anticipation grew. He seemed so invested in what we were doing together and his physical body seemed energized by the activity which we were engaged in together. The last line of my notes from this session reads 'I think there is a connection.' I felt that I was finally able to say it aloud.

In those three sessions (seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen) there was one other occurrence that warranted mention. Before the balloon play in each of these three meetings, Brian engaged briefly with the boy doll and some of the other familiar toys that were laid out on the table. This was important, I felt, because Brian had not engaged in this play for some time. I had begun to assume that this part of his exploration had ended since we had moved on to more physical play. Brian did not devote much of the time to this play but he did make contact at the beginning of each session. In the first, he put several small toys in his mouth which I removed and then he removed the doll's shoes and handed me a balloon. In the second, he engaged for a few minutes with the doll. First he removed its shoes, then the falling and catching game with the doll, and finally he took the small brush which he used on the doll and himself. Before engaging with the balloons, he took the mirror, held it up to his own face and smiled. He then held the doll up to the mirror beside him and smiled again. In the third session, he simply removed the doll's shoes, touched each of the objects on the table, and then handed me the package of balloons.

I believed that these events were notable because they seemed to act as an anchor for the very physical activities that would follow. Brian seemed to be preparing himself for the ensuing action. I tried to relate this present behaviour to some past conduct and found myself contemplating on the period of self-reflection in which Brian engaged before the break. At that time, he seemed to need to completely withdraw from any interaction with me. Now, it seemed that he was able to retreat briefly and then return ready to engage with me and the play.

The final session (twenty) of this quartet found me alone. Brian was unexpectedly absent so I turned to drawing to process my emotions surrounding his absence and to continue in my attempt to gain a greater perspective with regard to our relationship.

The drawing that emerged was of a maze (see Figure 8) with a golden yellow crown at its centre. The green maze was surrounded by thorny branches which blocked the lone entrance to it. Once inside the maze, the path to the golden crown was easy to follow and seemed to hold no hidden obstacles. In my estimation the real difficulty lay in making my way through the thorns. When I reviewed this drawing, I was struck by how small the thorny branches actually were. I was amazed by how simply one could penetrate the branches and enter the maze. In my interpretation, these were indicators of the hope that I held for our relationship and the progress that I was beginning to believe we had made.

The sessions that remained unfolded in a way that I could not have imagined. I would like to examine them in the following manner. First I will present sessions twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-three at which Brian was present. Brian was then absent for the next five scheduled sessions which left me, and I suspect him, with a number of unresolved issues. Included in this group of five was, what should have been our final session together. I will explore my reactions to these events and how they have impacted on my approach to the therapy that I will provide in the future. After having come to terms with the fact that I would not be able to achieve proper closure with Brian, I was then given the opportunity, quite unexpectedly, to meet with Brian one final time. This session I will address as an event in its own right.

The next two sessions (twenty-one and twenty-two) were connected in some way and seemed to lead one into the other. They both began with a great deal of excitement and energy. Brian showed pleasure when I arrived and this playfulness continued as we made our way to the drama room.

The first of the two encounters began as so many had before with an exploration of the familiar toys. Brian laughed and clapped and seemed to be enjoying himself greatly as he made contact with these toys. When he was done, he rose from the table and began to move around the room as if he was looking for something very specific. I offered him the package of balloons as this was a way in which we had made contact recently. He acknowledged what I had offered but continued on his quest without taking one of the balloons. After travelling around the room several times he came to rest standing in front of the wall. It appeared that something had caught Brian's attention.

This wall was constructed of large, concrete bricks and was painted white. Brian stared straight ahead and began to clap his hands and move his body in a rhythmic dance. He devoted the remainder of our time to this activity. Although his posture - back facing me, face to the wall - seemed to exclude me, he maintained contact with me by checking over his shoulder from time to time. I attempted to implicate myself in the activity by joining Brian in clapping and dancing. As soon as I began, I knew that it was not the right path to take. What he was engaged in seemed very private. Perhaps I attributed too much to this activity but it assumed, in the context of our relationship, an air of ritual. In my mind, in that room, Brian's dance became a rite of passage. I felt that

he was making a transition from one stage in his development to another. Although I was required as a witness, I was not needed as a participant.

At heart, what do we do as therapists? I believe that often it is not our technological interventions, but the power of being with another suffering person, showing a genuine warmth and presence, that is solacing.

For creative arts therapists, like all psychotherapists, do not really treat the fundamental disease entity itself, such as schizophrenia, learning disability, retardation, traumatic stress disorder, or personality disorder. We treat the human being's sense of courage, esteem, ability to cope, and capacity to find meaning in their lives that have been affected by an illness or disability. (Johnson, 1989, p. 13)

In the twenty-second session Brian resumed the ritual in front of the wall after a brief, yet purposeful investigation of the toys and a momentary tossing of a balloon to me. Once Brian had found his focus on the wall, the clapping and the movement began. As in the last session, he sought to verify my presence by looking over his shoulder.

I decided to wait until Brian was done but I also committed myself to being completely present in the space with him. I gave over all of my attention, my concern and caring, and my ability as a therapist to the process in which Brian was engaged. It was a feeling unlike any I had experienced thus far in my work. I did not know what was happening, or where this would lead, but on an instinctual level I knew that Brian needed me to be there while he worked through this issue. This was the ultimate state of not knowing and I found myself able to dwell in this place while Brian alone understood the meaning of his actions. This was

an instance when I felt as if I was containing Brian and holding the relationship together while he explored some part of himself in safety. I believed that he was able to engage in this exploration because he felt protected and because he knew that our relationship could tolerate it. I had faith in the knowledge that he was aware that I would still be there when he was done.

When we began what would be the final session (twenty-three) before a prolonged, and unanticipated break in the work, Brian was playful and eager to start. He came to the drama space seeking out the package of balloons. The rest of our time was spent communicating through the balloons. It seemed whatever had been happening during the previous two sessions was over and Brian was ready to return to our relationship. Was he changed in some way? I can't say for sure. I know that he played, laughed, and shared his pleasure with me.

The drawing that I created after this session was of two containers (see Figure 9) which held coloured liquids. The contents were flowing one into the other. The blue liquid was rough and unsettled and as the orange flowed in it seemed to collect on the surface of the blue without being able to penetrate it. The orange, on the other hand, seemed calm and unperturbed and the blue was able to infiltrate the serenity of the surface. The drawing seemed to be telling me several things - primarily to relax and allow change to happen in its own time. I also saw both Brian and I clearly in these images. Him as the calm orange fluid pouring over me and permeating my thoughts, and myself as the windblown blue water unable to achieve the level of understanding that I thought I needed in order to be good enough. I saw myself as having only accomplished a tiny part of what I imagined was possible. Interestingly, in

this picture I have made a connection with Brian - blue to orange - and that belief had been made tangible in the art.

The next five meetings were cancelled for a variety of reasons including illness, an ear operation, and institution schedule changes and it appeared that I would not be able to realize a formal ending to the therapy. During this period I continued to process our work and our relationship through drawing (See Figures 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14). The prevalent feelings that I experienced during this period were of loss, confusion, and anger. I felt that I had not been able to say good-bye and I worried that Brian would not understand where I had gone. I feared that he would think that I had just stopped coming for no reason or that he had done something wrong. I attempted to explore these feelings in the art and was surprised by what emerged.

The picture (Figure 10) which I drew in response to the first absence was of anger. Anger at not knowing what was happening with regards to the scheduling, anger at being left out and anger at being told that it didn't matter because Brian wouldn't understand at any rate. The jagged pieces of the broken glass in this drawing allowed just a glimpse of the night sky abundant with golden stars. I felt that I was being deluded into thinking I was making a difference but in reality I was only permitted to view a small piece of the picture.

The anger passed as I attempted to explore the feelings that I had experienced surrounding Brian's second absence. I no longer felt the need to prove myself to anyone. The focus of my concern had shifted entirely to Brian and what he was thinking or feeling about being away. In the next drawing (Figure 11) there exists a number of images which inspired contradictory emotions within me. The turquoise sea frightened

me instead of soothing me, the bright yellow sun hurt my eyes and did not offer warmth, and the blue tentacles seemed to be seeking to comfort me and form a connection between the purple probing shape and the green floating mass rather than something which sought to destroy them. I believed that I would never see Brian again at this point and I now believe that I felt as if everything was upside down and backwards. The images that I had created reflected this confusion. I no longer held on to a strong sense of the role that I had played in Brian's life. For a few brief sessions I had known that we had made a connection and I was confident that the work we were engaged in was important in Brian's development, now I was uncertain what anything meant and this sense of doubt pervaded my drawings.

The purple shape appeared in the following drawing (Figure 12) as well only much smaller and less imposing. I think now that it was a response to the fact that I was no longer playing an active role in Brian's life. He and I were apart and the decreased size of the purple probe which I saw as myself had become less prominent in the art as well. The green mass also surfaced in this next drawing. This time it was larger and it seemed more complex and substantive. It had a core, a heart which was mirrored in the smaller purple probe. I saw this as an embodiment of the change that I perceived in the relationship between Brian and I. I came to the realization that therapy had ended and whatever we had experienced together had ended as well. Not that I believed the effects had ceased but that the physical relationship that we had attained was over and that Brian would move on to the next part of his life as would I. I believed that I had changed as a result of having known and worked

with Brian and I hoped that he had also gained something from our relationship.

In the drawing (Figure 13) which I made after I learned that there would be a fourth absence, I saw hopelessness and despair. As I looked again at the black washed out border that was trying to hold everything in, I realized how incapable I felt in this regard. I did not feel able to hold Brian and I began to imagine that the relationship that we had formed was being swept away by forces greater than either of us. The blue and purple strokes are moving everywhere upon the page, they are going beyond the boundaries that I had created to contain our process. All appeared chaotic. I wondered what the outcome would be and what powers I could invoke to influence it in a positive way. Although at the outset I had perceived the situation as hopeless, as I explored the drawing further, I was able to wrest a modicum of hope from the image that I found on the page.

As I approached the fifth session from which Brian was absent I would have expected to feel defeated in my attempts to alter the situation and somehow obtain closure. As I looked again at this drawing (Figure 14) I saw the pieces of something positive. The magnificent silver fish, afloat in the turquoise sea seemed to be at peace. When I first made this drawing I was certain that the fish was Brian and I was represented by the turquoise sea. He, moving forward, supported by the work that we had engaged in together and I, serene and confident that what we had accomplished would stay with Brian as he journeyed on.

When I returned to this picture later on, I saw myself as the fish, calmly coming to terms with a set of circumstances which were beyond my control. Brian was no longer in the picture because our therapeutic

alliance had ended and I was now able to process what I had learned from our relationship and integrate it into the body of knowledge that I had acquired in my training. This would become a part of who I was as a therapist and how I would work with clients in the future.

I am not certain which interpretation of this image is more accurate but I sense that each had value in the lessons that I was able to acquire from the exploration of it.

The work was officially concluded when I was told that Brian had returned to school and I would be able to see him one last time. In deciding whether or not this would be therapeutically of benefit to Brian or just a means for me to experience closure of our process, I explored many areas of our relationship. I decided that it was important for both of us to experience termination of the work in a positive and celebratory manner.

The final session began by making contact with many of toys we had worked with over the past months. Brian made physical contact with several of them as they were presented on the table. He spent several minutes with the boy doll, holding it and trying to have it stand on its own. This had been my role in many previous sessions. It seemed to me that Brian was letting me know that he knew he would have to do these things for himself. He seemed to be telling me that he knew this was the end.

He picked up the package of balloons, chose one and attempted to blow it up. When he was unable to do it he handed it to me and looked into my eyes. This gesture confirmed everything positive that I had hoped for in our relationship. He knew that I would be there for him until the end.

Once the balloon was inflated, Brian engaged in many familiar behaviours with it. He drummed on it, shook it, and finally he tossed it to me. Throughout this reminiscence – in my mind that is what it was – Brian showed his enjoyment through smiles, laughter and clapping his hands. During the tossing of the balloon, Brian again took on the role that I had performed in this activity. He would catch the balloon, look at me and then toss it back.

This session was very emotional. I felt as though I was losing a friend. The thirty minutes seemed to pass very quickly and I found it time to end the session and return Brian to his class. I gently took the balloon from him, placed it on the table, and offered him my hand. He calmly approached the table, retrieved the balloon and tossed it to me. I knew then that this was difficult for Brian as well. He rarely resisted leaving the session and had usually responded appropriately when informed that it was time to go. Today he would not give up the play easily. He tried several times to engage me in balloon play and when I would not be tempted, he returned it to the table, picked up the boy doll and took my hand. I don't recall, as I write this, which of his educators told me that it would not make any difference to Brian if we had a final session or not. I knew at that moment that it had made a tremendous difference. This session had given Brian the opportunity to revisit the work that he had done. It gave him the chance to say good-bye to the space, to the toys, and to me. It was important.

I told Brian that we had to leave the toys in the room and as he placed the doll on the table, he took one last look around the room and then gave me his hand and began to walk towards the door.

The drawing that emerged after this session (see Figure 15) held an enormous amount of hope for Brian but also for me. I saw the path as there for each of us. He would continue on his way and I would follow my path to becoming a therapist.

