

See What I'm Saying

Fact-Fantasy Stage/Sequence



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Fact-Fantasy

Stage/Sequence

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Around 7 To 11 years

7 Years

Adam and Lisa, just arriving home from school, race each other to the refrigerator for a snack. Mother tells them that there are cookies on the table and juice in the refrigerator—and to be quiet because their baby brother is napping. The twins collect their afternoon treat and on the way out of the kitchen Mother hears Adam announce that he is going outside to play street hockey with some of the guys; Lisa announces she is on her way upstairs to check on her Cabbage Patch doll family and is expecting her girlfriend, Anne, to come over soon to see her doll collection.

Around age 7, Adam and Lisa are very likely to go their own ways whenever possible. Both children have identified with the parent of the same sex, and for the next year or so Adam will prefer to play with boys, and Lisa will prefer the company of girls. Some parental values become so much a part of their personality that now they often act and sound like their parents on issues of “right” and “wrong.” They are also acquiring new role models—teachers, television and movie stars, and sports heroes.

School continues to introduce Adam and Lisa to a variety of new learning experiences. At their own pace they will learn, through reasoning, how to move from the beginning to the end of a process and back again. Thought processes, in general, are gradually becoming more logical. They know the difference between closed forms—for example, how circles differ from squares—and they can distinguish between curved and straight lines.

The social need to communicate with peers and adults outside the home speeds the development of language skills. The use of words becomes more meaningful. Words are now an important aspect in determining the kinds of new relationships they will form and how Adam and Lisa will handle

encounters with other children and adults. Like most children this age, the twins still talk to themselves, usually when struggling to solve some problem.

By now, Adam and Lisa are not likely to draw any figure that cannot be recognized as male or female. More and more, their drawings will include a ground line and horizon line. The consistent appearance of these lines tells us that Adam and Lisa are at the proper stage of development for their age, with their two feet settled firmly on the ground as they learn more about their expanding environment.

At age 7, figures may still be facing front and not showing much movement, but this will gradually change as the twins' world stretches from home to school and they engage in more active play with their new friends.

A child may use a certain color for drawing because it is the only one available or because it is the one that appeals most to the young artist's curiosity and interest in experimenting. Only when important adults press for more realistic images do Adam and Lisa begin to suppress some of their natural spontaneity and creativity. Ideally, Adam and Lisa will be given art materials with no adult rules attached. Left to express themselves freely, they will first draw what they know and then what they see. As their cognitive and artistic skills improve, children's art expressions will tell us what they know and see and feel.

Let us look at some drawings from real-life 7-year-old children.

Eva, 7, tells us much about herself in just two drawings. In the first picture (Fig. 86), she has drawn a figure sitting on a horse. The way the horse's legs are drawn gives the impression of movement. Rider and horse are facing what looks like a gate or fence; in horseback riding terms this could represent a hurdle. The felt-tipped markers have been used so heavily that it is not easy to see exactly where ground meets sky, but the horizon line is there. It is also difficult to tell whether the figure is male or female. The proportions of the objects—excluding the oversized sun marked with Eva's real name—are relatively the right sizes. Eva, on her horse, could jump over the hurdle.



Figure 86

In the second drawing, Eva has let everything spill out (Fig. 87). Obviously, she is familiar with the mythical story: Eva has titled this picture “Pandora and the Box.” Pandora, with long black hair and a fancy dress, occupies the center of the picture. Around her are symbols of some of the concerns now felt by this 7-year-old child: good and bad, blindness, “cold feeling,” germ, death, and poison. Some of these “worries” may seem a little unusual for such a young child, but I believe that television makes even young children aware of these possibilities. Eva also may have heard of some of these “conditions” from her parents—her mother is a special education teacher and her father is a physician. She has also included spiders, fighting, and a good spirit—objects and ideas we would expect her to know.



Figure 87

We do not know what Eva was thinking when she drew these pictures. They were given to us by her mother, who felt that Eva's intensity when drawing the pictures, and then putting them aside, meant that they may have had more meaning for Eva than some of the other art work she produced. This probably is true. What more marvelous symbol than something like a "hurdle" to tell us what it is like to be in school, away from home most of the day, and required to make new relationships with important adults and peers?

Eva is still sometimes uncertain whether she should *act* like a girl or a boy. But she does know that she is a girl and Pandora (a fantasized representation of herself) looms large and queenly over all the problems that may be connected to the "hurdle" in the first picture.

Brent, whom you met at age 6 (Fig. 72), was 7 years, 5 months old when he created a fantasy world on paper. Brent has discovered science fiction, a typical interest of boys this age in our outer space-occupied society. Instead of blasting off into space, however, Brent has gone under the water. Drawing on a sheet of lined notebook paper—Brent will draw on anything that has a usable surface—he

created an underwater world complete with an Earth transporter and an Earth police station. Like Eva, Brent gives himself a fantasy world, but with built-in controls: the Earth police station has an open door to the “real” world through his Earth transporter (Fig. 88).



Figure 72

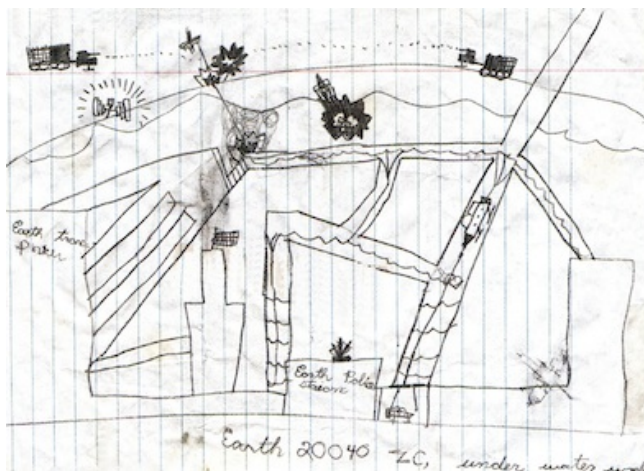


Figure 88

Children, like adults, also want to escape the “real” world when problems occur. Children will tell us in their drawings about the natural turmoil they feel around home and school. This movement is expressed in the images of magical, mythical, and scientific fantasies. For the healthy child, there will

always be a growing connection to the “real” world.

Becca, 7, was beginning to make plans about what she would be when she “grew up.” Naturally, these plans will change many times before she makes her final choice. Becca did two drawings within a few days of each other; together they tell a story about who she is and what she fantasizes she will be. In the first picture Becca has drawn a smiling girl (herself), holding up one hand as if she were waving (Fig. 89). On a piece of paper that she attached to the drawing, Becca wrote, “When I grow up I will be a doctor.” She already knew that it was acceptable for women to consider what once was traditionally a male profession. The girl in the picture is wearing a dress; a stethoscope is hanging from her neck. Less than two weeks later, Becca has drawn a “big” girl holding the hand of a “small” boy. There is something hanging down the front of her dress in this picture, too. Although Becca did not say so, the hanging object resembles the stethoscope in the earlier drawing. The small boy may represent Becca’s younger brother (Fig. 90).



Figure 89



Figure 90

At this stage Becca has mixed feelings. This is a time to be like Mother and, at the same time, to be independent of Mother. Becca's drawings reflect her ambivalence about letting go and growing up. She is trying to master how she will fulfill both of these needs. She will be a "lady doctor"—not like Mother—and a lady who takes care of little children—like Mother.

Becca is one year older than her sister Dayna, who was introduced at age 6. Although she too is now 7, Dayna is not ready to plan for the future. She still wants to play outside with the dog and has drawn her wishes in a colorful image of a little girl and a rather large dog (Fig. 91). Not yet comfortable with thinking as far ahead as Becca did, Dayna nevertheless makes concessions to growing up and being female. She puts rouge on her cheeks and elaborate eyelashes on her eyes. As we have mentioned before, the oversized head is seen often in the drawings of children this age. In addition to aiding in the effort to achieve balance, this overemphasis on the head also may indicate a need to pay more attention to the new experience at school.



Figure 91

We have shared with you the images of Keith's adjustment in preschool when he was 4; his graphic response to the concept of the creation of the world when he was 5; and his increasing ability to handle media in his painting of a tree when he was 6. At 7, Keith combined paint, pencil, and crayon to create a cartoon-like image of a snowman (Fig. 92). At the same time, he did a crayon drawing of a smiling boy with very broad shoulders who is tossing a football (Fig. 93).



