

PART TWO: CHILDREN'S HOME AND PRESCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

Introduction

This second part of the thesis has four chapters. One chapter is dedicated to each of the children, as their art experiences at home and preschool are described and discussed. These chapters are then followed by a fuller analysis of their art experiences in relation to Deweyan perspectives. Each chapter is supported by coloured photographs, which were gathered throughout the research. In these chapters (and the ones in Part Three), the children's actual comments are in italics and in quotation marks. Most of the photographs that appear in these chapters were taken by the children or as directed by them. While these pictures have not been significantly altered, some have been cropped or digitally blurred to exclude extraneous background or to remove identifying information. To allow for a clearer scrutiny of the photographs a CD version of this thesis accompanies the paper-based one.

Although all four children provided important insights into the nature of their art experiences, for several related reasons Lee's experiences are examined first and in the greatest depth. Firstly, he was a prolific drawer and his artworks provided a vibrant point of contact between Lee, me and his family. Because Lee and his family spoke Mandarin as their first language (and I spoke English), when I responded to questions or comments, particular care was taken in formulating clear, well considered ideas. This in turn generated some rich research information. Also, as Lee's family relocated immediately following the fieldwork, analysis of his experiences took precedence. Most importantly, Lee's narratives of experience revealed him as a key participant, in terms of affording many insights into important theoretical ideas.

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss and describe Lilly's, and then Sophie's art experiences. Placing their research narratives alongside one another was appropriate as later they attended the same school. As will be seen, Lilly was a prolific drawer and her art experiences provide some similarities and some contrasts with those of Lee. Some of these contrasts are apparent in terms of the children's gender, their cultural backgrounds

and their personal and social interests. Sophie's experiences provide further insights into a young girl's experiences of art, but she offers quite different approaches to art than those afforded by the other children. As will be seen, in the initial phase of the research, Sophie's art experience lay more in her aesthetic appreciation of the world around her than in the making of artworks.

In Chapter 8 Jackson's art experiences are discussed. His experiences provide interesting contrasts and parallels with the other participants as he expresses his art through structural materials such as timber and cardboard. In Chapter 9, Dewey's (1934/2005) perspectives on art as experience are revisited in light of the children's home and preschool art experiences. These reflections provide some focussed insights into the nature of the children's art experiences with a particular Deweyan focus on the relationship between recognition, perception and art actions, children's spontaneous art, their artistic growth and development and the conditions that constrained and promoted their art experiences.

Before moving on to share each child's art experiences, I will set the scene with some details and images of the children's preschool.

Markham Community Preschool

All of the children attended Markham Community Preschool (MCP) for part of the week. Each child attended at least once a week when one other research participant was present. At no time, however, were all four at preschool concurrently and they were not generally part of each other's friendship groups.

Markham Community Preschool was a forty-place, community based, not-for-profit centre, which was housed in a purpose designed building with a large outdoor play area. At the time of the research 80 children were enrolled. It was open for one morning and four full weekdays and the weeks coinciding with primary school holidays. The staff comprised one office assistant and six educators, including the director. The teachers had specialist qualifications relevant to early childhood and the centre was licensed by the NSW Department of Community Services Practices.

MCP adhered to the early childhood *Code of ethics* (Australian Early Childhood Association, 1990) and it had a 'strong philosophy of encouraging children to take an active role in their learning using play based activities to stimulate their curiosity and

creativity' (MCP brochure, 2007¹¹). The teachers were committed to building on children's interests and to communicating with parents. On a regular basis they observed, photographed and recorded aspects of each child's learning activities. These records were compiled in a journal that was shared with each child and his/her parents. These journals, which were available and accessible to children, regularly travelled between home and preschool. The information gathered in the creation of these journals also informed MCP's programme development.



Figure 1. Dedicated and changing art spaces at preschool.

At the time of the research the *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* was still being developed (Council of Australian Governments, 2009) and the centre programmes were informed by the *NSW curriculum framework* (NSW Department of Community Services, 2002). In terms of this NSW curriculum, it was expected that the children experienced an environment where 'they discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive' (p. 163). It was also expected that children would develop 'familiarity with the properties and character of the materials and technology used in the creative and expressive arts' (p. 163). To this end the staff provided a variety of permanent and changing art areas (Figure 1). The art materials were well maintained and stored for children's easy access. Also, I noted that while at least one teacher

¹¹ Full reference withheld to protect confidentiality.

managed various indoor and outdoor activities a teacher often sat with the children in an art space. Often they took this opportunity to observe the children and write observations for the children's preschool journals. On other occasions they would demonstrate a technique in a casual way, such as 'playing around' with the watercolour paints, so that children's interests were aroused (Figure 1, bottom left).

A table in the main room, where art and craft resources were readily accessible, was the space most frequently used by the children (Figure 1, top left). There were also several painting easels, with varied painting media, and drying racks for children's paintings (Figure 1, top right). The teachers encouraged and supported the children's exploration of new art materials, mainly by sitting with the children and demonstrating how to use the various media (Figure 1, bottom left). There was a permanent play dough table. To provide for some variety, the teachers regularly offered changing art resources such as drawing, painting, collage or construction materials (Figure 1, bottom centre). Occasionally, tilted drawing boards were also provided or art activities were set up outside. In addition, there was a solid woodworking table place outside, which was equipped with timber off-cuts, nails, hammers and other tools (Figure 1, bottom right).



Figure 2. Craft table (top); block area; home corner; sandpit.

The teachers also planned some art activities to coincide with children's specific interests. For example, when some children became interested in road signs the

teachers brought out a resource about signs, read stories and encouraged the children to make their own signs (Figure 2, top). Again, in such situations, teachers often sat with or near the children, and provided motivation, encouragement and support. In general, the motivation was in the form of questions or resources, the encouragement was in the form of praise and the support was in the form of technical assistance with art materials. The teachers were sensitive to individual children's interests and encouraged each child to respond to the organised activity in a way that developed his or her own ideas. For example, Jackson's computer artwork, which he was explaining to his mother (Figure 2, top right), had begun as a sign making project.

The children could freely choose to create in these art, craft and woodworking areas and other areas frequently used for creative play included the block area, home corner and sandpit (Figure 2, bottom).

The children's homes and families

Lee, Lilly, Sophie and Jackson all lived in two parent families and had at least one sibling. During the first phase of the research two families lived in central Ashtown and two lived on life style blocks about 10 km away. The following four chapters, which discuss and describe the children's art experiences, each begin with an overview of home and family life.

5. LEE

Lee and his family

Lee Wong was a first generation Australian-born Chinese boy who spoke Mandarin and English. His father, Xiaoming, had a PhD in computer science and lectured at the local university. His mother, Jingjing, managed the household and looked after the children. She had a Chinese degree in education but was not yet qualified to teach in Australia. Lee had a sister, Penny, who was 27 months older than him.

The year before Lee was born the family had emigrated from China to a large Australian city. Chinese immigrants made up the largest group of immigrants to arrive in Australia since the mid-1980s (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002) and the family had regular contact with extended family and a Chinese community. However, such contacts were not possible in the smaller city of Ashtown. Both parents valued the educational and social benefits that their children gained by attending school and preschool and they said that they enjoyed being involved in this research.

Lee was aged between 4 years 11 months and 5 years 9 months during the research and he attended preschool two mornings a week. Between October 2006 and June 2007 he shared over 9 hours of recorded discussions and produced about 1,500 photographs. Lee took the vast majority of these photographs, although family members took some. Over half of his photographs featured artworks or art activities; although in some cases there were several photographs of a single artwork or activity. Likewise, there were artworks and art experiences that were not photographed. Our research interactions were enjoyable and productive and despite our dialectal differences, Lee often took the lead in our home-based discussions.

Lee's art experiences

Lee's art experiences as part of family life

Lee shared with his family everyday routines, competencies and knowledge that constituted their 'funds of knowledge' (González & Moll, 2002; Moll, 2000). For example, his home life was rich in bicultural and bilingual conversations, texts, art, images and objects – he had books, games, posters, movies and computer programmes in both English and Mandarin. Learning experiences, such as drawing, writing, mathematics or

playing a musical instrument were part of family routines as time was set aside for 'learning time'. From Lee's perspective, it appeared that learning time was an interactive and potentially interesting part of his home life and while Penny did homework, Lee often drew.

While Lee's parents were not financially wealthy, like the academic Chinese immigrant families in Li's (2007) research, they made educated choices and invested in a 'variety of material resources' that were 'beneficial to their children's learning' (p. 295). Furthermore, their valuing of education, maintenance of Chinese identity through language, and their relationships as a cohesive family unit reflected traditional Chinese family values (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Jingjing and Xiaoming provided their children with materials, time, space and supportive interactions. While these human and physical resources were neither expensive nor extensive, as will be seen, such provision was critical in supporting and extending Lee's home-based art experiences. Resonating with other research (Anning, 2002; Pahl, 2002; Ring, 2003, 2006b), Jingjing powerfully influenced her children's art experiences, and as the youngest sibling Lee had ready access to art materials and spaces.

When I visited Lee's home, we usually sat at the dining room table, which was also the main place at which he drew and constructed. Occasionally, he climbed on a chair or the table as an extension of his artmaking and performance space. The solid wood table appeared to be central to Lee's creative experiences and the hub of family interactions, schoolwork and art activities. One end was usually cleared to make room for the family of four while the other was a tidy jumble of books, paper, pens, scissors and art gear. Sometimes, during our sessions, Lee reached for materials so he could draw, write or construct. Lee appeared to be creative, competent and empowered in this area of his family home.

Media and format

Lee liked to draw and he favoured using pen or pencil on paper. This paper was usually in the form of loose A4 sheets or as pages in an exercise book. He also drew with chalk or markers on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Many of his drawings were in the format of maps, games or stories. As the following discussions will show, although these types of drawings had similar features Lee differentiated between them.

Lee's maps



Figure 3. Drawing and studying maps.

Because of Lee's keen interest in maps, during one visit I showed him a real map. With little comment, he rushed from the room and returned with one of his map-drawings. He climbed onto the table and for over seven silent minutes he looked carefully at the map's topographic features and drew on his own map (Figure 3). He added distance and highway markers and used inventive spelling to label Ashtown, Sydney, Melbourne, China, Japan, Spain, Toowoomba and my house. Apart from my house, these were places where Lee or his family had lived or visited. Therefore, through drawing maps Lee was able to graphically map the various places he had a sense of belonging to – both in terms of his personal experiences and in terms of making connections with the experiences of significant others.

Although Lee was motivated by seeing an actual map, his artistic reaction was spontaneous, self-initiated and consistent with a personal interest in map-like representations. He looked closely at the features of the real map and used this visual information to extend his own repertoire of map-drawings (Kindler, 1999; Wolf & Perry, 1988). Furthermore, although this event disrupted our research routines I witnessed an episode of his spontaneous art-making that, rather than being isolated from outside influences, was motivated by an external stimulus rekindling and extending his current interest.

Taken at face value, Lee's map was a simple line drawing with letters representing placenames. He had not carefully coloured or shaded this drawing and it

was not visually beautiful in a traditional aesthetic sense. As such, his map-drawing would not rate highly if critiqued in terms of realism (Freeman & Janikoun, 1972) or modernist aesthetic qualities (Davis, 1991). Also, as noted in other research, drawings such as these are created for the child's 'benefit rather than the benefit of any spectators' (Kindler, 1999, p. 340). In Lee's case, applying these traditional appraisals of children's drawings based on realism or aesthetic beauty would fall short of recognizing his artistic intentions as understood within in his wider human experience. For example, in this simple drawing he explored and expressed a sense of belonging in relation to place and people. While he had not verbally articulated the need to explore his sense of belonging, through artistic enterprise Lee tapped into the broader human concern for 'belonging'.

Lee also explored this theme through other drawings episodes. For example, in one drawing he drew where he was at home and, across the page, he drew where his sister was at school. Also, when his father was visiting China, he drew pictures of himself flying to join him. While these drawings did not have map-like graphic features, they served some of the same functions in terms of making sense of Lee's place in relation to others.

Lee's game-drawings



Figure 4. Lee's game-drawing with stickers.

Lee was clear about differences between his drawings of maps, stories and games and he endeavoured to communicate their unique features. For example, when he showed me his drawing with stickers (Figure 4), I asked him what the story was about. In response, he began, "*Once upon a time.*" He then hesitated and corrected, "*Oh*

– *this is a game!*” He then performed a five-minute soliloquy as he described and played his game. As he did so, he drew more details. Thus, his engagement with his drawing prompted him to re-experience game playing while simultaneously extending the game. As such, I could see that he used his drawing as both a experiential and a working document (Brooks, 2002b).

Lee’s descriptions and modifications provided further insights into his artmaking processes and the way in which various art materials motivated his artmaking. For example, it appeared that the stickers had been added after the drawing had a basic structure, and once in place they stimulated further drawing. This indicated to me that his spontaneous art was not always anchored to the initial stages of creating an artwork or expressed by starting a new work. In other words his artistic spontaneity could be related to other, apparently less spontaneous events.



Figure 5. Lee’s floor game and castle-game drawing.

Lee’s game-drawings also provided him with visual scripts that helped structure his verbal responses. These self-generated scripts, which evolved as he spoke and drew, were confidently expressed using dramatic gestures and theatrical voices. These lively renditions contrasted with his more hesitant conversational speech. For example, in his castle game-drawing (Figure 5) he pointed to the round shapes and explained, “*This is a special money.*” Moving his finger across the drawing he continued, “*A castle. Shut the door quickly because the dragon in there. And a bomb! You can see the bad guys in the jail.*”

When I asked him where he got his ideas from he brought out a plastic floor mat and pointed to corresponding graphic features. However, he had not transferred an

image from one place to another so much as transformed it to something more in keeping with his personal interests. While not deliberately provocative, in the way in which Reggio Emilia philosophies promote (C. Edwards et al., 1998; Gandini, 1993; Hendrick, 1997), Lee's environment provided him with visual stimulation and his experience of books, television, movies, computer games and actual events were expressed through his art.

Lee's ability to perceive the visual qualities of his environment supported his artmaking experiences but I saw few examples of him asking other people for assistance with his drawings. This added weight to the notion that verbal language was only one form of communication (Ahn, 2005; C. Edwards et al., 1998; Gallas, 1994) and suggested that artistic development could be supported by self-initiated visual inquiry. In addition, this observation suggested that the notion of the environment as a third teacher (Danko-McGhee, 2009; Pairman & Terreni, 2001) was not limited to classroom, artistic or 'beautiful' surroundings.

Communication about art



Figure 6. Shark computer-game drawing; Battleship computer.

Lee responded positively to an interested audience and was persistent in his efforts to communicate about his art. On one occasion, he explained how to play the shark game-drawing (Figure 6, left). He said that there were “*five chances [to] help the little fish before the shark coming.*”

I evidently looked confused, for Lee then said, “[!] *need the computer to show you how to do it. [Pause]. You need to download.*” He looked around as though searching for inspiration. He then spoke to Jingjing in Mandarin but she could not understand what he wanted.

As Lee was quite agitated I suggested that he could explain it on my next visit.

Lee, however, was determined to explain and he left the room and returned with his Battleship™ game. He pointed out the audio and video plugs on his television, and to the pegs on the Battleship game and said that if you mixed the plugs up it “*goes shiny, real and loud!*” He then arranged pegs on the game, put the drawing in the game case, trimmed the edges (Figure 6, right) and said that he was pretending that the game board was a computer, but that you have to buy a disc to play the real game.

These types of interactions, and Lee’s determination to explain effectively, illustrated how important it was for him to be able to communicate about his art. This was also a complex process, as in his initial drawing he had conceptualised his drawing as a computer game. When he tried to verbalize what had once been an internal and graphic dialogue between himself and his drawing (Brooks, 2002b), he found it necessary to use physical props. From a sociocultural perspective, I could see how he had used both tools (such as the drawing and the game) and symbols (such as the game pegs representing computer plugs, or a game representing a computer) to facilitate effective interpersonal communication (Vygotsky, 1962/1934). As Lee’s father lectured in computer science, he had also connected with his family’s social capital (Coleman, 1988) and funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

As we watched Lee, his mother and I asked him questions about the computer game. Lee responded, but he also insisted that we understood that his shark-drawing-as-computer-game was “*not really real.*”

Vivian Gussin Paley (2004) also noted that young children were aware of their in-role persona and were surprised at adults who appeared to ‘believe in what was obviously a ‘pretend’ situation’ in dramatic play’ (p. 24). Lee’s insistence that we understood the fantastic or imaginative aspect of his art suggested his conscious intent to both entertain fantasy in his art, while also seeking social connection and effective communication with us. This ability to ‘alternate between imagination and fantasy at one end, and a sense of reality at the other’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 63) has been recognized as one of the personality traits of a creative person.

Lee at Preschool

Lee attended preschool two mornings each week. On only four of my ten visits was Lee observed actively engaged in art activities. While he seemed reluctant to work at a table with other children he sometimes watched what they were doing. It was my

impression that his inability to be clearly understood by his peers negatively affected his socialising with other children. For example, he was more likely to work in an art area if no other child was present and, while he joined in most of the preschool activities, he was often on the edge of play activities and relatively non-verbal. At preschool, he appeared to be a shy child but this was incongruent with his confident, outgoing manner at home and with me. Karen Lui and Susan Blila (1995) reported that young children usually played with ethnically similar children, and Chizuko Konishi (2007) suggested that difficulties associated with negotiating shared verbal understanding limited play interaction for second language children. Therefore, being Chinese and speaking English as a second language had likely impacted on Lee's preschool experiences and social interactions.

The space in which Lee experienced art at preschool was more fully equipped than his home space. However, in terms of how this preschool space was experienced, he appeared far more comfortable and confident in his home environment. His experiences of interacting with others also varied between home and preschool. At preschool he responded to direct questions and usually spoke in a rapid, soft voice that could be difficult to hear and to understand. His difficulties in forming complex verbal English statements limited his ability to communicate clearly and he seldom called attention to himself. At times, he asked teachers for assistance but in order to act on his directions the teachers needed to be patient, attentive and responsive – conditions that could be difficult to achieve in a busy preschool. At preschool, therefore, social interactions were far more emotionally, cognitively and physically demanding for Lee than at home.

The teachers were aware of his solitary nature and his preference to play apart from others. They also commented on the transformation that occurred when he was talking about his drawing and it was during such activities that he was most likely to initiate conversations with adults. While the research processes would have supported him in developing such confidence it was also clear that the art itself was highly motivating and over time, as Lee's interest in art activities began to outweigh his social reticence, he became more involved with others at preschool. For example, in one of his teacher's written observations it was noted that "[Lee] really wanted to do a water colour painting" but at first refused because there were three other children at the table. However, he "gave in eventually and joined the others after standing and watching for a

while.” As his solitary manner concerned his parents and teachers his eventual involvement in the painting activity was seen as significant.

Three weeks later he again joined some children, this time in making Christmas cards – an activity that he then continued at home. It occurred to me that there were several aspects of the creation of Christmas cards that stimulated Lee’s artmaking and were also consistent with his home-based art experience. Firstly, he had a sense of purpose for his drawings; this sense of purpose also involved a sense of audience and an anticipation of positive emotional responses. For example, when he created a card for his teacher, I asked him, “What do you think Nellie will say when she sees the Christmas card?”

Lee replied, “*Oh my God! Thank you Lee!*”

In addition, he was receptive to the graphic features of Christmas cards and had been responsive to learning new techniques. He was also keen to teach others. For instance, on one home visit he asked me to make him a Christmas card. After providing me with the necessary card and pencils, and giving me general instructions, he sat next to me and created his own card. When I had finished, he looked at my card and commented on ways that I could improve it – which I diligently did (such as adding a snake under the Christmas tree). Such interactions provided further confirmation that our research relationship empowered Lee to take the lead and be in the role of expert. It also suggested that, despite his apparent reluctance to interact with other preschool children, he was secure in the support he got from his teachers and receptive to being taught new art techniques. Also, it must be noted that Christmas cards were part of the exciting anticipation that Lee, and all of the children, felt about Christmas.

Maps, computers and games at preschool



Figure 7. Lee's map; laptop computer.

The week after Lee made the Battleship computer I arrived at preschool to find him playing outside with his new map-drawing (Figure 7, left). He told me, “I’m a *pretend policeman*.” He also said he had some soldiers to help him and explained that the map had a treasure (represented by the key), several guns (which represented soldiers) and a bridge like the one at preschool. In this context, he had not only transformed the card into a map but he had transformed his solitary game to one that involved adventure and imagined companions. This observation supported Pearson’s (2001) assertion that rather than children’s artworks being the residue of practice they were part of their social practice. In Lee’s situation, his treasure map was an integral aspect of his social practice of play.

Later that morning Lee drew a laptop computer (Figure 7, right). He folded a card, drew a keyboard grid on the bottom half and a screen on the top. Flipping the card over, he drew a battery compartment with wires on the lower half, and a computer lid with his name, buttons and oblongs on the top half. He then tried to fit his playground map onto the screen (see rolled map in Figure 7, right). When this approach was unsuccessful he then drew directly onto the screen.

Writing keyboard letters presented Lee with another challenge. To begin with he used letters he knew (such as those in his name) but found that he still had unmarked keys. In a manner reminiscent of behaviour I had witnessed at home, he then searched the immediate environment for more letter shapes. With his face the picture of concentration, he scanned the wall displays, identified a new letter, translated this into a

drawn mark on his card, looked up again to confirm a similarity between his drawing and the letters, and then repeated the procedure in rapid succession several more times. Although appearing fully engrossed in drawing, at one point, he carefully caught a mosquito and took it outside. The catching and releasing of this insect may seem trivial but it struck me as significant, for he appeared so engrossed in his drawing and visual scanning that he seemed unaware of his other surroundings. However, this incident suggested that he had both a heightened awareness of his internal drawing processes and an embodied presence in the environment.

As Lee released the mosquito, five-year-old Tom came to the art table.

When Lee returned Tom asked *me* what Lee was drawing. Rather than speaking for Lee, I asked him if he wanted to tell Tom about his computer.

Lee said, *“Not really, ‘cause I got quick to make it up.”*

This ‘quick-to-make-it-up’ descriptor was apt when considering his level of intense concentration coupled with his frantic pace. As this drawing activity continued for more than ten minutes it was not quick in terms of time elapsed. However, his statement suggested awareness of, or sensitively to, the fleeting and tenuous moments between envisioning an image and graphically translating it into a drawn mark. As someone who also creates in an artistic mode of expression I recognized Lee’s experience of creating a link between thought and artistic actions, where time takes on a different quality and the outside world becomes secondary to the internal dialogue between self, environment and media. In these circumstances there was a sense of urgency and timelessness. In theories about creativity this intensity of perception and action has been aptly described as a state of ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Another factor that contributed to Lee’s need to be ‘quick to make it up’ was the manner in which scheduled routines, such as snack break or story time, took precedence over self-directed activities. Jingjing had alluded to this issue when Lee was modifying his map-drawing (Figure 3, P. 97). She said, “He’ll just concentrate to draw until he finished...Sometimes he didn’t want to go to preschool. He says, ‘Oh it’s so boring.’ [Pause]. Because, maybe at home he’s free to do everything, but at preschool it’s time for story time, or time for music. He likes Transformers very much. Every day he plays with them. He says, ‘There’s no Transformers at preschool so I don’t want to go’.”

I asked her if she had told the teachers that Lee wanted to play with his Transformer.