Through this work with him, I learned a great deal about myself and what was essential for me to be able to engage in this profession. I discovered more about who I was and how where I came from influenced who I was and this knowledge helped me to decide where I might be going as I continued to develop as a therapist. I think that Brian, too, learned about himself and a little bit about the world outside of himself as well.

Discussion

Throughout this paper, I have tried to reflect on the process of drama therapy as it happened, within the context of the session and afterward. However, I think that it is necessary to summarize the key elements of the work and perhaps share a few connections and insights that I have arrived at since the sessions have ended.

What I set out to accomplish in this paper was to explore how a relationship would develop in a therapeutic environment using my personal experiences within relationships as a starting point. I hoped to come to some conclusions regarding the use of dramatic play therapy in establishing a rapport with a young child who had been given the diagnosis of autism and I examined my approach to entering into a therapeutic alliance with a client.

I believe that I have achieved elements of all of these aspects of the work and yet I feel that there is much more to be learned.

With Brian I was able to draw on many of the experiences that I had lived through as a child and this helped me to empathize with him. I felt able to respond to him in a real way because I believed that his life contained pieces of mine. Joanne Kielo (1988), in her Master's thesis, cites a definition of empathy from the American Psychoanalytic Glossary, (Moore and Fine, 1967) part of which I would like to include here.

a special mode of perceiving the psychological state or experience of another person. It is an 'emotional knowing' of another human being rather than an intellectual understanding. To empathize means temporarily to share, to experience the feelings of another person... (p. 43)

I believe that a therapist who is in tune with the elements of her own life experience may be better prepared to participate in therapy with a client. Because I was able to accept the aspects of my life which made me different from every other therapist who was in contact with Brian, I believe that I was more open to and willing to embrace the personal culture from which Brian came. Phil Jones (1996) cites Ciornai (1983) and Canda (1990) as two authors who have begun to explore "the importance of cultural and socio-economic factors in considering change within the creative arts therapies (p. 12). In this paper I have chosen to focus on culture from a personal perspective rather than from a more global stance. I recognize that these ideas could be developed further with a particular focus on the way in which autism is viewed by the dominant culture. Such an investigation could contribute to the on-going debate surrounding the influence of culture in therapy but is beyond the scope of this paper.

The impact of culture on an individual is so significant that it becomes an ethical responsibility for the therapist to explore the culture in which the client exists, and to acknowledge one's own cultural influences. Supported by this awareness one may feel more capable of understanding and accepting the differences inherent in each member of the therapeutic dyad. In this particular instance, I was not so intent on helping this child to become like me and fit into my world; rather I could focus on discovering who he was and who he wanted to become in the world.

Dramatic play therapy was the tool that I used to make contact with Brian. Sue Jennings (1993) distilled several theories of child development and the role of play in the lives of children. From this

material she has created a paradigm, Embodiment-Projection-Role, (EPR) (see Appendix V) which she applies to her work with children. This model offered me flexibility in the way that I worked with Brian. I was able to draw on a variety of materials and toys which helped me to interact with Brian at both sensory and projective levels. At the start of our work the plasticene and soft toys allowed Brian to explore through his senses. His body exploration, which is an important element of the embodiment stage, was very self-focused at this point. He did, however, use the toys to explore sensations on his hands and his face but this sensory play did not involve contact with the therapist. Later on Brian began to explore space through his body and through interactions with the therapist. In this way Brian began to expand his play to include another component of the embodiment stage.

In some phases of our work he began to use the toys to express himself and he briefly entered the area of projective play. Through the doll and the puppets Brian seemed to be telling me something about himself and what was important to him. The play gave him the opportunity to observe, while the toys took on his repetitive behaviours. It was as if he was free of the drive that governed these behaviours and could just be in the space.

The beauty of this model lies in its ability to adapt to the child at any point in the therapy. It offers the therapist a frame of reference from which to observe the child and to monitor the changes. This paradigm assists the therapist in formulating therapeutic treatment goals and it aids in selecting appropriate materials and interventions. Using it as a guide, I was able to observe the client and respond as his needs changed. I found this way of working advantageous in developing a relationship with

a non-verbal client because language was not necessary to fully engage in the process. Other means of communication such as sound, movement, gesture or facial expression became an alternative to the spoken word. EPR provided me with the developmental guidelines which served as a structure from which to build the relationship.

I believe that this model was effective in my work with Brian because it opened a door that each of us was then able to step through on to a common ground. Once we had met in that place, we were able to deepen our relationship through the objects and the toys that were employed within the play.

It was also useful to examine Phil Jones' (1996) play-drama continuum which summarizes the developmental stages and their implications for drama therapy interventions (see Appendix VI). Like Jennings, his model has evolved from observations of children as they develop. I found it offered a more detailed range of behaviours through which I was able to identify the stages that Brian was experiencing. The five broad stages are sensorimotor play, imitative play, pretend play, dramatic play, and drama. Brian engaged in many of the behaviours which Jones highlights. He did not, however, progress through them in the sequence which Jones suggests. At the start we were very much engaged in sensorimotor play which has as a key element contact with and physical exploration of objects. This contact and exploration continued throughout the sessions and as mentioned earlier, this seemed to be a primary means of interacting with the world for Brian. The balloon play which came near the end continued this sensory exploration.

A second element of this stage is physical relationship with another which became a reality further along in our work. There were glimpses of

a desire to relate to me in sessions nine and ten which did not seem to last. Brian allowed me to pat and hold his hand with the dog puppet and I began to mirror Brian's expressions with the boy doll. Often during this period Brian would withdraw to solitary play as if he was not ready to commit to me. In the second series of sessions his desire to relate to me was more typical and was evident in the play. He engaged me in play with the doll, the mirror, and the balloons.

Imitative play came about in the later sessions. In the beginning Brian would watch me or hand me objects. Once I had become more familiar to him and he was experiencing a sense of who I was in this space, he started to imitate both sounds and facial expressions. I think it is important to note that this did not happen spontaneously but in response to me first imitating his sounds and expressions. Towards the end of our work Brian did begin to initiate imitative play.

Jones goes on to describe pretend play which includes several symbolic components wherein one object or movement is used to represent another. Jones suggests that this is the beginning of make-believe play. Brian did not venture into this area of play save for one aspect which was the functional use of symbolic toys. Brian demonstrated this method of play with a brush and comb which he used to comb both the doll's hair and his own. Brian also, I believe used the doll's shoes as a way of symbolically removing his own shoes. The doll served on many levels as a representation for Brian. The next developmental stage is called dramatic play and focuses on "sustained fantasy and enacted portrayal of others" (Jones, 1996, p. 190). Although Brian never engaged in this type of sustained work he did develop complex play with objects and a capacity to interact with the objects

that I was using, which is also a component of this stage. Brian was able to interact with me through the boy doll, the dog puppet, the mirror, and most strongly the balloons. The final stage, drama, was never explored during the time that Brian and I met.

The model that Jones has developed was helpful to me in terms of being able to identify the stages at which Brian was operating. I was able to place the play in the context of where Brian was on the continuum and determine what kind of play would be appropriate. Jones cites Irwin with regard to the importance of having an awareness of the play-drama continuum. She says that it 'can help the therapist be sensitive to shifts in functioning and to deal with them...via appropriate media and materials' (Irwin, 1982, p. 150 in Jones 1996, p. 184).

I believe that there is great potential in the continued use of this model of therapy with children who have received a diagnosis of autism, and like Brian are seeking a way to communicate that feels right to them. This method resulted in progress in the way that Brian was able to participate in a relationship. I tended to view progress as a spiral, ever deepening each time we returned to a particular area of interest rather than as a linear path where milestones were checked off as they were accomplished. The progress that Brian achieved was related to making connections and interacting with another person. Progress in our work meant that Brian had moved from watching me play, to handing me materials and objects to manipulate on his behalf, to choosing toys with which to play and initiating the play. Brian gained a sense of his own power to choose and he developed a sense of the reciprocity that exists within relationships. Perhaps in the eyes of the institution, not a great deal of progress had been made. However, I believe, that even in terms of

the institutional goals, communication, behaviour, socialization and pre-academic, significant progress was made. The communication goals were primarily tied to attaining speech but there was also an element of responding to language. Brian progressed in this regard from being responsive on the most basic level, for example, sitting when told, giving me his hand to return to the class room, to anticipating events and being able to distinguish complex sets of behaviours as in the balloon play and with the boy doll. In the domain of behaviour, Brian was manipulating toys in his environment and he showed recognition of both my role and the role of the drama therapy space. He knew when I arrived what that meant and where we were going. With regard to socialization, he was able to attend to my behaviours and often watched and waited to see what I would do next and I afforded him the same respect. As our work evolved, he also began to respond to my requests to come to me and to return to his class room. The goals related to pre-academic skills were also met to some degree. Brian was able to respond to an environmental stimulus with a motor behaviour as evidenced by his balloon play. It is interesting that my goals were not as skill specific as those developed by the institution and yet through the play, Brian was able to make significant gains in some of these areas as well. I think that because I was able to expand my definition of progress and my way of seeing Brian in terms of his own development, both Brian and I experienced success.

After my work with Brian was ended, I was invited back to present this case to the team at the institution. In receiving feedback on Brian at this point, several weeks after our last session, I learned that he had transferred some of the behaviours from drama therapy to other areas of his life. On the playground, he was now actively involved in the space

and with the equipment. Whereas he once stood on the periphery of the playground and only observed what the other children were doing, now he was participating. His educators also shared that when it was time to go inside, Brian would run to the top of the slide as if daring them to come and get him. He was initiating a game, an interaction, a relationship. I think that it is safe to attribute some of these new behaviours to the work that we engaged in through the dramatic play. Brian was making choices about himself in relation to the world.

In regards to my decision to process the work through art, I can only discuss how this method enhanced my experience. It provided me with an alternative means of viewing the work. I found that through it I acquired an expanded perspective which allowed me to explore other possibilities. I realized that what I had gained from this process was very personal and was intensely connected to this specific experience. I would, however, refer the reader back to Silverman's (1999) ideas around the benefits of processing the work with clients through an unfamiliar orientation. She suggests that this may encourage the therapist to be open to the many possibilities contained within the therapeutic process. As a drama therapist, I chose to express myself through art because it was unfamiliar to me and it was a medium with which I had little experience. In deciding to do this, I had no idea what the outcome would be. I chose this method based solely on my desire to eliminate as much self-censorship as possible. Since completing this process, I have discovered that Joanne Kielo (1988) also explored art therapists' drawings as a way of examining counter-transference issues in therapeutic alliances. Although her work was psychodynamically focused, I think it bears mentioning because, in essence, she was attempting to investigate how therapists

use their art to process their relationships with their clients. I was striving to accomplish the same end in a humanistic way. I was not trained in art therapy and I was, in no way, trying to interpret my work other than by exploring what it meant to me. I found this process to be worthwhile and I feel that it added greatly to my understanding of myself and the issues that impacted on my therapeutic relationship with Brian and on my overall development as a therapist. I was able to visually explore the aspects of this relationship which allowed me to further review the themes and images that arose in the sessions. Seeing myself reflected in these drawings helped me to face the dark and the light of who I was and to put these qualities in perspective. I began to reconnect with pieces of my life that had been forgotten. Working with this personal material helped me to begin to know who I wanted to be as a therapist and what I had to offer to potential clients.

The final aspect of this exploration that I will examine is my development as a therapist and the ways that this client helped to define how I want to practice therapy.

Throughout the months that I spent with Brian I experienced many highs and lows. I lived through moments of unbelievable exhilaration as I sensed him reaching out to me and I underwent times when nothing seemed to make sense and it appeared that Brian was not interested in maintaining contact with me at all. As I looked back over these sessions and the myriad emotions that accompanied them, I tried to make a connection to other relationships that I had known. I realized that each relationship develops its own rhythm over time and the participants experience periods of coming together and being in tune with one another but periods of moving away also play an important role. In any

intense relationship that I have been involved in, I realized that there were points when I needed to withdraw from the other to be with myself for a time. I also came to understand that I only felt safe in taking the space that I needed because I trusted that the other would not disappear. My alliance with Brian followed a similar pattern and when I recognized this fact, I was able to feel a personal sense of satisfaction in the progress we had made as partners in the therapy. Each relationship is unique and I wondered how what I had learned from this relationship would help me to better understand others. I think that I discovered the necessity of not entering into an alliance with preconceived notions about the client or myself. I also realized that it is important to be open to the possibilities that exist within the client but also within oneself. I have learned that therapy is about change, and in order to effect change one must first be aware of the situation in the here and now.

Conclusion

It is difficult to arrive at a conclusion when one has worked with a single client in a somewhat exclusive manner. Because I did not have access to many other aspects of Brian's life, I am only able to draw conclusions based on the work in which we engaged.

When I decided to explore dramatic play therapy within the limits of a single case I knew that the results of the work would also be limited by the frame of this process. The changes that occurred in both Brian and I were, I had to acknowledge, specific to this particular relationship. It is a complex process to generalize the learning from one interaction to others. Higgins (1993) states

Generalisations in single-case research can only be built up through systematic replication, since each piece of research can only refer to the particular case under scrutiny. But this pattern of generalisation applies to case-lore in general and is a further instance of the closeness between single-case research and clinical practice (p. 98).