Figure 92



Figure 93

We have said before that graphic images always reflect some part of the artist who has created the particular images. In addition, images speak to that moment in time. In these two pieces of artwork, Keith is telling us different feelings about himself. In the picture of the snowman, he is saying that sometimes he feels like a huge blob and a stupid fellow. We know this because Keith has the snowman saying, "Boy!

I'm a stupid feller." It is also interesting that Keith had drawn three small houses. There is a tree between the two on the left, and the third house sits alone near the edge of the right side of the paper. At the time he drew this, Keith's family consisted of his older brother, father and mother. We also have learned that very often people draw the same number of objects in a picture as the number of people in their immediate family. We think that in this picture the houses represent the three males in Keith's family (including himself), and the tree represents his mother. This combination of objects and symbolic representations is not unusual for a child this age. Keith, like many 7-year-old children, is still working through his relationship with his mother and father. We also think that Keith's "stupid feller" snowman probably reflects his normal feelings of being inferior to his older brother, partly because he was the "baby," and because he was also aware that he was small for his age.

In his next drawing (Fig. 93), Keith strongly compensates for any feelings of inadequacy by making himself a football player and writing his name in large letters on the picture (he did not sign the drawing of the snowman). Keith's father played fullback for his college football team, and Keith's brother, Brent, plays Little League football.

We will see more of Keith's and Brent's drawings as they move toward adolescence.

The next seven drawings and paintings to be discussed come from a teacher in a public school, and aside from the children's names and ages, we know nothing about the children or their families. They are all in second grade and adjusting well to school, according to their teachers. We are very pleased to include these art expressions, because they are all different and wonderful examples of what individual children tell us when they are 7.

Shirley wants us to know that she knows what looks "male" and what looks "female." She has drawn all of the body parts for each figure and used color in a creative yet realistic way (Fig. 94). Shirley knows that sky is different from ground, but is still not aware that in a drawing the sky and ground meet at the horizon line.



Figure 94

Deana has drawn three whimsical figures riding what looks like a dinosaur (Fig. 95). The three important people in her life (parents and self) are transformed into a fantasy. One of the figures carries a smaller figure; we do not know whether this represents a sibling, but it may. Deana's colors are not completely realistic, but that only helps to tell us that she is a creative and imaginative child.



Figure 95

Putting herself on paper as a “big” person can help a child feel like one. Rae has used almost the entire space of the paper to create this image of a woman in a hat and high-heeled shoes (Fig. 96). Rae apparently has learned about horizon lines; the blue sky meets the green ground.



Figure 96

George almost ran out of paper trying to create his “big” man—there is not enough room on the paper for the arms (Fig. 97). George has handled the paint very well, and artistically has painted the man in a light color against a dark background.



Figure 97

Dick has learned to draw objects like wheels on bicycles, and to make fancy numbers. In his drawing he is still using the familiar scribble and shapes within shapes to create a sky, but soon he will reach the developmental level of his peers and learn how to draw sky, ground and a horizon line (Fig. 98). He does know how to represent himself. He has drawn a smiling boy with hands on hips, standing beside a very original creation of a bike.



Figure 98

Elly's beautiful painting illustrates her continued interest in important objects in her environment —house, tree, and sun (Fig. 99). She also includes a bicycle, flowers, and a winding path leading to the house. The colors are realistic: a tree is green and brown, a house could be yellow and red, and a bicycle could be red. Often the way children draw windows and doors on houses makes them resemble faces. The sizes of the objects in this picture are not quite in proportion to each other. The organization of the picture, especially the way Elly has placed the house sitting on the horizon line, indicates that, if asked, she could produce all that is absent in her image without any difficulty. But why ask her to do that? Elly has taken "artistic license" and has painted how she feels in and about her surroundings. Her painting reflects her sense of balance and security in this colorful place.



Figure 99

Betty, like Keith and Elly, is still mastering that special group of three. In her own individual style of expression she has created three ballet dancers. The shorter hair on the figure in the middle makes us think this may be a male figure, but only Betty could tell us that. Her dancers are on their toes on a red stage, and they look as though they are moving (Fig. 100). Betty probably likes the color blue and has painted blue mouths to match the blue eyes of her dancers. As the architect of this image, Betty's use of color and its application is her expression of creativity. Betty's smiling, moving figures, in ballet costumes and toe shoes, tell us that this little girl, at 7, is learning about new people and new activities and is having fun. Her picture made us smile, too.



Figure 100

Warning Signals at 7

We have stated before that when we describe warning signals at any age, we are putting up a red flag and asking someone to pay close attention to this child, gather more information, and seek help if necessary. As we explore further, these warning signals may also tell us to wait—like the yellow light in a traffic signal. We must stop, look, and wait, before we move forward. In these situations we must move cautiously before we take steps toward intervention and treatment.

In Chapter 6, we described Bobby's "gaping mouth" drawing as an image that, if studied without knowing more about Bobby, would cause concern. Because it is as important to know when not to do something as it is to know when to do something, let us discuss two more examples of Bobby's drawings at age 7.

At 7, Bobby has created a Father's Day card for his "Douddy." At first glance this picture might appear to have been produced by a younger child (Fig. 101). However, the way in which Bobby uses different seals to design the card, and his lettering, tell us that Bobby's ability to organize his interests and thinking is normal for his age.

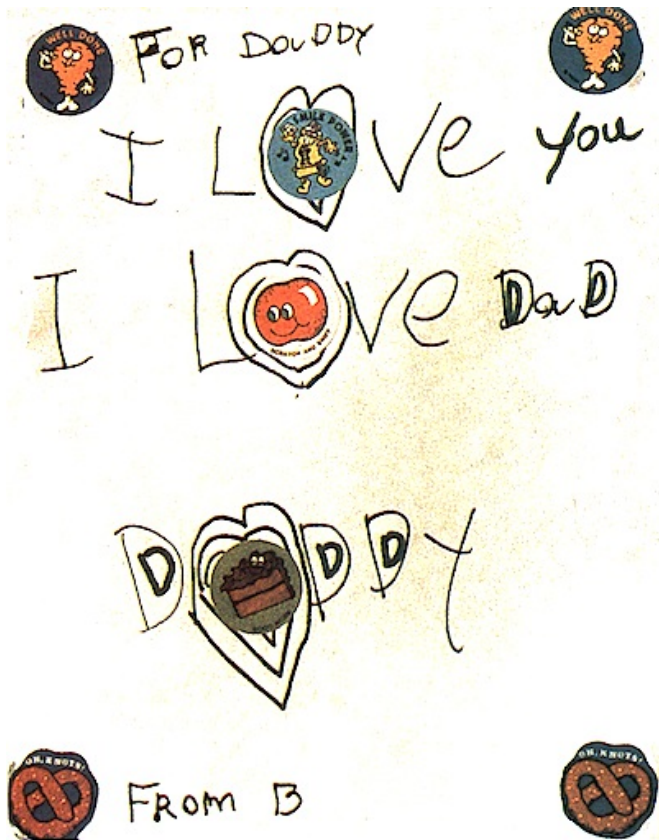


Figure 101

Bobby's second picture, obviously drawn for the same occasion, includes a picture of himself and "Daddy" (Fig. 102). Bobby is still drawing figures floating in space. He is still mastering shapes within shapes, just as he is mastering his trauma from repeated surgery for his cleft palate. But his figures are much more complete, telling us that he has made tremendous developmental progress in his self-image and artistic skills over the past year. Bobby is catching up with his peers, and there is no cause for concern.