Jingjing replied, “Ah, no. I heard Judith say he is so quiet so I want to encourage him to make some friends with the other kids.”

In respect to the rift between Lee’s overt wishes to play with his toys at preschool and his apparent need for more time to complete his art projects, and the well-meaning decision by adults to structure time and to restrict his play activities at preschool, several thoughts occurred to me in terms of Lee’s art experiences. Firstly, it is worth noting that although there were some similarities between Lee’s art experiences at home and preschool the preschool environment did not promote the level of intense artistic involvement that home allowed. It also limited the range of activities that he wanted to engage in – most notably his fantasy play with Transformers. At home, this aspect of his play was carried through to many drawing episodes but was not explored at preschool. Also, at preschool, I had not observed play based around superheroes or action figures. Therefore, it was possible that, like the centres in Ring’s (2003) research, such role-play was not encouraged. However, based on my insights into Lee’s persona at home and preschool, it was possible that his Transformer toys could have created a link between Lee and his peers, rather than be a barrier to such interactions. For example, his play with Transformers would have linked home and preschool experiences and afforded his teachers greater insights into his interests. Also, as the handling of objects can be ‘essential precursor to any in-depth investigation or abstraction’ (Brooks, 2002b, p. 223), his Transformers could have provided a point for social and verbal interactions and for negotiated understandings between Lee and his peers. This then, may have flowed through to some shared drawing and play experiences.



Figure 8. Laptop computer.

Computers were one theme that Lee did explore at home and at preschool and not long after he created his laptop drawing at preschool (Figure 7) he also drew a more complex one at home (Figure 8). In this latest drawing he utilized the structural features of an opened exercise book to make the screen and keyboard. Computers were a relatively new drawing theme for Lee and it occurred to me that his earlier struggle to communicate about his shark computer game was pivotal in his artistic exploration of computers. This point is explored more fully from a Deweyan perspective in Chapter 9.

Home-based learning time

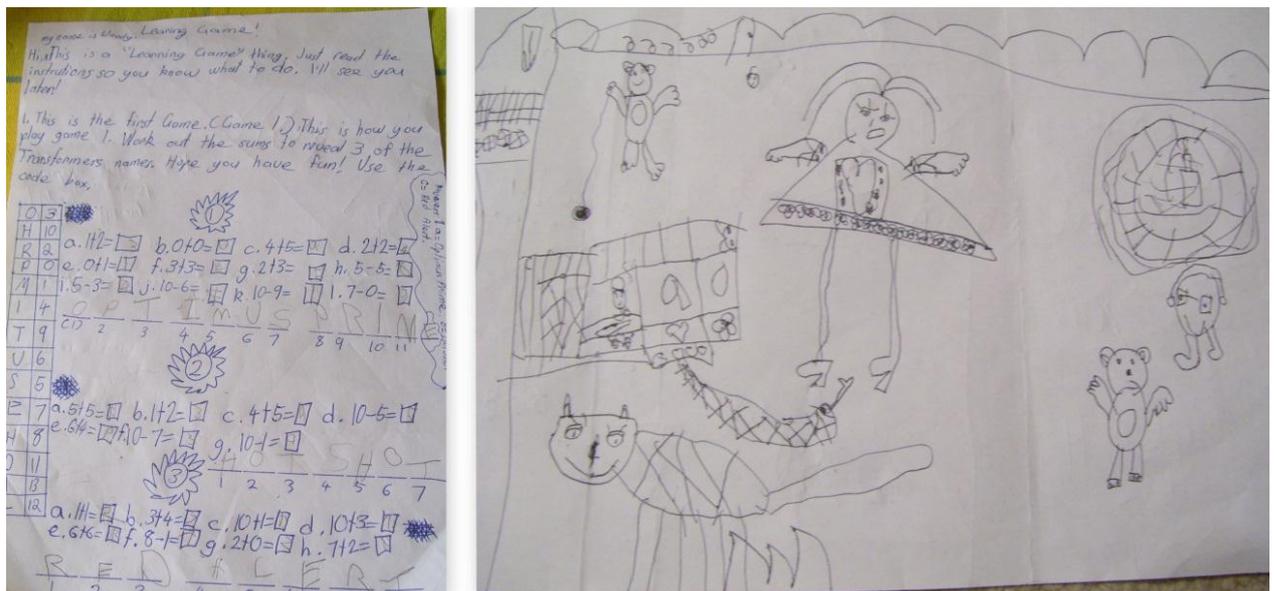


Figure 9. Transformer worksheet; princess activity sheet.

Although Lee was not yet a school pupil, he was expected to be involved in home-based learning routines and when Penny brought home worksheets Lee used these as inspiration to draw his own worksheets. He also responded to activity sheets made for him by his mother or sister. For example, Penny made a number-to-letter code game based on a Transformers theme (Figure 9, left). In a reciprocal manner, Lee made an activity sheet for her (Figure 9, right) that he called, "Got to help the princess to decorate."

It was interesting to note that, while Lee's drawings of figures were often not gender specific (for example see 'Farmer Bob' in Figure 15, p. 117), when he drew for his sister his drawings had stronger gender indicators. This insight added weight to other contextual art research that has recognized that children's gendered identities were 'woven into the fabric of [their] daily lives and ever-changing identities' (Ivashkevich, 2009, p. 59). His drawings also revealed that his sense of audience played an important

role in his choice of drawing styles and gendered drawing features. For Lee, his sister was an important female with whom he had ease of communication. In these worksheets each child also based the activities around the other's interests (Figure 9) and this demonstrated their highly developed interpersonal empathy.



Figure 10. Poster for Chinese language lessons.

Lee also used drawing to be part of another important cultural and familial ritual as Jingjing taught her children how to read and write in Chinese. She was instructing Penny in forming Chinese script and in order to be part of this activity Lee independently drew a poster for his mother to use (Figure 10). This drawing was motivated by Lee's interest in drawing and his drive for social interactions with his family. As such, from a sociocultural perspective I could see how his drawings became the mediating tool (Vygotsky, 1978) with which he initiated interactions with family members.

Within his family environment, Lee's ability to generate such drawings was significant as they also allowed him to move from being a mere respondent to other's ideas to being a director of activities. This required both an understanding of the aim of the family events (such as homework activities or learning Chinese script) and the requisite art skills. In many ways, his worksheets were another variation on his repertoire of game drawings and through this genre he inserted himself into the family event in a leadership role. This was possible in the context of familial trust (with his sister and mother), through family-based routines (involvement in homework and language learning activities) and through application of art knowledge and artworks (use of worksheets and labels). Although he was not able to write Chinese script he utilized his art skills to enter into the event and in doing so, he enhanced his sense of belonging. Such purposes for children's art has also been evident in findings from Griebing's (2009) research.

These insights also suggest that Lee could have been supported in developing closer relationships with his preschool peers and teachers if he had more opportunities to communicate and participate through drawing. Most importantly, he needed both a responsive audience for his drawing (as his family members and I were) and some co-participants (as his sister and mother were). In the absence of close same-age friends this role would be need to be assumed by teachers but dominant practices of non-teacher intervention at Markham Community Preschool, and in early childhood art practices in general, worked against such interactions. On the few occasions when Lee joined in teacher-led art activities, such as when making Christmas cards, he was motivated, productive and able to carry the experience forward to future situations.

Art themes, characters and iconic symbols

Lee was a prolific drawer who used a repertoire of iconic symbols to represent ideas. For example, while he was skilled at drawing fish and sharks and he had a large range of drawings featuring these characters he also drew shark characters to symbolize danger or evil. Also, like many children of his age, Lee drew the sun in the sky as a symbol of day time, and stars as a sign of night time. However, his suns or clouds were more than just icons in that he often drew faces on them and involved them in action with other characters. When he included rain clouds these were often positive symbols as he explained that if it didn't rain then people would not have water to drink and they would die. Soldiers were usually good characters and guns were most often used by the 'good guys.' Indeed, in some drawings the suns and clouds had the guns as they dealt with the bad guys and in two drawings in Figure 11 (p. 110) the suns were equipped with guns or gun holsters.



Figure 11. Drawings that explored good and evil.

Lee’s drawings often explored themes of good versus evil, with complex and amusing subplots and characters. For example, the Transformer characters (Figure 11, top, left) were ‘good guys’ battling the evil Batman™. Meanwhile, in Lee’s words, the sun had a “sun coming out of its tummy,” and the monkey was “doing exercises in the tree.” When he described the country in which these stories took place, he often described it as China. In terms of identifying the roles that drawn characters played, Lee often classified them as good or bad guys. For example, he pointed to three drawings (as seen in Figure 11, top right to bottom right) and said, “*Bad guy with money bag... bad guy in Starship, and Batman...good and bad guys with sun and clouds.*”

Through his drawings, Lee wove together complex narratives and characters. For example, in one drawing (Figure 11, top left) he used a blend of popular heroes (such as Batman), toys and movie characters (Transformers, Mutant Ninja Turtles™), iconic

symbols (sun, clouds, guns) and imaginative characters (such as the monkey doing exercises) to generate a drawing full of action, story and themes. As he enthusiastically shared these drawings I was reminded of Vygotsky's assertion that 'when a child unburdens his repository of memory in drawing, he does so in the mode of speech – telling a story' (1978, p. 112). Of the four research participants, Lee had the greatest propensity to tell a story through drawing. Perhaps, in part, this was due to his difficulty in sharing verbal narratives in what was a predominantly English-speaking community.

While the formats of maps, games or stories dominated Lee's drawings at home, he also drew other topics. Just as the children in Ring's (2003) research explored family life and popular culture through drawing and play, so too did Lee explore images related to Chinese fictional characters, Chinese locations, his family and Transformers. He also created many drawings on the topic of soldiers, armies and battles. At least one of Lee's preschool teachers was aware of his interest in military themes as he had told her that he wanted to be a soldier when he grew up. Although this teacher asked me if Lee drew soldiers at home she did not encourage this topic at preschool. This reluctance to encourage such drawing themes has been noted elsewhere (Richards, 2003b, 2005) and was in keeping with discouraging undesirable gendered behaviours as expanded through Australian discourse on gender equity in education (Butorac, Lymon, & DEETY, 1998; MCEETYA Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997).

While Lee's interest in military themes was not encouraged at preschool, he was able to explore this topic at home. For example, Lee and his family visited an army museum and on one occasion his father printed military images, which he and Lee then stapled into booklet form. Lee then drew his own drawings to go with the images that depicted facets of military life, such as uniforms and equipment. Thus, while these images and drawings were an outlet for his authentic interest in army themes they were provided by his family without specifically promoting themes of violence.

The way in which Lee's gendered identity was evident in his artworks and constructed through his art practices, has been touched upon in these discussions. However, word limits demand that a rigorous analysis of this aspect of the children's art experiences will need to be kept for subsequent publications. It is salient to note however, that the nature of Lee's art experiences were linked to his gendered identity as a young male, and that social practices in the home and preschool promoted and limited some of his ways of expressing gendered identities through his art, especially as they pertained to his interest in the military.

Personal and cultural identity through drawing

Lee's book of army photographs and drawings also brought together his continuing interest in military themes, his emerging interest in making books and his inclination to tell stories through his drawings. In the first few months of the research Lee's fascination with developing increasingly complex ways to give graphic form to his stories was evident. For example, when I first met him, his drawing-narratives appeared on a single page in the form of a map or game, depicting various characters, actions and sequences of events. He then began to staple together several drawings on a similar theme and called these books. His army pictures fitted this category. He then progressed to creating several drawings that represented a different moment in the story, and on one occasion he made a book for each family member. Responding to his new interest in making books, his parents provided Lee with an exercise book and he drew several stories in this book.

It was clear to me that Lee responded to graphic images on television, books and movies and that he modified these images to suit the themes that he was personally exploring. For example, his family owned a DVD of 'Mulan', a Disney animated version of a traditional Chinese story. Initially, Lee drew pictures from scenes in Mulan. He then decided to make a Mulan book and to modify the storyline in ways he felt was an improvement on the original. He did this by replacing the original Chinese dragons with "*Chinese dinosaurs*" as they were better suited to survive the "*big icy water going down.*" He explained further, "*Dinosaurs, they have a long neck. You can see the neck if they go in the water - that's why.*"

I related Lee's confident manner when engaged in and sharing his art experiences to Vygotsky's assertion that 'in play the child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself' (1978, p. 102). When Lee shared his drawings and stories with me, he did so with use of the graphics, words, gestures, actions, songs and noises. His drawings and art experiences were an extension of his exuberant personality and they were delivered with a great deal of humour as the various characters had complex personalities, interactions and actions. Thus, the life Lee experienced through these drawings was exciting, social and adventurous – his extroverted exuberance in these situations was in sharp contrast and 'a head taller' than his persona at preschool.

Bob's Farm: Farmer Bob

Drawing also afforded Lee a level of confidence in communication that exceeded his confidence to communicate verbally. Furthermore, it appeared that the nature of his art experiences (especially his home-based experiences), coupled with the research processes (in which he was treated as competent and knowledgeable person) facilitated his confident participation with art and afforded him a sense of control and a position of power as the expert.

However, the world could still be a scary place for a young child and Lee's complex drawn story of 'Bob's Farm: Farmer Bob' provided insights into some of the circumstances of Lee's lived experiences that he explored through his art experiences. When he shared this art experience with me it was *an* experience in the sense of having a single pervading quality that characterises an artistic-esthetic experience (Dewey, 1934/2005). In an attempt to convey some of the qualities of this experience I have presented this episode in a narrative style. This narrative also includes dialogues and Lee's photographs of his drawings. Lee's turn of phrase has not been altered and his words are in italics. Where this talk was part of his story-telling voice it has been formatted in bold. My experience of this episode, and appropriate background information, is also woven into this narrative. The story begins with my arrival at Lee's home.

The narrative begins...

With laptop case in one hand, and my camera slung over my shoulder I knocked at the front door of Lee's home. Jingjing opened the door with a cheery greeting. Moments later, five-year-old Lee popped out from behind his mother. He welcomed me with a shriek of delight, as though we hadn't seen each other for weeks – when in fact we had met at preschool a few days previously. He joyfully lunged towards me, and with a mischievous grin took my free hand and led me inside. This lively, articulate and boisterous child literally lifted my spirits and not for the first time I considered how 'Lee as a son' was a different persona to 'Lee as a preschool boy'.

As I joined Lee on this sunny afternoon I sensed that he had something special to share with me. I was aware that a lot had happened that month for him with the end to his time at preschool looming. A week earlier he had joined some of the other preschool children in visiting his new school in an orientation morning and I too had attended with Jingjing. We

had sat in the school hall, as the principal explained how to pack a school lunch box and to prepare a child for school. Although I was not a parent, it irked me that, despite five years of raising a child, 'we' were being told how to pack our child's lunch box. It was as though all experience leading up to the point of being a schoolchild was negligible; that the years of getting children off to preschool with packed lunches, appropriate clothes and positive attitudes was not the real thing. Now school attendance – that was a serious business! The principal even mentioned the school's discipline procedures, although she noted that expulsion of a kindergarten child was almost unheard of. I did not know how the bona fide parents felt, but the apprehension I felt about Lee adjusting to school life increased with this visit. During our time in the hall, Lee and the other children were involved in unspecified activities in the classrooms. Later, when I asked him what he did, he just shrugged his shoulders. He appeared indifferent to the experience – or perhaps just as bewildered as I was.

However, Lee was not indifferent on this day of my home visit as he led me towards his dining room table. He climbed onto the chair at the head of the table and stood obliquely facing me. This confirmed that I was in the role of an audience as on previous occasions in similar poses he had sung songs, recited poems and told stories. On this chair Lee had created a lived space, a centre stage in which he bodily took on a mantle of confidence and leadership. This further confirmed that his home and preschool were not just different places to him – they were different lived spaces with accompanying lived experience of body and human relations (van Manen, 1990). On the table in front of Lee was an exercise book opened at what appeared to be a title page (Figure 12). Lee positioned me and the book so I was looking at it the right way up – not unlike what he experienced when he had a story read to him at preschool or at the town library.



Figure 12. 'Bob's Farm, Farmer Bob' title page

He looked at the upside-down words on the book cover and let out a sigh. He gave his mother a quick glance – I could see that this child and parent were collaborators, with Lee taking the lead role and Jingjing offering technical and emotional support. “Farmer,” she prompted in a gentle voice.

Again, he drew breath. In a clear voice, he announced, **“Bob’s Farm, Farmer Bob.”**



Figure 13. Bob's farm house; green and orange sheep. Pages 1-2.

He reached down and flipped to the next page (Figure 13). **“Once upon a time, there’s got a house. This is not just a house, it’s a farm house. There lived a Farmer**

Bob. Farmer Bob's got three sheep. One is different because it is green – and these two orange sheep wouldn't play with him, Lee's sad voice trailed off.

"Oh, that's a bit sad," I responded.



Figure 14. The green sheep runs away. Pages 3-4.

Turning the page (Figure 14) Lee's voice expressed suspense, **"And once at night, in the gate, something secret got away."** Lee turned quickly to the next page, tilted his head on a slight angle, raised his eyebrows and asked me in a storybook tone, **"Can you see it?"**

Looking at the book I suggested, "One of the sheep got away?"

Engrossed by the narrated story, I had almost forgotten that Jingjing was there until she prompted Lee, "You tell me the reason why."

Ignoring this request, Lee continued, **"Farmer Bob very happy to see the sheep. Can you see the green sheep?"** Again, this last sentence was said with an upward intonation, inviting a response in much the same way I imagined he had experienced when adults read children's books aloud.

"Oh, it's off the picture," I exclaimed pointing to the green sheep's legs at the top of the fourth page (Figure 14, right). How clever, I mused. This was the first time I was aware that he was using graphic conventions, such as partially obscured objects, to tell the story. Three previous pages had drawn letters, but he now employed the image as the storyteller.

Lee was aware of the power of the image, and he was making sure that I too understand the significance of this part of the drawing.



Figure 15. Only two sheep; Bob is alarmed. Pages 5-6.

Lee flipped the page (Figure 15). He said, ***“And the Farmer Bob have only two sheep.”***

Lee has drawn a blackened sky and stars that indicated that time had passed in his story.

“O-oh! Something gets wrong!” said Lee in a dramatic narrator’s tone. I noted the outstretched arms of the alarmed farmer. Then, still in the voice of the narrator, but this time in a more conversational manner Lee said, ***“He met a new friend called Josh.”***

“Josh the new sheep?” I asked, so I could be sure we were then talking about the green sheep and not Farmer Bob.

“No, Josh the Wass!” shouted Lee in an exasperated tone, as though I should have known better.

“Josh the Wass?” asked Jingjing, as this appeared to be news to her also.

“Yes,” replied Lee more calmly.

Jingjing said quietly, “Yes, his name, this sheep’s name...”

“...is Josh the Wass,” I finished.

Although the green sheep was not drawn on this page in this retelling of the story Lee had felt the need to account for the lost sheep, and to make sure he was not lonely. Lee muttered by way of an explanation, “*He see him up a tree...um...*” His voice trailed off, and then by switching back to the confidence of the narrator he commanded, “***Next page!***”



Figure 16. Bob looks for the green sheep. Pages 7-8.

“***Farmer Bob was to look.***” Again, there was a night sky and Farmer Bob appeared to be moving right as though on a journey (Figure 16). Lee continued, “***He was to say, ‘Oh my God, that might be where he be.’***”



Figure 17. Bob climbs a hill; Bob meets Garfield. Pages 9-10.

Lee flipped to the next page but said nothing (Figure 17).

“What’s this bit?” I asked.

“Is it a hill?” inquired Jingjing.

We were both still caught up in the story and Lee nodded solemnly. He said, **“But he’s wondering. That sheep is a Garfield. ‘Do you see my sheep?’**

‘No, no, no, but you can come in and look, but I’ve got some work to do’”

I smiled as Lee modulated his voice in the space of a few sentences to be the narrator, Farmer Bob and Garfield. Lee breathed life into the Garfield character, who for a moment Farmer Bob had mistaken for his lost sheep. He gave Farmer Bob and Garfield speech bubbles that denoted the two-way conversation. Lee had a Garfield soft toy and he had storied this character as a busy fellow, which was most unlike the cartoon character¹².

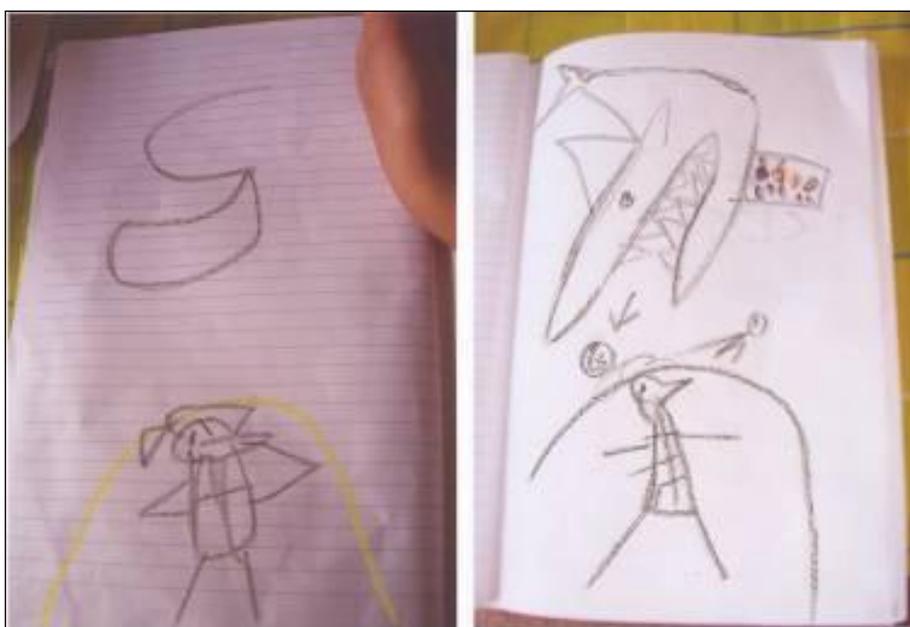


Figure 18. Bob needs a map; Bob meets a shark. Pages 11-12.

Turning to the next page (Figure 18) Lee took on the voice of Farmer Bob: **“I need something to...I know, I need a map’.”** Ah, I thought, Lee was back to an old favourite – maps, and I wouldn’t have been surprised if sharks and soldiers appeared next. I noticed that he had tucked the next page face down on the table. He carefully opened out the page, exposing just a tail shape, and in a drawn out and high-pitched voice he asked, **“Guess what is this is?”**

¹² Garfield is a cat character created by cartoonist Jim Davis

Maintaining the drama and humour of the moment I responded, “Oh, it’s the edge of something scary. It’s not a shark fin, is it?”

“Of course it is!” laughed Lee, as he uncovered the drawing.

“Oh no! The shark is going to eat Farmer Bob!” I exclaimed in mock horror.

Switched back to being the narrator, Lee said, **“Have you seen my sheep?”**

‘No, no, no,’ says the shark.

‘I saw you eat it!’

‘No, I be baddy. Your hat is going to be flooded.’

‘Yes, I want to buy a hat.’”



Figure 19. Bob at hat shop; Bob at police station. Pages 13-14.

Lee continued (Figure 19), **“Farmer Bob he wish he have a new hat. So, Farmer Bob walked to the shop, but the shop is ready to close. So he go to call the police station man. He said, ‘Have you seen my sheep?’**

‘No,’ said the man.