This kind of work, however, can continue to be explored with other children diagnosed with autism. The changes that Brian experienced hold promise that this method has something valuable to offer to clients within this population. The clinical application of dramatic play therapy based on the developmental stages and needs of each child is an area that requires further investigation. I believe, as Greenspan and Wieder (1998) have discovered, that treating each child as a unique being with unique needs is the key to creating an environment in which a child with autism feels safe enough to venture out into the world.

There are several elements of this study which are important for future work. The first is the implementation of a dramatic play therapy model based on a developmental continuum with a child who has been diagnosed with autism. Secondly, my assumption that Brian belonged to a specific culture which had evolved from his diagnosis of autism, as I also belonged to a particular culture which influenced my role as therapist. Finally the processing of the work through art. Each of these factors contributed to the unique perspective from which this case was explored.

It is impossible to replicate the conditions under which a relationship developed in order to examine whether the resulting changes were valid. I do, however, believe that it is possible to transfer the learning from one situation to another. The work that I engaged in with Brian gave me a foundation on which to base future work with this population and it afforded me an unequalled opportunity to discover the world from another's perspective. Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned from this experience was to never assume that I know what is best for a client. I have come to understand that it is my role ..."to journey with the patients as they explore and discover the meanings of their lives, reflected in their creative work (Moon, 1990, p. 55).

In conclusion, I would like to quote a poem by Thomas McKean, a man with autism, which I found in Cohen's (1998) book, *Targeting Autism*.

Build Me A Bridge

I have known that you and I
have never been quite the same.
And I used to look at the stars at night
and wonder which one was from where I came.
Because you seem to be part of another world

and I will never know what it's made of.

Unless you build me a bridge, build me a bridge,

build me a bridge out of love... (McKean, 1994, p. 43)

I hope that I have helped to build a bridge with Brian through the play
and that through this recording of the work in which we engaged other
bridges will also be built.

Figure 1
Session 3
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons

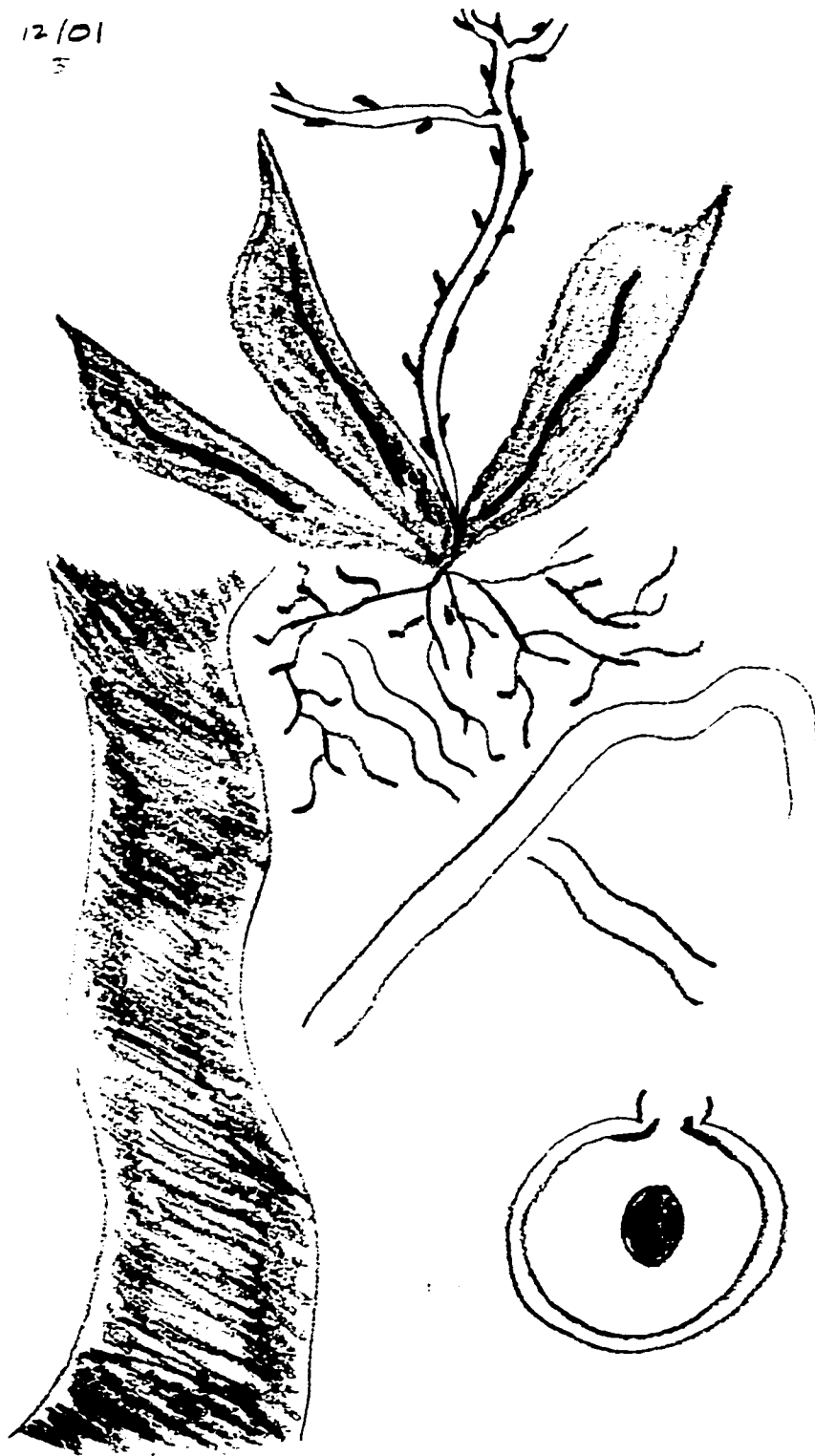


Figure 2
Session 4
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons

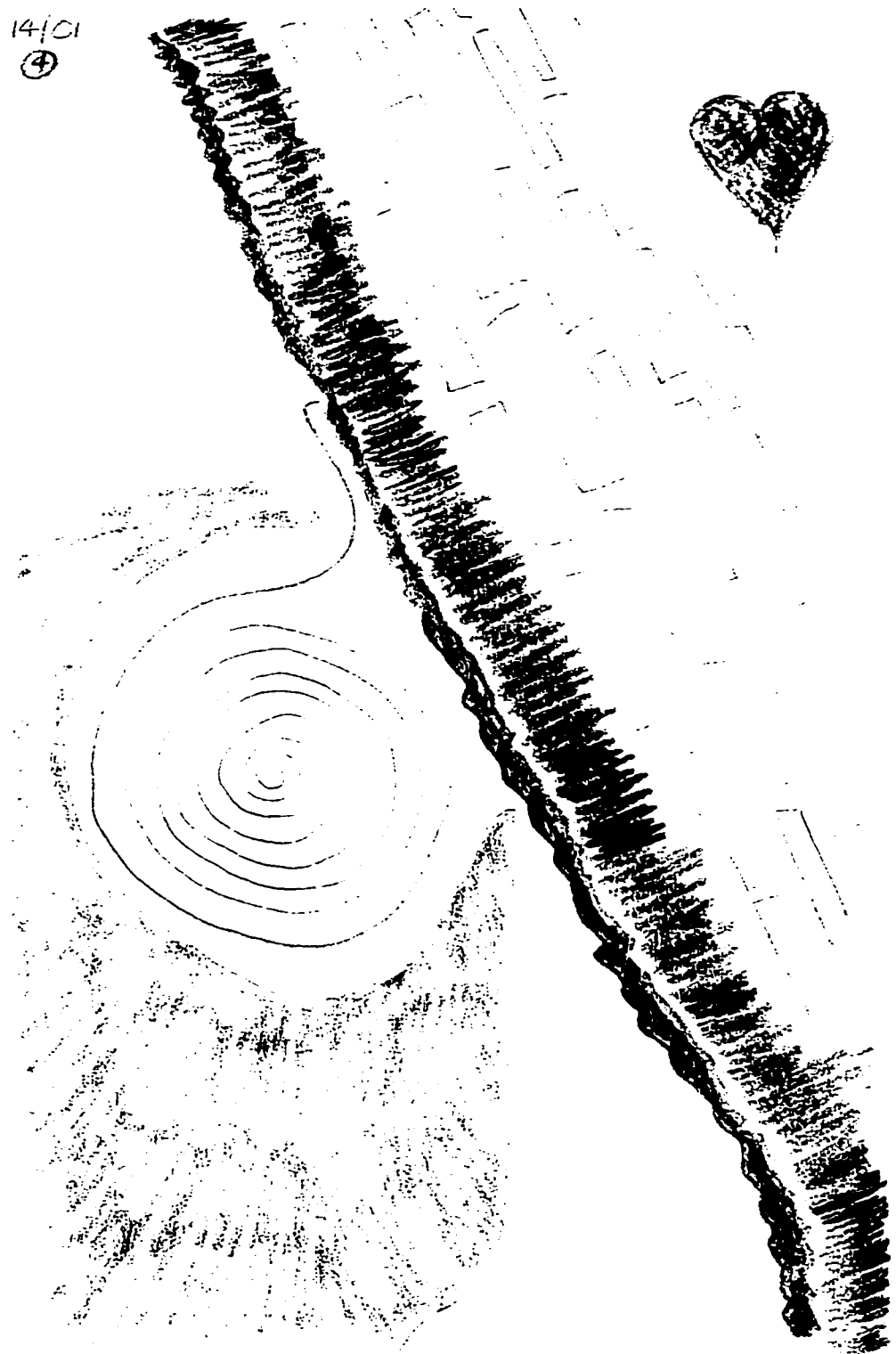


Figure 3
Session 16
Materials: Bond paper, magazine images and pencil crayons



Figure 4
Session 12
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons



Figure 5
Session 13
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons

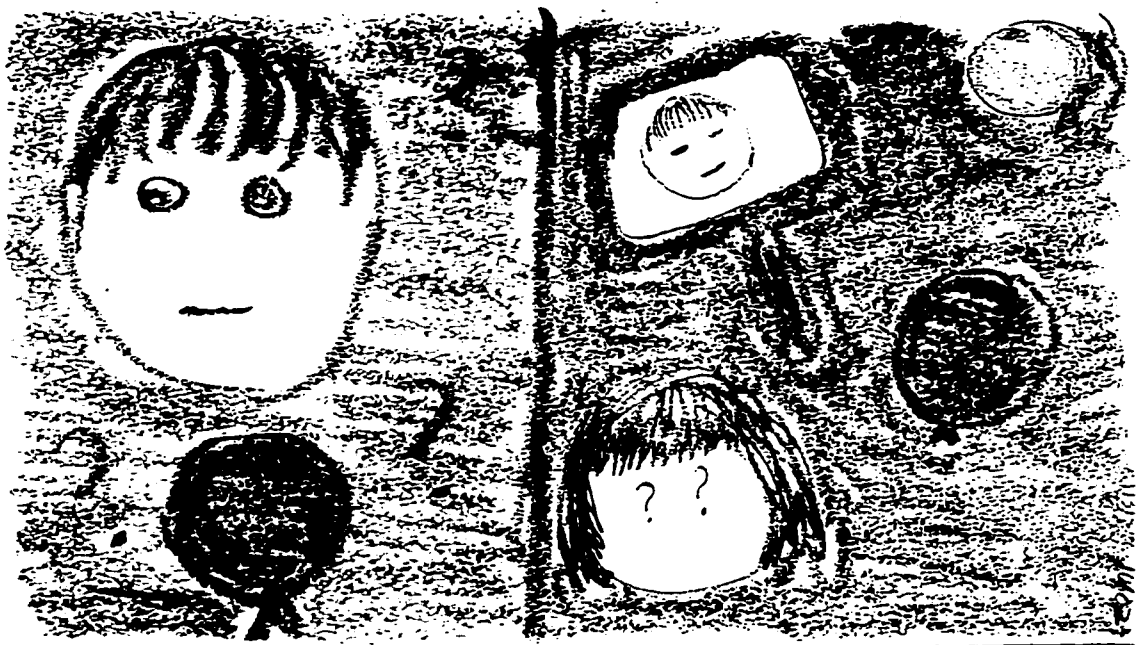


Figure 6
Summary drawing following sessions 5 - 8
Materials: Drawing paper and pencil crayons