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 13

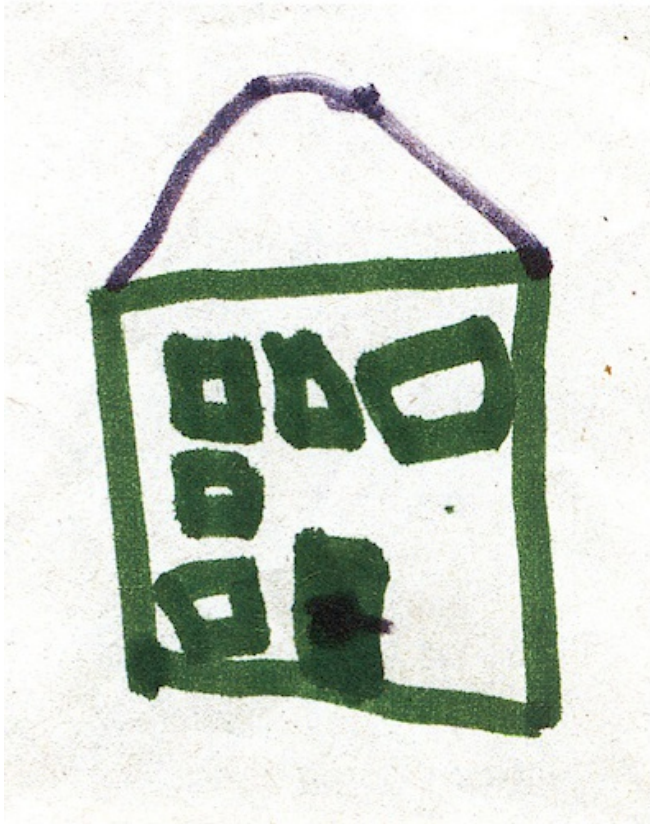


Figure 1

There is considerable cause for concern, however, when we look at the picture of a house drawn by Rafe at age 7 (Fig. 103). You saw one of Rafe's drawings in Chapter 1 (Fig. 13). In this new picture, he has drawn a house floating in space. The image tells us he cannot make straight lines—he must draw over some of the lines to make them meet. He does know what elements make up a house; like Kim (Fig. 1) Rafe has drawn windows and a door. He has even included a chimney. But the struggle he portrays in trying to draw a house is a warning signal of a problem that requires further investigation. Rafe, as we discussed earlier, is a child of average intelligence who has a learning disability. This drawing alone

would be a warning signal—a signal reinforced by his other drawings.

8 to 9 Years

Adam and Lisa, now age 8, continue to go their separate ways. Adam prefers to spend his time with peers of the same sex. At school he will seek the company of other boys during lunch and free periods; after school he will also spend his time in outdoor activities or indoor games with these same boys whenever possible. Competition in school achievement and in sports becomes evident, and Adam chooses friends whose accomplishments in these areas are similar to his. Adam and his friends sometimes talk about the girls in their classes and may even tease them occasionally. Usually at this age, however, they keep their distance.

Lisa's friends are girls she has met in school or in her neighborhood. Like Adam, she much prefers to be with peers of the same sex during and after school. She frequently invites girls over after school to do homework or play with dolls. Lisa and her friends also compete with each other, but this competition is more likely to be associated with scholastic achievement than with sports. However, Lisa and her friends have more opportunities for participation in sports than girls have had in the past. She will most likely become friends with girls who have similar interests; this is normal. The girls are beginning to notice the boys, whisper and giggle about them, and decide together who is "cute" and who is a "geek." They too keep their distance from their opposite sex peers.

This year and the next two are interesting years for the twins. As they learn new things in school, meet new classmates and teachers, and become acquainted with the parents of their friends, they realize that not every child or every adult is the same. It is surprising to them that a "friend" whom they thought liked the same things they did has suddenly moved on to other interests and other peer groups, and sometimes they feel left out. It is also surprising to them that some parents are more "strict" or less "strict" than their own. The twins begin to think sometimes that they have the greatest parents, while at other times they are certain their parents are the worst. This usually happens when there is a conflict about being allowed to go somewhere or acquire some new toy or piece of clothing. It is not unusual during this year and the next for the twins to fantasize that they are adopted and even dare to ask their parents for "proof" of their birth.

Adam and Lisa become much more aware of these differences among parents or caretakers during this year and the next two years. They also begin to realize that some of their friends lag behind them in some areas and that some seem to be leaving them behind.

By ages 8 and 9, children's drawings become more and more realistic, reflecting school pressures to improve their verbal, writing, and reading skills. Some children still work on art projects at home, but for others the pressure to excel academically closes the door to appreciation of the arts and free expression. Children who continue to express themselves through art will express more movement and fantasy, at the same time showing more realistic proportions in the relationships between objects in a drawing.

We now describe some drawings from real-life 8- to 9-year-old children.

Elysa has drawn a "self-portrait" at 8½ years. She presents a profile of a little girl standing in the grass, looking very content, with a big smile on her face (Fig. 104). This picture also communicates that Elysa at 8½ is still drawing a figure with a large head and has not yet learned how to represent the horizon line. But her skill in drawing a profile and in attention to detail also tell us that she is expanding her artistic skills at her own pace.



Figure 104



Figure 72

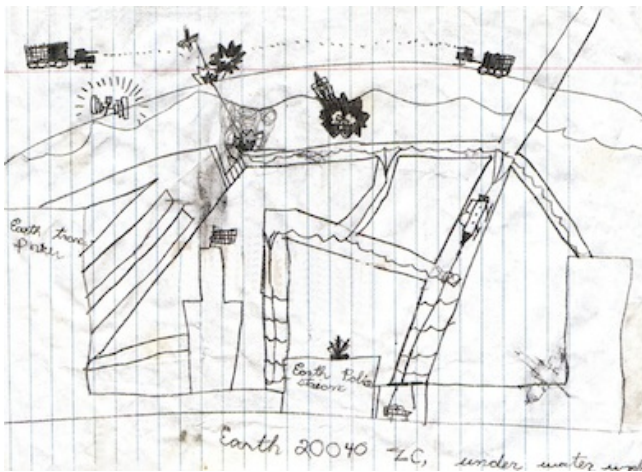


Figure 88

We said previously that Halloween is a time that always inspires young artists to create fantastic images. Brent, 8 years, 7 months, struggled to put all of his images on one piece of paper and discovered that he was running out of space (Fig. 105). A sitter was with him when Brent was working on this picture, and he expressed his frustration to her. She suggested that he tape another piece of paper to the

bottom of the first. Brent was delighted with this solution—he now knew how to solve the problem of running out of space on paper. He now also had enough room to include all of the objects that for him represented Halloween—a haunted house, flying witches and bats, pumpkin faces, and a black cat hunched on a fence. We met Brent’s family earlier in a picture he created at 6 (Fig. 72) and learned about his fantasy of an underwater world at 7 (Fig. 88).



Figure 105

A friend had a wonderful way of teaching the children in her classroom new words to add to their vocabulary. She would give the children a large sheet of paper, instructing them to write eight new words on this sheet and illustrate each word. She would also have them move to the words and make a sound they thought would be connected to each word.

Ron, 8, did this series of images to show his understanding of “run,” “shoot,” “kick,” “jump,” “fight,” “work,” “cry” and “bark” (Fig. 106). Looking at his individual representations, we can see that Ron understands the words and has learned how to draw movement and action, creating his own symbols for different words and ideas.



Figure 106

Nina, another child in the same school class, was given the names of states and countries—"Texas," "Mississippi," "Washington," "New York," "Mexico," "California," "Iran" and "Hawaii"—and asked to draw them. At 8, Nina is learning a great deal about different places and has selected objects meaningful to her to represent each place symbolically. For example, she has drawn a river for Mississippi, a tall

monument for Washington and palm trees for Hawaii (Fig. 107). The way that Nina makes connections and solves problems presented to her tells us that she is progressing very well in school and is becoming more aware of the world around her.



Figure 107

Etta, 8, still focuses on three objects, and has shown us that on some level she is still preoccupied

with the most important relationships in her young life—Mommy, Daddy, and self (Fig. 108). Etta has painted a colorful picture of three figures. From the clothing on the figures it was difficult to tell whether they are females or males; in real life both boys and girls wear pants. However, two of the figures have long hair, suggesting that the one with short hair may be a male figure. Etta is able to portray movement—the arms are all in different positions. She also makes the sky meet the ground at a horizon line, and can control paint to produce a complex image.



Figure 108

Sonny, 8, is experimenting with different media and discovering how to create intricate designs in black and white, using stems and flowers as his inspiration (Fig. 109). The control of the lines and the organization in this picture tell us that Sonny has noticed his surroundings and can organize his impressions of them.



Figure 109

Jamie told me she loves to draw landscapes and sent this picture to me along with a drawing of a female figure. Her drawing of trees, grass, sun, sky, clouds and flowers is organized, colorful, and recognizable. The trees are all grounded on the grass and the sky meets the ground (Fig. 110). The image of the girl, while not grounded, is complete, and like Elysa above, Jamie still sometimes puts a big head on her figures (Fig. 111). Learning new skills, like horizon lines and ground lines, doesn't mean that they will appear in every graphic production. We will see some of Jamie's early drawings in a later chapter. These drawings tell us that she is continuing to develop normally.