‘Have you seen MY sheep?’

‘No, so we will going to go find’.”



Figure 20. Bob and a policeman search. Pages 15-16.

Lee turns the page, looks at it but does not speak (Figure 20).

“So they got in the police car?” I asked.

“Yeah,” agreed Lee. **“They search, with the badge, but no.”**

I noticed that a gun has appeared in the story as the policeman and Farmer Bob searched for the green sheep. Below the men was a body of water, which usually signified danger – especially in the form of lurking sharks.



Figure 21. Bob and police search; green sheep comes home. Pages 17-18.

He continued (Figure 21), **“He said, ‘Can I search for it?’**

‘No.’”

I look to the next page in which Lee had drawn the policeman firing his gun into a building as Farmer Bob moved towards a flock of sheep. I expected a dramatic conclusion to this story, and I was surprised when Lee, in a calm and resigned voice, said, **“And he come back, and they lived happily ever after.”**

He completed this story and immediately launched into retelling his next drawn story, about a prince and princess employing a knight to get the castle they wanted off a *“bad princess.”* He then decided that he was going to make another story called *“Find the boat in the street”* and he drew at a furious tempo, intent on his task. I again observed the single-mindedness in which he created his narratives and marvelled as he sketched page after page at a frenetic pace showing external evidence of the dynamic interplay of process and product, of his drawing and thinking. Again, he appeared to be in a state of creative flow as his internal narrative manifested in graphic marks. This observation also affirmed my belief that episodes such as these were more than just art-like activities for Lee; instead (as will be discussed in Chapter 9) in the Deweyan sense these were his art experiences.

As I witnessed the phenomenon of Lee’s creating a new story, Jingjing, who had left the room a few minutes earlier, returned and said to me, “He told me that they wouldn’t like to play. The green one said, ‘I am so sad, I am so lonely.’ He told me in Chinese, maybe because it is very difficult for him to say in English. The green one got away. ‘So sad’ he said, ‘I want to change my colour’.”

She looked towards Lee and asked, “Did you tell Rosemary – the green sheep say I want to change my colour into orange so these two can play with him?”

Lee looked up with an almost dazed expression, and then resumed drawing.

Jingjing continued, “So, at the last page the green sheep eats a magic biscuit and changes colour; changes orange at the last page – an orange one so they can play together. You can see in the first page the sheep is green, and in the last page it is turning orange.”

This insight changed my impression of the outcome of the story. In Lee’s story each sheep’s colour gave it a sense of belonging or ostracism and the green sheep was unhappy when the other sheep refused to play with him. However, someone did care about the green

sheep – Farmer Bob. With Jingjing’s new confronting information, however, I realized that I had already attributed a metaphoric analogy to the story: that is, if the sheep represented children, then Farmer Bob represented the carer, parent or teacher who cared for all of his or her family or charges. Farmer Bob went to great lengths to find the green sheep and the book was titled after this character. This focus on Bob was in keeping with Lee’s previous stories and drawings where superheroes, soldiers and Transformers were cast as the main ‘good guys’. As I travelled the parallel narratives of Lee’s preschool experiences as a Chinese child on the fringes of social interactions, and the green sheep’s social isolation, I had felt pleased that he, as the storyteller, has storied the green sheep as returning by his own volition and accepted for who he was. However, Jingjing’s elaboration of the narrative, accompanied by the graphic evidence of the green sheep now outlined in orange, revealed a different and harsher version. For it seemed that, only by becoming externally like the others, while also retaining the internal ‘greenness’, was the green sheep accepted, befriended or happy. Furthermore, the task of transformation was not something that the green sheep accomplished without the external aid of a magic biscuit.

The narrative and the phenomena re-explored

Stepping out of the immediate narrative and my thoughts at that time, I reflected on the phenomena that was Lee’s drawing and sharing of ‘Bob’s Farm: Farmer Bob’ and considered what was often obscured or taken-for-granted (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), not just in terms of his art experiences but also in terms of his personal experiences. Reflecting on this critical research episode required a form of zooming-out from the details of this event to a more holistic and contextual overview of this episode within Lee’s wider experiences. However, before doing so I will briefly zoom in on the artworks and briefly discuss these in relation to the telling of the story.

In terms of scrutinizing ‘Bob’s Farm: Farmer Bob’ as an artwork, or series of artworks, I regarded each drawing as both simplistic in its singular structure and complex in its overall function as a dramatic moment in a book and story. The use of simple graphic images not only met the audience’s need for visual clarity, especially in terms of identifying the characters and setting, but these allowed Lee to draw at a rapid pace. Thus, he demonstrated that he had ‘a repertoire of visual languages, as well as the wit to

know when to call on each' (Wolf & Perry, 1988, p. 18). His repertoire of visual languages and graphic skills also included sequencing, partially obscured images, letters and words. He employed comic book conventions such as speech bubbles and motion marks for bullets flying. Lee designed characters, such as Farmer Bob and the sheep, with distinguishing features that allowed the artist and audience to identify with them over numerous pages. He also created unique characters such as the shark, Garfield, policeman and shop tender, who contributed to the main plot and subplots. He used iconic images such as maps, suns, moons, stars, sharks, and 'good-guys' with guns and badges to represent people, places, times and dramatic tension. He also used picture book conventions such as the strategic placement of characters on the page to denote journeys, movement, and dramatic action. Lee's fluid use of multiple forms of texts in the graphic form was characteristic of many of his artworks (for example the drawings in Figure 11, display several of these features).

When Lee shared these artworks he did so by way of a visual sharing of the images coupled with dramatic use of voice, gesture and sounds – all of which interacted to heighten communication and artist-audience joint involvement. Susan Wright (2007) referred to the media in which young children created and shared their artworks with an active audience as drawings-tellings. In a study of children's drawing coupled with the medium of telling, Wright (2007) also noted children's complex use of diverse symbol systems across a variety of expressive medium including filmic features, and referred to this as 'intratextuality'. This intratextuality, in terms of the graphic features of Lee's drawings of 'Bob's Farm' and his manner of delivering this drawing-telling, is worthy of further investigation. Also of interest are the ways in which he engaged in the actions of drawing and his verbal and physical performance of his story, how these ways of knowing and acting came to be part of his funds of knowledge and how these were linked to others aspects of his cognitive, social and emotional development. However, such areas of investigation will need to be addressed in other forums as this thesis's focus on the nature of young children's art experiences prompts me to zoom out to a wider view of his art experiences and consider some of the 'big ideas' that he explored through this drawing-telling experience.

Transformation as a theme, a process, and a big idea

In the story of 'Bob's Farm: Farmer Bob' Lee used magical transformation to alleviate the green sheep's isolation. Over time, I recognized that 'transformation' was an

idea and image that Lee explored often. For example, his favourite toys were Transformers, and some of his earliest research photographs were of these toys in various poses. Moreover, he created many narratives and drawings based on their exploits and constructed Lego models that he transformed from robots to vehicles. He also carried the idea of transformation through to drawings in which he created characters using several previous discrete images – such as his drawings of dinosaur-dragons, a dinosaur-zebra or a *“Big bad ant with a teddy bear head.”* What is more, for Lee, transformation was not just a theme of his play or drawings, but a daily reality as he navigated the social paths of preschool and home life. As I was thinking about the Bob’s Farm episode I found it useful to draw upon a sociocultural perspective of creative processes to help explain this more fully. In particular, I looked carefully at the writing of Moran and John-Steiner (2002), and found it useful to personalize one of their quotes¹³ with Lee’s name.

Lee comes to know about the world not through absorbing – but through transforming – the information received from others’ speech and actions; he must reconstruct knowledge based on these experiences. Through the transformation of this social interaction and use of cultural tools and signs, Lee can free himself from the constraints of the present environment and take control of his own future. Past experience influences but does not determine what Lee does; he can reorganize the way he thinks in anticipation of future needs and goals. The emphasis is not on autonomy from others, but in the development of self mastery and a more flexible interaction with others. (pp. 4-5, modified with Lee’s name)

This helped me to form a clearer picture of how Lee’s creation of ‘Bob’s Farm’ could be understood from a sociocultural-historical perspective. Considering Lee’s experiences from this perspective I could see that his social knowledge about his own world was derived, in part from interactions with his family, teachers, community, preschool peers, and me. Such interactions had the capacity to transform his thinking, actions and knowledge. Furthermore, within his supportive family environment Lee shared routines, cultural practices, languages and competencies that constituted his family’s funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005). As a preschool boy, friend and community member Lee also experienced social interactions, but often without the easy flow of shared language and similar family values and traditions. When reconciling these ways of being Lee was constantly learning and developing through a series of transformations. At the same time, Lee was learning and growing through his social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978).

¹³ For the original quote see Chapter 2, page 26.

Furthermore, although the drawing and retelling of 'Bob's Farm: Farmer Bob' was a part of Lee's current experiences they had also evolved from his past experiences. For example, his literacy and art experiences had previously included drawing of toys (such as his toy Sheep and Garfield), action games and stories. He had also developed an understanding of picture book formats, which he had gained in part from library visits, preschool books and stories, bedtime stories, movies and television. Also, at preschool he had seen the children's book, 'Where is the green sheep?' (Fox & Horacek, 2004), in which sheep of various colours happily played together, performing amazing feats, such as surfing, while the green sheep was asleep behind a bush. Lee was likely to have built on his interpretation of this picture book and on his other play and drawing experiences when he developed Bob's Farm. However, I believe that his story was to a large degree influenced by his wider life experiences and the big ideas that he subsequently explored – such as that of belonging.

So, returning now to Moran and John-Steiner's (2002) quote, I agree that Lee's drawing experiences were influenced by his world around him, and he had done what was necessary to 'reconstruct knowledge based on these experiences' (p. 4). I also agree with the view that such experiences did not predetermine what he would do, or how, in this case, he would develop his story. Instead, he had transformed the narrative in a way that I believe was 'in anticipation of future needs and goals' (p. 5). The future goals and needs I refer to here were associated with Lee meeting the challenges of starting school and forming new peer relationships. He could anticipate that, despite the reassuring knowledge that his parents, family and teachers would care for him, like the green sheep, he must solve his own relationship issues. Therefore, as I listened to Lee telling his story of Bob's Farm and later reflected on it, I recognized a triple parallel - of his story, his actual experiences and sociocultural perspectives on creativity as expressed by Moran and John-Steiner (2002). Furthermore, I agreed with those perspectives in that the story demonstrated that Lee's 'emphasis [was] not on autonomy from others, but in the development of self mastery and a more flexible interaction with others' (p. 5). For Lee, drawing was a powerful way to communicate, to explore big ideas and to possibly make sense of future events.

To recap at this point, across the research reported and discussed thus far, Lee's drawings and photographs not only facilitated conversations around the narrative of his art and storytelling, they also transformed my understanding and consciousness of how he experienced his life. For Lee, Jingjing and I, the negotiation of meaning and

understanding of his stories and drawings, and dialoguing in English and/or Mandarin, also generated some shared cultural understanding. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 2 (pages 22-24) it was fair to say that Lee's self-initiated home-based art experiences facilitated communication on intrapersonal and interpersonal planes (Vygotsky, 1962/1934, 1978). What is more, Lee's drawings provided a means for us to bridge some of the language divides.

The manner in which Lee shared 'Bob Farm' suggested that he achieved personal satisfaction from his artmaking and from the social connections that such art experiences facilitated. For, as will be later expanded, art experiences such as these not only brought Lee into 'active and alert commerce with the world' (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 18) but through his subsequent interactions with his mother and me they transformed his interactions into a fuller sense of 'participation and communication' (p. 22) with those around him.

Drawing on the whiteboard at home

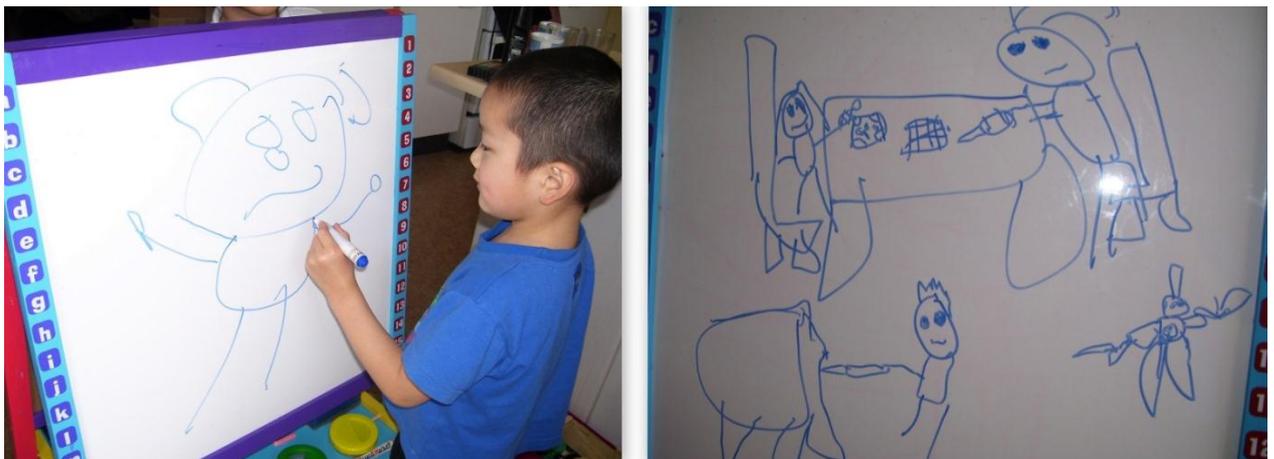


Figure 22. Drawing on the whiteboard; drawing of learning time scene.

Some art media were conducive to social interactions based around the actual artmaking process. For example, in mid-December Lee was given a whiteboard/blackboard easel and with good humour Lee drew "Penny as a monkey" (Figure 22, left) while his sister chalked a humorous picture of him on the blackboard. As this spontaneous create-and-erase mode of drawing did not allow Lee to return to a drawing, or to make a series of drawings that sat side by side, the whiteboard drawings appeared more simplistic than many of his paper-based drawings. This mode of drawing, however, encouraged him to look around him for ideas for his drawings. For example, during one 'learning time' he drew himself at the whiteboard with his Transformer toy, while in the

background (so positioned on the drawing by being placed higher up the drawing plane) his sister and mother played a game at the table (Figure 22, right). Jingjing was unaware that he had drawn this family scene until he shared his photographs with me. When she saw the drawing she joyfully exclaimed that it was just as the evening had happened. I noticed that Lee beamed with pleasure and pride at these comments and the excited and loving responses from his mother. Thus, the whiteboard as an art media appeared to facilitate drawing experiences that were more social, temporary and interactive than had been experienced previously when drawing on paper. It also appeared that Lee had formed the habit of taking photographs of his drawings, and as this episode revealed, these photographs provided a point of interest amongst people.



Figure 23. Selection of Lee's drawings with a family theme.

Drawing on the whiteboard appeared also to prompt Lee to explore ideas about family life and identity using a variety of other media. For example, during a two week period he also used felt pen on card to create "*Me like a baby*" (Figure 23, left); on the whiteboard he drew his family with a family of ants (Figure 23, centre), and with coloured pencils on paper he drew a family of dancing penguins (Figure 23, right). Again, Lee appeared to be motivated by a variety of visual stimuli and events. For instance, the ant drawing was made after he discovered a line of ants at home and the dancing penguins were created after watching a children's television cartoon in which 'Louie' demonstrated how to draw a penguin¹⁴.

Lee's interest in drawing family groups sat alongside his interest in battles and soldiers and I had become aware that both Lee and Jackson explored some themes that were traditionally associated with boys' interests and some which were not (Jackson's experiences are discussed in Chapters 8 and 12). Although an extended discussion on the traits of creative people is not practical in this thesis, it is worth noting that 'creative boys' have often been seen as 'more sensitive and less aggressive than their male

¹⁴ Louie, an ABC children's TV character, demonstrated how to draw various objects.

peers' and that 'creative individuals to a certain extent escape' rigid role stereotypes (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 70). Lee and Jackson demonstrated the willingness to explore a variety of themes and roles through art.

Art experiences in the summer holidays



Figure 24. Summer holiday drawings.

When the school term had ended Lee's family went away to visit extended family. On their return, a month later, I met with Lee who had taken over 80 photographs of his art experiences. As I browsed through his photographs, he and his sister provided some commentaries on his photographs of Christmas cards and his many drawings of battles, Transformers, sharks (Figure 24, left), knights, and the like. I noticed that he had also introduced some new characters, which were derived from books, television and Manga cartoons, including Elmo¹⁵, polar bears (Figure 24, right) and Tashimo and Dashsong. Lee's drawings continued to be a mix of humour and action, and even when he used images from popular culture, he created innovative and humorous story-drawings. I also noticed that he had extended his range of drawings associated with Chinese themes. This may have been due in part to access to a wider range of Chinese visual images as Lee and his family stayed with extended family.

¹⁵ Elmo is a character from the television series, Sesame Street®

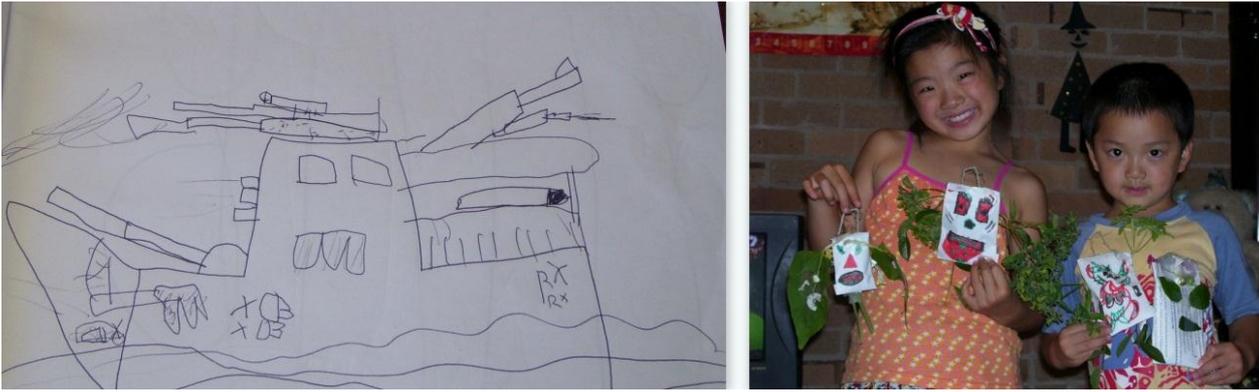


Figure 25. Destroyer; Plant Monsters.

Lee had also drawn pictures based on actual experiences, such as going on board a destroyer (Figure 25, left). When we looked at the photographs of the “Plant Monsters” (Figure 25, right), the children fetched the actual items, which were made from recycled paper and shrubbery. They performed with these, using various voices, as though they were puppets. When I asked them where they got the idea for plant monsters from, Penny told me that it was her idea first, “Then Lee copies me for a little while and then he changes his ideas again, and again, and again.” She said, “Sometimes Lee’s ideas give me new ideas – sometimes stay the same.”

These comments, when considered alongside Vygotsky’s (1978) theories and Brooks (2002a) research, provided some valuable insights into how, at immediate interactive and social levels, the siblings developed their own plant monster while contributing to the other’s construction through verbal language and manipulation of materials. At a structural level, the children’s home environment provided access to art materials and a safe and emotionally supportive space in which to be creative. In addition, the school holidays provided them with more unstructured time together than available during the school term. Therefore, rather than doing art for each other (as I had previously observed), the siblings were able to make art together and develop the experience into a more complex and rewarding experience. At a wider cultural level, the children knew that their artworks were valued by their parents and by me. All of these factors contributed to the social practices of artmaking for Lee in his home at that time.

Lee’s school orientation visits

It was common practice for the preschool to help coordinate the children’s attendance at school-orientation days. As described in the narrative of the Bob’s Farm experience, I attended one such visit with Lee and was aware of another when he

showed me his 'starting school' poster-worksheet and artwork (Figure 26). When I inquired what he did at school he said, in apparent reference to the worksheet, it was "Quite simple." When I asked what was simple he said, "Just nothing."



Figure 26. 'I'm starting school' poster; Lee's own version.

As far as I was aware, this was the first time he had encountered commercially produced and coloured worksheets (Figure 26, left). On the other hand, his practice of re-creating his own versions of worksheets (Figure 26, right) was part of his established pattern of home-based learning activities. Therefore, it appeared as though this commercially-produced worksheet had prompted activities which were, paradoxically, below his ability potential and difficult to successfully complete. For example, the worksheet instructed Lee to draw his school and his school friends – a task I considered quite obscure as he had little visual or experiential knowledge about either. Therefore, he had drawn his own topics including a clown face. Being aware of Lee's ability to glean visual information, I assumed that he had seen a clown picture in the classroom. Also, this worksheet task would also have been 'quite simple' compared to his later home-based experience of making his own version of it.

As will be seen, these orientation tasks were not a reliable indication of the types of art-related activities that Lee later experienced at school. His school and home-based art experiences are discussed more fully in Chapter 10.

6. LILLY

Lilly and her family

Lilly Rose was an Australian born Caucasian girl, who lived in Ashtown with her parents, Cathy and Phillip, and her sister, Raewyn, who was 21 months younger. She had regular contact with her paternal and maternal grandparents and, to a lesser extent, with her step brother and great grandmother. Some of these family members lived locally and others lived in a neighbouring town. When I first met Lilly, her mother worked as an administrator, her father was self-employed and they were renovating their older style house. The following year the family's financial circumstances changed and they bought a rural lifestyle block on the outskirts of Ashtown and Cathy then worked from home.

Lilly was aged between 4 years 7 months and 5 years 6 months during the research period and she attended Markham Community Preschool (MCP) two and a half days a week. On other working days, Lilly and Raewyn went to a home-based day-care. Lilly's father usually collected the children and was present when I met with her. As Lilly's mother felt she was missing out on hearing her daughter's comments about her art, several months into the research she rearranged her work schedule to be there. Raewyn was usually home during my visits and she often watched Lilly as she discussed her photographs. At times she asked Lilly questions about her drawings and, as her speech was indistinct, Lilly frequently 'translated' for me. Lilly told me that she also used to be hard to understand and that teachers said "*No one can understand me.*" However, Lilly's speech had improved markedly at preschool.

Between October 2006 and June 2007 Lilly shared 8 hours of recorded discussions and produced about 1,000 photographs. Most of her photographs were of her drawings and many of her other photographs were of people she knew. Lilly was articulate and physically active when discussing her photographs and often she drew while talking. She keenly anticipated my visits and was forthright about signalling when she was tired, finished or disinterested.

Lilly's art experiences

Lilly's art experiences as part of family life

Drawing permeated many aspects of Lilly's daily habits and routines. She had many family interactions based around her art, and drawing in bed was part of her bedtime routines. Lilly and Raewyn's art making activities, and their artworks, were valued as part of family life and the girls were provided with ready access to basic art materials such as pens, pencils, scissors, and paper. They also had space to spread out and spiral-bound books of cartridge paper for drawing in. As such, art activities were an integral aspect of the family's everyday routines, competencies and knowledge that constituted their 'funds of knowledge' (González & Moll, 2002; Moll, 2000). In addition, a large desk was available in a porch area for the children to work at. However, when Lilly was not drawing in her bedroom she seemed to prefer more social areas such as the lounge and kitchen.