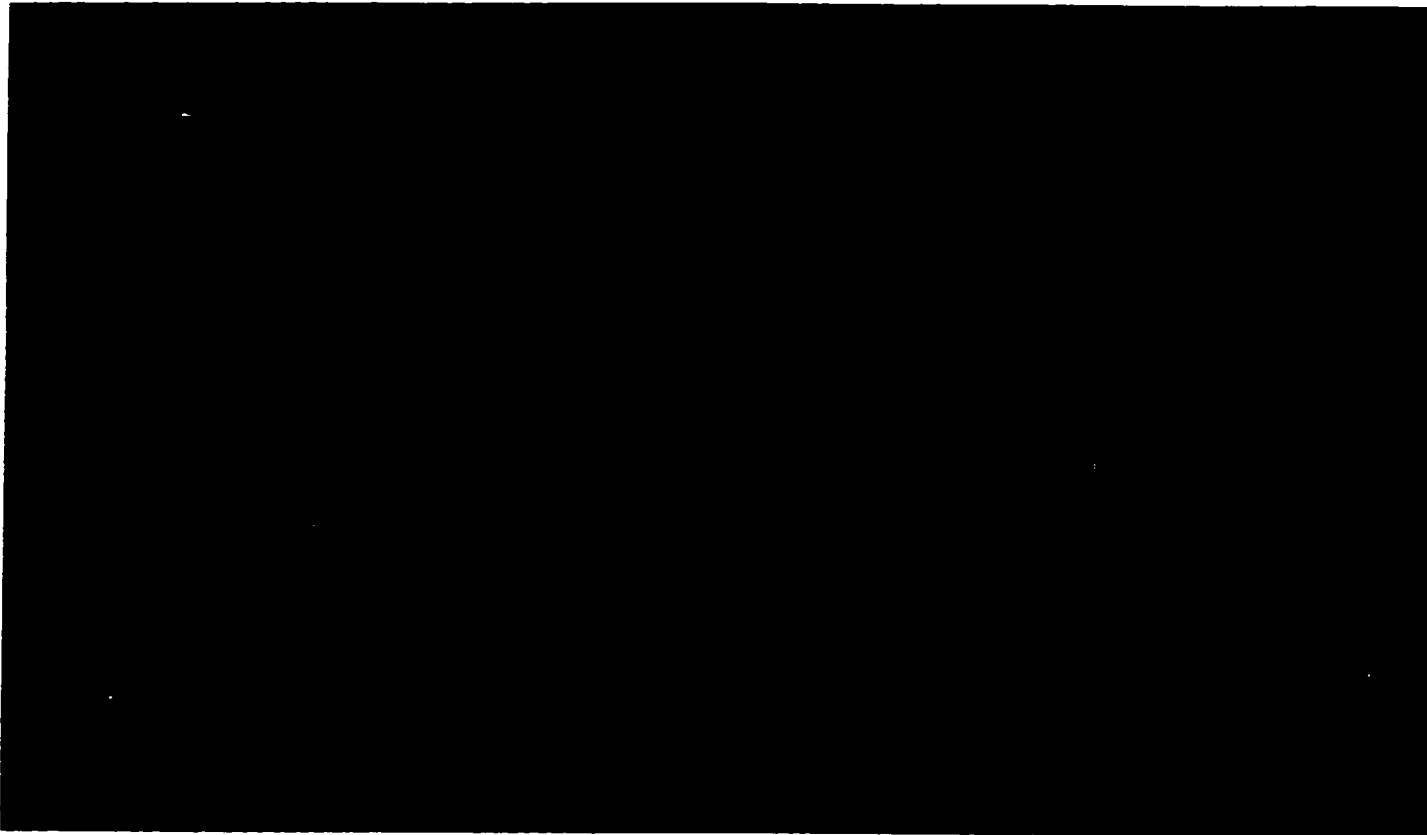


Figure 7
Session 17
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons

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⑪

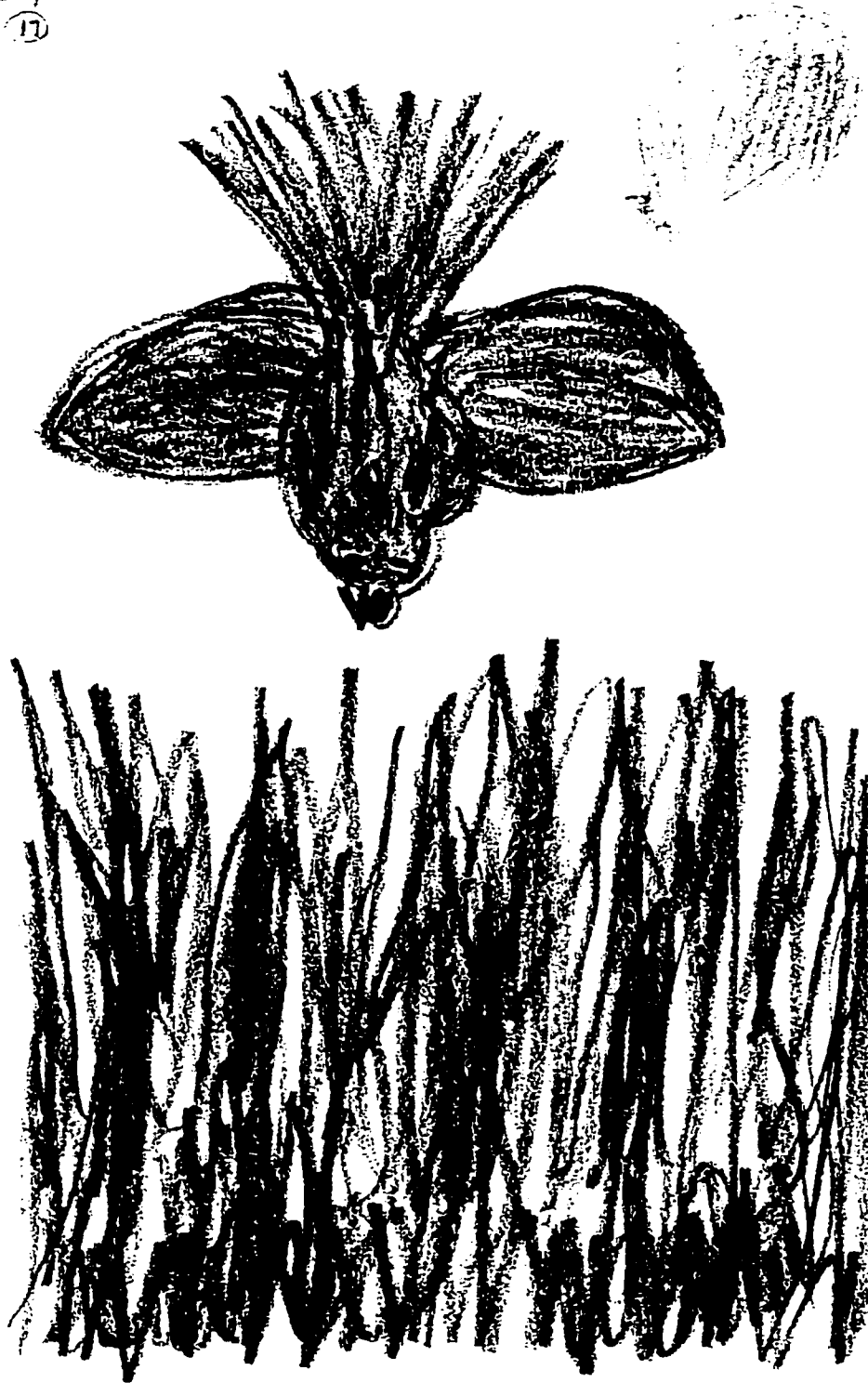


Figure 8
Session 20
Materials Sketchbook and pencil crayons

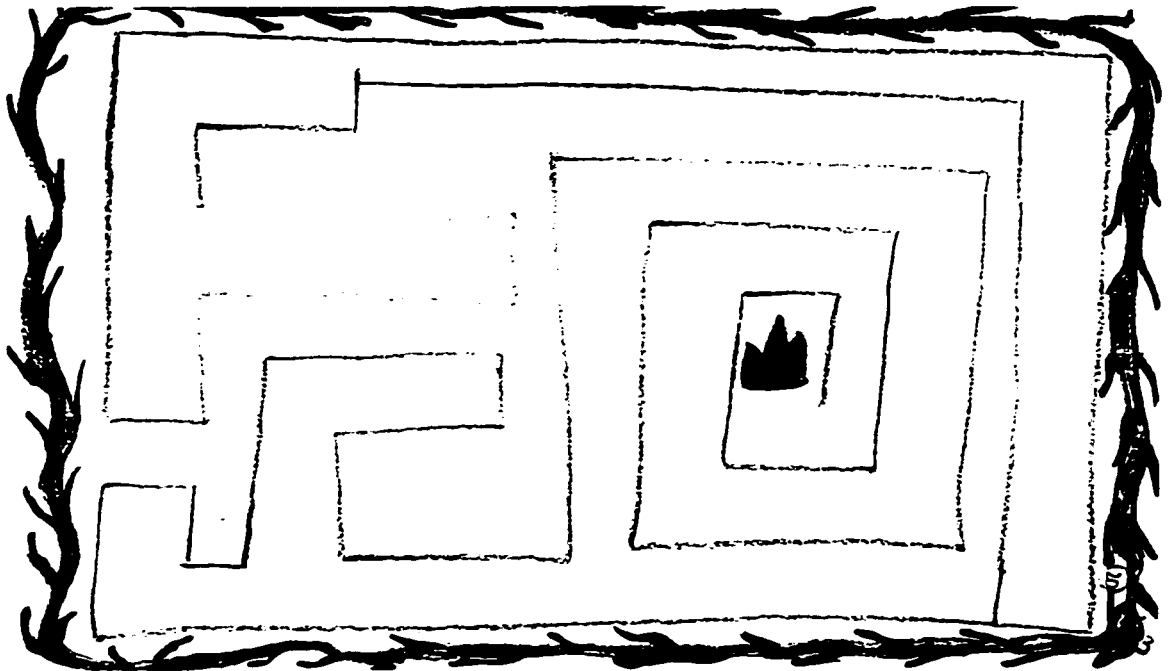


Figure 9
Session 23
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons

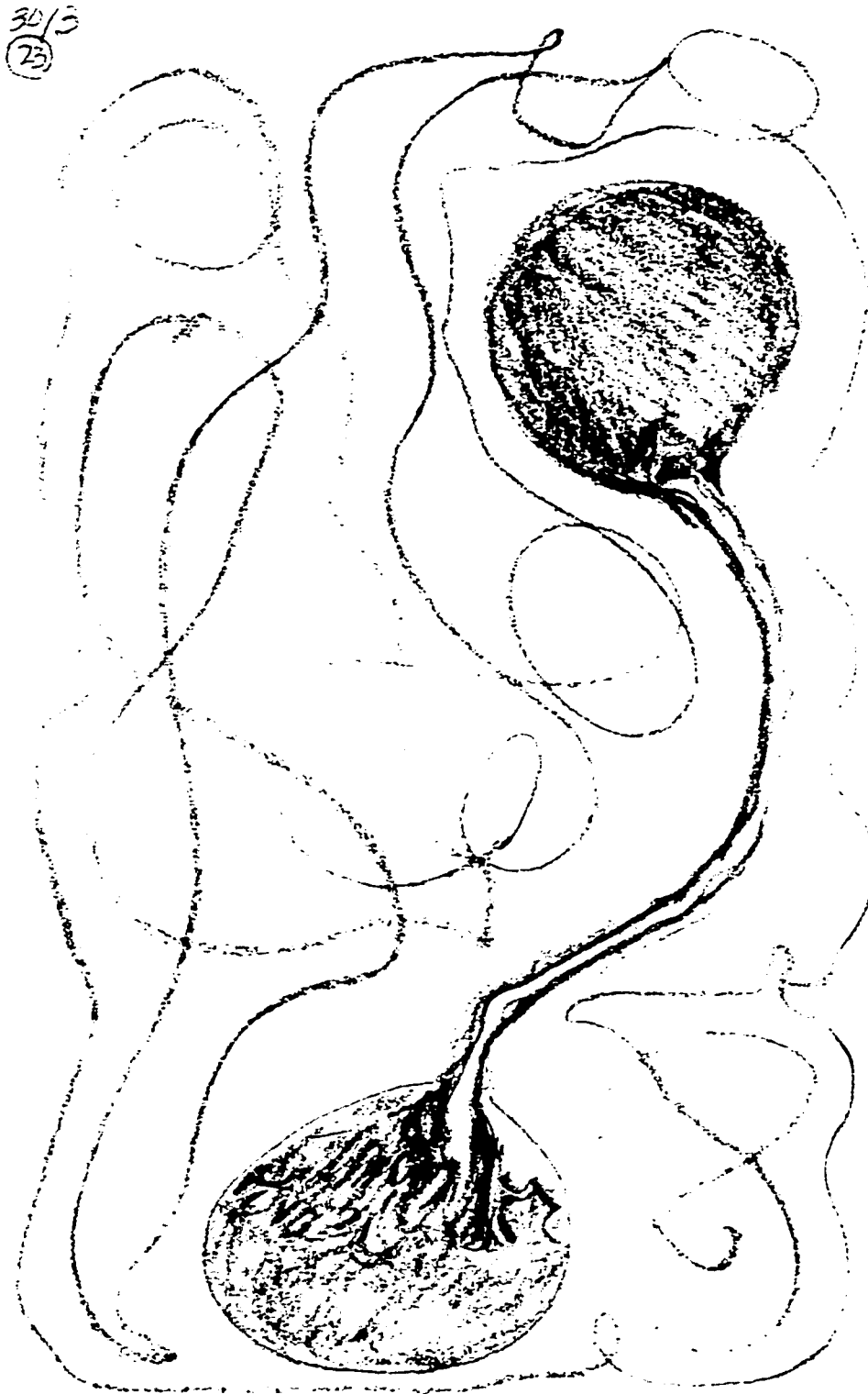


Figure 10
Session 24
Materials: Sketchbook and pencil crayons

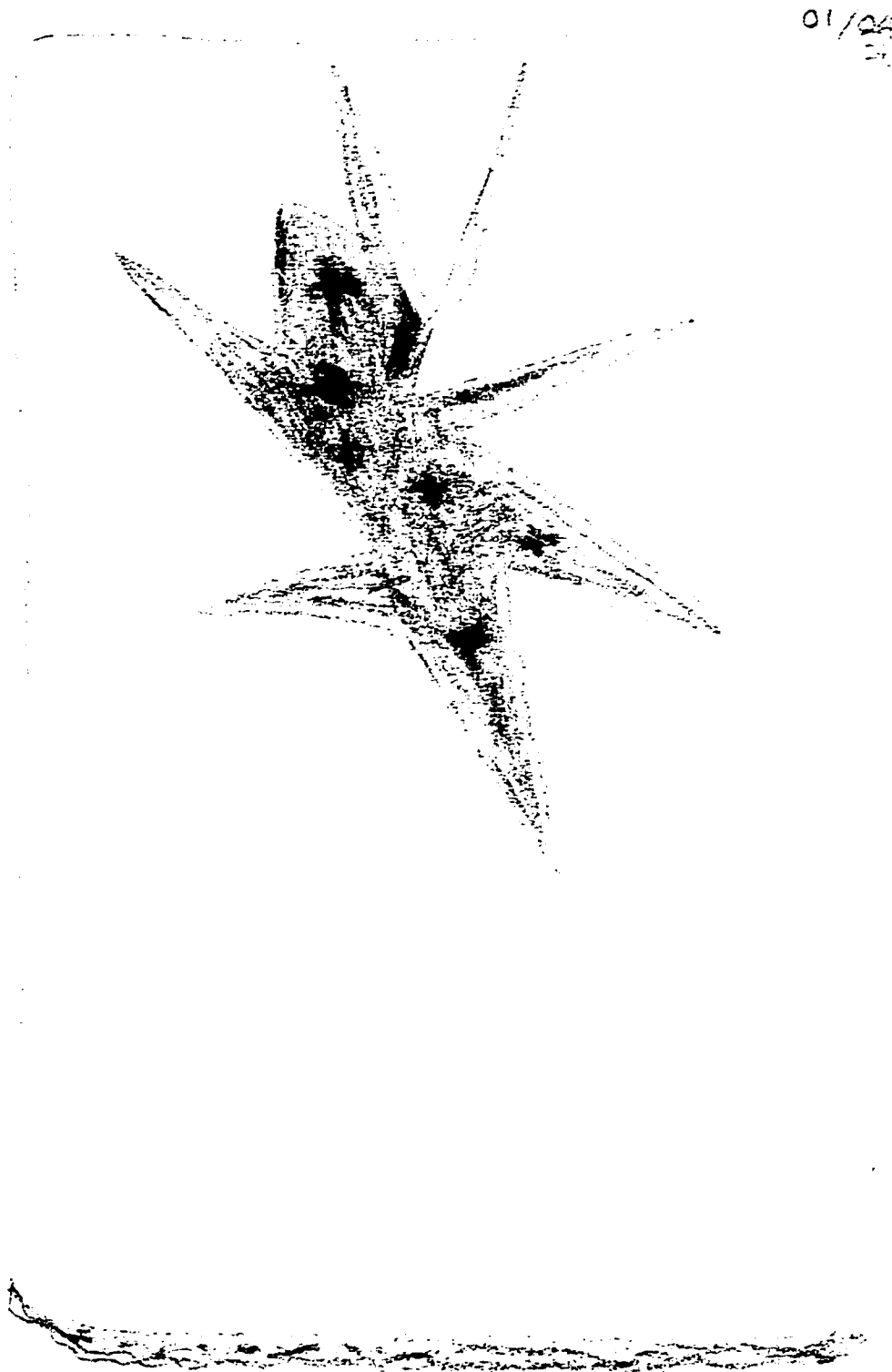


Figure 11
Session 25

Materials: Sketchbook, pencil crayons and watercolour pencils

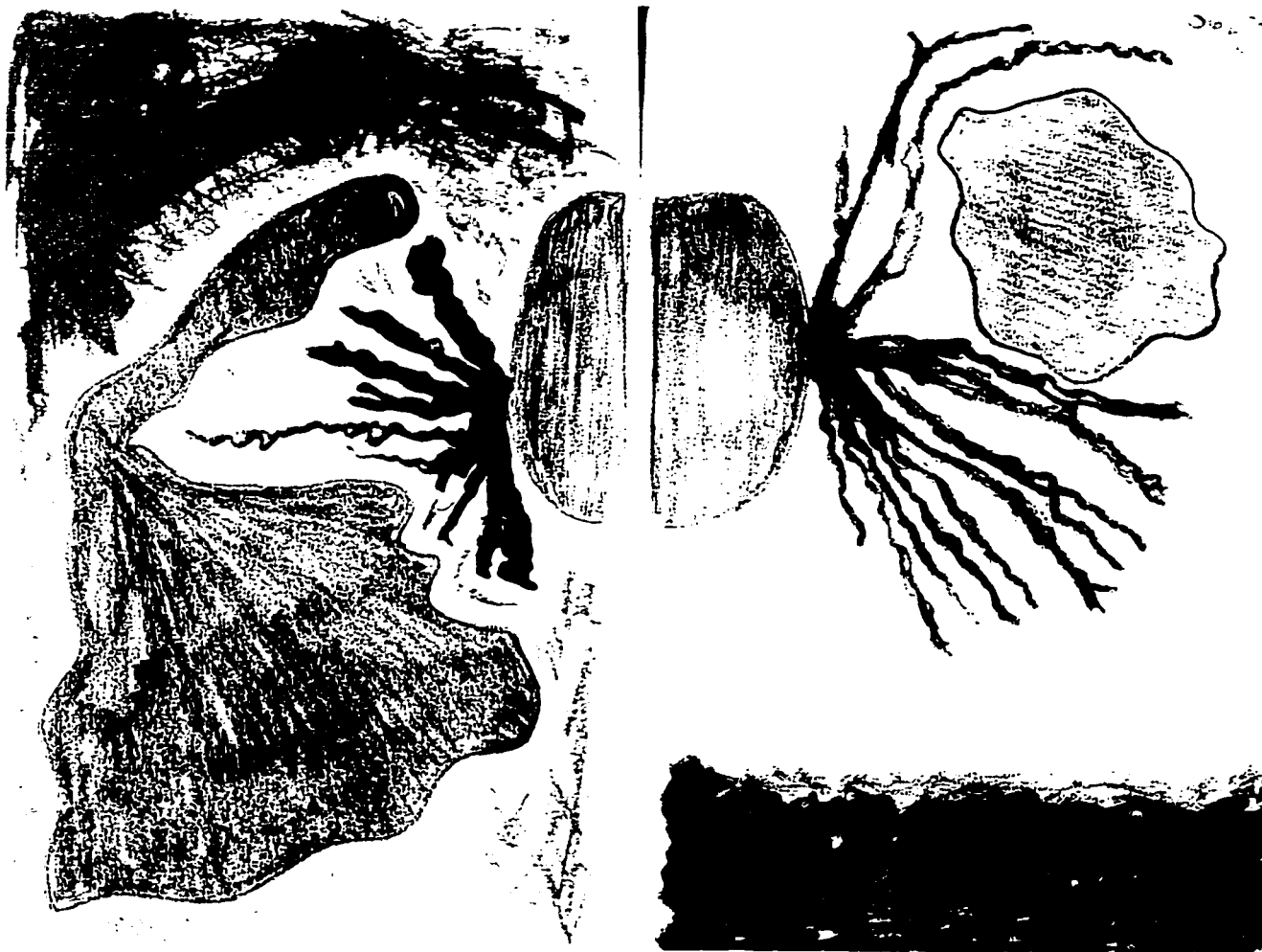


Figure 12

Session 26

Materials: Sketchbook, pencil crayons and watercolour pencils

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26

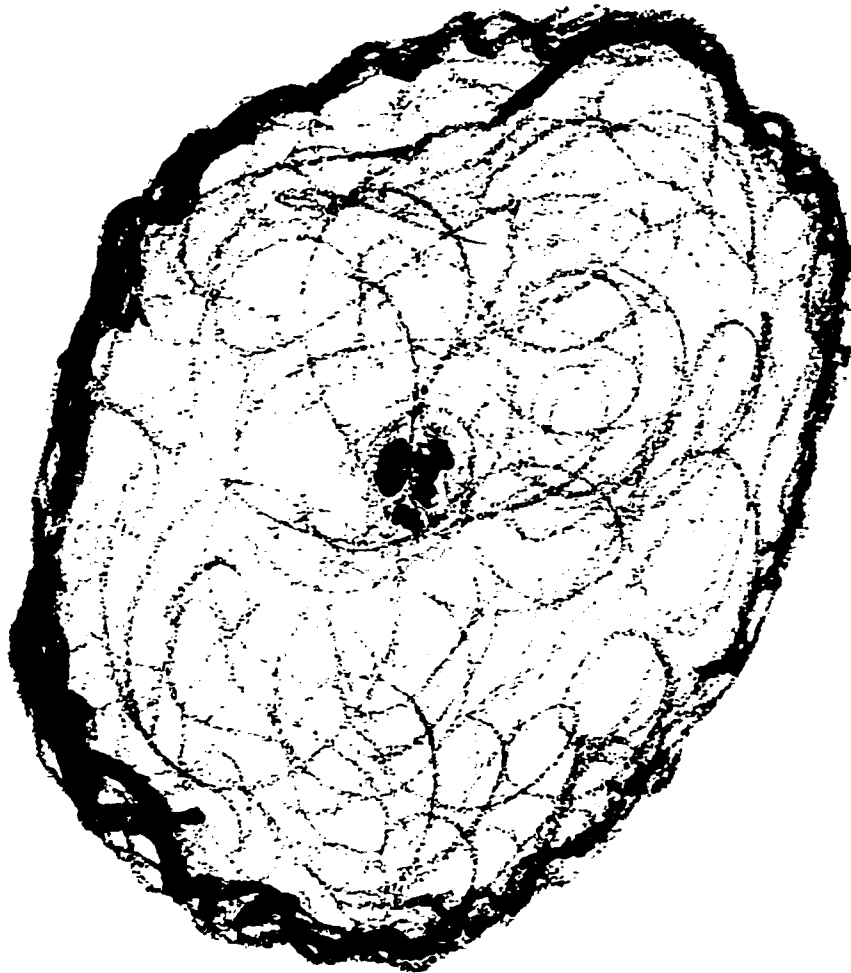


Figure 13
Session 27

Materials: Sketchbook and watercolour pencils



Figure 14
Session 28

Materials: Sketchbook, painting crayons and watercolour pencils

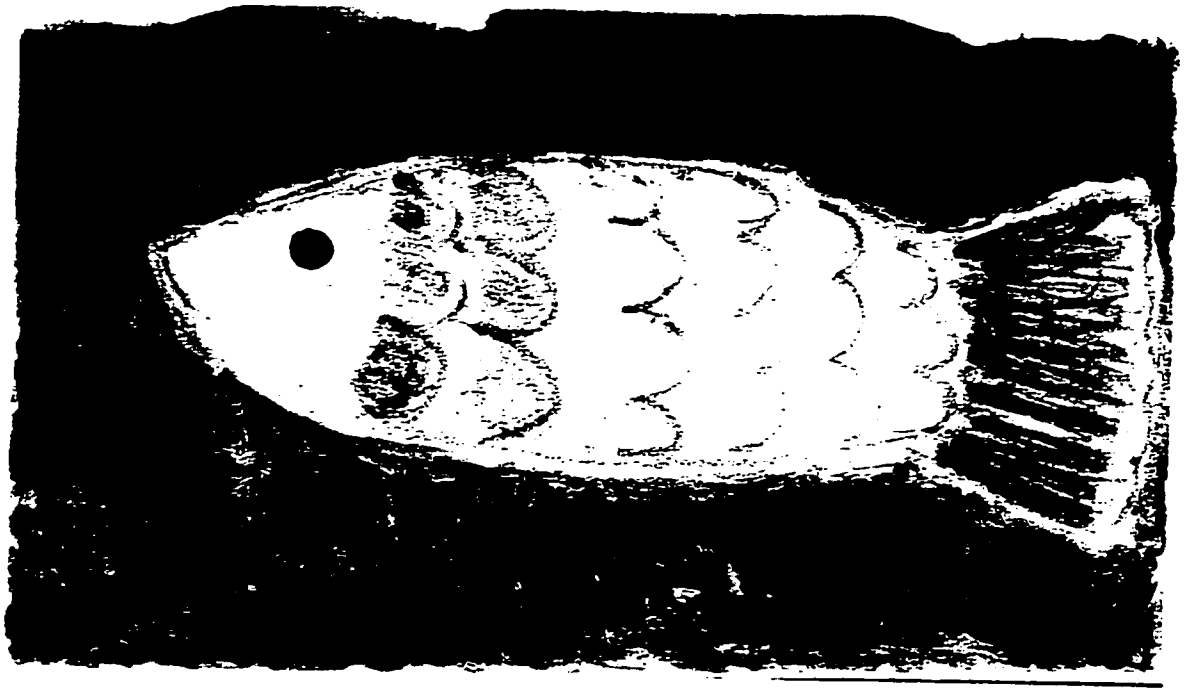
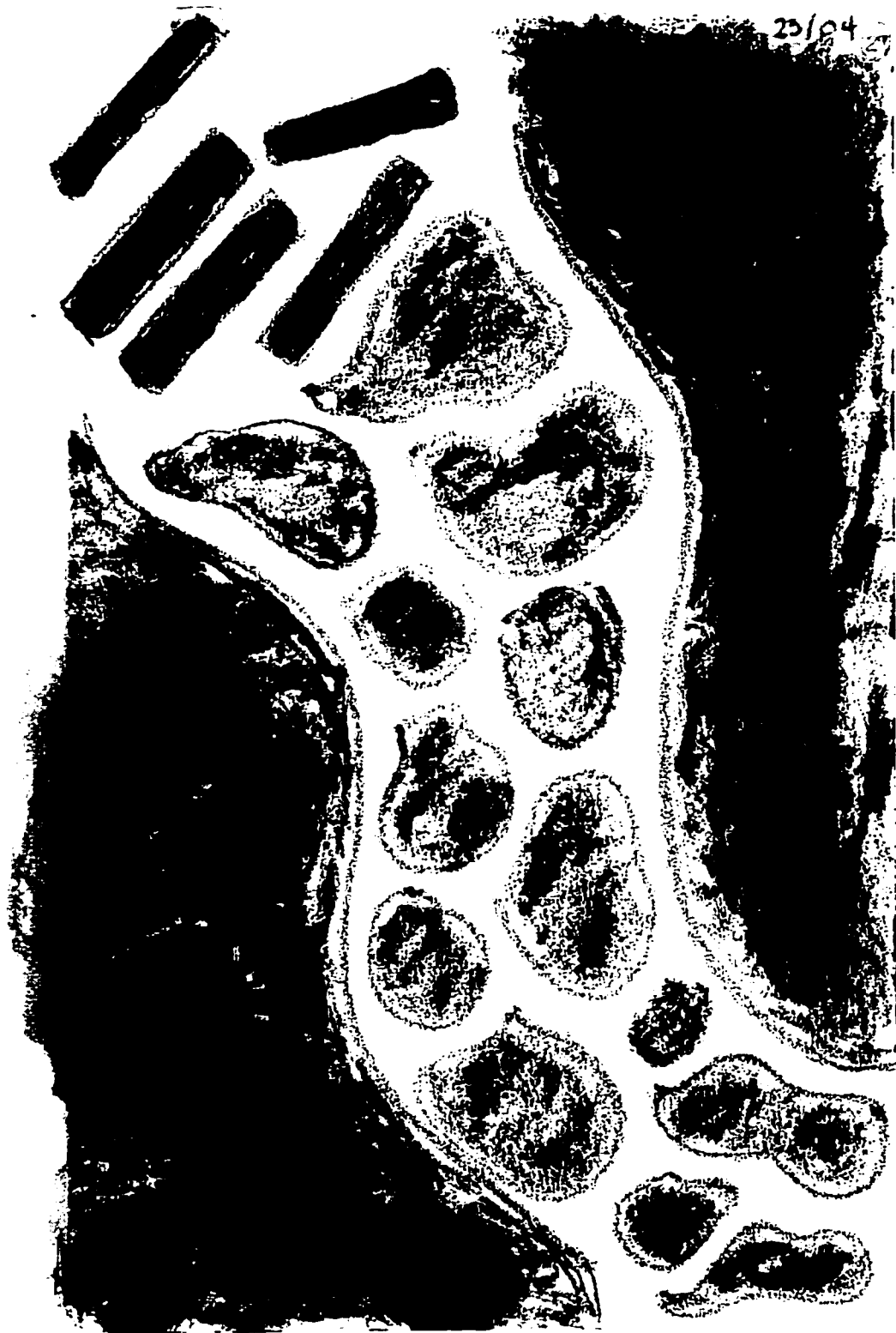


Figure 15
Session 29

Materials: Sketchbook, painting crayons and watercolour pencils



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APPENDIX I

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

0-3 months

- Skin and touch sensitivity***
- Empathy with mother**
- Mouth and hand play***
- Sound repetition and vocal play***
- Surprise at face**

3-6 months

- Postural cues***
- Movement repetition***
- Interest in bodily things***
- Interest in faces***
- Play with food**
- Play with toys***
- Excitement at familiar things***
- Laughs at surprise***
- Moves and 'sings' with parent**
- Crescendo ('This Little Piggy Went to Market')**

6-12 months

- Crawling/walking***
- Development of personal circle around body**
- Pretends to be mother ('the primal act')**
- Anticipates climax***
- Makes others audience***
- Clear purposes, goals**
- Demands attention***
- Repetitions***
- Sound games***
- Gestural language***
- Explore objects - realizes their existence***
- Delight at outcome***
- 'Peek-a-boo'**
- Jokes**

1-2 years

Insatiable curiosity
Mischievousness
'Me' and 'mine'
Exchange with others
Words developing
Dances
Pretence actions*
Makes toys pretend
Pretends objects are toys
Relates toys to one another (doll in another toy)*