Figure 110



Figure 111

Lisa, like Jamie, likes to do artwork and also sent me some new drawings. Lisa is 9 and one of her drawings depicts a feeling of nervousness and excitement. She has drawn a girl, about her own age, complete with eyelashes, long hair, jeans, and a flowered shirt (Fig. 112). The arms and one foot are up; the other foot is firmly planted on a bed of tacks, nail up; in a cartoon blurb she has written, “boy I’m nervous.” She titles her picture, “I’m on pins and needles.” There is a big smile on the girl’s face, so the tacks do not appear to be too painful. Lisa’s drawing tells us she has learned to make images that are consistent with her age.



Figure 112

Warning Signals at 8 to 9

In previous chapters we met Scott, a very creative child who receives a great deal of encouragement to draw at home. At 8, Scott produced a very organized drawing by placing one color next to another to make different shapes (Fig. 113). But most of his previous drawings showed a freedom with the medium and subject matter that is not present here. Even when Scott mastered his dislike of a snowman and drew him as a robot at age 7 ½, he was more expressive and creative. Because I know Scott and have been very familiar with his artistic productions since he was 3, I wondered what stimulated this very tight, structured drawing. In fact, it reminded me very much of the kinds of drawings produced by nurses and medical students when asked to draw for the first time in years (this observation will be further discussed in a later chapter). I asked Scott's mother if she had any idea of what may have prompted Scott to produce this image, so unlike any of his others.



Figure 113

His mother did have an answer. Scott's father had gone out of town on a business trip for a few days. Shortly after he left, Scott received a call from a friend who told him he had just learned that his father had gone away and was never returning. Immediately after reporting this telephone conversation to his mother, Scott went to his room, did this drawing, and then moved on to another activity. It was also very unlike Scott not to show his artist mother his pictures and discuss them with her. Scott's mother and I both believe that after his friend's "news," Scott probably began to worry that maybe his father would not

return either. The concentration required to make these colored shapes within shapes (a preoccupation with an earlier form of expression) seemed to relieve some of the anxiety we believe Scott was feeling temporarily—an anxiety seen in the pressured way Scott used the crayons.

Learning to make designs with new media in school is expected at ages 8 to 9, as we saw in Etta's painting. However, when a child produces a spontaneous picture that is so very different from everything else he or she is creating at that time, as Scott did, it is important to notice whether this kind of expression continues and to try to learn if there is anything troubling the child. In this case the anxiety was based on a fear that, for Scott, was not a reality. Scott did not duplicate this image, and there was no need to discuss this picture with him.

Becca drew a picture of herself with a stethoscope around her neck when she was 7 (Fig. 89), and she wrote about her wish to be a doctor when she grew up. We predicted that she would change her mind many times before reaching a final decision. At 8, Becca drew a picture of a figure she titled, "self-portrait," and she attached a story in which she reported that she washes dishes and wants to be an artist (Fig. 114). We would expect Becca to want to identify with her mother (an artist), and we would also expect to see this drawing indicate normal developmental progress in the same way her earlier ones did. At 8, Becca's drawing of a figure was less mature than her drawing at 7. Like Scott, Becca seems to be telling us that something is troubling her this time. Being aware that a sudden shift in creative expression may be a warning signal will alert us to observe our children's developmental progress more closely.



Figure 114

We do not know what was going on with Becca at the time, but I was able to share this observation with Becca's mother so that she would be sensitive to Becca's struggle with identity issues during adolescence. The last we heard, Becca had grown up just fine; she was in college and doing very well.

Around 7 years, Elizabeth had some feelings of anxiety related to her school performance. Her concerned parents discussed this matter with her teachers, who were also concerned. A medical examination had revealed no obvious physical reason for the anxiety. Elizabeth is a beautiful, bright, talented little girl, who loves to draw. For this reason, it was recommended that she meet with me to try to determine why she was so worried. At the time of this writing, Elizabeth agreed to share two of her drawings, which we both knew were very important in the understanding she was gaining.

From the beginning, I was impressed with her intelligence and artistic talent. During one of our first meetings, shortly before she was 8, I asked Elizabeth to draw her family (Fig. 115). In the picture she has made a very good realistic representation of her father, mother and older brother, all in proportion to each other. But Elizabeth has drawn herself like a Cabbage Patch doll rather than a real person.



Figure 115

Some months later, Elizabeth has drawn a picture of what she does when she is angry or upset—she cries (Fig. 116). Here, the image of herself is much more realistically portrayed as the real, pretty young girl that she is. Elizabeth, her family, and I know that these two drawings, made months apart, show us that Elizabeth is beginning to have a better image of herself and is more able to express her feelings than she had been able to in the past. She still draws members of her beloved Cabbage Patch doll family, but they are no longer self-portraits. Her images of family members also have improved.



Figure 116

Carl, 8, is in the same school class as Ron (Fig. 117) and Nina, but his drawing tells us that he is not doing as well as they are. Some of the illustrations for his words look like they have been drawn by a much younger child. The way he drew the faces and hats for “Mexico,” and the moving arms in his figure symbol for “New Jersey,” shows us he is probably of average or above-average intelligence (Fig. 118). However, the fact that he has not completed figures and draws in a constricted, colorless way warns us that he may not have a very good self-image. Normal children at this age usually feel pretty good about themselves, and those good feelings about self are essential in helping Carl (and all children) find their way through the normal upheaval of adolescence. Carl may be having some emotional problems. Fortunately, his teacher is aware of this and knows where and how to obtain help if necessary.



Figure 117



Figure 118

Ken produced three drawings during the school year when he was around 8 ½. He is a learning-disabled child who attends a special school. Ken’s problem is that he is hyperactive. His drawings show us he has difficulty staying within boundaries, real or imagined. His picture of the “Battle of Gettysburgh” indicates he has worked very hard to organize the battlefield and draw the North and South sections, with the river between, but he is not able to achieve his goal (Fig. 119).

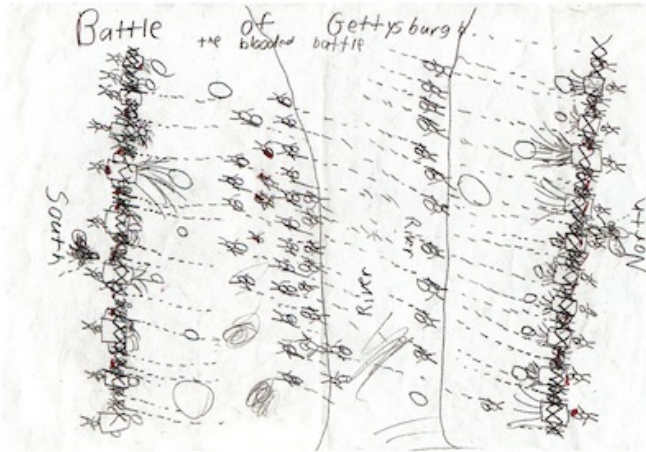


Figure 119

Ken has also tried to draw "A Tornado" and "A Tital Wave" and has been unable to control his movements on paper; this picture is more scribbled than drawn (Fig. 120).



Figure 120

Ken has also drawn "Super Rabbit" (Fig. 121). While this shows a little more control, the form is

clearly not consistent with images drawn by other children of his age. Here too, Ken is unable to stay within the boundaries he personally established; he is compelled to scribble in and around the figure. Ken is receiving special attention in his school setting, including medication and art therapy. It is hoped that intervention and treatment eventually will help Ken to function better and move forward developmentally.