Art was clearly one of Lilly's favourite activities and art materials featured prominently on her Christmas and birthday wish-lists. She also took art gear when visiting extended family and actively looked for materials she could use. Thus, drawing and artmaking were important aspects of Lilly's ways of being and she recalled doing drawings since she was very young. Her memories of earlier drawing episodes were sustained by occasionally looking through her old artworks which, over Lilly's lifetime, had been collected and stored as treasured family possessions.

In Lilly's home, the children's art was also displayed in frames, taped to walls and doors, and attached to the refrigerator. Over the years, the children had occasionally drawn directly onto walls, floors and furniture and these had not been removed. This reinforced my impression that the family home belonged to all the family. Lilly also explained that when she was younger she was allowed to draw on her own bedroom walls and furniture because they were renovating their house. However, when they fixed up their house she would not draw on the walls. It appeared to me that Lilly understood that what was currently or historically appropriate was not necessarily appropriate in future situations.

While Lilly's interpretation of these past drawing experiences did not align with those of her parents (for Cathy had laughed when she heard Lilly say she was allowed to draw on the walls) I sensed that Lilly had had fun drawing on these usually forbidden sites and this playfulness, sense of fun, understanding of limits and conditions, reinforced

the image I had of a family that was full of love, laughter, playfulness and shared experiences. Lilly's parents were tolerant of the mess that the children created and valued and enjoyed their children's creative spirits. As noted in Lee's case, and in other research (Anning & Ring, 2004; Pahl, 2002; Ring, 2006b), these parental attitudes and the provision of spaces and resources were likely crucial in supporting Lilly's positive art experiences in her home.

Lilly's parents sometimes joined in with the children's art activities, and encouraged visual fun such as decorating food, drawing together, face painting or dressing-up. In terms of drawings, Lilly showed me pictures that were jointly drawn with her mother many years earlier, and more recent ones drawn with her sister. She also showed me a drawing of two horses. She said that she had asked her Nan to draw a horse and she had watched and then also drawn one. While these joint drawings were few in number Lilly obviously enjoyed these shared experiences. Also, while the sisters usually made their own artworks they were encouraged to share art materials and assist each other to solve problems. From a sociocultural perspective, in these situations Lilly was usually Raewyn's more capable other, while the adults provided Lilly with the social interactions necessary to support her growth and development (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Vygotsky, 1960, 1978). In addition, the art focus of this research project appeared to further support the sisters' interpersonal relationships through art as it supported and extended established routines based around art.

Art media and themes

Lilly favoured drawing and she usually used pens, lead pencils or fine felt-tip markers on paper or light card. While she often drew in one of her spiral-bound drawings book, at other times she drew on found objects such as shopping lists, envelopes, card, scraps of paper, cardboard tubes, cereal boxes and the like. When drawing in her book, Lilly randomly selected pages and on many occasions drew several drawings on the same page, drew on both sides of her page and re-orientated pages to create a variety of base lines. She also revisited drawings to add details, additional features or shading. I noticed that her use of multiple orientations was both a feature of the artwork and of the way she physically drew. For example, on several occasions I observed Lilly as she competently drew pictures from a side angle or while viewing it upside down.



Figure 27. Drawing comprising several drawing episodes.

These drawing practices resulted in some of her drawings appearing jumbled and complex. For example, in one drawing (Figure 27) it was evident that Lilly had not only included several of favoured themes and topics (such as people, domestic furniture and playground structures) but she appeared to have drawn on this page over several distinct drawing episodes.

I point out here that I was not present when Lilly made many of her drawings (including that in Figure 27) and as she drew so prolifically it was not plausible for her to fully discuss every drawing. However, within this visual ethnographic and narrative orientated research, Lilly's photographs and related narratives of experiences, provided insights over time into the connections between her thinking and her actions. As such, Lilly taught me to interpret many of her drawings as comprising a number of artmaking episodes. For example, I interpreted Lilly's drawing in Figure 27 as being made up of at least nine drawing episodes, as presented in Figure 28.



- Drawing episodes and topics (top to bottom, left to right):
- a). Profile view, girls in beds, bedroom furniture.
 - b). Aerial view, girl in bed, two sets of drawers, second bed.
 - c). Small girl in hat/circle.
 - d). Lilly's family including step brother.
 - e). Water slide and canon at pool.
 - f). Raewyn's scribbles.
 - g). Blue scribbles above person—possibly water as also seen in (e).
 - h). Blue animal with a face.
 - i). Black fish.

Figure 28. Lilly's drawing as several drawing episodes.

While Lilly and Lee both drew prolifically, I noticed a key contrast between their purposes for making art. For example, while Lee usually made art that also meet some other social purpose (such as to tell a story, create a game or allow participation in family events), Lilly appeared to dwell more in the artmaking processes at a more private and intrapersonal level (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986/1934). For instance, it was not unusual for Lilly to create a series of drawings in which she practiced her drawing styles and these drawings seemed to be for her private viewing. I also came to understand that these apparently fragmented approaches to drawing were not because Lilly had lost interest, but rather because she was experimenting with various techniques. For example, amongst her partially drawn images she pointed out where she had tried different view-

points such as aerial, profile and cross sections of room interiors, as seen in Figure 28 (a) and (b), or how she had abandoned a drawing and attempted another approach.

When I asked her about one partially completed drawing she told me, “*I hate that one.*” About another, Lilly said that she had stopped drawing “*because I didn’t like it.*” It was clear from her confident manner, and subsequent attempts at drawing, that she did not just discard her ‘failures’, let them ‘ruin’ the page or deter her from trying again. Thus, I also came to see that Lilly was quite resilient to setbacks and showed evidence of having positive drawing self-efficacy (Richards, 2003b).



Figure 29. Home and family-based construction projects.

While drawing was Lilly’s main art activity, when she had access to construction materials, this influenced what she made. For example, on one occasion, when Lilly was discussing her photographs, she found some sticky tape and made one of her two-dimensional drawings into a three-dimensional “*noise maker*” (Figure 29, top left). She also transformed a preschool drawing of a mermaid into a hat (Figure 29, bottom left). On another occasion, when she was at her grandmother’s house, she made a “*Silly Billy party hat and glasses*” which she later asked her mother to model (Figure 29, centre). Referring to these items Lilly said, “*I made these at Nan’s place. She has sticky tape.*”

“Does Nan have some stuff you can use all the time?” I asked.

“No,” Lilly laughed, “*She gets really cross when I use her important stuff.*” Lilly pointed to a Nan’s table in another photograph and said, “*That’s all her important things but she lets me use them anyway.*”

While the research processes probably formalized these art-based interactions Lilly’s good humoured reaction to her Nan’s ‘important stuff’, her mother’s playful modelling of the hat and glasses and the family collection of the children’s artworks suggested a history of family interactions through art. Thus, it was not just provision of time, space and materials that promoted positive art experiences for Lilly, but family history, supportive relationships and good humour. Moreover, ‘playfulness by “more able others”’ (Ring, 2006b, p. 74) helped Lilly to create new meanings through her art and to build on past art experiences (Dewey, 1934/2005).

While I do not wish to digress too far from Lilly’s own narratives, at this point I will point out that her access to specific art materials influenced how she experienced art and the artworks she subsequently created. This observation aligns with Dewey’s (1934/2005) assertion that through artistic-esthetic experiences ideas and materials are united in expression. That is, the subject-matter of a Lilly’s art was a unification of the subject expressed, and the various art media (the matter) through which it was expressed. In other words, her access to art materials influenced what she made (such as the glasses) and what she made was influenced by the materials she had (such as when she transformed her mermaid drawing into a hat). Thus, as will be discussed further in Chapter 9, new levels of perception led to new actions. As such, once Lilly understood the potential of sticky tape to modify her two-dimensional work, she acted on this knowledge and also looked for opportunities to extend her art experiences. Her mother had laughingly commented that she and Lilly’s grandmother often bought sticky tape for general use, but Lilly would look for it and then use it for her art projects. So while sticky tape, (or in Lee’s case simple stickers, as seen in Figure 4, p. 98), were unsophisticated art materials, these simple materials stimulated artistic explorations of techniques and ideas as they became part of the subject-matter of these children’s artworks.

Not all art materials were as equally versatile for children, however, and when Lilly was given some compressed foam, she drew on it and cut around a shape to make a house (Figure 29, top right). But, as her mother commented, she soon lost interest in this material when she found she could not manipulate it with the same ease as card or paper. Around the same time, Lilly was also given her own sticky tape and she

transformed her own slippers into magic shoes (Figure 29, bottom right). She explained how these were like Dorothy's red shoes (from the *Wizard of Oz*) and how, although these were her real slippers, she also used them for dress-up. Lilly's ability to independently create a prop which supported other play episodes was also noted in Lee's art experiences and in other research (Griebing, 2009).

In terms of motivation for making three-dimensional artworks, then, Lilly was inspired by at least three sources of ideas. Firstly, access to materials and tools encouraged her to modify some of her drawings (such as the mermaid hat). Secondly, the properties and shapes of materials prompted her to make structural forms (such as the glasses). Thirdly, Lilly explored some of her familiar drawing topics (such as Dorothy's magic shoes) in fresh ways through three-dimensional art media. In doing so she explored and experimented with the properties and possibilities of the art materials. In this exploration she appeared to get some satisfaction from meeting the challenges associated with discovering what could be done with certain materials. However, as evident in her brief interest in compressed foam, an 'obtrusion of calculation' associated with some materials limited her 'spontaneity of expression' (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 73).

Domestic life as an art theme



Figure 30. Drawings of family scenes and domestic life.

Lilly's home environment also provided her with inspiration for the subject-matter of many of her art. For example, domestic items such as beds, sets of drawers, cradles, vases, wardrobes and lamps were often featured in her drawings. Indeed, Lilly competently drew bathroom scenes and house interiors with furniture, walls, stairs and fixtures (such as curtains and lights). Her visual knowledge about interiors may have

been heightened by her family's involvement in minor home renovations. Therefore, just as Lee was fascinated by computers, I recognized connections between the subject-matter of Lilly's art and her family's funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992).

Lilly's drawings of domestic scenes usually included people and, more often than not, female family members. For example, Lilly described the people in Figure 30 (left) as "*little girls, sisters.*" She also said that the drawn bedroom furniture was like her own furniture. I noted that while the top bed in this drawing was elongated (possibly to make it fit the page fully) in some subsequent drawings Lilly consciously attempted accurate proportions. For instance, several months later she did a series of small drawings of house interiors. In one of these drawings she pointed to a girl in a bed and said, "*I looked at her to make the size of her bed the same size as her.*" In another drawing she pointed out that she had drawn the bed so it was the "*right size to fit the fairy girl,*" and that the drawers were the "*right size for the bed.*"

Often, when Lilly discussed her drawings, she expanded on the relationship between the various characters. While most of her drawings contained just female characters, occasionally a male character also featured. For example, a couple of months after she drew the bedroom scene (Figure 30, left) she drew a family group with child in a pram (Figure 30, centre). As Lilly seldom drew male characters unless they were her family members, I got the impression that the subject-matter of this drawing was Lilly's mother with baby Raewyn, and Lilly and her step brother as older siblings. In this drawing the older siblings are obviously close in that their hands are touching. Thus, while Lee's drawings often explored a sense of belonging in a geographical sense, in this drawing Lilly seemed to be exploring how people (and thus herself) belonged together in a blended family.

It was also evident that Lilly explored the ideas associated with mother-baby bonds. This included several compositions of a baby in a mother's arms, in a cradle, a pram or sitting on the floor. Indeed, as will be discussed shortly, her exploration of the themes of families and being female were so recurrent and complex that I came to regard 'family relationships' as one of her 'big ideas'. In a related interest, Lilly also enjoyed drawing clothes and accessories. Two months after her pram drawing, she drew a mother and two little sisters walking towards some clothing, which appeared to be on display or in a wardrobe (Figure 30, right). The focal point of this drawing was the clothing. Lilly often returned to previous drawings to add more details and this appeared to be the case for one of these outfits. In terms of finding more visual information to

inform her drawing of clothes I was aware that Lilly looked carefully at real clothing and at illustrations in her books. Thus, both Lee and Lilly looked to their visual environments for specific information to inform their drawings. In this respect the environment provided them with artistic provocations (Gandini, 1998; Milikan, 2010) and their experiences of art embraced a broader, postmodern definition of visual culture as they built ideas based on everyday experiences of art and popular culture (Freedman, 2003).

In terms of the themes of their drawings there were clear contrasts between Lee's interests in drawing such things as military themes and Lilly's interests in drawing female clothing and accessories. There was also some similarity in their interests in exploring family themes and a sense of belonging. However, taken overall, it would be fair to say that, if a selection of their drawings was shown to another person, that person would likely identify the young artist's gender. Therefore, aspects of Lee's and Lilly's art experiences reflected their gendered identity and preferences, as also noted in other research (for example, see Bosacki et al., 2008; Boyatzis & Eades, 1999; Duncum, 1997; Golomb, 1992; Ivashkevich, 2009; Ring, 2003; Speck, 1995). Furthermore, viewed within a sociocultural-historical perspective, Lilly's and Lee's drawing interests were influenced by the way in which they were socialised as boys or girls. Moreover, as Mindy Blaise (2005a) pointed out, 'young children take an active part [in] "doing" gender by socially constructing meanings about femininities and masculinities from the gender discourses available to them in their everyday worlds' (p. 85). Thus, as both Lee's and Lilly's drawings were central to their experience of everyday life, so too were they central to their construction of meanings about being male or female. It was interesting to note that while Lilly showed a strong interest in drawing feminine themes, these interests did not appear to be reflected in her own clothing or grooming. For instance, apart from enjoying dressing up in costumes (such as Snow White) she did not show a great deal of interest in 'wearing femininity, body movements, make-up, beauty, and fashion talk' (Blaise, 2005a, p. 92). It is important to also note, that through accessing the children's perspectives it was clear that exploring gender identity was just one of the many ways in which they reconstructed an understanding of life's experiences through their art.

Lilly at preschool

For Lilly, art also offered her a means of emotional comfort. For example, while she liked attending preschool, she often felt unhappy when her parents left. Therefore, she settled herself by starting a drawing. One of her teachers reported that this had

become her regular habit and that she often launched into drawing without preamble. While I acknowledged that such art actions on her part required some connection between her actions and thoughts, I was interested to know if Lilly anticipated that she would 'need' to do drawing to settle herself, and in doing so consciously thought about what she would draw.

I asked her if she came to preschool with an idea.

"Yes." she replied.

"What makes you think of an idea?" I then asked.

"*My brain!*" she laughingly replied, as though this was self-evident. She then sang "*If I only had a brain*" from *The Wizard of Oz* soundtrack.

Lilly's verbal responses indicated to me that she was aware of the link between her thinking and drawing processes. Her reference to using her 'brain' was interesting in light of Kindler's (2003) assertion that children used their 'visual brain' and developed visual intelligence through their artmaking experiences. Lilly's verbal and sung responses were also indicative of the way she explored her favourite themes in a spontaneous way through a variety of the arts and in a variety of different contexts. Furthermore, her preschool-based art experiences appeared to be an extension of her home-based ones. Therefore, although Lilly's drawings appeared to be spur-of-the-moment (from her teacher's perspective) they were really a mix of past and current experiences and her art provided a bridge between her home and preschool experiences. As an 'educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about students' everyday lives' (González et al., 2005, p. 5), such insights could have also been valuable for teachers, in terms of developing curriculum and pedagogy based on children's interests, knowledge and dispositions.

The link between Lilly's past and current experiences, and between her home experiences and preschool-based art, was also apparent in her habit of drawing several pictures on one page at preschool and in the themes she continued to explore. For example, she continued to draw pictures of family members and when she learnt how to draw the logo of her father's business vehicle she did several drawings of her father in his van. The books, stories and topics of interest at preschool also prompted links between these new ideas and Lilly's home-based drawing themes and big ideas. For example, when the children were shown various road signs, including warning signs for kangaroos and koalas, Lilly drew her own modified road signs with these animals in family groupings.

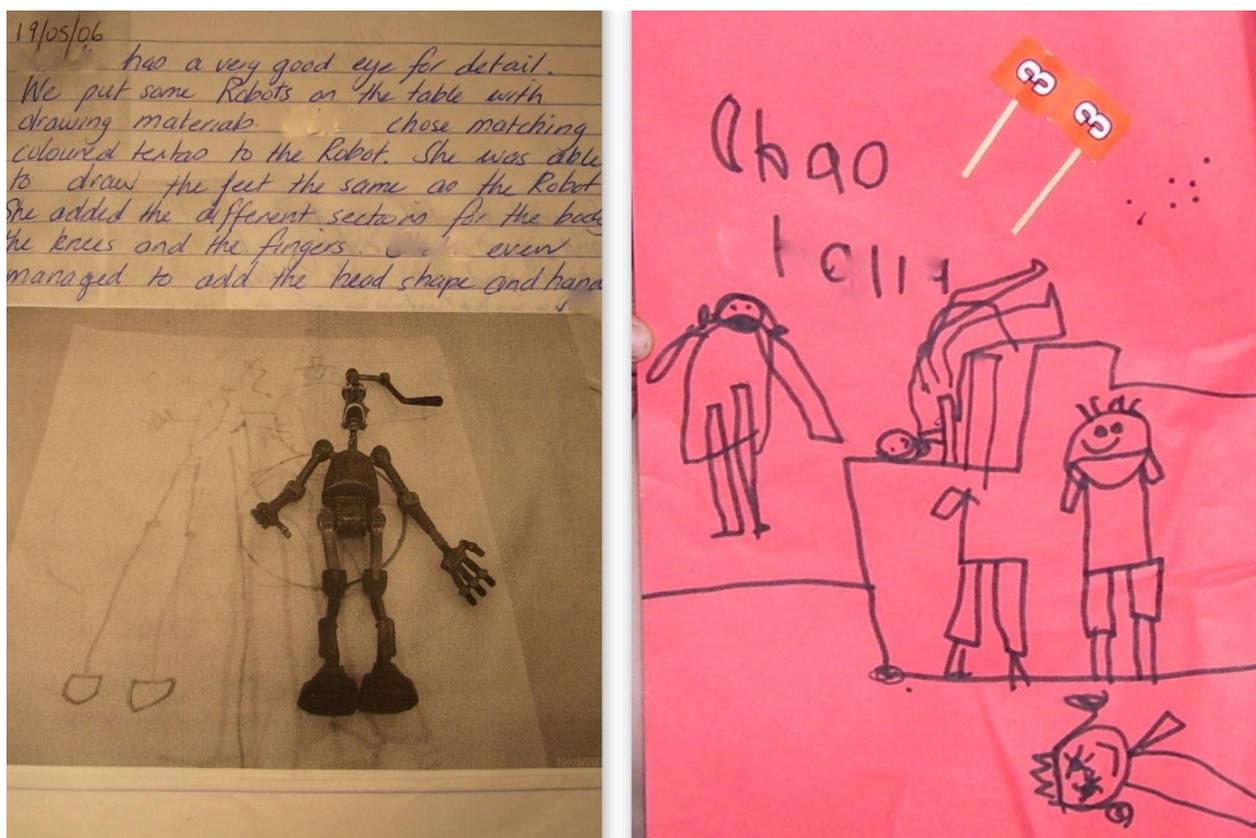


Figure 31. Observational drawing; practicing drawing techniques.

While Lilly's preschool-based drawings still featured families, they were less likely to include domestic items such as furniture. This suggested that, like Lee, her drawings were influenced by her visual environment. In this respect her preschool environment provided her with new sources of motivation for her art (more so than it had for Lee, who was not as comfortable in this setting). For example, one entry in Lilly's preschool journal showed how she had created a fairly accurate representational drawing of a toy robot (Figure 31, left). Her teacher described Lilly's drawing process and commented that she "has a very good eye for detail." Her ability to translate three dimensional shapes into two dimensional lines at that age (4 years 3 months), I believe was worthy of comment, as it revealed an early move towards 'visual realism' (Luquet, 1913, 1927) and was indicative of her visual intelligence (Kindler, 2003). It also exposed her interest in drawing complex and unfamiliar objects based on observation.

While Lilly's interest in observational drawing and fine detail was recorded, as far as I could tell these skills and interests were not deliberately supported or extended at preschool. As Lilly had asked older family members to show her how to draw certain objects, such as horses, I believed that Lilly would have been responsive to some level of 'expert' advice from teachers. Nevertheless, in the absence of specific teaching

support, the individual preschool journals honoured each child's artistic expressions and prompted on-going discussions about earlier events. These journals also appeared to make the children's art experiences more memorable, bringing their artmaking episodes into social realms, which in turn made these episodes more emotionally rewarding for children and for others. As a case in point, over 14 months after Lilly drew the robot (Figure 31, left) she made a similar robot at school from connector rods. Although Lilly had her own camera, she insisted that the robot was not dismantled before I had a chance to photograph it. Later, when we discussed these photographs, Lilly referred back to the robot drawing she had made at preschool. Therefore, just as her family treasured and talked about her historical artworks, so too did the preschool journals prompt social and cognitive connections between the children's art experiences over time and place.

Also paralleling home-based drawing habits, several of Lilly's preschool-based drawings appeared to be partially completed or showed evidence of her exploration of drawing techniques. For example, when Lilly was aged 4 years 8 months she tried several ways to draw a person sitting on a chair (Figure 31, right). She also stuck down two small numbered sticks and made a clear attempt to write her name on this drawing (although these have been digitally blurred to limit identification). I had seen Lilly stick things on her home-based drawings as well as play around graphically with the letters of her name (such as making a face out of them), yet this attempt to 'name' her drawing was relatively rare. As such, I took Lilly's name writing to be indicative of the way literacy-related practices at preschool, in the form of asking for a named label or writing one's own name (and being praised for doing so) influenced her motivation to write on her drawing. Another interesting thing about both of these drawings (in Figure 31) was that, while many of Lilly's drawings had clear gender indicators, when she concentrated on the graphic problems of representation, her drawn characters tended to have weaker gender identifiers. To me, this suggested that when Lilly did make a point of showing gender, such as in her family drawings, these were deliberate actions on her part as she explored her big ideas about relationships, sisterhood and being female.



Figure 32. School bus; school bags; bus with children and aliens.

Like Lee, Lilly was absorbed when engaged in artmaking activities and would work on them for long periods. Compared to her home environment, preschool offered Lilly a greater variety of construction materials and resources. However, unlike her home space, the artworks needed to be put away when she had finished or, more often, packed away when partially completed. For example, when Lilly discovered cotton reels and a biscuit tray she decided to make a school bus (Figure 32, left). One hour into her construction time she had to pack up for story time. Subsequently, she did not complete all of her planned ideas, which had included making school bags for the children (Figure 32, centre).

Although she did not finish her bus construction this experience had piqued Lilly's interest and later, at home, she drew "*Girls, boys and aliens and their bus*" (Figure 32, right). Thus, in terms of the flow of ideas, Lilly's ability to perceive the potential of the tray and reels to form a bus, and her working of this idea through transformation of art materials, led her to later explore the idea through drawing. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 9, from a Deweyan perspective, her ability to unite perception with action was a vital ingredient in her developing art experiences (Dewey, 1934/2005). Yet, at the same time, Lilly was unable to finish her construction and this would have limited the satisfying sense of completion which marks an esthetic experience. On the other hand, because Lilly was able to control the drawing media and had the time, space and resources to do so at home, it could be argued that she had a more satisfying and complete drawing experience (Figure 32, right).



Figure 33. Preschool craft activities with visiting grandmothers.