Makes exits and entrances
Carries treasures about
Crayons in fist
Being chased or chasing
Explorations: length/weight/number/size*
Makes rules
Makes music in time, rhythm
Makes 'homes' (boxes, cloth)

2-3 years

Movement flexibility: speed, rhythm, up/down, front/back
Strategies (offers, bargains)
Running commentaries
Sentences develop
Complete sequences of action (time)
Personifies parent routines
Time: 'in a minute'/'in a little while'
Group choral games
Crayons in fingers
Joins toys in pretence
Change roles
Narratives continued
Hide and seek/'house'/tag

3-4 years

'Why?'
Puzzles ('it fits')
Takes turns, sharing*
Group games
Good gross motor control
Early grammar

Exaggerated stories
'Follow the leader'
Space differences made
Participates in narratives
Matching games (buttons/boxes)
Makes pretence environments
Runs from 'monsters'
Dressing up
Pretence emotions
Groups of characters played
Acts problems/fairy tales

4-5 years

Fine motor control
Secrets, surprises
Grammar develops
Group pretence play
Early conscience
Friends and enemies
Seeks approval from peers
Highly imaginative roles
Different voices
Symbols distinguished from reality
Gymnastics
Free movement to music
Relay races/creeping
Pretends to tell time
Games of order ('Ring around a Rosy')
Play rituals (possession, sequences)
Consciousness of roles of others
Puppets
Anticipates future*
Invents narrative
Begins to learn to avoid aggression
Relies on own judgment

5-7 years

Learns time beat
Boy/girl/baby play (sex)
Group play
Groups move in large circles
Role flexibility

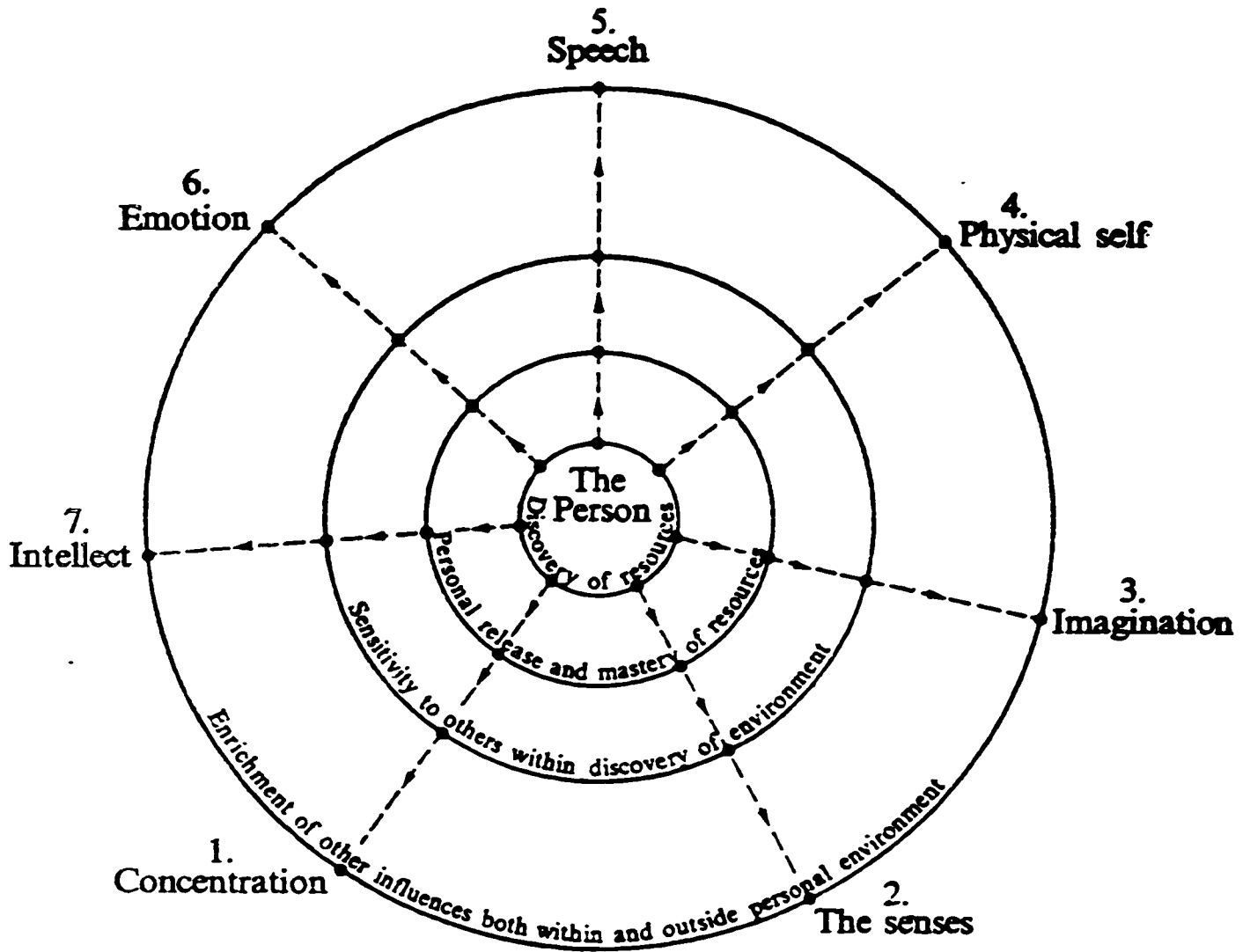
Social roles begun (teacher/pupil)
Caricature
Games of acceptance ('Farmer in the dell')
Playful conversations
Improvises movements, objects, characters, situations
Analogy/animism
Difficulty in distinguishing fantasy and reality
Makes costumes/clay models
Chasing and running games
Left/right awareness
Realistic themes
Episodic plots (picaresque)
Movement: 'big/small/grow'

* These behaviours and developmental milestones were exhibited by Brian throughout the drama sessions. Because of the concentration of behaviours at the early developmental levels, I structured the beginning sessions with Brian at the embodiment stage.

This Developmental Checklist was reproduced in *Playtherapy with Children: A Practitioners Guide* (1993), Sue Jennings London: Oxford Blackwell Scientific Publications from *Drama in Therapy, Volume 1, Children*, (1981) edited by R. Courtney & G. Schattner, New York, Drama Book Specialists.