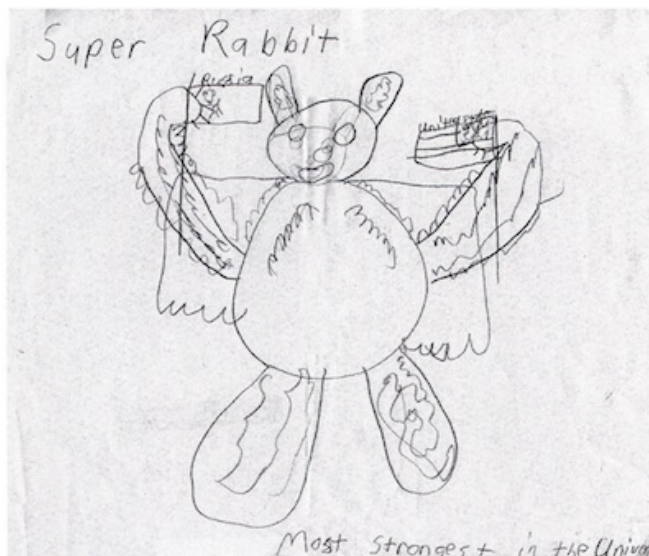


Figure 121

Another 8-year-old boy, Dick, also was diagnosed as hyperactive. Because of his behavior it was assumed that he also suffered from minimal brain dysfunction and was placed in a special classroom. He was referred to a colleague of mine for movement therapy to help him control his hyperactive body movements. The movement therapist, Mrs. Dulicai, began to suspect that this child was emotionally disturbed and did not have any minimal brain dysfunction. For a number of years, Mrs. Dulicai and I have worked together, using both art and movement/dance therapy approaches with individuals, families, and groups, training students in both modalities. It is not unusual for us to share our professional concerns, and Dick's evaluation and progress reflects this collaboration.

To test Mrs. Dulicai's belief that Dick did not have minimal brain dysfunction, I decided to ask him to make two drawings of a house—directing him to draw the first very quickly, and to take as much time as he wanted needed in the second (top and bottom of Fig. 122). As you can see, the top drawing resembles some of the artwork made by Ken, loose and scribbled over. However, when Dick is allowed to draw at his own pace, no evidence of minimal brain dysfunction or hyperactivity appears.

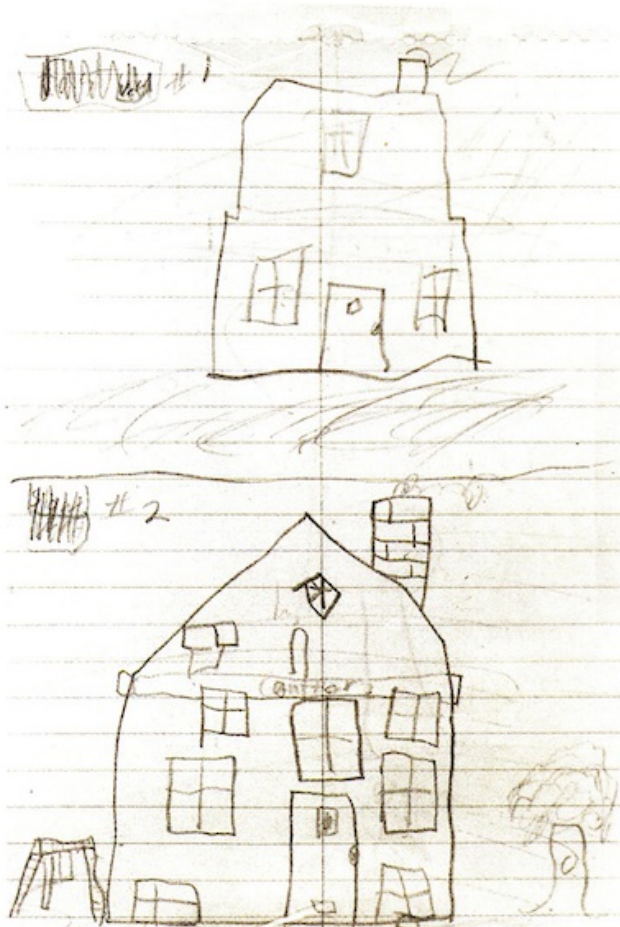


Figure 122

The way in which Dick drew the house and tree in unrealistic proportions offers another warning signal. At 8, this is not typical. Further investigation by Mrs. Dulicai confirmed her suspicion that Dick's emotional problems were interfering with his ability to learn. Movement therapy sessions then focused on Dick's emotional problems. Counseling sessions with his mother also were held, and within the year, he was able to return to a normal classroom setting.

9 And 10 Years

At 9, Adam still prefers the company of boys, and his interests continue to center around school activities and sports. He and his friends will get together as frequently as they can during school and after. Adam is particularly pleased when he and some of his classmates are invited into a game of baseball with some of the older boys. Weather permitting, the boys will play games—basketball, kickball, street hockey and football. Sometimes on a weekend or after dinner Adam's father or mother or one of the other boys' parents will join them. Adam does not always feel like playing in a game and some days is content just to watch.

When the weather brings the boys indoors, there is always television and a myriad of computer games. Adam and his friends have their favorite rock stars. They very likely have a radio, cassette, or CD player blaring, regardless of what else they are doing. This does not always please the adults in the house, and compromises must be negotiated between Adam and his parents about when and where in the house he can listen to his music.

Other areas of compromise begin to occur around the issues of what Adam wants to wear to school (probably the same T-shirts and cut off jeans his friends are wearing), what games and sports equipment he must have, and how much money he needs to "go places" with the boys on the weekend.

Lisa and her friends are not playing with their dolls as much as they did during the previous year, but the dolls and stuffed animals are still very much part of the decor in their bedrooms. Gymnastic activities after school are appealing, and sports are more available for girls than they were in the past. Lisa finds new friends who share her expanding interests, which include her special favorites among the rock stars. And this is a time when Lisa and her friends plan weekend sleepovers.

Clothes are also becoming an important item for Lisa. She and her friends will try to convince their parents that they must have a special sweater or a certain style shoe—whatever makes them feel like they are part of the group. Lisa loves to go shopping with mother or some of her friends on a weekend, checking out jewelry and makeup counters and imagining what they will buy when they are grown up.

In spite of these activities that are still decidedly female and male things and the impact of the feminist movement, TV, and new cultural norms, it is not unusual to see Adam or some of his friends interested in what was formerly considered just for girls and interest from Lisa and some of her friends in activities previously assigned to boys.

Sometimes it seems as if they are squeezing their school work in between all of these peer activities, but most of the time Adam and Lisa realize that school is very important. They also know that if they do not attend to their schoolwork, they will be in trouble with parents and teachers.

As the twins reach age 10 and approach age 11, they realize that more and more is expected of them. Adam and Lisa are expected to do their homework; they are expected to take care of their personal hygiene; they are expected to understand why they cannot have everything they want. Parents, caregivers, and teachers are setting new limits. Lisa and Adam are not always willing to comply and this causes some friction between them and the adults in their world. They are beginning to realize that for now, they must accept these limits. This is not always an easy time for the adults around them. As preadolescents, Adam and Lisa will communicate in subtle and not so subtle ways that they are not pleased with these controls. Parents, caregivers, and teachers need to acknowledge and accept this reaction because it is normal. At the same time, they need to remember that setting limits will eventually help the twins establish their own boundaries as responsible adults.

Other important and interesting things are happening at this time. Adam, Lisa, and their friends are becoming more aware of their bodies. They notice some of the girls growing taller faster than the boys, and some girls are growing breasts earlier than others. Privately, the girls discuss menstruation and its relation to having babies. When not able to find an answer to a particular question about these subjects, Lisa will probably ask her mother, or an adult female with whom she feels comfortable, to explain. Only when Adam can't get the answers he wants from his peers, will he approach his father, an older brother,

or a male relative he feels he can talk to.

Some 9- to 10-year-olds attend boy-girl parties, but they are not much fun. Generally the boys will sit in one corner and, depending on how much TV they are allowed to watch, try to act “cool.” The girls will probably be in another part of the room, still in the giggling stage and trying to decide how to get the boys to dance. Regardless of how grown up they may try to act, children at this age still are not ready to socialize with peers of the opposite sex.

This is a time in children’s lives when they experience preadolescent anxiety. Some of Lisa’s and Adam’s friends long to jump into adolescence and others are holding back. The twins notice that some friends act older and leave them behind, while others now seem too young for them.

Intellectually, the twins are developing learning skills that enable them to follow a thought process from beginning to end. They can identify new learning problems and understand new ways to solve them. They understand the concept of conservation and sequencing. For examples, they know that pouring a glass of water into different-sized bottles does not change the amount of water, and they can put objects in size order, from smallest to largest, and then reverse the process.

The art productions of 9- and 10-year-old children will show that this is a time when familiar objects are represented realistically. Baselines are elevated and ground lines are clearly drawn. Objects and people are illustrated in frontal and profile views and show action. People and objects in the environment will be in realistic proportion to each other. The subject matter will show us the facts the children are learning and their fantasies, as they move through later childhood and approach the normal upheaval of adolescence.