One preschool event that Lilly really enjoyed was when two grandparents came to MCP with craft materials. The women brought and shared interesting craft materials such as felt, feathers, card, glitter, fabric and glue. They also worked alongside the children, assisting them as requested to. On two of these occasions I observed Lilly, and several other girls including Sophie (Figure 33, right), eagerly join in these craft sessions. Boys were less likely to join in. On one occasion, in keeping with themes that Lilly had explored through her drawings, she arranged felt figures to create a family group. She then drew faces on these small shapes (Figure 33, left). Compared to the other children, Lilly was more focused on her own project and seldom watched what the other children were doing. On another occasion the women supplied pipe cleaners, coloured cards and old Christmas cards (Figure 33, centre and right). From these, Lilly constructed a more complex pipe-cleaner girl, with bag, clothes and shoes. With the help of one of the women Lilly also made a card house for the girl (Figure 33, centre).

Although these craft sessions were just 'added extras' to the preschool curriculum, in that they were not planned with the express purpose of extending particular children's interests, I came to see that they were worthwhile on several levels. On a personal level, Lilly and Sophie appeared to find these activities satisfying. As will become evident in the next section, Sophie did not often choose to create art, but she eagerly attended each of these sessions. For Lilly, these sessions also bridged some of her home and preschool experiences as, for example, she explored family themes. She also expanded on her range of artworks which involved gluing and sticking. For Lilly, I could see how these art resources were akin to her exploration of her own grandmother's 'important stuff'. On an

interpersonal level, the visiting women at preschool encouraged and supported the children without suggesting specific projects, and they assisted them to complete projects before they had to be packed away. As such the presence of these adults mirrored some home-based social environments in that they were interested, helpful and unobtrusive others who contributed towards children's sense of satisfaction during artmaking processes and contributed towards them achieving a sense of artistic completion.

Another important feature of these craft sessions was that the art materials were fairly open-ended and easy for the children to manipulate. I noticed that Sophie showed a great deal of pleasure in just looking at and feeling the various materials, while Lilly had specific themes and ideas that she was able to develop through these materials. From my own I point of view, gaining an understanding of how Lilly and Sophie experienced these activities made me re-examine my own prejudice against commercially produced craft materials. It also reiterated for me that it was the nature of the human interactions that supported such activities, rather than the material per se, that made the most impact on how children experienced these events.

Lilly's 'Big Ideas'

Over the period of the research, and in a variety of contexts, I believed that Lilly explored three main 'big ideas' through her art. Her first main interest was in exploring family relationships and, in particular, sisterhood and being female. Secondly, she demonstrated a deep and sustained interest in exploring graphic effects and drawing techniques. While this was not a big idea in the same way that issues of familial and gender identity were, developing her drawing style appeared to be very important to Lilly. Thirdly, she recorded and explored emotional themes through her drawings. These drawings were not just records of events, so much as means by which she made sense of emotionally challenging situations and transformed her own emotional responses in a positive way. I will now discuss each of these big ideas more fully.

Family relationships

A dominant theme that Lilly explored through her art was that of family relationships and, in particular, female roles such as being a sister, mother or wife. Actual family events also influenced her drawing topics. For example, when her father's cousin visited their home Lilly drew female cousins in some drawings. Lilly drew several fictional female characters included Dorothy, Glenda, Munchkins, mermaids, princesses

and witches. She also had dress up costumes which she wore around home and she said that her favourites were “*Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Little Mermaid, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty and Looney Tunes.*” During the first phase of the research she often wore a dress-up costume when I visited. This seemed relevant in that Lilly not only explored these female characters through her drawings, but simultaneously embodied them through role play and props. I sensed a parallel here between Lee’s dramatic renditions of his drawn stories and Lilly’s ‘being’ a fictional female character while drawing. Both Lilly and Lee transformed themselves and their drawn characters so that some of the ordinariness of their lives was imbibed into their characters, and some of the fantastical qualities of the drawn characters were absorbed and enacted in their lives.

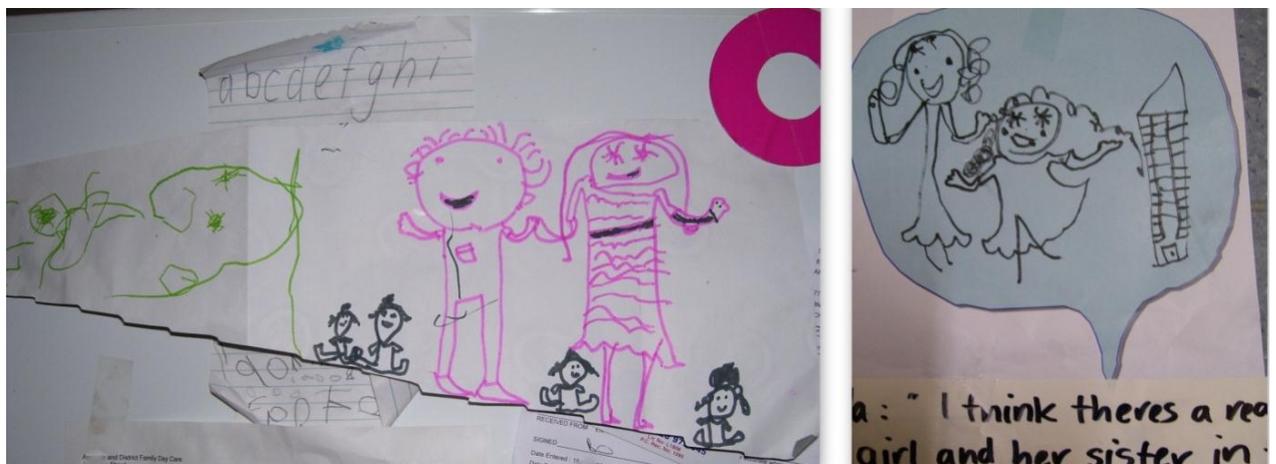


Figure 34. Lilly and her sister’s drawing of families; Lilly’s drawing of sisters.

Sisterhood was both a theme of Lilly’s drawings and the reality of her life. Lilly and her sister often played together and sometimes this involved drawing together. For example, when I first met Lilly she showed me a drawing of a mother, father and babies that she and Raewyn had drawn (Figure 34, left). While the sisters had quite distinct drawing styles a careful examination revealed that the star-like eyes on Lilly’s faces also appeared in Raewyn’s drawing. Vygotsky (1978, 1986/1934) recognized that meaning was usually constructed through joint activity that involved ‘mentoring by more culturally knowledgeable persons’ (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000a, p. 2) and the sisters’ joint art experiences showed how Lilly provided her younger sister with visual and cultural knowledge about drawing marks around eyes to represent eyelashes on female faces.

Lilly also explored themes of sisterhood at preschool. For instance, when a new boxed computer arrived at preschool the children were invited to draw what they thought was in the box. Lilly drew a picture of two girls, claiming that a “*Real little girl and her*

sister” were inside (Figure 34, right). She understood that children were not in the box but had enjoyed entertaining this fantasy through her drawing.

At home, Lilly’s younger sister provided both a fellow artist and an interested audience. For example, in the first two months of the research, Raewyn watched and listened during my home visits but she seldom spoke except to ask Lilly questions about her art. However, on one home visit Lilly was unwell so Raewyn brought her own drawings to me instead. Mimicking the research processes she told me about her drawings and asked me to take photographs of them. I also noticed that her drawings were similar to ones that Lilly had previously drawn. These observations added weight to my conviction that a Vygotskian perspective on the social nature of learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986/1934) could be applied to children’s artistic development and that Brooks’ (2002a, 2009) assertion that learning can lead development in art was also valid. Later, when I told Cathy about Raewyn’s involvement she said Lilly’s involvement in the art research had indeed motivated Raewyn to draw and talk more about her art.

Lilly’s focus on sisterhood was also embodied in other home-based spontaneous drawings. For example, she drew two women with long dresses and crowns, claiming one was the “Queen’s sister” and, amongst her Glenda and the Munchkins drawings, she drew a “big sister Munchkin.” The book did not have a sister character and Lilly explained, “I made her up.”



Figure 35. Dorothy as a girl; Dorothy as a mother; Dorothy as an old woman.

Lilly made up several new roles for drawn characters. For example, when she was drawing images from the book and movie of ‘*The Wizard of Oz*’, she not only drew

Dorothy as she appeared as the girl in the story (Figure 35, left) but also as a mother with a baby in her arms (Figure 35, centre) and as an old woman with wrinkles (Figure 35, right). With regards to the mother Dorothy, Lilly said “*I haven’t seen the movie of that one – I just made it up.*”

To my amusement Lilly had also extended her repertoire of female characters by ‘rewriting’ a traditional rhyme with “*Humpty Dumpty’s wife.*” Also, consistent with her focus on relationships, she drew herself as Mrs Humpty Dumpty’s friend. She also drew Dorothy’s aunty and Dorothy’s mother in a rocking chair. As will be seen, over the time of the research, Lilly continued to draw women as wives, brides, girlfriends and mothers.

Lilly appeared to invest energy in providing for the emotional needs of her characters. For example, she created companions for various drawn characters such as a sister for the Munchkin, a baby for Dorothy, a friend for Mrs Humpty Dumpty, a sister for the queen and for the mermaids. Meeting the emotional needs of others (and in this case the ‘others’ were fictional characters) could be interpreted in terms of Lilly’s socialization into gendered roles of nurturing. For example, while both Lee and Jackson drew characters in their drawings these boys did not seem to provide extended family histories for these characters. Moreover, while the other female participant, Sophie, was more ‘girly-girl’ (Blaise, 2005a, 2005b; Reay, 2001) than Lilly she did not explore these gendered identities to the same extent through drawing. Therefore, based on interactions with Lilly and the other children, I came to believe that Lilly’s highly gendered drawings were more than an unconscious response to socially conditioned gendered identities and roles. Instead, through her art Lilly storied her characters in ways that met their supposed emotional needs and her own. In this respect I saw parallels between Lilly’s exploration of female roles and Lee’s ‘Bob’s Farm’ art experience. For both of these children, their art experiences allowed them to ‘reorganize’ their thinking in ‘anticipation of future needs and goals’ and led to ‘development of self mastery and a more flexible interaction with others’ (S. Moran & John-Steiner, 2002, p. 5). Also, Lilly’s drawings of female characters, at times, did not conform to gender stereotypes. For example, in her angry drawing (see Figure 38, p. 154) Lilly showed her three female characters as angry and aggressive.

Exploring graphic effects and drawing techniques

Another aspect of Lilly’s art experience that set it apart from the other children’s, was how she experimented with various visual effects and strove to develop the technical aspects of her drawing skills. For example, I had observed Lee adding detail to his drawings, such as when he spoke about them or when he looked at a real map, but

these additions were usually aimed at extending the narrative rather than ‘improving’ the drawing. While Lilly also did this, more often than not her goal was to perfect the visual image and develop her drawing abilities.



Figure 36. ‘Wizard of Oz’ drawings.

I felt that Lilly had a quite distinctive drawing style, such as elongated figures, and as she reworked her drawings her personal style became more evident. She also scrutinized book illustrations and animated pictures, with the view of extending her own drawings. For example, as part of her bedtime routines, Lilly studied the illustrations in her *Wizard of Oz* book and drew pictures based on these (Figure 36). A couple of months later when Lilly saw the character of Glenda, in the DVD movie of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, she commented that Glenda was “*more prettier*” than in the book because she had a long dress, black shoes and nice socks. This visual awareness motivated her to add more detail to some previous drawings, as well as bringing these features into subsequent drawings. Also, in visual response to the movie, she expanded her interest in drawing houses and began to draw turreted, elongated castles.

I also saw parallels here between Lee’s interest in drawing features from a real map and Lilly’s interest in the way illustrators drew characters, clothes and domestic environments. Lilly’s access to authentic graphic images from books and animated movies, coupled with her strong interest in developing her drawing styles, provided valuable visual information which she translated into graphic effects in her own drawings. To take some other examples, when Lilly developed an understanding of how shoes went over feet, she drew the feet on Dorothy and then put the shoes on top (Figure 37, left). I could see how this realization could be linked to her earlier interest in working out how to draw correct size proportions for girls and their beds. In addition, in her drawing books, Lilly had ‘working pages’ in which she tried out and discarded various ways to

draw things, such as dresses and the like, as seen in Figure 37 (right). The crossed lines on this working page were applied with some vigour and her mother explained, “Lilly got really upset when she couldn’t draw anything she liked – everything didn’t look right. She got angry and didn’t want to draw anymore and she crossed out a lot of them.” Nevertheless, Lilly kept these pages and her willingness to tolerate drawing ‘mistakes’ and to persist in developing her drawing techniques were a feature of her artworks and of her art experiences.

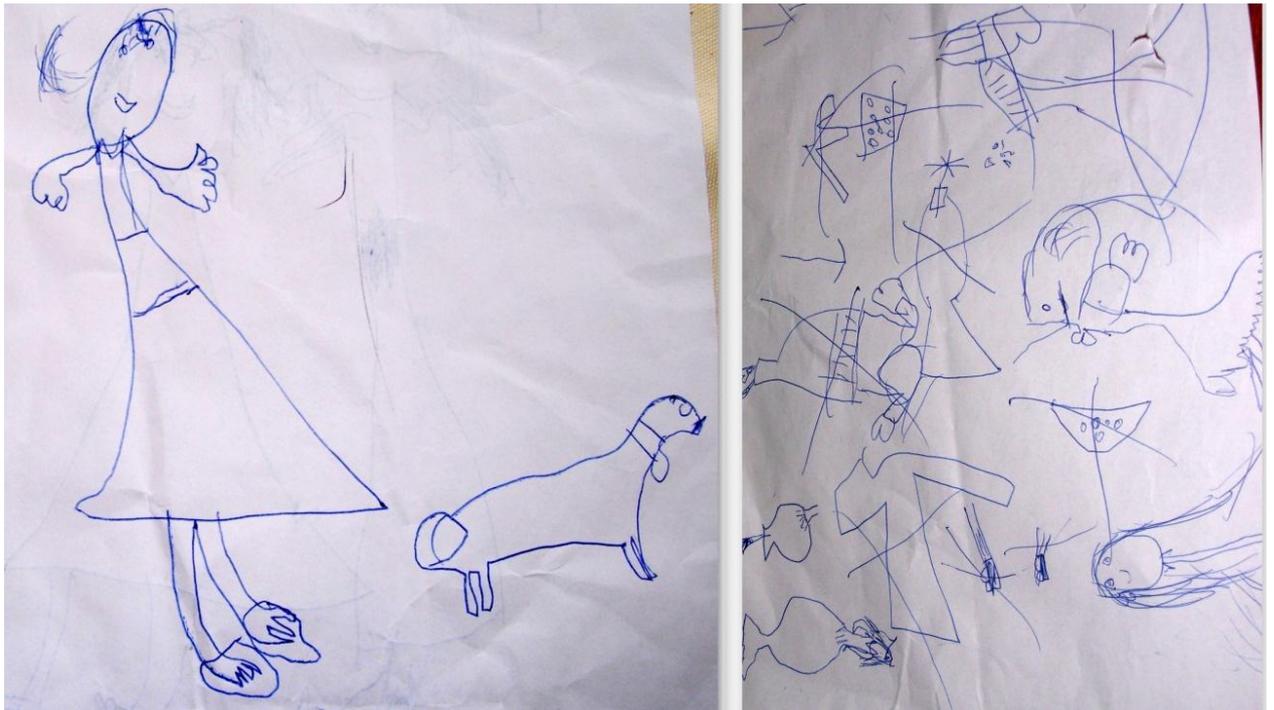


Figure 37. Drawing shoes on feet; working page on dresses.

Lilly’s progressive development of drawing skills through careful observation, copying drawings and then developing her own themes revealed how she used the work of other artists and illustrators to help her to co-construct new understandings about ways of drawing. I have deliberately used the concept ‘co-construction’ here, rather than the concept of ‘scaffolding’, as I believe the former notion applies with more validity to the way both Lilly and Lee developed their drawing skills through interactions with the visual culture (of book illustrations, maps and the like). Let me expand: the term scaffolding has been used in relation to Vygotsky’s theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is understood as ‘the distance between the actual developmental levels determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers’ (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Scaffolding is understood by some theorists as ‘a

support system for children's efforts that is sensitively tuned to their needs' (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 20) and, when related specifically to interactions between children and teachers, has often implied that the teacher had particular outcomes in mind. However, a child can make sense of, and expand on, knowledge and experience in ways other than through interactions with more capable people. Furthermore, the language that a child used to generate new understandings was not always verbal. In the cases of Lilly and Lee, the language they worked with was visual, and the dialogues they had were with the images in books. Although no other person showed Lilly how to look at illustrations, or Lee how to read maps, their keen interest in art, and the research processes which involved them in regular discussion about their art, were part of their co-construction of new understandings and their on-going artistic development. It can also be said that Lee and Lilly had developed to the level where they could have a 'conversation' with visual images at a metacognitive and intrapersonal level (Brooks, 2006) and that their progressively complex ideas in drawings suggested a transformation of thinking that was 'indicative of an intrapersonal dialogue or internal revisualization' (Brooks, 2002b, p. 227).



Figure 38. Angry at bedtime; adding to the building plan.

Lilly may have benefited from some 'expert' help but, unlike Lee, she did not have the benefit of observing an older sibling. However, she did demonstrate an interest in what her parents were drawing and observed with a sense of intent participation (Rogoff et al., 2003). For example, having watched Cathy make a 'keep out' sign for the master bedroom (in an attempt to create one designated art-free zone in the house), Lilly introduced the X mark into her own drawings to exclude the parts of the drawing that she did not want. She also used more carefully drawn X marks in other contexts to give a different meaning such as when she was angry with her sister and mother and expressed this eloquently in her "*angry at bedtime*" drawing (Figure 38, left).

Lilly told me that the crosses drawn through her mother and sister showed that she wanted them to "*stay away*"; while the happy faces on the male figures represented that she wasn't angry with her father and step-brother. She also explained that scrunched eyes, turned-down mouths and stamping feet showed how angry she was. Alongside these emotional cues, she placed the drawn characters in a real life context of bedtime routines such as wearing bedclothes and having their hair brushed. Through employing her repertoire of art tools and symbols, which in essence were part of the wider cultural tools and symbols, Lilly not only recorded aspects of her daily life, but explored bigger ideas of kinship, disharmony and alliances. When she retold the story of this drawing she did so with laughter, explaining that she felt better after she had made the angry drawing.

Lilly also learnt a new way of drawing when she watched her father draw a plan for house alterations. Later, unbeknown to Phillip, Lilly added her own drawings to this page and employed some of her father's drawing conventions. For example, he had drawn squiggly lines intersecting another line to show where walls might be removed, and drawn ladder-type marks to denote decking. Lilly used similar marks in her drawing, which she then described as a building plan (Figure 38, right). This drawing was quite unique at that time, in that Lilly drew very few drawings that were not on her favourite themes of people and domestic scenes. This type of diagrammatic scaled drawing on a horizontal plane (architectural plan style) also varied from her usual drawing style. At that time, it occurred to me that Lilly's interest in her father's plan offered further proof that she was very responsive to the graphic world. It also suggested that her repertoire of drawing styles may have been wider if she had had a wider range of experiences available to her. As it turned out, this event was the beginning of a new drawing interest for Lilly and three years later she showed me some plan-type drawings of houses she

was designing in which she had extended her use of architectural planning formats. Therefore, although at age four her interest in plans may have appeared to be fleeting, she retained and extended this aspect of her drawing experience in the years to come.

Transforming emotional responses through art

For Lilly, the mastering of art skills was personally satisfying and her growth and development in art experiences facilitated deeper intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. As evident in the ‘angry at bedtime’ drawing (Figure 38, left), her art also helped her to make sense of complex feelings and to transform angry or unhappy feelings into more positive emotions. Thus, through the act of drawing she managed to harness angry impulses and generate an artwork through considered actions. This aspect of her experience will be explored from a Deweyan perspective in Chapter 9. The point I make here is that although Lilly did not explore the subject-matter of ‘emotions’ (such as exploring the many facets of what it means to be happy or sad, pleased or angry), she consciously employed art to transform her life in a positive way. In this respect, I also thought of this as one of her big ideas.

While Lilly’s expressive art experiences were not always as tumultuous as her angry drawing, her caring nature was apparent in her everyday interactions with others. One preschool teacher commented that Lilly drew a lot of pictures about families and that she “was very good at helping people and knowing when people were happy or sad.” Lilly also used her art to help her through difficult situations. For example, her preschool journal stated, ‘Lilly was sad (cried) when mother left – “she didn’t say goodbye.” [She] painted what she was feeling and added [a] ‘sun’ to make herself feel happy again.’

Sometimes, however, when Lilly shared her photographs of sad or angry drawings she said, “*I don’t want to talk about that one.*” As such, some of Lilly’s drawings had served as emotional outlets and were private to her.

One drawing that she did discuss was one that she drew of a sad girl who she had made happy by drawing a banana in the picture. While a banana was not typically a symbol of happiness, at that time bananas were in short supply and when Lilly grandmother had given her some this had made her happy. For this reason she drew a banana in the picture. In an extension of this idea, in another drawing Lilly replaced the mouth with a banana – which doubled as a smiling mouth.

Art experiences in the summer holidays



Figure 39. Mermaid drawings; miniature drawn plan.

While summer holidays provided Lee with new opportunities to work with his older sister on art projects, for Lilly having her younger sister around was not novel and did not greatly influence how she experienced art. However, the summer holidays did provide her with more time to draw and to view books and movies. It was during this holiday time that Lilly developed many of her more elaborate 'Dorothy' drawings. She was also given new art materials and, as was her habit, she experimented with what she could do with these. Christmas gifts also provided her with new sources of ideas for her drawings. For example, Raewyn's mermaid doll inspired Lilly to draw several drawings of mermaid families (Figure 39, left, top right).

At that time, Lilly was given fine-tip pens and her mother reported that she spent a great deal of time making very fine, detailed drawings – mostly on her favourite topics of domestic scenes and families. She also made her second plan-type drawing, which was a very small but detailed plan of a playground for her new house (Figure 39, bottom right). She also introduced Cinderella as new female character in her drawings and this character replaced Dorothy as her main fictional character. When I asked Lilly if she had a book of Cinderella, she told me 'No' and, 'I just knows it.'

The manner in which Lilly flamboyantly discussed her drawings and, in her own words, “*just made it up*” or “*just knows it*” revealed several things about the nature of Lilly’s art experiences. Firstly, she had at her disposal, and was able to call upon, her family-based funds of knowledge, images and stories from popular culture and personal experiences to create fictional characters. While the character of Dorothy was firmly linked to one of Lilly’s books, when she claimed to ‘just know’ how to draw Cinderella she demonstrated that she had both internalised the visual indicators that popular visual culture had attributed to Cinderella (as evident in books, illustrations, film and animation) and externalized these features through her drawings. Thus, drawing was part of Lilly’s social practices (Pearson, 2001). Secondly, she demonstrated the ability to respond critically to the graphic marks, that she and other artists made, in a way that allowed her to develop her own drawings. From a Vygotskian perspective it was also evident that, like the children in Brooks’ (2002a) classroom, Lilly dialogued with her drawings at an intrapersonal level (Brooks, 2005b; Vygotsky, 1978) which informed her subsequent artistic actions. Thirdly, Lilly had the ‘visual intelligence’ (Kindler, 2003) to pull together these factors to generate increasingly complex and more personally satisfying artworks.