APPENDIX II

A CIRCULAR REPRESENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT



Reproduced from Way, B. (1967). p. 13

APPENDIX III

Transcripts of Reflections on the Art - Session 1 through the Last Session

Session 1

The first drawing - this is our first session after Christmas. The break has been too long. I feel as if I have to start over again. The beginnings of a relationship have been formed and now I wonder if Brian remembers. In the drawing I see smiles, I see movement, I see hills and a bird pushing upward trying to get through. Is the bird Brian or is the bird me? I think it's me. I think it's me trying to move closer to Brian. at the top of the picture there is something yellow and glowing surrounded by jagged blue lines. There seems to be so much distance between myself and Brian. He is so protected. There are so many layers between him and I. Maybe just the fact that the bird is in the picture - that the bird is in the room with him is enough for now. Slowly, slowly - that's what I have to keep telling myself. This is not something that is going to happen quickly.

Session 2

Brian is absent today. My heart is heavy but in my drawing it looks like a balloon, a kite with many tails. It's such a letdown when I go to get him and he's not there. A ring at the bottom of the picture - a double ring that's not quite connected. It reminds me of a stone. That old song "May the Circle Be Unbroken" but it is broken. Maybe that's the way in. Maybe that tiny opening is a way for me to go in.

Session 3

When I look at this picture I feel such hope. Every thing in it reminds me of growth. There's an egg in the corner, again that circle with the opening but today the opening is a little bigger. There is a little more space in

which to move. A plant with strong green leaves and buds upon its stem, roots that seem to go deep into the ground, a path. Perhaps today we have begun our journey. Perhaps today we really started out. The path doesn't go anywhere but maybe that's because I don't know where it's going to lead. That's up to Brian. In this drawing, I see handing over the lead to him. I see letting him take over, lead the way. I see hope. I see beginnings. I see connection.