Some of Adam’s and Lisa’s real-life counterparts show us these facts and fantasies in their drawings.

Like some pictures we saw previously in this chapter, the first seven art productions described were created by children from the same school district and represent different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Their teacher reports they were all performing academically at age-appropriate level. We know nothing about these children except their age, sex, and what they tell us about themselves in their pictures.

Vera, 9, knows quite a bit about baseball. She has drawn a baseball player “up to bat.” He is standing on the base, feet in position, arms up, ready to swing his bat (Fig. 123). His baseball uniform is handsomely painted in red and white. Vera also knows sky meets ground, and she is able to keep the paint from smearing so that everything she wants to say is carefully and clearly illustrated. She is also telling us she wants to play ball like the boys.



Figure 123

Rita, at 9 is also interested in a sports that is usually assumed to be just for boys. She has drawn two girls and a boy playing football on a field of grass (Fig. 124). One girl appears to be getting ready to kick, while the other girl reminds us of a cheerleader. The boy on the side is holding a football. Rita's figures are all in motion and in realistic proportion to each other. Her decision to show just three players leads us to believe that Rita may still be working through her transition from home to school and peers, which is not unusual for this age. What is important is that Rita's painting does show us that she is at the proper cognitive and social levels for her age.



Figure 124

Jose, 9, seems to have a real appreciation for flowers. He has creatively painted a pink flower with a yellow center, placing it on a blue background (Fig. 125). The way Jose used all the space on the paper and applied the paint with sweeping brush strokes tells us that he has been encouraged to express himself creatively and had acquired the necessary skills to do so.



Figure 125

Aaron, 9, has discovered prizefighting. His drawing of two prizefighters and the referee is remarkably detailed for a child of his age (Fig. 126). Aaron has drawn one fighter knocked to the canvas; the other fighter is being proclaimed the winner by the referee over a microphone. Aaron has missed no detail, and the smile on the “winner’s” face tells us that this young artist feels good about himself. Aaron should feel pleased. His drawing indicates that he is functioning on an advanced intellectual level and can clearly represent anything he chooses.



Figure 126

At 9, Bert is as capable as Jose in depicting people and objects in his environment that interest him. Bert has illustrated a room equipped with a work table, shelves, desk, and desk chair, in which a man and woman are working (Fig. 127). The realistic way in which Bert has drawn one figure facing front and the other figure in profile, both holding objects, demonstrates that Bert's artistic and learning skills are better than average.



Figure 127

Cathy, also 9, has painted a colorful picture of three ladies, all dressed brightly and in different positions. We cannot tell whether Cathy's figures are dancing or walking, and we are not quite sure what two of the women are holding (Fig. 128). Cathy seems to have a little more difficulty in handling paint than some of her peers, but her organized, creative composition communicated that Cathy knows what

she wants to express and is doing it well for her age.



Figure 128

Sheila tells a story about a girl walking along a street, pulling a small child in a wagon (Fig. 129). We do not know whether Sheila, who is 9, has a younger brother or sister, or is romanticizing about growing up and pulling her own child in a wagon. She has written the word "love" on the top step leading to the door of the house she has placed behind the figures. Sheila's picture, so carefully executed, conveys the importance this scene has for her and that she is capable of expressing herself creatively.



Figure 129

These seven children have shown us, through their artistic productions, their own unique interests. The way in which they are able to express these interests tells us that they show developmental progress normal for their age. Some are a little more advanced than others, which may mean that some are able to learn more easily than others and have had more encouragement to be creative. As we saw, a few of these children are moving along the developmental path a little more slowly, at their own pace.

You met Elysa when she was 8½. At that time we mentioned that she had not yet learned to represent a horizon line, and at 9½ she was still separating sky and ground in her drawings. By age 10, Elysa has caught up and perhaps is moving ahead of her peers. For a school project she has created an intricate design in black and white. The elaborate and sophisticated way in which Elysa solves this assignment revealed that she was able to address problems on an advanced intellectual level (Fig. 130).



Figure 130

At this age, Elysa can also tell us that she is approaching adolescence with normal concerns about herself. In Fig. 131, she has drawn a figure in profile leaning on a raised knee. The mouth is drawn so that it almost looks like a moustache, and there is an earring on the ear. It is not unusual for a child of this age to begin to draw figures that combine female and male characteristics. Adolescence is a time when this question of identity must be faced once again. At 10, Elysa's figure drawing, in profile, suggests that she is not yet ready to "face" this task, or "move" too quickly. Although the figure is grounded on the bottom of the page, one foot is cut off by the bottom of the page.



Figure 131



Figure 11



Figure 113

We know from Dayna's drawing at age 4 (Fig. 11), and other productions, that she enjoyed artwork and generally drew images reflecting her activities and fantasies like other children her age. At 9, however, Dayna produced a crayon drawing that is at once colorful, tightly controlled, and very different from her other pictures (Fig. 132). This picture immediately reminded me of Scott's drawing produced when he was anxious about his father's absence (Fig. 113).



Figure 132

I could not help wondering whether Dayna's image was also expressing concern about a real or imagined loss. Some months later, I spoke to Dayna's mother, and she confirmed my assumptions. The family's beloved housekeeper, who had been with the family since Dayna was an infant, had retired around the time Dayna did this picture. Unlike Scott, Dayna felt a real loss, but like Scott, was filling in different areas and shapes with heavy crayon lines as a way to "contain" the strong feelings connected with this separation.



Figure 48



Figure 49

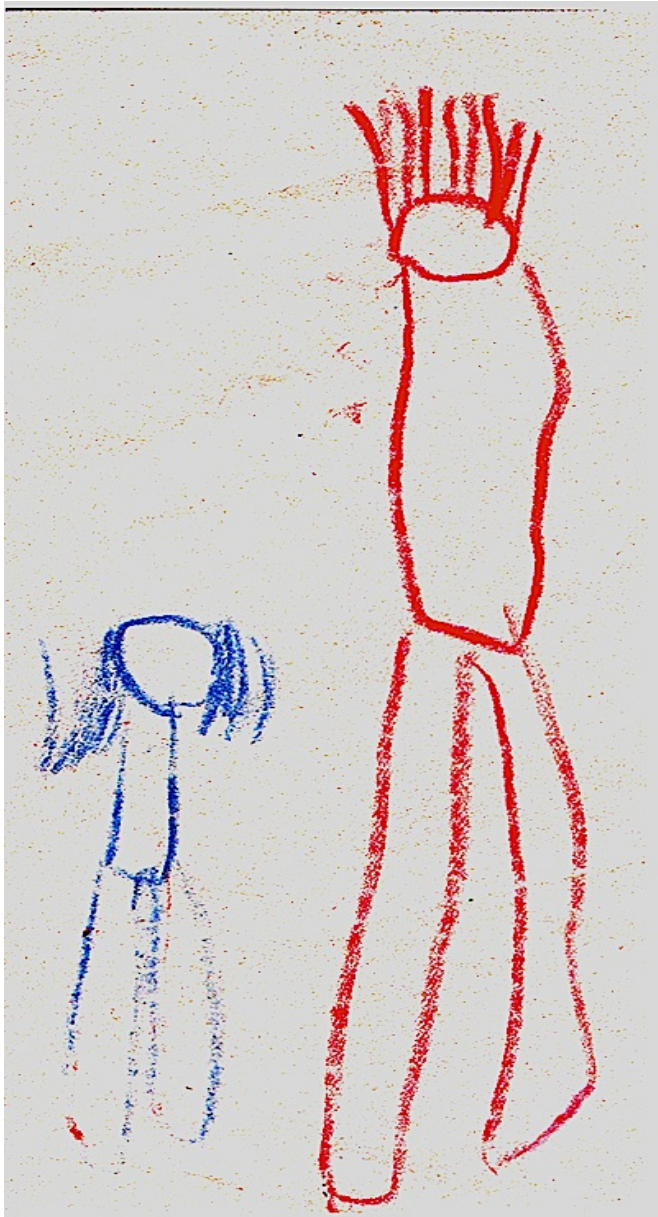


Figure 61



Figure 62



Figure 63



Figure 92



Figure 93

Keith, 9, has been drawing fantasy characters for months. You have seen Keith's art work at 4 (Figs. 48, 49), at 5 (Figs. 61, 62, 63), and at 7 (Figs. 92, 93). Keith knew this work was in process, and he and three of his friends wanted to be represented. They sent a book of characters they created and titled, "THE DUDES." It is so typical of preadolescents to create funny, bizarre and strange characters, to project

different images as they experience physical changes, and to display some uneasiness as they approach the teen years. It also is one way they can imaginatively express thoughts and feelings about who they will be (or not be) when they grow up.