In the first phase of the research I witnessed Lilly’s enthusiasm for art and I looked forward to seeing how she carried these experiences through to her school-based experiences. Two weeks before her 5th birthday Lilly started school at Campion Girls’ College (CGC). As Sophie and Lilly later attended the same school, their stories of school and home-based art experiences are both presented in Chapter 11.

7. SOPHIE

Sophie and her family

Sophie Greene was an Australian Caucasian girl who lived with her parents, Anna and Luke, on a lifestyle block on the outskirts of Ashtown. She had two siblings; Charlotte who was 22 months younger and Greg who was 29 months older. The family also had regular contact with one uncle. When I first met the family they had been in Ashtown for just six months and were adjusting to a new school, preschool and jobs. They were also finalizing the purchase of a retail business which both parents later worked in.

Sophie had previously attended preschool and in Ashtown she went to Markham Community Preschool three days a week. Charlotte also went there but the sisters seldom played together, preferring the company of same age friends. Greg went to a private boys' school. Sophie was aged between 5 years 4 months and 6 years 2 months during the research. She appeared to enjoy the research processes and she generated about 6 hours of recorded discussions and 750 photographs.

Sophie's art experiences

Sophie's earlier artworks

During my first visit to her home, Sophie showed me her art folder from her previous preschool and her mother told me that "She loves art." Although Sophie did not respond to this remark, or make many comments about her artworks, she clearly enjoyed showing me the painting, prints and drawings that were in this folder (Figure 40, left). It also had several photographs of preschool-based art displays and of an art project in which fathers and children stitched original designs onto a large wall hanging. Anna commented that one teacher at that preschool was "fabulous and on to art." Sophie was clearly proud of her folder and over the course of this research she showed it to me several times.



Figure 40. Sophie's artworks from previous preschool.

During this initial visit, Sophie also showed me two of her more recent artworks. These were a coloured pen drawing of an apple tree and a dye painting of her father (Figure 40, right). She held up the dye painting and said '*That's daddy.*' I understood that she had painted it at her old preschool but she did not offer further comment. In a positive tone I remarked on the simplicity of her 'daddy' painting and on the detail in her apple tree drawing. By way of explanation for this contrast, Anna explained that Sophie had created the apple tree drawing at home while she was watching her older brother draw an apple tree. She also referred to Sophie as an 'imitator' because she liked to do what others were doing – including in her art.

Over time, as I became familiar with Sophie's experiences, and the choices she made, I regarded her tendency to do what others were doing to be closely linked to her need for social interactions rather than an inability on her part to be inventive. Also, over time, I realized that repeated patterns, such as those in the apple tree drawing, were a distinctive feature of her art style and of her aesthetic awareness – that is, not only did Sophie explore decorative effects in her artworks but she was visually aware of patterns around her.

Sophie's art experiences as part of family life

Sophie's home was tidy and well-furnished and as she took many photographs of the decorative ornaments, fabrics and furnishings in her own home, she appeared to appreciate these things around her. In terms of artmaking resources, Sophie and her

siblings had a child-sized activity table and chairs in the kitchen area where they could play. However, I was not aware of art materials being constantly available here or in any other room. Nevertheless, on four occasions art materials were available and Sophie drew independently or engaged in semi-organised art activities with her siblings. Apart from these few art experiences, Sophie seldom independently engaged in art activities at home and art activities were not an aspect of the family's everyday routines.

As a result, she did not generate many artworks at home. She also had less to say about her art processes and when she showed me her photographs she tended to wait for me to comment rather than leading conversations. For example, when I asked her why she created specific artworks she often responded with “*’cause*” and when asked why or how she created artworks she often said, “*I don’t know.*”

Her mother actively encouraged Sophie to take photographs of her art and on four occasions she took short videos of Sophie talking about her art. Although Anna modelled similar verbal cues to those I had used, Sophie was no more articulate about her art experiences with her mother than she was with me.

Sophie’s photography

Over the course of the research Sophie refined her photography skills but in the first few weeks the novelty of using the camera resulted in more than 400 photographs. Only one of these photographs appeared to link clearly to the theme of personal art-making experience. The remaining images, which were often repeated ones of people, places and objects around her, appeared to be quite indiscriminate as Sophie played with the camera without necessarily viewing or reacting to her photographs.

By the second week however, after we had discussed her photographs, she became more discerning about the images she took and she actively sought opportunities to take photographs. For example, unbeknown to her mother, she had climbed into the back of a delivery truck at her parents’ business and taken photographs. This marked a more adventurous attitude towards photography and from that time onwards it appeared as though the camera was seldom far from her. She then took photographs of her parents’ workplace, of visitors to her home, and of items in her house. She also took quite a few while watching TV or playing with her siblings.

Sophie demonstrated confidence and ability in her camera use and Anna reported that at ballet classes she had helped a mother to adjust the setting on her digital camera.

This amused Anna as they did not own a digital camera and Sophie had been using the research camera for just over a week.



Figure 41. Sophie's block camera; photographs of patterns and designs.

Sophie was fascinated by the camera and at preschool she made a camera out of wooden blocks, tape, a lid and some string (Figure 41, left). It was interesting to note that even with the real item to 'play' with, both Sophie and Jackson delighted in making their own 'pretend' cameras. Part of the purpose for doing so aligned with Griebing's research (2009) in that the children then used these as props for play. I could also see how these artmaking activities contributed to the children's sense of independence, as also noted by Griebing (2009), in that they gained satisfaction from producing their own artifacts, as opposed to just using those given to them.

Sophie's interest in patterns and in decorative effects was displayed in both her artmaking and in her appreciation of what she regarded as interesting. For instance, in her early photographs she focused on patterns such as those evident on a tattoo, bedcover, floor rug and decorative sticker (Figure 41, centre and right). When she discussed such photographs she often touched the computer screen in order to point out design details. As Sophie appeared to find the tattoo very interesting I asked her, "Is it like a pattern or a drawing or anything like that?"

She replied emphatically, "*Because it's a pattern! Pattern!*"

Sophie was unable to articulate why she took these particular photographs but through interactions with her I understood that she thought these had something to do with her art because they were “*patterns*”, “*pretty*” and someone had made them.

As Sophie became increasingly familiar with photography she also expanded her critical capacity to select and edit images. When she viewed her photographs she enjoyed rotating images, deleting poor photographs, and cropping unnecessary parts. She was also receptive to photo-worthy opportunities. For example, when it snowed in late spring (a rarity in Ashtown) Sophie asked her mother to take her out in the car so she could take photographs. When I met with her the next day and viewed her photographs she reviewed them with a critical eye. For example, where the car window frame appeared in one photograph she asked me to show her how to crop the image and then successfully cropped several photographs.

Art media and themes

Despite Sophie’s voluntary involvement in this research project she engaged in significantly less art activities than the other research participants. She also engaged in fewer art activities than her siblings or many of her friends at preschool. Therefore, I did not get a clear idea of the media she preferred. Nevertheless I could see that colour and design were always part of Sophie’s artmaking and, unlike the other participants who often drew with black pen or pencil to tell a story or recount an event, on only one occasion did I witness Sophie spontaneously drawing with a basic lead pencil. Therefore, although Sophie did not favour particular media, she did favour colourful art materials and showed a propensity towards working with decorative styles and patterning. This was apparent in her early photographs and in almost all of Sophie’s spontaneous artworks.



Figure 42. Preschool art: Bird feet pattern; collage and dye; creating a necklace.

At preschool, for example, Sophie painted two paintings, which she titled “*Bird feet.*” Her first one was painted with vibrant colours (Figure 42, left) and a second one was of a similar design using softer pastel colours. To get a better understanding of Sophie’s sources of ideas for these paintings I asked her, “What made you think of doing them?”

She replied, “*Just me.*”

“Were they bird feet when you started or did they turn into bird feet once you had made them?”

Sophie replied, “*When I made them.*”

These large paintings were painted on the preschool easel and although it was not clear whether the paintings started out as a deliberate intention to paint bird feet, or if the marks themselves suggested bird feet, the second painting was clearly an extension of her initial painting. For artworks such as these, where patterns and designs were involved, Sophie appeared to make conscious choices in her artmaking processes. The careful selection and placement of marks and materials was also evident in her careful arrangement of dyed lines, glued feathers and coloured crepe paper (Figure 42, centre). In contrast, her necklace was created at a faster pace and with less attention to detail (Figure 42, right). This item comprised a pendant with a face drawn on it and a long necklace of crepe paper.

She proudly said, “*It’s the longest necklace in the world.*”

Sophie clearly enjoyed this activity, which was social in nature, and she and her two friends happily chatted together as they each created a necklace. They then briefly used them as props and paraded around as though they were fashion models.



Figure 43. Mummy with decoration hair; rainbow.

As the research progressed Sophie showed an interest in drawing with coloured felt-tip pens. In one home-based session she said that she had a surprise for me. After we had discussed her photographs she brought out two large drawings (Figure 43). She was excited and laughed as she showed me the first drawings in which she had carefully coloured a face with multi-coloured hair. With genuine delight, I said, “That’s beautiful!”

Sophie beamed proudly and replied, “*My picture.*”

As I looked at the drawing Anna asked her daughter a question, which I could not decipher, and Sophie pointed to the hair and said, quite crossly, “*Decoration!*” It appeared as though Sophie was very sensitive to possible criticism and she had interpreted her mother’s question as a criticism of her work. As research by Norman Freeman (1997) suggested, children of Sophie’s age care about other people recognizing the topic of their drawings and ‘fear of failing to secure the recognitions’ can lead to ‘caution in innovation’ (p. 32). This in itself could have acted against Sophie’s motivation to draw design-orientated artworks, as often these art styles did not have clearly discernible meanings in the way more realistic representational drawings did.

Sophie also showed me her second drawing of a rainbow. Again, I was delighted with her drawings and Sophie exclaimed “*I did both of them.*” I sensed that she was proud of having created these artworks herself and had found some satisfaction in expanding some of her own artistic ideas.

Pointing to drawing in Figure 43 (left) Sophie also added, “*That’s Mummy!*” It was clear from her manner that she anticipated that I would be delighted by her drawings,

and I asked Sophie what she thought I would say. She said I would say *“That’s pretty!”* The interactions surrounding these two drawings were also memorable in that this was one of the few times in which Sophie expressed a ‘heightened vitality’ (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 18) about her artworks. This is a point I will expand on in the next chapter. Later, Anna also commented that Sophie was motivated by the audience that I provided. In addition, she noted, as Sophie had become more confident in sharing her ideas and artworks she also initiated conversations with her mother about her art. As a result, Anna said, “I see more of what [Sophie] can actually do.”



Figure 44. Triangle boat; decorative pattern.

At preschool, Sophie also used felt-tip pens to create drawings with patterns and decorative effects. With regards to the one drawing (Figure 44, left) she said, *“It’s a triangle for a boat.”* I was aware that Sophie knew what a yacht was called but in typical Sophie style, she described her drawing in terms of its graphic features. This was even more evident when she discussed her second drawing (Figure 44, right). She said, *“I drew this at preschool. There’s squares, lines and two crosses and dots and swirls.”*

It seemed to me that Sophie felt more confident about her art now that she had developed a set of descriptions by which she could share these with another person. So while the words did not replace the act of drawing, for Sophie having the verbal art language enhanced the social aspect of art experiences.

However, in general, while the other research participants were often excited and animated when they created and discussed their artworks, this was not so for Sophie,

either in terms of her quantity of artworks or her discussions about these¹⁶. Furthermore, I was mindful of the contrast between the other children's vibrancy of actions and Sophie's apparent lassitude when engaged in art activities or discussions about these. However, as the research project progressed it became apparent that, although artmaking was not one of her central interests, decorative effects and what Sophie regarded as beautiful were of more interest to her. Moreover, when her interest in patterns was manifested through her artworks she showed heightened interest in her own artmaking. Thus, her most personally satisfying works displayed strong design elements and she was able to talk about these artworks with others.

Access to artmaking materials

Ready access to materials, and the absence of other distractions, also contributed towards Sophie's level of engagement with her art experiences. For example, when Sophie was at her parents' workplace, she used the available materials to create a bird picture (Figure 45, left and centre).



Figure 45. Sophie's bird sign; decorating a box.

Sophie said, *"This is my bird picture that I made but I covered it all in black."*

I asked, "So underneath there's some marks that are covered up?"

"Yes," replied Sophie.

Looking at the drawing I asked, "What was underneath?"

"Umm...Besides a mouth and nose – three eyes, three noses, and three mouths," she laughingly replied.

It was unusual to see Sophie so animated about an artwork and I said, "No! I think you are tricking me. I'll never know because you covered it up." Sophie laughed also.

Looking at the bird picture, I said, "This is interesting– it's like a bag."

¹⁶ Sophie usually produced two or three artworks every month. Therefore, as delightful as her artworks were they represented the bulk of Sophie's art. In contrast, only a small percentage of the other children's artworks appear in this thesis.

"It is a paper bag!" replied Sophie emphatically.

"Where did you get the paper bag from?"

"Mum's work. It's a sign."

I asked, "Is this something you did at mum's work?"

Anna, who was watching our interactions, commented to Sophie with surprise "Oh darling, it is too!"

Sophie looked pleased.

I asked her, "What made you think of making a bird?"

Sophie said, *"Nothing."*

Anna appeared to want to say something and I said "Oh, mum's got an idea."

Looking at her daughter, Anna said, "I think you might have heard a conversation about how to scare birds away from fruit trees."

Sophie's then seemed cross. *"No. No. I drewed the garden! But it's not for fruit trees!"*

Anna gently asked, "But it was to scare birds?"

"Yes, but it's not for fruit trees!" Sophie said quite forcefully.

I said, "So you were thinking about birds were you? And you made your own funny one?"

Sophie brightened. "Yes," she laughed.

"And you covered all its face in?" I prompted.

"Yeah."

The next photo showed the other side of the bird sign (Figure 45, centre). I said, "Wow this is an interesting part. Do you want to describe it? Is this a mouth - a beak?"

Sophie continued in a brighter tone, *"A beak – and that's the eyes - two eyes, cheeks, red feathers, the nose, the black bit, and that's a bit of bleeding up the top. And bubble wrap."*

This small exchange suggested a few things about Sophie's experiences of spontaneous art. Firstly, when materials were available and other distractions were not, Sophie was capable of creating innovative and complex artworks. She did so without seeking recognition at the time (her mother did not know she had made the bird picture at work) but later she was determined to explain its meaning on her own terms. Sophie seemed quite agitated by the suggestion that her idea had stemmed from an overheard conversation. Based on my understanding of drawing self-efficacy (Richards, 2009b) I

construed that Sophie wanted to avoid the label of 'imitator' as previously mentioned by her mother.

I also surmised that Sophie's limited access to a home-based art space and art materials was simultaneously the result of her lack of interest in art and a factor that limited her interest in art activities. This conjecture was based on observing similarities and differences between the research participants' art experiences, and on Ring's (2003, 2006a, 2006b) findings that parental tolerance of mess and the organisation of time and space were important in supporting children's engagement in art. For any child, having access to materials was also important as these materials held the potential to be used as art media. Moreover, it was not just a matter of having art materials, so much as having ready access to them in a manner which allowed a child to maintain a connection between his or her ideas, the artmaking processes and outcomes of such activity. Sophie's 'bird sign' artwork was a reminder how action and perception was united through artmaking – a point which will be explored from a Deweyan perspective shortly.

In terms of the contrasts between the art environments of the various participants, Lilly, Lee and Jackson had spaces at home where they freely accessed art materials, worked on art projects and stored completed and in-progress artworks. These places, while sometimes as simple as the end of the family dining table, became their art studios and workshops where they could literally make a 'mess'. Sophie, on the other hand, had a lovely home but she did not appear to have a 'messy' art space. However, on an occasion when her mother was sorting out items for disposal and recycling, she inadvertently created a messy environment full of interesting materials that Sophie and her siblings took advantage of. As Anna noted with good humour, "Every time I have a clean-up they decide to get everything and make something, which means there are more things to throw out in the end!" Sophie had enjoyed exploring the materials and she had responded to the checker pattern on the shoe box by drawing small patterns in each square (Figure 45, right). Sophie then wanted to show me her decorated shoe-box but was told that it had been thrown out. As far as I was aware, this was the only time that Sophie and her siblings initiated a home-based art activity. As such, it appeared as though having access to a variety of simple art materials at home may have motivated more fulfilling art experiences for Sophie.

Aesthetic awareness as art experience

While I made a conscious effort not to over analyse the children’s art experiences through my adult or theoretical lenses, I did endeavour to be sensitive to the events and art experiences that individual children felt were significant. Therefore, as I became increasingly aware of Sophie’s repeated explorations into aspects of design and pattern, I came to recognize that this focus was linked to a much bigger idea – that of a sense of beauty. It also occurred to me that if retelling the narrative of a drawing was a difficult task for a young child, how much harder it must have been for five-year-old Sophie to put into words her concepts of beauty? Nevertheless, she had found a way to communicate her art intentions by focusing on discussion about the graphic features – that was the shapes, lines, colours and compositions of the artworks. Also, she often referred to what was ‘pretty’ in the photographs and artworks.



Figure 46. Sophie and her sister visit the art gallery.

I did not press Sophie to expand on her concepts of design, pattern or beauty for to do so, I felt, would be putting ‘words in her mouth.’ Nevertheless, I felt that decorative effects were something that had caught Sophie’s interest, and that she tried to make sense of through art. In December, a visit to a local art gallery with Sophie gave me new insights into her aesthetic awareness. Although she and her family seldom visited art exhibitions, she responded to this exhibition in a very mature way. By this I mean that she did not just glance at the artworks; instead she scrutinized them. The gallery had plain 2B pencils, paper and clipboards available and Sophie collected a set of

these. She then sat, looked carefully at one painting and drew a line drawing of part of it (Figure 46, left and top right).

I was surprised by Sophie's choice of displayed artwork to draw, in that it was one of the more monochromatic paintings. It later occurred to me that the lack of colourful art materials in the gallery may have influenced Sophie's choice of painting. As she studied and drew, her body language suggested an alertness that I had not witnessed before. The gallery space appeared to register with Sophie's interest in the aesthetic world and both her mother and I were surprised by the intensity with which she observed and drew. This was the only time I had seen her draw with plain pencil, and the first time I had seen such concentration on the task. Viewing as an art experience appeared to be significant to Sophie, and the usually boisterous Charlotte sat quietly with her and then walked around with her sister as they looked carefully at other exhibits (Figure 46, bottom right). How Sophie experienced art in terms of appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of art is explored in some more detail in Chapter 9. At this point, it would be fair to say that, from a Deweyan perspective, rather than the artmaking being *an* experience for Sophie, the appreciation of art was an aesthetic experience.

Our gallery visit was one of our last interactions before Christmas. Sophie had told me that she was looking forward to going to Champion Girls' College and she dressed up in her school uniform to show me. In January, she started school and her art experiences in that phase of the research are discussed in Chapter 11.

8. JACKSON

Jackson and his family

Jackson Smith was an Australian Caucasian boy who lived in a rural property on the outskirts of Ashtown with his parents, Sally and Doug. He had a sister called Josie who was 27 months older and his family had regular contact with Jackson's paternal grandmother. On the days that Sally did not work at the university as a technician, Jackson stayed home with her. Doug held a senior position in a branch of the emergency services and he was sometimes home with Jackson.

Jackson was aged between 5 years 1 month and 6 years old during the research. He attended preschool for three days a week. During the research period he generated over 5 hours of recorded discussions and more than 1,000 photographs. Most of his photographs were of the constructions that he made and some were of his other artworks. Jackson was confident and articulate and he usually took the lead in our discussions.

Jackson's art experiences

Jackson's art experiences as part of family life

In much the same way that drawing permeated Lee and Lilly's home-based art experiences, Jackson enjoyed construction. As will become evident, he used a variety of materials for his construction projects. His creative activities were well supported by his family in terms of provision of materials, space, time and familial support. His family also had positive associations with art in that Jackson's paternal grandmother was an artist, who had paintings displayed in their home. His father was also regarded as artistic and on several occasions Jackson's grandmother talked about childhood art projects that involved his father and uncle. The children also regarded their mother as being 'good at art.' Thus, recognizing, providing for and valuing artistic expression was a cross generational phenomena and part of Jackson's family's social capital (Coleman, 1988).

Jackson needed large spaces to work on his construction projects and sometimes he worked alongside Doug in his well-equipped work shed. As Jackson's carpentry skills developed and interests expanded he was given his own selection of tools, including a hammer and handsaw. He also had supervised access to power drills, work benches,

clamps and other equipment as well as materials suitable for shaping and fixing wood, cardboard and other light materials. Thus, access to carpentry tools, materials and know-how were part of his 'funds of knowledge' (González & Moll, 2002; Moll, 2000) and father-son interactions helped Jackson to develop his three-dimensional projects rather than leaving them as merely 'background' activities (Ring, 2003, p. 115). Of equal significance was Jackson's relationship with his mother. He spent a lot of time with his mother and, of the four participants, he was the most likely to ask his mother to collaborate on one of his art projects. Sally also got him books of interest and suggested or started projects that would motivate him to construct or draw.

When I visited Jackson's house he was playful and enthusiastic. We often laughed together as he used funny voices and noises when discussing his art works. Sally took a keen interest in these sessions but she did not specifically contribute unless asked to by her son. I found her proximity helpful as sometimes her facial expressions prompted me to ask Jackson more about one of his projects or confirmed his version of the story.

Jackson often joked with me and he liked to finish each session with a game or activity. Sometimes these activities focused on his latest construction as he taught me how to throw a boomerang, use a bow and arrow or throw darts at his home-made dart board. While some of his activities were physically challenging for me because I had a back injury, I participated as fully as I could in the ethical spirit of 'giving back' to Jackson.

Media and formats

Jackson worked on many of his construction projects for several consecutive days and he would also return to earlier projects and extend them. While he commonly used wood or cardboard, he also constructed from discarded household materials, such as plastic bottles, cardboard rolls and coat hangers, and from commercially produced plastic blocks such as Lego®. Unlike Sophie, Jackson had a ready supply of art materials and openly requested more items if he felt that his project demanded it. He was patient in his art making and used appropriate tools and materials to shape and fix materials. In much the same way in which the other children spontaneously drew, Jackson's spontaneous art was often based around his constructions.

At preschool, he used recycled boxes, egg cartons and cardboard tubes for his constructions. Although MCP had a wood-working bench and associated equipment, he

was not particularly interested in using these. Instead, as will be discussed further, Jackson used the large wooden blocks to make vertical structures and horizontal 'drawings'.

To a lesser extent Jackson created drawings and collages. At home he usually drew using coloured pencils on paper, while preschool offered a greater range of drawing and painting materials. In both settings, his drawings often had clear links to family or preschool events or to the ideas that he was also exploring through his three-dimensional constructions. By comparison with Lee and Lilly, he did few drawings based on fictional characters or fantasy themes. Instead his artworks revealed his interest in the physical world. Also, like Sophie, some of his two-dimensional artworks had strong design elements and he often decorated his finished constructions.

Jackson's big ideas

Through his construction projects Jackson often explored how the physical world worked and the relationships between movement, mechanisms and structures. For example, when he discussed his constructions he often described how they were constructed, what made them strong and how the moving parts functioned. In some ways I regarded Jackson as a junior physicist and engineer as he made sense of his physical world through exploration of materials and actions.