Session 4

In this picture there is a definite division. There's a wall. There are bricks but there seems to be nothing in between them. There's no cement holding them together. It's as if they're just floating in space but a wall none the less. A wall that seems as though it would be easy to penetrate. And there's that yellow thing - that bright yellow. The heart which seems to be Brian. He is at the heart - the heart of what we are trying to do together. On the other side of the wall there is a spiral - a spiral that's enclosed - enclosed almost by pincer-like appendages. They're not closed - they're not holding it in tight. Almost as if they're protecting the spiral. There's one tentative strand of the spiral that's looking for a way into the wall. I wonder what will happen when the spiral weaves its way through - when it meanders through the cracks and the openings in the wall - when it reaches that golden heart on the other side?

Session 5

Bubbles, clouds, lightness, breath. There is such a unity in this picture. Two mouths working together to keep the balloons, the bubbles aloft. The bubbles rise into the sky. Light and filled with air. It's a picture that makes me happy and it makes me sad at the same time. There's such a simple beauty in what's going on - the rising up, the lightness, the air, the clouds.

Session 6

Container. A strong, green line filled with red. The red all moving, moving towards the corner. Such movement, such energy. In fact in places, it seems as if it's overflowing the container. I wonder if I am strong enough to contain Brian. If I can hold everything he needs me to hold. What happens when a container leaks? What happens when tiny bits seep out? Does the frame change? It's in there and yet all around the perimeter there are tiny leaks, tiny places where just a tiny little bit escapes. Are those the parts I really need to know about? I am missing the key elements? Am I holding well enough?

Session 7

A. B. C. 1. 2. 3. Is it really as easy as that? I look at this picture, these letters, these numbers and I guess that day I felt it was easy. I felt that things went well. I felt that if I could just stick to the basics, we could build from there. Such feelings! When I look at these two pictures together - same colours used in such different ways. Red and green. Primary colours. No, they're not. Green's not primary, it's secondary. Blue and yellow. It's back to growth again, that green, that hope, that spring in the middle of winter. Is it as easy as just containing him? Or is it the fact that that is all I can do? Is offering him a place, a place to begin, the building blocks of language, the building blocks of abstract thinking. I look at the shapes now - the straight lines, the curves, the C looks like a container, placed in such a way that it could hold things, the B two eyes looking out, the 1 marching straight ahead, pointing up, up, up to the corner of the page. I know now, in retrospect, that it wasn't that easy. I guess then I thought..., no, I knew it wouldn't be. It was just a good day.

Session 8

I see a face, a face in the water, black features looking out from beneath the blue. Contain, contain, contain, contain! Everything's about containing. The water has such a strong edge - the reeds and the grass growing along its edge further contain what's in there - that face. The face that's looking out. What is it trying to see? Is it me trying to see Brian or is it him trying to figure me out? Reciprocity - back and forth - sharing. He's sharing. I know he is. He's giving me those things he thinks I need. He's looking at me. His face is willing me to understand. Is that the face I show to him as well? Am I willing him to understand me?

Session 9

Again the boundary, the container. This time though it is golden yellow. A colour that I've used so often for Brian. Black circle in the middle. The green, the growth, the hope. Containers within containers within containers. Roots, legs, lizards, swimmers, prehistoric fish moving, moving within their golden boundary. So many things keep repeating themselves - the green, the golden yellow, the circle. This time it's closed like a ball, like the earth with the swimmers traversing it. With the golden yellow radiating, radiating but keeping everything inside. I need to move beyond. I need to let myself be more open to the possibilities, stretch the boundaries a little, allow for the unexpected, the unknown.

Session 10 & 11

Another light day - balloons floating skyward in bright colours, orange and green and purple, blue and yellow. The puffy clouds in the background. Everything moving up, up. The positiveness just hits you in the face when you look at this paper. It's kind of a strange way to put it - positiveness hitting you in the face - it doesn't seem like a very positive reaction but that's how it feels. This was so definitively positive. Maybe it's too positive. Why do I question everything? It's so bizarre. It was good. This day was good. The green ball, the blues. The contrast in the picture of February 9th is astounding. A week later and I see anxiety, I see fear, I see tighter and tighter boundaries, I see things trying to get in, to infiltrate the boundaries, or are they merely illuminating, lighting up, showing the way. The boundaries in this picture are jagged again. They're not clear definitive lines. I wonder if it's a lack of confidence? I am doing the holding. Are the boundaries too ephemeral? Are they not strong enough? Is that why Brian is so tentative? Is that why he retreats? Is he testing, making sure that I can hold before he gives any more?

Session 12

A jigsaw puzzle, bright colours, lots of golden yellow, lots of green and purple, blue and red, the pieces all round and snugly fit together. Remarkably enough the pieces are all there. So many times I felt as if there was a piece missing in this puzzle, that there was something that I didn't have. Yet in this picture, everything is there, connected, snug, fit. There is so much closeness, so much support.

Session 13

Balloons again. Balloons and big-eyed faces. Wide-eyed with wonder - Question marks and the mirror. Question marks in my eyes. I have so many questions. Are the answers in his eyes? His eyes are big and brown and open and mine are question marks. His face in the mirror, reflected back, big eyes, brown eyes. So many things I don't know. Then I wonder do I really need to know them? Is it enough that I am here, that I provide a space, a time, a person who cares and supports and gives, encourages and accepts? I believe this is the key - that I just accept his wide brown eyes, that I accept whatever is offered without judgment without question. The questions are for after. The questions are for me.

Session 14

The coiled spring, pushed taut surrounded by green again. I guess I never really give up hope. It's always there somehow. The spring is so constrained, so taut. I feel there is frustration in this picture. I feel there is tension and anxiety. I look at it and I see something trying to get out. Strong boundaries, strong container kept in. There is no opening, top bottom, sides. It is totally self-contained. A container that is surrounded by green, surrounded by hope.

Session 15

Spirals again, tight ones, big ones, loose ones floating above a turbulent sea. Waves with black, blue, deep and scary. Profound, as though there's something underneath the surface. I wonder how the spirals remain aloft? They float so close to the waves yet not touching. Touching one another somehow connected - red to yellow, yellow to orange, tight to loose. The water is rough. This is not a calm sea. This is not a calm journey.

Session 16

I've made a collage this time. A collage of birds in cages, fences, knots. Beautiful colours reds. I look at a small figure in the corner with images in his head suspended on tentacles. I know that's me. That's me trying to make sense. Going from theory to theory. But again I look, I look and everything is contained. There are frames, there are cages, there are fences, there are boundaries. And it is the knots that connect the pictures. The knots are in me. I see myself trying to open things, untie knots, unlock gates, let birds go free but maybe that's not such a good idea. But then again, who am I to decide whether something should be caged or free? I look into my heart. I look through deep red, blood-red binoculars. How far can I see with these binoculars? Not very, it seems. They're clouded over, dark red with blood.

Spring Break - Client not at school

There's something new in my drawing today - angles. I've never seen such sharp, geometric representations. There are boundaries within boundaries, containers within containers but outside of it all the boundaries become soft again. They're curved and winding as they enclose the sharp edged geometric patterns. The soft curved boundaries open allowing things in, allowing things out. The triangles and straight-lined shapes allow nothing in or out. The red core deep in the centre has no where to go. It is bound on every side. The soft grey meandering pink that surrounds it softens but can't change or perhaps it's the sharp-edged corners that pierce the softness.

Spring Break - Client not at school

A page of blue and purple - lines moving up, up to the corner of the page. Variations on a theme, theme of sadness. Blue, melancholy yet

there is energy. It isn't a sadness that has given up. It is a sadness that is moving. I believe I will move through this sadness. I believe, I believe that if I stay with the sadness, to feel it, to know my own sadness then perhaps I can better feel someone else's sadness. But I don't think that Brian was sad. I think that Brian was fine. I think it's my own projection of sadness. It's me feeling sad. It's me feeling sad, feeling inadequate, feeling as if I can't do enough. But how am I to even know what enough is. It's not something that is preordained. Enough is whatever. He'll take what he needs. Have faith in the work. Have faith in the process.

Session 17

When I look at this drawing, I look as if, I feel as if the bird, the bright red bird with the blue, blue eyes is diving straight into a fire. As the pink balloon floats off. Am I missing the point? Am I trying too hard? The wings open wide, the eyes staring straight ahead, they know exactly what they're doing. Perhaps the bird will veer up in the last second?

Session 18

A single leaf, round and pointed at each end. Very distinct veins. A strong green line going through the middle, holding everything together. Tightly enclosed, contained.

Session 19

Grey clouds, clear blue water but such dark foreboding things beneath the surface. This theme seems to be occurring in many drawings - something beneath the surface, something hidden away. Why, I wonder, is it dark, this day? I feel that I have tried to fit too many images into one picture - a cloud, an egg, the water, the dark shapeless masses beneath the water and in the centre of it all di di da. Bright and pink in the centre of it all. These are Brian's words. This is what he says, this is what he sings,

this is what he offers me. The purple egg, the yellow centre - this is what he gives to me. I think the darkness underneath is related to me. I think it is the issues, the things I have yet to deal with, the frustrations, the perceived set-backs, my rescue fantasies, not being fulfilled - dealing with that. Not pushing it under the surface, but dealing with that, dealing with the needs that I have in relation to this child. If not being able to shed those needs, at least being able to acknowledge those needs. To let them come out, not within the session but within my life. Only face them instead of keeping them hidden.

Session 20

A maze with a crown surrounded by thorns. There's my golden yellow again, my Brian, secreted away deep within the maze. Openings, they're there. First I have to get through the thorns. First I have to get through the branches that surround the maze. I think that it's impossible to get through those branches, those long thorns without getting hurt. For better or for worse, we're in this together.

Session 21

My picture is a small boy facing a brick wall. I see only the back of his head and all of those bricks piled one on top of the other. I'm not in this picture. I'm standing just outside. I am a witness not a participant. That role felt right. The little boy has strength. He has strong arms, straight legs. His hands are open. He will receive, if not from me, then from the wall. He will feed himself. He's not alone.

Session 22

Magenta lines that swirl around the page, snakes hidden within those lines. Long tongues, scowling faces, a bug's eyes. Insects, small and green, clinging to brown branches. No beginning, no end, just a

continuous line that flows across the page hiding things, revealing things. I sense what is in there. I am not a witness today, I'm in there. I am in the maze, I am in the magenta lines that flow across the page. These lines keep things safe. They contain. They hold. They hide. They reveal. They go back upon themselves and then they move to somewhere new. This page reminds me so much of a therapy session. A series of therapy sessions, going forward, going back, revisiting, moving on, discovering, losing, finding again. A process between two people that is so intimate, so close, so alive.

Session 23

Green lines flowing across the page today, continuing. In the midst of it all there seems to be some kind of scientific set-up, some orange container that is flowing into a blue container. The blue container, lower down, and the liquid that is contained within it is flowing up like magic. It's made such a tiny little inroad into the orange but it's there. The blue is rough, like waves, windblown. The orange is calm, gentle, relaxed. The orange flows into the blue and settles on top of it. The blue almost seems to be pushing it's way into the orange. It's not being rejected but there's such a small space made to accommodate it. The boundaries are less clear.

Session 24

Strong boundaries once again. Orange, square hugging the edges of the page. A sharp angled creature within. Blue and full of stars. A crack in the window that allows a piece of the night to show through. A star shaped break that allows just a small glimpse of what's outside. An opaque window that you can't see through. Only through the broken part. That's all there is. There's nothing more. And at the very bottom there's red. Is it blood? Is it pain? Is it things that have been broken in order to see?

Session 25

Everything is flowing, undulating across the page. Strands of blue reach out. Turquoise water lies just below. Nothing hidden this time. It's clear you can see to the bottom. Yellow sky, bright, too bright. It hurts your eyes when you stare too long at it. A purple hose, an appendage that has an eye at the end that is searching, seeking out what is unknown. Feeling for what is around it. The picture worries me on some levels. I don't know what is going on. I can only describe it because the feelings ... the feelings don't make sense. There's calm and yet it's not calm at all. And when I talk about turquoise water it sounds as though there is something beautiful here but it doesn't feel beautiful. It feels frightening, things are being assailed. The calmness is not real. There's something else going on.

Session 26

A green mass swirling in the centre of the page. A smaller version of that purple hose looking up, no where near the green mass. The green mass has such a strong boundary. It's dark and it's thick. Nothing will get through this. It's as if the purple hose is looking, trying to see a way in. The

green mass is swirling, it's moving. At its core there's black and red. A small core that seems to guide it. If I look closely at the purple hose, at its core there's also black and red. Smaller. There is a connection. These two things have made a connection. It's not strong but it's there. This comes through much more clearly.

Session 27

There's an overwhelming sadness in this picture. Almost a frenzy. Black surrounds everything. Purple and blue move up and down the page. Lines have gone astray. Things aren't working out the way they were supposed to. There's a lot of hopelessness now. This is not the way it's supposed to be and I'm very unhappy about it.