At 9, Keith has drawn a strange-looking character, with one green eye and one red eye, with a red high hat perched on the side of his head (Fig. 133). Keith calls his picture "Jamaican Jugee." This "person" in Keith's picture is kneeling on a green hill, high above everything with his head and most of his body in the clouds. The colors and the details have been applied with great care. We do not know what this figure means to Keith, but we learned that he spent days completing it.



Figure 133

Another character created by Keith, named “Jamaican Juji,” was elaborately detailed in pencil (Fig. 134). This figure has hair standing on end, bloodshot eyes, and a mouth that appears to be screaming. “Juji” appears to be shocked by what he sees, and he is not nearly so “lofty” as is Keith’s “Jamaican Jugee.” What fantasies of Keith’s this figure reflects are also unknown to us. But both drawings tell us that this child is able to show us intellectually and emotionally his wildest fantasies in a way that is acceptable and appropriate for his age.



Figure 134

At 9, Keith's friend and co-creator of "THE DUDES," Milton, created "BUBBA" (Fig. 135). With two sets of ears, squiggly hair, wrinkled brow and odd features, "BUBBA" does not look like anyone we know. The drawing does tell us that the artist who produced this is very clever and imaginative for his age.

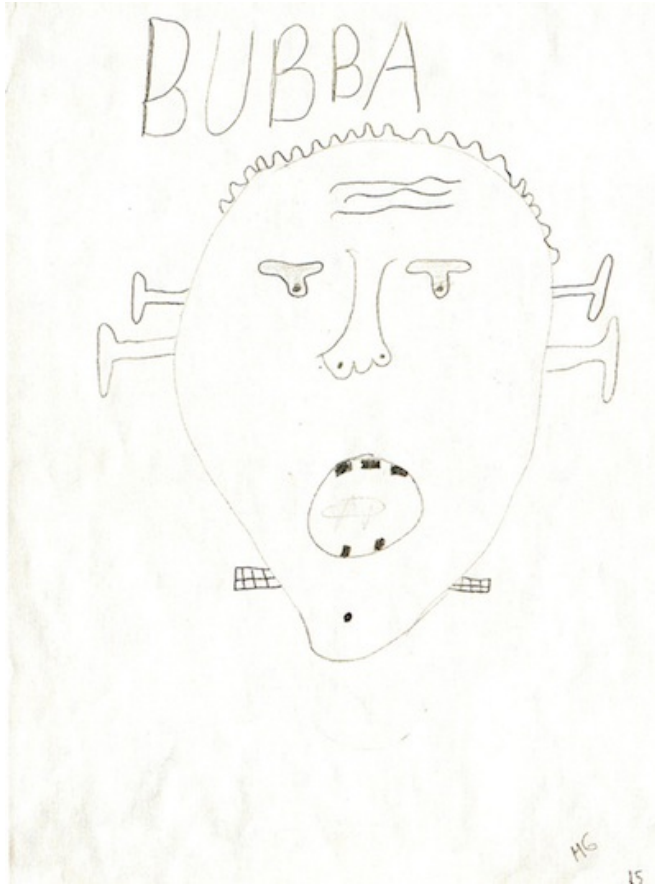


Figure 135

The other co-creators of “THE DUDES” happen to be 11, and we include them here to demonstrate how different, and at the same time similar, children are between 9 and 11 years.

Simon, 11, chose to make a female character called “SHIRLEY.” She has pigtails, wide eyes, and very little body identified by what looks like a collar on a shirt (Fig. 136). Simon has learned to shade objects with a pencil, giving dimension to the face he has drawn. Although the facial features are feminine, there

are no female characteristics in the part of the body that is seen. This is not surprising, for Simon is closer to adolescence than Keith and Milton. Like Elysa, presented above, he is probably beginning to be aware of some of the tasks related to his physical development that he will have to “face.”



Figure 136

Alan, also 11, avoids the issue of doing a male or female character. Instead, he draws a “PEANUT HEAD” with droopy eyes, odd nose and mouth with a cigar hanging out of one side (Fig. 137). The caricature also has a skinny neck, but no body.

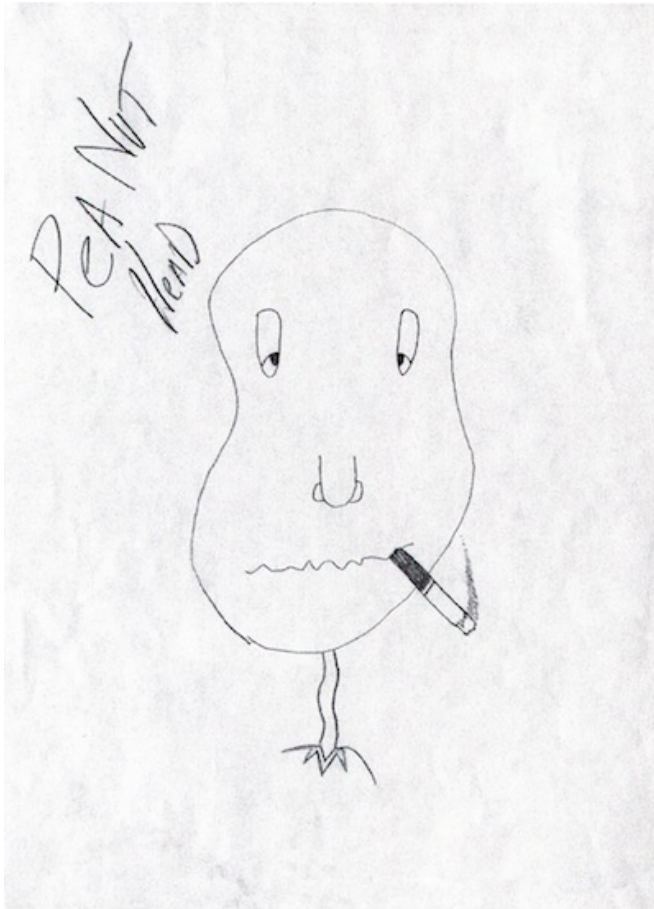


Figure 137

All four of these boys have cleverly allowed us a glimpse of their fanciful views of themselves and others during the week they designed “THE DUDES.”

Another boy between ages 9 and 10 had an entirely different style to communicate his thoughts and feelings consistent with this age. Don drew two pictures at the request of his teacher. The first was a spontaneous drawing of a huge figure with a pumpkin head, standing over a figure that has been

stabbed. Feelings of aggression and anger are normal at this age, and Don knew by now that to express them directly was not acceptable. But he also knew that by creating unreal characters he can express any of his feelings on paper (Fig. 138).



Figure 138

Don's second picture was a family portrait. It is clear in this image that he does not view his sisters (females) in the same way he views himself, his parents, and his brothers. His sisters barely look human, while everyone else seems to have a very normal face. He omitted all human bodies, but drew a huge dog (no doubt the family pet) almost complete at the bottom of the page (Fig. 139). We have said before that omission of body parts at specific ages is a warning signal. However, we know that Don can draw very realistically when he wants to, and at this preadolescent stage, it is not unusual to see incomplete figures.