Another aspect of Jackson's art experiences was that he developed his ideas through his artworks as he constructed for significant periods of time and make various modifications. Therefore, I considered his constructions as art projects rather than one off activities. He also considered the aesthetic qualities of the work in that he cared about the way the construction looked when finished. Thus, while children's exploration with construction materials has not been widely explored in research, I was confident that from a Deweyan perspective Jackson enjoyed the same level of artistic-esthetic experience (Dewey, 1934/2005) as the other research participants who drew. As such, through his three-dimensional artworks he explored his big ideas about the physical world.

Jackson's construction projects at home

Jackson created self-initiated construction projects both independently and with help from his family. Generally, he controlled the format of his constructions and asked for help from family members when he needed it. In most cases he was the 'expert' as

he had a set ideas about the type of help needed and how things were done. At other times his interaction with family members was more equally collaborative in nature in terms of decision making.



Figure 47. Jackson's wooden ladder; sword; table.

There were also projects in which Jackson was the apprentice. For example, with guidance from their father, he and his sister made a useable wooden ladder – a process that involved them in measuring, marking, sawing, sanding and nailing (Figure 47, left). Jackson's supported learning and shared experiences clearly carried through into his independent projects. For example, he used the same basic tools and techniques that he had mastered when constructing the ladder to independently build a wooden sword and a sturdy little table (Figure 47, centre and left). From a Vygotsky sociocultural perspective I could see how these three projects had involved Jackson in 'problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers', which in turn led to 'independent problem solving' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) and co-construction.

When Jackson was not working alongside his father he worked on the outside veranda. Inside the house he also made work spaces in the dining room, lounge, and in his bedroom. His choice of work space was influenced by the materials he used, the physical dimensions of his art project, weather conditions and the sort of support he needed. His family was tolerant of the spaces that Jackson used and the mess he created, although long term storage of large constructions posed a problem. I also observed Jackson working with his sister and, although she was older than him, when Jackson had a specific plan she was patient and willing to do as he directed. These types of interactions revealed that his family members respected and supported each other's skills and interests. Again, Jackson's co-constructions with his human and physical 'resources', and the positive attitudes of all the people involved in such experiences appeared crucial in supporting and extending Jackson's artistic experiences and development. The important roles families, and the environment, play in supporting

young children's art experiences has been noted in other research (Anning, 2002; Ring, 2006a, 2006b).



Figure 48. Plane with propeller; building a catamaran; completed catamaran.

In addition to the ladder, table and sword, Jackson created other constructions using timber, including a plane with a propeller and a catamaran (Figure 48). He keenly showed me his progress on his catamaran and, as he demonstrated how he nailed it together (Figure 48, centre), he described his technique for making it strong. His demonstration suggested that he too had benefited from such modelling from his father who acted in the role of more capable other (Ferholt & Lecusay, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978).



Figure 49. Slingshot; bow and arrow; Lego gun.

Jackson also used tree branches to make a slingshot and to make a bow and arrow (Figure 49, left and centre). When he explained how the slingshot worked I asked him if he had got the ideas from a book or from another person. He replied, "*I just thought of it.*" It also appeared as though he was responsive to the materials' properties as he had selected supple greenwood for the bow and a hardwood forked branch for the slingshot.

While several of his creations were weapons he seemed more interested in the way they worked than their weaponry functions. This was borne out to some extent by Jackson's insistence that, for photographs, his mother modelled how the bow and arrow 'worked' and that she photographed him firing the sling shot. It occurred to me, as I reflected on Jackson's weapons and Lee's drawings of battles, that in general a disservice is done to children if their depth of engagement in such things is regarded as merely 'boys' themes' or a male interest in positions of power or violence. While some of

these issues may be relevant, these two boys reminded me to withhold my judgment and to consider some of the other big ideas that children may be exploring through these themes.

Jackson, like all of the children, taught me so much more than just the topics encompassed by the research agenda and there were many situations in which I was the interested novice. For example, apart from teaching me about nailing timber (Figure 48, centre), he showed me how to make a Lego block gun which exploded when the trigger block was ‘fired’. We each made a gun that made a startling ‘crack!’ and flew apart when fired. We both enjoyed the excitement and hilarity and Jackson extended the play episode by introducing the challenge of trying to get a photograph as the gun exploded (Figure 49, right). It became evident, in this and other interactions, that the introduction of negotiated rules and challenges was part of what made these activities interesting to Jackson. This is a characteristic that has been recognized in sociocultural perspectives on play (Dockett & Fler, 2002; Mabry & Fucigna, 2009).



Figure 50. Camera; sleeping bags; hand weights.

Jackson created some items from recycled materials (Figure 50) and his choice of construction projects was not limited by gender stereotypes in terms of materials or themes. For example, at preschool he made a camera from a recycled tea box and lids (Figure 50, left). At home, he also made sleeping bags for his soft toys by cutting and hand sewing old jeans (Figure 50, centre). These construction projects related to Jackson’s personal experiences of photography and camping. He was also open to new ideas and in that same week, he made hand weights from a discarded cardboard roll. This creation developed from a response to the structure of the roll and the potential of the materials. He said, *“I just made it up...Just looked which way it could go.”*

Jackson photographed how the weights and sleeping bags were used. He also photographed each face of his model camera which I thought was significant as, until recently, rather than referring to the photographs when responding to questions, he fetched the actual object – as though handling the physical object answered all

questions. However, as Jackson's understanding of photography developed he photographed his creations from several angles and I too became more competent in understanding his intentions and ideas. As will be discussed shortly, he also developed a sophisticated understanding about using photography as an art medium through which he could explore his physical and visual world.

For the most part Jackson had specific outcomes in mind when he was creating his three-dimensional artworks and he was careful in his use of materials, tools and techniques. Furthermore, he was mindful of the skills he possessed and when he needed help. I came to realise that many of his art experiences were related to topics of current interest to him. At that time this included aeroplanes, flight, boats, marine crafts, and Daleks.



Figure 51. Rocket; drum set; gun.

Some of Jackson's larger structures also allowed him to be bodily part of the construction. For example, he made a rocket out of cardboard boxes that was big enough for him to sit in (Figure 51, left). He told me that he made the rocket by himself but that he had got the idea from a book.

He appeared to derive pleasure and satisfaction from his ability to make and physically use his constructions. For example, in response to an invitation to bring a musical instrument to his preschool camp out, he made a drum set from plastic ice-cream containers (Figure 51, centre). He demonstrated how each drum had a different sound because he had deliberately used two different size containers and had put lids under one of each size. When he showed me his gun, which he had constructed from cardboard tubes (Figure 51, right), he showed me how to look through the sights and take aim. Again, it appeared as though part of the challenge for Jackson was to create

structures that were then made more functional by being an extension of his own body. While Gardner (1993) theorized that there were multiple ways in which life was sensed and made intelligent, this entire aspect of children’s creative expression through manipulation and modification of three-dimensional, physical objects, is still relatively uncharted.

Jackson often borrowed non-fiction books on his topics of interest. From one book, he and his father made paper planes and later, at preschool, he taught his friends how to make these. He also made smaller three-dimensional objects from paper and lightweight card such as a Chinese lantern, Christmas decorations, paper snake, kites and flags. In another project Jackson and his sister half-filled two plastic bottles with sand and taped them together at the mouths to make a sand timer. On yet another occasion, Jackson and a visiting friend used a ladder, wood and plastic train tracks to make a ramped racing track for his toy cars. While such projects may have seemed less art-like in nature than drawing or making rockets, Jackson photographed and discussed these in much the same way that he discussed his other constructions and drawings. Therefore, I came to also regard these as aspects of his art experiences.

Drawing, painting and collage at home and preschool

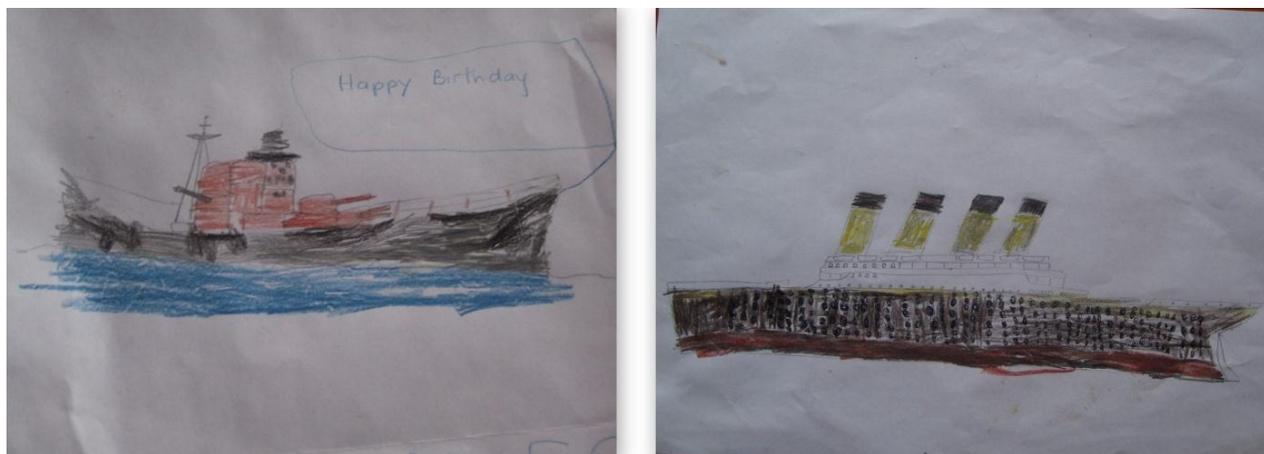


Figure 52. Boat drawings.

At home, although Jackson spent more time on construction projects than he did on two-dimensional artworks the subject-matter of these were linked. Also, just as he asked for help with his constructions, so too did he seek help with his drawings. For example, when he was aged 5 years 3 months he wanted to make a birthday card for a friend so he asked his mother to draw a basic outline of a ship. He then added some minor detail and coloured it (Figure 52, left). Rather than constraining Jackson’s drawing

development this approach appeared to promote his skill development and confidence as, three months later, he showed his mother a picture of the Titanic and asked her to draw the basic outline. Jackson then added many details, such as the portholes, and colour (Figure 52, right). This second drawing contained many more features which were drawn by Jackson than the earlier one had.

When Jackson showed me these drawings he referred to them as his drawings. Thus, his collaborations with his mother, where he controlled the type and level of support he was given, allowed Jackson to feel ownership of the process and the artworks. As will be seen in Chapter 12, this art journey did not end there as a month later Jackson competently and independently drew a full and detailed coloured drawing of a ship based on observation of a model ship (see Figure 108, p. 268).



Figure 53. Get well card; birthday bag; pet poo.

As noted in other research (Griebing, 2009; Richards, 2003b), children sometimes create artworks with the express purpose of giving these as gifts. Jackson did likewise and, in addition to his friend's birthday card (Figure 52, left), he created drawings or paintings to give as gifts. This included a coloured drawing of flowers in the rain (Figure 53, left). He said, "*It's was for mummy when she was a bit sick, and it was raining.*" While he said that he drew the raindrops because it had been raining, the overall visual effect appeared to please Jackson and six weeks later he drew a similar drawing as a birthday card for a young female friend. At preschool, he also created a birthday gift for his grandmother in the format of a painted bag (Figure 53, centre). He pointed out the "*Army man*" and the black parallel lines which were tank tracks. He laughingly said "*Watch out! You might get run over!*" Jackson's fun with 'earthy' themes was also apparent in the dot painting (Figure 53, right) of "*Maxie's poos.*" This was also a visual response to a home-based experience as Jackson pointed out where Maxie, his pet goose, had made little green droppings in her yard.

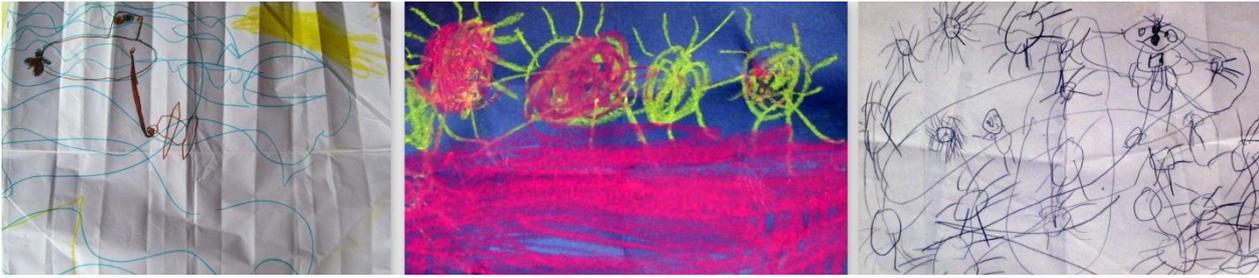


Figure 54. Submarine scene; lava and suns; robots and suns.

Some of Jackson's drawing-stories mixed family experience with fantasy. For example, when discussing his drawing that he had made at preschool (Figure 54, left)¹⁷ Jackson said, "*Someone is fishing from the submarine.*"

I commented that there was a sun in the drawing.

In a tone that suggested how implausible my suggestion was, he responded, "*It's not the sun.*" He then scrutinized the drawing for a moment and said, "*Yeah it is the sun because the submarine is not far under the water and you can see through the water to the sun.*" He then told me that, when he and his dad were fishing, they saw a stick floating upright in the water and they joked that it was a submarine. I discussed this event with his father, and although he recalled the episode it did not seem significant at that time. Yet this father and son interaction had inspired Jackson to graphic exploration. His consideration of how the sun could be seen underwater was also characteristic of Jackson's propensity to theorize about the physical world.

The sun is often used by children to represent an area of their picture as the sky. Like Lee, who had transformed the sun and clouds into action characters (see Figure 11, p. 110), Jackson extended the use of the sun as a basic symbol. For example, he created a couple of drawings on black paper, of rivers of lava with four suns in the sky (Figure 54, centre). Jackson said he drew four suns "*Because it is very hot.*"

The sun theme also appeared in one of his few action drawings (Figure 54, right). He described this drawing as one of a "*Huge robot that a man sleeps in. And the suns keep the robot away.*" This action drawing was not of the careful drawings style that Jackson employed when he attempted realism, as seen in his details drawn on the Titanic, in Figure 52 right (p. 180), and revealed that he had a repertoire of drawing skills to call upon and the 'wit to know when to call on each' (Wolf & Perry, 1988, p. 18).

¹⁷ This drawing was folded by Jackson so that he could fit it in his preschool folder. As such, the folds were not part of the artwork.



Figure 55. Collage of Nana's eyeball; 'octopi' collage; octopi book.

Jackson's discussions about his art gave me insights that I might have otherwise been oblivious to. For example, in one session, when his mother and grandmother were present, he showed me the collage that he had made at preschool (Figure 55, left).

"It's Nana's eyeball – your eyeball Nana," he said.

Nana asked, "Is that when I got a new eye is it?"

"Yeah."

Jackson's grandmother explained that she had recently had laser eye treatment and that Jackson had phoned to ask how she feeling.

Jackson pointed to the collage and said, *"And there it is."*

"They took it off and put a new one in?" asked his grandmother.

"Yeah," he replied, *"it's standing on the paper."*

Despite Jackson's frequent use of humour, when he described this artwork of Nana's eyeball, he seemed quite serious. This suggested that he was trying to make sense, through art experience, of the medical procedure that his grandmother had experienced.

The collage of 'Nana's eyeball' had a definite theme and Jackson had used the few new art materials that were provided at preschool on that day. However, when I observed him working independently with collage material I noticed that he sorted through the resources and identified which materials he would use. He completed sections of the collage and then assembled it – in much the same way that he assembled his more rigid constructions. For example, he made a collage of what he called an "Octopi" (Figure 55, centre). He had used a folder cover for the base sheet of his collage and when he had completed it he then decided to make it into a booklet. On the first page of his booklet he drew a boat and gave it legs, saying it was a "Walking boat" (Figure 55, right). While he was working on his collage a younger boy joined the table. This boy eagerly watched Jackson and created a similar collage. When I mentioned this to Jackson he was quick in pointing out *"I wasn't doing anything the*

same.” Although Jackson liked to get other people to join in his projects on his terms, he resisted any suggestion that he copied another child’s idea.

While he had to pack up before he had finished making his octopus book, a week later he made another book by folding two pieces of paper and stapling them through the centre fold. He then drew six simple drawings including a church, a dog’s face, a centipede and baby. When I saw this book I asked, “Do you want to tell me a story through the pages?”

He began, “*That’s a church. Ahh, I can’t tell you one.*” So, while the pages were in the format of a book, unlike Lee’s books, Jackson’s drawings did not relate to an overall theme or story.



Figure 56. Crocodile drawing; water pump painting; quill and ink poster.

Another source of inspiration for Jackson’s art experiences was graphic images from books and television. Like Lee, Jackson responded positively to the TV programme ‘Louie’ which had demonstrations on how to draw. On one occasion Jackson drew a crocodile from instructions given on this programme (Figure 56, left). He also explained, in some detail, how to draw a robot as demonstrated in this programme.

In terms of robots, Jackson was particularly interested in Daleks (from the UK television series ‘Doctor Who’) and he had created several drawings of these. At preschool Jackson had also constructed a large Dalek in the sandpit, making a sand mound for the body and a spade as the exterminator-arm. He explained how he and his friends were seeing how much sand they could put on the arm before the other end tipped out of the sand. He laughingly said that it was very strong and in the end “*I jumped on it!*” Then in the voice a Dalek he exclaimed, “*You will be exterminated!*”

In this episode, apart from Jackson’s interest in Daleks he had explored the tipping effect of the spade in much the same way that he experimented with making devices that acted as cranes. He later also showed me his painting of the water pump (Figure 56, centre) and explained, “*When you push this part down, this part goes up.*” Jackson’s painting and sandpit construction revealed an understanding of pivoting

mechanisms. While he did not elaborate on the origins of his water pump painting, as rural properties had artesian wells, it was likely that Jackson had based this painting on personal experience and observation.

On one of my home visits Jackson gave me one of his goose's tail feathers and told me he was going to think about how he would use his one. A week later he had transformed the feather into a quill, dipped it in ink and drawn a poster (Figure 56, right) which he explained showed, "*One dollar for onions, two dollars for the sausage, three dollars for bread, four dollars for sauce and five dollars for salad.*" For Jackson, the motivation to make this artwork was two-fold in that MCP was about to have a barbeque and he was able to use his feather in a functional way. Also, as he had an advertising brochure under his artwork as he created it, this may have provided him with a source of inspiration for this piece.

Despite Jackson's main interest in construction it was also interesting to see how, over time, he explored graphic effects in his two-dimensional artworks. For example, he had used dots in several of his artworks (as seen in Figure 53, p. 181) and in another one he had covered drawn dots with transparent tape and said "*It is like you do dot to dot – you've got to join all the dots.*" He also said he had used the tape so people could use a special pen, wipe it off, and play again.



Figure 57. Criss-cross kite designs.

Like Sophie, Jackson also appeared to get some satisfaction from exploring decorative effects, as evident in his criss-cross designs (Figure 57). He had little to say about the first artwork, which was created at preschool using pre-cut strips of paper and coloured pens (Figure 57, left). He was more interested in his second collage, made three weeks later, which incorporated more of his own structural and graphic elements. He described this as a kite (Figure 57, centre). He made the third artwork five weeks later, and although this time the work was fully two-dimensional, he again described this as a kite pattern (Figure 57, right). I noticed that while Sophie's artworks appeared to be fully focused on patterns, Jackson discussed the functional aspects of the work more

fully, such as the design's relationship to kite making, than he did the decorative features.

Jackson's construction projects at preschool



Figure 58. Plane drawn with large blocks; 'butcher's ship'; small block plane.

Compared to Jackson's home environment, preschool placed more restrictions on access to construction materials, tools, working and storage spaces and timeframes. Therefore, he often created temporary structures with blocks. The preschool teachers actively supported the children's personal interests and the director, Judith, showed me photographs of Jackson's recent constructions with blocks where he had made a small plane with plastic connecting shapes (Figure 58, bottom right) and, based on a book about planes, created a large block 'drawing' of an aeroplane (Figure 58, left). This took up a great deal of space and, as Jackson had a definite plan in mind, he made this without input from his friends.

I witnessed several other block construction projects in which Jackson had a specific goal in mind and gave directions to other children. He also got quite cross with his friends if they didn't follow his plan. He explained, "*They didn't know what to do and messed it up a bit.*" Although his friends did not react adversely, these types of activities and interactions created tensions amongst some staff members who believed that Jackson was too bossy. However, communicating with other children was not necessarily an easy task and, as I knew from personal experience, that which was

implicit in art actions is not necessarily made explicit through words. Furthermore, as I had a wider view of Jackson's overall behaviour I saw his domineering manner as just one aspect of his ways of being when in the role of expert. What preschool probably lacked were situations in which he could be the novice and learn from someone with greater skills.

Although the preschool had woodworking tools and materials, Jackson created just a few items from wood, such as his spaceship (Figure 58, top right). He flew the structure through the air and explained that there were "*knives*" (the unpainted sticks) that fitted between the blocks, making this into a "*butcher's ship*."



Figure 59. Block towers at preschool.

A memorable preschool project for Jackson was one that involved constructing a tall tower from building blocks. This construction began when his mother set up four blocks in a vertical U shape. She said that she had done this to help Jackson get involved in a preschool activity before she left for work. Jackson and two friends then replicated the basic pattern and built vertically until the structure was almost as tall as the boys (Figure 59, left). At this point the boys stood on low stepping stools. What set this event apart from their usual play with blocks was the way that Judith, the preschool director, then encouraged Jackson and his friends to keep working on it. She provided a ladder for the boys and the friends cooperated with each other by passing up blocks and taking turns on the ladder (Figure 59, centre left). As was often evident in play activities that involved several children, the various participants negotiated their own rules (Dockett & Fleer, 2002; Mabry & Fucigna, 2009; Vygotsky, 1933) and worked out roles and responsibilities within the group. Jackson had suggested that the leader should be the tallest person (which he clearly was), and as he often facilitated the construction projects the others boys agreed to this selection process. The construction project also

generated viewing interest from some other children and as the tower posed some risk of toppling the teachers rearranged some furniture to create safety barriers.

Judith observed the children and commented about the complexity of their role negotiations and how well they problem-solved. Also, from my point of view, this construction experience was a closer match to Jackson's home-based experiences in terms of challenges and problem-solving. When the second story of blocks was in place, she asked the boys to draw their structure. The boys did this although Jackson seemed the least interested. Judith later said that she wished she had not disrupted their construction. So I asked Jackson, "Did you want to draw?"

"No," he replied.

"Why did you have to do the drawing?"

"So I could remember how to make it," he said.

"Did it help?"

"Yeah," Jackson replied. So, although this change of art media had disrupted the flow of other processes, Jackson understood the purpose of drawing. At the same time, his comments supported Judith's feeling that the drawing task disrupted the event for him.

Another teacher, Nellie, was interested in relating the children's construction experiences to mathematics. She encouraged the three boys to make a second tower using smaller blocks and to predict how many blocks they would need to make it as tall as their other one. She held the ladder and encouraged the boys to take turns (Figure 59, centre right). Although this interaction facilitated some interesting mathematical language the dynamics changed for Jackson in that he was no longer leading the group. He also had less autonomy in determining the purpose of his actions and he appeared to be less interested in this construction. This observation was confirmed two weeks later when the photographs of the towers were displayed on the preschool wall. He pointed to the smaller tower and said, "*We had to do it that way and they [the small blocks] just don't balance that well.*" From a Deweyan perspective, it became increasingly clear that when Jackson was unable to unite his artmaking purpose through related actions and perceptions, this limited his sense of having a fulfilling, esthetic experiences (Dewey, 1934/2005). I will expand on these ideas shortly.