Session 28

A silver fish with a purple tail in a turquoise sea. One blue eye. It's beautiful. Who is it, I wonder? Is it me? I guess it's all me on some level. Or maybe it's Brian swimming through me. Perhaps I am the turquoise sea, perhaps I am the purple tail, perhaps I am the blue eye. I don't know. Am I the guide, am I the one who sees, or am I the turquoise sea that supports the fish? I'm sure he's the fish. The silver, the innocence, the joy. I'm sure that's him. I would like to think of myself as the sea, the support that guides him along even though he's not here.

The Last Session (Session 29)

The path is there. The boundaries are there. The hope is there. The golden stones, the stepping stones, the moving on. We're both moving on. There are small red flowers in the grass, perhaps seeds that have been planted. Perhaps seeds that Brian has planted in me. I guess I don't really know if I've ever planted a seed in him. I think I have. I believe that the time we have spent together has been worthwhile. A drawing of the

boundaries, I realize how important they are to me. Throughout our work together, those boundaries have been necessary. Necessary for me and for him. Sometimes the boundaries move, sometimes they're very rigid. The path I've drawn on this 23rd (22nd) of April, it can go anywhere and I think that holds true for myself as well as for Brian. He has many places to travel as do I. I think that the things he has taught are about giving space, accepting, waiting, allowing, playing. The art has been, I think, my way of playing, my way of processing what he has given me. The end.

Transcripts of the Reflections on the Summary Drawings

Sessions 1 - 4

Yellow - everywhere I look there is yellow. There is movement but it feels very chaotic. It doesn't seem to have a purpose. I wonder if I am feeling purposeless as we begin again. I see the boundaries that I have imposed on the image and yet these boundaries do not seem to be serving any real purpose. They don't seem to be keeping anything in or out. I feel a little like that about our sessions. I don't seem able to keep things in or out. I can't keep the comments of the teachers from entering our space - those small green marks everywhere remind me of their comments. They just seem to appear when I least expect them. I wonder what the darkness in the centre is? It seems to be at the heart of the drawing and I have referred to Brian as a heart before. What is this black. I feel somehow that it is me and the negativity that I cannot seem to prevent. It is so small and yet my eye is drawn to it just as I am drawn to the comments of the teachers - the experts. Seeing the blackness gives me power. I know it is there so I can be aware, alert. If I am expecting it - does expecting it cause it to happen - I can be prepared. Expectations caused me a great deal of trouble at the start. Do I really want to go back there? Forewarned is forearmed. Be prepared.

Sessions 5 - 8

This picture is beautiful to me. I love the way that the colours move on the page. The explosion in the centre gives me energy and makes me feel alive. Again the borders, the containers play such a big role in my life and so in the therapy that I do. They are important as long as they serve a purpose in the work. These boundaries seem to be keeping us from one another although the space is shrinking. I wonder if the explosion of blue

can penetrate one of the containers that seems to be holding us. I wonder why I am not holding Brian. Why I am so enclosed? Is he shutting me out? I thought at first that he was the pink and now I think that he is the blue with the yellow visible beneath the surface. I can see that there is much below the surface but I feel as though I cannot reach it unless I create an opening. There is hope in this image but it too is serving a holding function. It keeps us safe from the blackness that surrounds everything. Perhaps Brian and I are becoming too self-contained. I need to learn about what his world is like outside of here. That I think is the blackness - the unknown. I feel that I am seeking answers but I do not know where to go or who to ask. The blue is definitely Brian. It is so fluid as it moves up the page toward me. It is me who has the hard edges and the sharp corners. Perhaps I am afraid that he will engulf me if I do not keep the boundaries firm.

Sessions 9 - 12

What a strange picture I have made. Fire burning out of control and yet it does not cross the boundaries of the transmission tower. The tower is such a complex structure. I wonder what I am trying to send. Why can't the fire pass through? What is it about this tower that can hold it back. The grass and flowers appear so normal like a small child's drawing across the bottom of the page. The tree intrigues me. Who are those faces peering out? How does it support itself so high above the ground with such fragile roots. It seems as if it should fall and yet it doesn't. Faith - perhaps having faith that it will stay erect is enough to keep it that way. Do I have enough faith in the work I am doing with Brian to keep going? The faces seem to be questioning what is going on? Where are the leaves? It

seems to be spring and yet the tree is bare. Perhaps the roots are strong enough to support the tree but not to feed it. The sky is so clear.

Sessions 13 - 16

The cages, the separation, the frame. All of these things keep repeating themselves. In this picture they seem isolating rather than embracing and securing. The crown suspended above the water housing the small gold creature. Is that what lives there or is that all that remains? Is it the creature or is it a shell? The face disturbs me as I look at it now. It reminds me of a mask - again a shell. It only comes alive when it is placed upon the face. Perhaps neither Brian nor I are in this image. Perhaps we have already been set free and nothing remains but the empty shells. The absence of green in this picture is striking to me. In most of the images I have created the hope is always somewhere within the frame or acting as the frame. It is not apparent in this picture. The water too is contained there are no waves just a smooth fluid border that seems to be holding the blackness in, under the surface. The blackness is in me. It is the wanting and the not knowing and the pieces missing from the puzzle. Perhaps those pieces will never be found but that does not mean that Brian will not free to express himself and create and grow. I knew I would find the hope - perhaps it is not in the picture but I have more of a sense of it within myself.

Sessions 17 - 20

The colours are the first images to hit me and then the gate comes into focus. It seems to stand between me and the colour, me and the creativity, me and the imagination, me and Brian. The gate does not seem to have an opening. The posts appear dangerous and able to cause pain. When I look again they seem to be arrows pointing to

something, away from something. The background is pink and it conjures up images of sunsets. Each opening tightly contains the colour mixture. It is beautiful in the way that the colours are blended within each space. Two colours coming together to form a new colour. That is what a relationship is in my experience - two people coming together to create something new not like either one of them but not unlike both of them. Maybe Brian and I are the mixed up colours and maybe we don't need to pass through the gate because we are both contained within it.

Sessions 21 - 24

Storm-tossed seas connections spaces dark and light. The green lines are they reaching up or down? When I looked at this picture they immediately seemed to be reaching up out of the sea, through the storm to something beyond it. This is my hope that moving through each session will take us to somewhere else. Brian is such a wonderful boy. I wonder if the black is how I perceive the autism as something dark that we have to journey through. The idea that it can be a positive part of his life encourages me. Others have found ways to live with autism, even embrace it once they have navigated childhood with supportive guides. The green lines of hope of passage seem so frail against the power of the storm and the sea. I guess nothing worthwhile is ever really easy. That was something my mother used to say to me when I became discouraged. I think it was her way of giving me hope and passing on her confidence in me. I hope that I am passing on that same confidence to Brian.

Sessions 25 - 28

We are really together. I feel that the intimacy of this drawing, the self-contained world of the drama space that we have created, is

overwhelming. Have I focused too much on this one relationship so that I am unable to see Brian in any context except with me? I don't think it is the case. I have tried to involve myself in other parts of his world but I am turned back, refused entry. So I focus on what we have, where we have been, and where we are going. I know that we are going to separate soon and each of us will have to leave the container of the relationship we have created. The purple and the green are both so strong. Each is capable of standing on its own. This shared space is growing and soon the shapes will move out into the turquoise sea - this sea is calm and welcoming. It will accept us both.

Session 29

This last drawing has so much potential. It could be anything. It might be a path going between a forest and an ocean. It may be two parts that were joined together once and have now separated like the continents as the world was formed. These two pieces look as though they once fit together but each one now seems independent of the other. There is a sadness in this picture and yet there is also strength. It feels as though the green is moving into the picture taking up more space and the blue is receding taking less space. I believe that this is the way that therapy should end - with the therapist moving out of the picture and the client coming fully into the picture.

APPENDIX IV

'Brenda and Edward were two happy dogs.' Thus opens the story of **'Brenda and Edward'** by Maryann Kovalski. It is the story of two dogs who assume very human roles in their community. They live in a house and Edward works as a night watchdog at a garage.

One day Edward leaves for work in a hurry, forgetting his lunch box. Brenda runs after him and follows who she believes to be Edward into the subway. She becomes frightened and disoriented when the other passengers begin laughing at her. She disembarks from the subway and finds herself in a strange part of the city. Again, she thinks that she spots Edward and hurries after him, only to be hit by a car. The lady who hit her takes her home.

When Edward returns home in the morning, Brenda is not there and he has been left no clue as to where she might be. He spends a long time looking for her but he never finds her.

Many years later, the garage owner begins to consider replacing Edward with a younger dog. **'This made him sad, but the saddest thing in his whole life had already happened when he lost Brenda, so he only sighed.**

On his last day a lady drives into the garage, opens her car door, and ...**'a smell came from the car that could belong to only one dog.'** Edward jumps into the car and refuses to leave so the lady decided to take him home.

The story ends:

'After a touching reunion, Brenda and Edward had dinner and watched the moon rise over the hills.

And after that they lived happily ever after,
two happy dogs once more."

APPENDIX V

The developmental paradigm Embodiment-Projection-Role (EPR)

Embodiment: Most prominent during the first year of life. Sensory experience, holding, whole and body parts.

Projection: Experiences are projected out into various toys and media. Media (e.g. sand and water) also heighten sensory experience. Toys take on roles and relationships and child controls outcome.

Role: Child takes on the role or the character and moves into different roles; integrates activity with role and creates the story or directs the drama.

Jennings (1993, p. 22)

APPENDIX VI

Key aspects of the play-drama continuum and components of each stage of play.

Sensorimotor play: Sound and movement: explores own body and body parts;

Contact with and physical exploration of objects;

Locomotion: rolling, crawling, standing, walking;

Physical relationship with another.

Imitative Play: Immediate imitation of a gesture;

Immediate imitation of a sound;

Immediate imitation of a facial expression;

Immediate imitation of movement of objects.

Pretend Play: Use of a combination of objects to represent other objects (e.g. pebbles to represent cakes);

Acting single pretend events (e.g. imitating drinking or digging, not in sequence);

Functional use of symbolic toys (e.g. using a pretend phone);

Brief wearing of other's clothes to signify imitation of another person (e.g. father's hat to indicate father);

Use of body to evoke/mime objects when not actually present (e.g. hand to mime an apple).

Dramatic Play: Continuous portrayal of others - people, animals (e.g. sustaining a series of activities as a fox);

Complex play with objects (recognising, acknowledging and interacting with others' use of objects);

Mastery of gross and fine motor skills in evoking and using objects;

Ability to use the body to pretend to be in a different, imagined reality;

Acting out make-believe situations (a short sequence of events) playing self or other for less than five minutes;

Ability to use objects as part of situations - props in make-believe play;

Simple games involving play identities (e.g. farmer and his wife);

Appropriate response and co-operation with others during play.

Drama:

Acting out make-believe situations (a sequence of events) playing self or other for more than five minutes;

Can keep in role and deal with interactions with others;

Can develop a sequence of imaginary events with others connected to roles being played;

Consciousness and use of audience performer space and relationship;

Can devise themes and prepare plot for enactment;

Ability to use script;

Division of roles in making drama (e.g. director/actor roles;

Consciousness of communication to others of a
dramatic product.

Jones (1996, p. 186, 187, 190 & 191)

APPENDIX VII

CONSENT INFORMATION

Drama Therapy Student: Susan Ward
(514) 634-3616

Supervisors: Irene Gericke, Douglas Hospital
761- 6131 local 22017
Christine Novy, Concordia University
848-4231

Background Information

One of the ways drama therapy students learn how to be drama therapists is to write a case study that includes case material and the drama process of a client with whom they have worked during their practicum. The purpose of doing this is to help them to increase their knowledge and skill in giving drama therapy services to a variety of persons with different kinds of problems. The long-term goal is to be able to better help individuals who enter therapy with drama therapists in the future.

Permission

As a student in the Master's in Creative Arts Therapies Programme at Concordia University, I am asking you for permission to write about certain aspects of the creative process and to include them in my paper.

Confidentiality

Because this information is of a personal nature, it is understood that your child's confidentiality will be respected in every way possible. Neither your child's name, the name of the setting where the drama therapy took place, nor any other identifying information will appear in the paper.

Advantages and Disadvantages

To my knowledge, this permission will not cause your child any personal inconvenience or advantages. Whether or not you give your consent will have no effect on your child's involvement in the drama therapy sessions or any other aspect of the treatment. Also, you may withdraw your consent at any time before the paper is completed with no consequences and without giving any explanation. To do this, or if you have any questions, you may contact my supervisor.

APPENDIX VIII

CONSENT FORM

Drama Therapy
Master's in Creative Arts Therapies Programme
Concordia University

I, _____, undersigned, give my permission for Susan Ward to write about my child's participation in the drama therapy session for inclusion in her Master's course paper in the Creative Arts Therapy Programme at Concordia University.

I understand that both my child and the setting where his participation in the drama therapy group took place will be kept strictly confidential and that no identifying information will be given in the paper. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time before the paper is completed, without explanation, simply by contacting the student or her supervisor. This decision will have no effect whatsoever on my child's participation in the drama therapy sessions or any other aspect of his medical treatment.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the implications of this consent, and I am satisfied with the answers I received.

I have read and understood the contents of this form and I give my consent as described above.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____