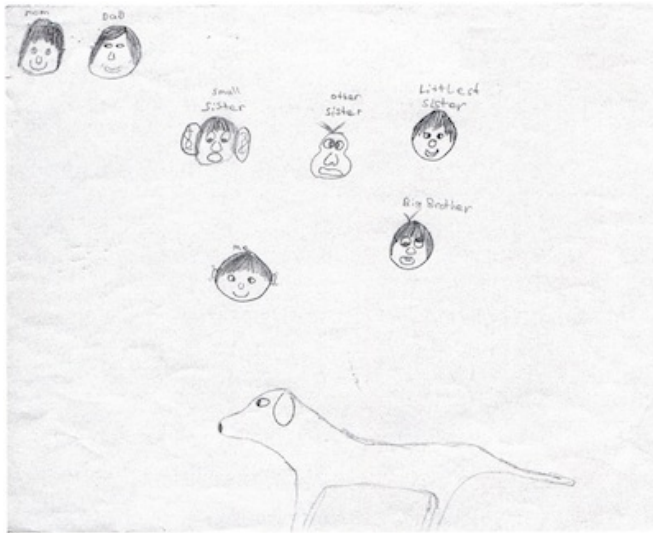


Figure 139

Warning Signals at 9 to 10

Anne, 10, was in Don's class and also drew a family portrait for her teacher. At first glance, we are impressed with Anne's ability to draw very detailed and complete figures. However, the teacher's note on the picture told us that Ann had several unrealistic excuses for not including herself—"she didn't fit," "she couldn't draw herself"—and did so only on the third request. We also noticed that she put herself at a distance from the rest of the family and that everyone is floating in space. Anne has placed a sun in the upper right (Fig. 140). Children this age are normally confronted with the need to gain distance from their families as they come closer to adolescence, but Anne's reluctance to include herself at all, the absence of a ground line, and the presence of the sun drawn like that of a very young child, in contrast to the very sophisticated way she drew the figures, point to inconsistencies that warrant close observation of Anne's behavior and her interactions with peers and adults.

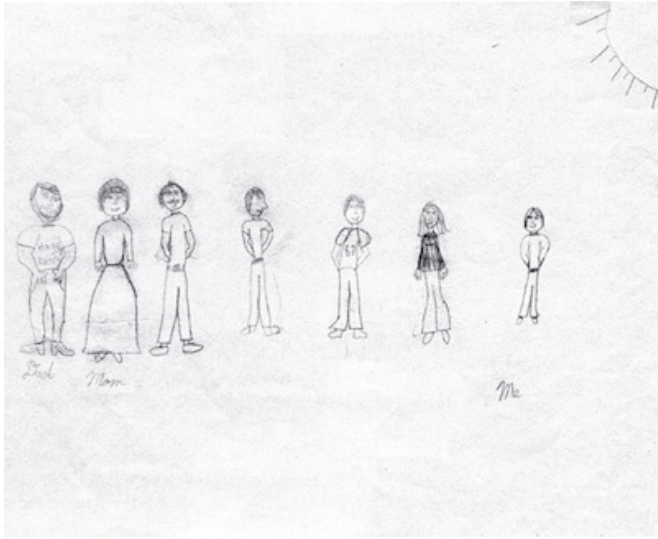


Figure 140

Another child in the same class as Don and Anne drew a picture that raised many concerns about her intellectual and emotional development. Elaine, 9, drew a tree, rainbow, birds and cloud (Fig. 141). These images are typical of those produced by children around age 4 and 5 years. This is a warning signal that something may be wrong.



Figure 141

Mickey and Pam, both 9 years old, have also shown us cause for concern in the way they illustrated their families. Mickey drew stick figures without any hands or feet (Fig. 142). We have said that omissions at this age are not unusual, but the floating forms, her childlike attempt to distinguish between females and males, and the “potato head” faces all suggest that Mickey is functioning on a level much lower than his chronological age.

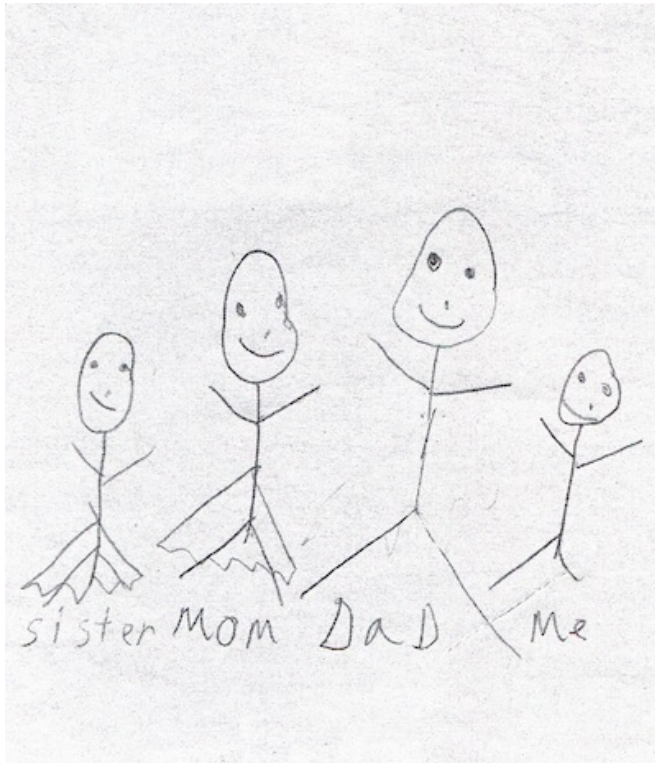


Figure 142

Pam (Fig. 143) has put a ground line under her family figures, but they have been drawn like those of a child aged 5 or 6. Both of these children's pictures contain serious warning signals.

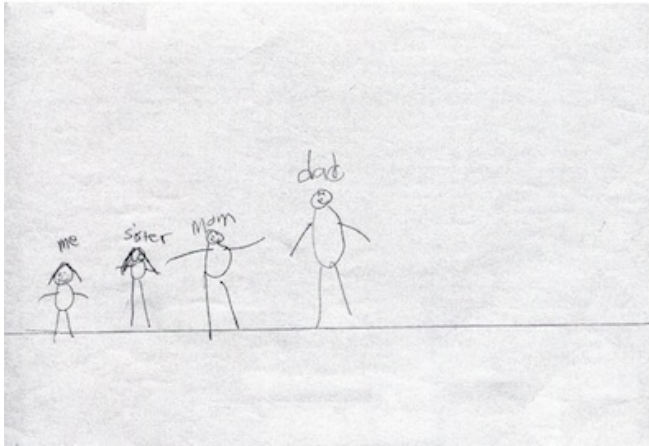


Figure 143

It is of importance to note that these children were in the fourth grade of a public school and giving no indication of having any problems. Their school performance was reported to be average and they were not known to behave inappropriately. Very often the quiet, average child will show no overt signs of problems.

We do know something about Jason, 10 years of age. He moved from a rural community to an urban one and was sent to a special school for learning disabilities. One of his early drawings, produced for the art therapist in his school, led the staff to believe that Jason's immaturity and stress over the family's recent move caused his learning problems, not brain damage as suspected at first. In this instance the warning signals in Jason's drawings helped to define the origin of his problems, providing data to enable his classroom teachers and art therapist to work together to help him "ground" himself in his new and frightening environment, the city.

His drawings tell us how Jason progressed over the next year. In the first, he has used his fingers, covered with charcoal, to make circles above the scribbled ground (Fig. 144). There is much more ground in Fig. 145 and the sun has made a partial appearance in the upper corner. Several months later, Jason began to make images that represent realistic objects in proportion to each other, with a ground line under them (Fig. 146). Near the end of the school year, Jason produced this wonderful drawing in which

he presented a house, a tree, a smiling little boy and a snowman, all grounded and in proportion to each other (Fig. 147). This picture, seen without benefit of the others and without information about this child, would surely be a warning signal. Jason still is not functioning at the level of his peers, but with support he can continue to progress and gain some of the intellectual and emotional skills needed to handle the challenges of adolescence.

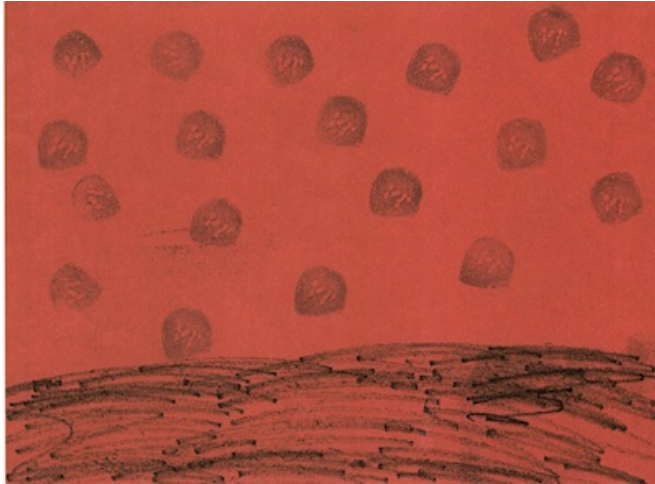


Figure 144



Figure 145



Figure 146



Figure 147