On the day that Jackson made these comments about the second tower, he decided to test his own theories by building a shorter tower using the larger blocks (Figure 59, right). He said he wanted to make it stronger than the previous towers and he

achieved this by sandwiching five layers of blocks, with each subsequent layer placed at right angles to the last. In some ways I could see that by applying some of his discoveries about stability Jackson was in the dual roles of designer and engineer. I was aware that the social nature of these experiences was also important in making them satisfying for Jackson, for when I asked him if he had made any other block towers since the big one he said that he hadn't because he wanted to make one with the same friends. However, that day I noticed that his two friends were not as interested in the new project as he was and although they played nearby they did not join in.

The initial tower building experience was a seminal one for Jackson. However, allowing the boys to create this tower without evident adult supervision was professionally risky for Judith, as some teachers were unhappy about the project, citing safety concerns and potential adverse parental reactions. However, she was aware of the level of competency that Jackson showed at home and how seldom preschool actually allowed him to push his personal limits. This professional tension provided insights into the ways educational environments were structured to constrain some ways of being and how a culture of fear (especially in regards to children's personal physical safety) impacted on what some teachers sanctioned. It also demonstrated how power relationships, in which children had the upper hand, were perceived as threatening by some caring and well-intentioned adults. Institutionalized restrictions in educational settings may have had the greatest implications for children, such as Jackson, who displayed high levels of competency in physically demanding activities elsewhere, and on teachers, such as Judith who were innovative, responsive to individual children's interests and supportive of child-initiated activities.

Jackson the photographer

Within the research Jackson was the only child who explored photography as an art medium. Initially, because he was more interested in three-dimensional art forms I was surprised by his interest in the visual elements of his two-dimensional photographs. I was also careful not to get too excited about his early indications of an interest in photography in case I was reading too much into what were serendipitous photographic experiences. However, as I appreciated his fascination with the physical world, his competent use of tools and processes, and his deliberate use of photographic effects, I realised that the camera was indeed being used as an artmaking tool. I could see that he did engage in photography as artistic-esthetic experience (Dewey, 1934/2005) in that his

perceptions of the visual effects of the photographs influenced how he took his photographs. I will explain this further, beginning with describing his first photographs.



Figure 60. First photographs.

Jackson's first photographs were carefully framed images of people, animals and objects from around his home. He commented on the light and shadows in some of his photographs and this visual awareness produced some aesthetically dramatic photographs (Figure 60). Despite his limited past experience with photography, he showed deliberate intent when taking his first set of photographs. For example, he asked his sister to climb a tree and his father to stand in a particular place holding a power drill. His father commented that Jackson had taken a long time to stage the photograph, and had used the view finder to frame the image and to help him to direct Doug's movements.

In the early stages of the research there were also indications that Jackson regarded the photographs themselves as having unique and real qualities rather than just being images of something else that was 'real'. He also appeared to see the artwork and the photograph as two separate artifacts. For example, he often clarified the difference between the actual artwork and the photograph, such as saying that he made the flag at preschool but he had made the photograph of the flag at home. In some ways, Jackson's understanding of the symbolic and representational properties of the photography mirrored Vygotsky's assertion that 'for a long time children relate to drawings as if they were objects' (1978, p. 113). Also, from the very first sets of photographs Jackson reacted to the image as though it had new meaning. For example when we reviewed the photograph of the plastic dagger in the cross of shadows of the pergola (Figure 60, right) he said *"This is a cross on a pirate map... and this is a dagger and it is like a cross, and it is pointing to where the treasure is and I'm going to dig it up!"*

Over time, Jackson not only responded creatively to images that he took, but, in a manner similar to that in which he explored and used a variety of construction materials, he explored creative possibilities in his photography. While all four children competently

took photographs, I was aware that in particular, Jackson and Lee took several photographs until they were happy with the results. For Jackson, I also saw that it afforded him a strong sense of audience. For instance, within a week of having the camera, he explored a form of mime and role-play where he was both the actor/artist and the audience as he took self-portraits of various facial expressions. When he shared these photographs with me, he became the narrator who shared these images with an audience. For example, in one photograph he had an exaggerated pouting expression and when he told me about this photograph he said he had “*Mo lips*” (Mo was his horse). It was possible that when this photograph was taken, Jackson was exploring facial expressions, but when he viewed the image on subsequent viewings, he ascribed new meaning to the image. Just as ‘events within a drawing-telling can also shift, and objects and characters that originally functioned in one way may be altered to function in another way later’ (S. K. Wright, 2007, p. 44), for Jackson, the act of ‘pulling a face’ had not altered, but the meaning he ascribed to this image had changed once it was bought into a more public arena.

Photographs, such as ‘Mo lips’, reminded me that the nature or importance of photographic or artistic images could not be predetermined, but evolved out of the research process. Likewise, the ethnographic value of images and artefacts did not rely entirely on my research goals, and as Pink (2001) pointed out, in the broadest sense such images were ethnographic when viewers judged them as such. Another example of this was seen in Jackson’s photographs of colour, some of which appear in Figure 61. These photographs emerged as Jackson photographically explored colours in his environment. These ‘colourscapes’ were peppered amongst his photographs and were shared with good humour.

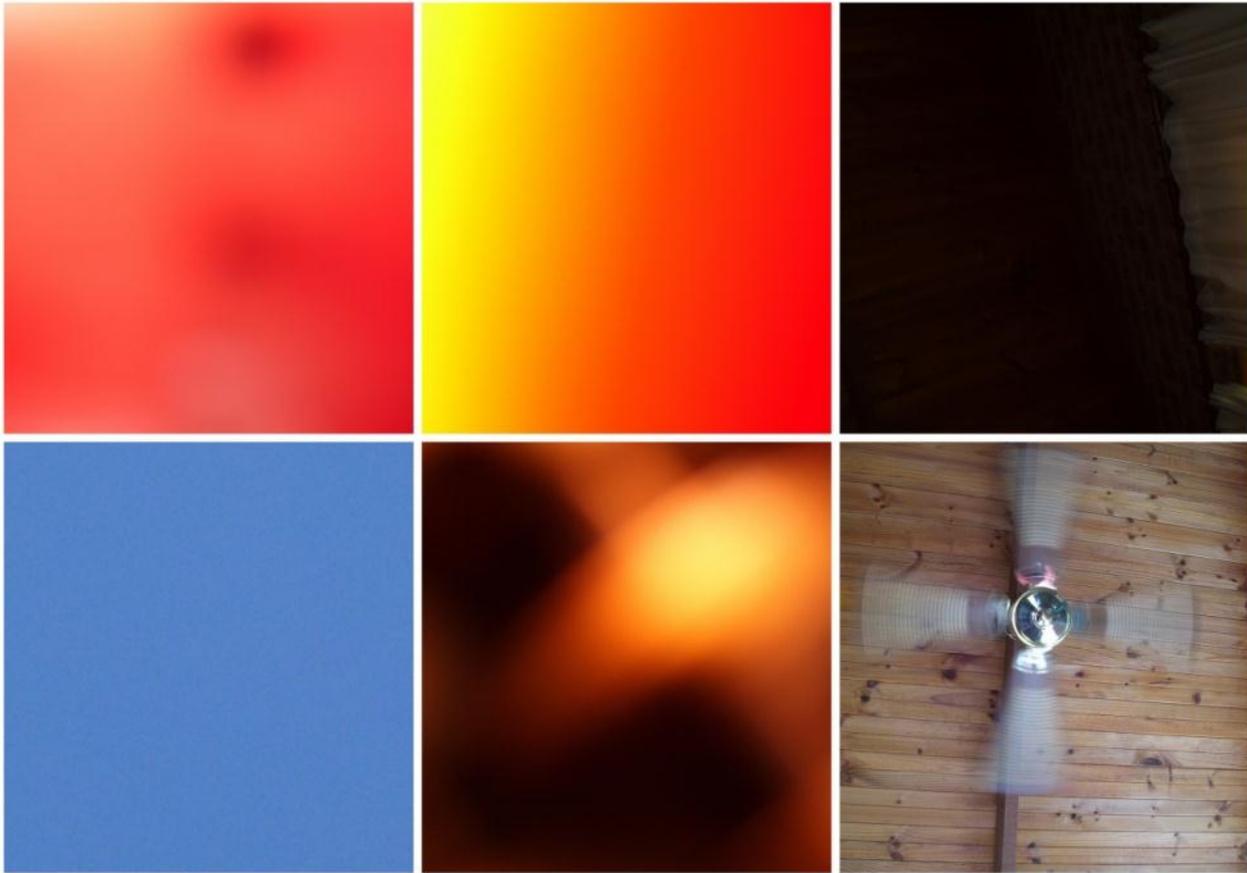


Figure 61. Colourscapes and photographic effects.

Jackson referred to the first image (Figure 61, top left) as the “*pink nose*” and the second photograph (Figure 61, top centre) he called his “*sunset picture.*” He enjoyed my bafflement over how this image was taken and he took some time before he laughingly told me that he had taken this photograph on top of his heel when using a flash exposure. The third image (Figure 61, top right) was part of his exploration of black photographs and he richly described the bottom right as “*golden sparkles.*” This photograph may have been unintentionally underexposed but Jackson’s interest in the visual effect prompted him to create other photographs of blackness.

The blue photographic image (Figure 61, bottom left) was taken of the sky. Jackson said, “*Fool your husband it’s something that is painted blue...and then say ‘I fooled you!’*” In the spirit of these interactions I did so and then reported the exchange back to him. Several months later, he explored new photographic effects of close-up shots of household furniture, in this case of a wicker chair (Figure 61, bottom centre) and of the ceiling fan in motion which appeared in the photograph as if stationary (Figure 61, bottom right).

Thus, through all of these various facets, digital photography was an art medium for Jackson which also provided him with a site for artistic engagement at personal and social levels, as he dialogued with his photographic art and dialogued with others through his art. For example, while his photographic mimes, such as that of “*Mo lips*,” seemed to be highly personal, it was also clear that the social aspect of having an audience was paramount in making this activity stimulating for him. As Vygotsky (1978) pointed out, ‘with the help of speech’ children acquired ‘the capacity to be both the subjects and objects of their behavior’ (p. 26) – for Jackson his form of ‘speech’ was the visual message of the photograph. Over time, Jackson’s sense of audience developed in complexity as he internalized the role of artist/presenter and audience/viewer and expanded his artmaking repertoire to include colourscape photographs. These photographs evoked a quizzical response on the part of the viewer, and reflected Jackson’s deeper level of understanding of the artist-viewer relationship. I recognised that, as an art educator and artist, my response to Jackson’s photographs heightened our consciousness of the art aspects of his explorations. Moreover, Jackson was the only child in this research project who explored colour in this way, and to also invite a puzzled response from his audience. In this respect, Jackson’s use of the camera as an art-making tool and as a mediating device which led to social interactions was quite sophisticated.

School orientation visits



Figure 62. School orientation activities.

Towards the end of the year, Jackson had two school orientation visits. I was present during his first visit, when he was involved in colouring in an illustration beneath a poem (Figure 62, left). I had not previously seen Jackson doing any colouring-in and I noted how intensely he concentrated on the task. On another visit, Jackson made a collaged and coloured umbrella and a jellyfish (Figure 62, centre and right). He said, “*I just coloured it in [the umbrella]...and cut it out.*” He then told me that the teacher had

stuck the dots on his work. I asked him why they did that and he laughingly said “*And they thought it was hard!*”

Although I felt that these school orientation tasks were aimed well below Jackson’s capabilities, his mother commented that he enjoyed the school visits. Also, as will be discussed in greater depth in the introduction of Part Three, I came to think of these new adult-directed activities as art-like activities rather than art experiences in the Deweyan sense.

The following year, Jackson actually started at Sandy Bay School and his art experiences at home and school are discussed in Chapter 12.

9. DEWEYAN PERSPECTIVES REVISITED

Throughout the first phase of this research, I was aware of the ways in which the children's engagement in art could be thought of as reflecting Deweyan perspectives on art as experience. Thus, before reporting on findings of the second home and school phase of the study, in this chapter I will re-examine in more depth some of the points that I raised in Chapter 3 in relation to the children's home-based and preschool art experiences. This discussion begins with an exploration of the relationship between recognition, perception and action as understood through this current research. As the discussion evolves, I also reflect on the children's spontaneous art, their artistic growth and development and the conditions that constrained and promoted their art experiences drawing on Deweyan perspectives to generate some understandings of each of these aspects.

Deweyan perspectives and the children's art experiences

From Dewey's (1934/2005) perspective, when perception replaces simple recognition this involves a person in an 'act of reconstructive doing, and consciousness becomes fresh and alive' (p. 54). During the first phase of this research I became increasingly aware of clear examples of the ways in which the children moved beyond mere recognition to deeper levels of perception. This was most apparent to me when they were fully engaged in art activities that linked with their personal interests and big ideas.



Figure 63. Perception replaced mere recognition.

As the following examples show, more often than not, when the children achieved this deeper level of perception it was their internal thinking *and* their external artmaking

that were reconstructed. For example, when Lee was given the real map he perceived its graphic features in terms of his own understandings of maps *and* in terms of how it then informed his own map-drawings. His reconstructive doing was evident in his focused and intentional observations and then in his acts of drawing (Figure 63, left). As Lee's own map developed he used this drawing to then structure the way he looked at the actual map (such as looking for distance markers). What is more, Lee's focused interests were not just in maps in general so much as they were in using this graphic format to explore ideas about where he belonged in the geographical world. As Dewey (1934/2005) pointed out 'when excitement about subject matter goes deep, it stirs up a store of attitudes and meanings derived from prior experience' (p. 68) and in Lee's case I believed that he was not merely motivated by his desire to draw maps so much as by his deeper interest in expressing ideas about place and belonging.

There were numerous other examples of Lee's ability to move beyond mere recognition to deeper levels of perception that then informed his artmaking. For example, Lee's castle game-drawing had features derived from his floor game (Figure 5, p. 99); the letters drawn on his computer keyboard were gleaned from preschool wall displays (Figure 7, p. 104); and popular culture influenced his choice of drawn characters such as Transformers and Batman (Figure 11, p. 110).

Lilly's interactions with her *Wizard of Oz* book revealed her perceptual skills in making sense of the graphic qualities of illustrations (Figure 63, centre left). At that time, I believed that the book's female characters and associated clothing styles were most salient to her rather than the overall story. It is also worth noting that it was her exposure to a different visual medium (an animated movie of this story) that propelled her to new levels of perception; for having spotted something in the movie that she didn't recognize as familiar (the character in a new outfit) she went back to her original book and sought new information. In these processes she was able to reconstruct her drawings and develop greater graphic detail (see Figure 36, p. 152). This in turn, appeared to give Lilly greater personal satisfaction as she expanded on her big ideas of being female, as expressed through clothing and characters, and enabled her to explore new graphic conventions. Also, having this variety of stimulating visual resources staved off 'staleness of matter' that could have limited her 'spontaneity of expression' (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 73). Again, for Lilly there were many other examples of 'reconstructive doing' through artmaking. This included her ability to look at her bedroom furniture and transform these familiar three-dimensional objects into two-dimensional drawings (Figure 30 left, p. 140)

or to look at her mother's actual clothing and to draw this (Figure 34 left, p. 149). As a relevant aside, such insights not only add credence to pedagogic practices of providing a variety of resources based around children's interests, but suggested that such practices supported children's development of perceptual abilities.

In this current research, reconstructions of thinking and actions were not always realized through drawing. For example, Jackson's move from recognition, to perception, to art actions was most clearly seen in his construction works. The way in which he perceived the physical properties of materials and incorporated this understanding into his constructions was also evident. For instance, having recognized that ice-cream containers made a suitable drum set, he explored the physical and percussion sound qualities of these and modified each one accordingly (Figure 63, centre right). While, to some people, such activities may appear to be more closely related to a scientific mode of working than to art, Jackson shared these experiences (and others like it) as examples of his art experiences. They also united action and perception in a manner consistent with Deweyan perspectives on art as experience.

While Sophie's ability to translate new perceptions into actual artworks was the least evident (in terms of quantity of her artworks) she appeared to have the greatest awareness of patterns and designs in the made world. While her earliest photographs pointed to this interest (see Figure 41, p. 162) her ability to tune into the aesthetic qualities around her became most obvious to me during our art gallery visit. This was a relatively novel experience for Sophie, and both her mother and I marvelled at how captivated she was by the gallery space (Figure 46, p. 170) and at her unprompted decision to draw one of the paintings. As seen in Figure 63 (right), Sophie and her sister assumed the poses of quizzical viewers (heads tipped to the side) as Sophie looked thoughtfully at one particular painting and her sister looked at the emerging drawing. As Sophie seldom drew, it appeared that the gallery's environmental conditions, which included displayed artworks, access to art materials, viewing seats, minimal distractions and the presence of unobtrusive but interested others, came together to support and extend Sophie's artmaking experiences. In Sophie's case, our visit to the art gallery provided a brief insight into how her perceptions led to her artmaking actions. It also provided an opportunity for me to observe Sophie when she was enthralled by something visual. This observation prompted a recall of Dewey's (1934/2005) assertion that both the expressive objects (artworks) and the expressive acts (artmaking) constituted esthetic experience in that the 'poetic, as distinct from the prosaic, esthetic art as distinct

from scientific, expressive as distinct from statement, does something different from leading an experience. It constitutes one.’ (p. 88). Therefore, Sophie’s appreciation of art, design and pattern constituted aesthetic experience.

Within the artmaking processes, as described so far, there were also close relationships between the children’s perceptions and subsequent actions as, at each stage of their artmaking, there was anticipation of what was to come and this, in turn, influenced what they did next. In this respect action and perception were ‘reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other’ (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 52). Keeping this in mind then, when there was clear evidence that the children experienced art in a way that showed a dynamic interplay between their art actions and their perceptions, I regarded them as having been engaged in art experiences. When there seemed to be a disjunction between their actions and perceptions I was more inclined to think of these as merely art-like activities (such as Jackson’s school orientation activities in Figure 62). My approach to classifying types of art activities is more carefully described in the following chapter.



Figure 64. Action and perception united through artmaking.

I will return now to considering Sophie’s art experiences, as expressed through her artmaking. While, compared to the other children, she produced fewer artworks, when her interest in patterns was united in expression through her artworks she displayed genuine delight. For example, when she drew her ‘Mummy’ with ‘*decoration*’ hair (Figure 64, left) she shared it with the obvious pleasure of one giving a precious gift. This glimpse into the potential of art to animate Sophie, and to provide a point of connection between her and others, highlighted for me Dewey’s (1934/2005) assertion that experience, taken to the full, was ‘a transformation of interaction into participation and communication’ (p. 22). This is an argument I will expand on, but at this stage I point out that, as I saw so few of these moments for Sophie, I came to believe that neither her

home nor preschool environments promoted her interest in decorative patterns. Also, as she appeared to have little ongoing access to art materials or 'messy' art spaces at home this may have limited her opportunities to unite her perceptions with subsequent actions. Moreover, as will become evident, across the research I saw little evidence of teachers promoting children's personal interest in patterns. Yet, as Sophie has shown, some children derived pleasure from decorative art forms and this interest was a legitimate means of artistic expression and interaction with others.

Jackson united his actions and perceptions in an evolving manner through his drawings and constructions. In terms of the latter, Jackson's art experience influenced the way he perceived and used the resources around him, and the resources around him influenced how he conceptualised and made his art. For example, at preschool there was a limited range of construction materials (compared to at home) and he explored the use of blocks to make flat 'drawings' (see Figure 58, p. 186) and vertical structures (Figure 59, p. 187). Jackson's comments indicated that, in these situations, he often began the project based on a preconceived idea. For example, in one tower construction he was aiming to make a better balanced and stronger tower than he had previously made (Figure 64, centre left). Although Jackson had thought carefully about his projects, at times he was unable to communicate his intentions with other children. As a consequence, when working with friends he often cast himself in the role of expert (a role he managed well at home) and directed the other children. As a result some teachers regarded him as bossy and tried to minimize such interactions. However, as Dewey (1934/2005) pointed out, the thinking of the artist where he was 'controlled in the process of his work by his grasp of the connection between what he has already done and what he is to do next', was one of the 'most exacting modes of thought' (p. 47). Therefore, it was not easy for Jackson to verbally explain his ideas to other children. Furthermore, when a teacher stepped in to modify Jackson's behaviour, such as insisting on children taking turns, this limited his ability to unite action and perception, and in turn this 'coerced submission' and worked against the unity of art experience (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 16). Also, as his motivation to create art was sometimes in the realm of 'finding out what happens when', he didn't necessarily have an endpoint in mind. Rather, the artmaking processes informed what was to come next, as seen in his building of a block tower for strength and stability. As Dewey (1934/2005) pointed out, 'the work of esthetic art satisfies many ends, none of which is laid down in advance' (p. 140). Another point of interest is that, while Jackson happily acted as an interested novice at home, at

preschool there were few truly challenging situations or experts in his areas of interest. As such he had little opportunity to assume this role.

Turning our attention to Lilly and Lee, it was clear that many of their drawing experiences revealed close links between their actions and perceptions. In Lilly's case, she made repeated exploration into the artwork of artists, as she encountered them in her books and movies. With varying degrees of success and frustration she persevered in her efforts to look carefully at illustrations (perception), to draw versions of these (perception into action) and to develop her own drawing themes (action and perception in relation). For example, her Dorothy in shoes drawing (Figure 64, centre right) evolved out of her interest in the *Wizard of Oz* book. In Lee's case, his multipage story of 'Bob's Farm: Farmer Bob' (Figures 12-21, pp. 115-121), clearly demonstrated how he united perceptions and actions in a cumulative way as each page informed the next, and the story wove together several subplots and characters. What is more, the way in which he visually crafted his book using simple repeated motifs and basic colours (Figure 64, right), coupled with his dramatized narration of the story, heightened the esthetic experience for him, as the artist, and for us, as his audience.

Thus, while it appeared to me that the children were motivated by producing artworks that gave them a sense of personal satisfaction their work was not merely private. Indeed, I came to see that the children's art was not so much 'private' as it was a means of making social connections and participating in their immediate social communities. Thus, as Dewey (1934/2005) noted, esthetic experience brought these young people in 'active and alert commerce with the world' and 'at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events' (p. 18). Moreover, fullness of experience transformed these children's interactions into a fuller sense of 'participation and communication' with others (p. 22). Discussion so far has furnished some examples of the ways in which four children responded to the world around them through art. On a physical level, artmaking involved them in the manipulation of materials into art media – be it through drawing, photography, painting or construction. I also believed that their cognitive engagement with their art media allowed them to develop their inner thought (Vygotsky, 1962/1934) and their visual thinking (Brooks, 2005b) through co-construction as their art actions and perceptions informed each other.

The children also used the artmaking experiences to facilitate interactions with other people. For example, while Jackson often created artworks on his own initiative, at times he actively sought interaction with others. These interactions included asking for

deeper levels of participation and communication. Moreover, his ability to draw this learning poster afforded him a leadership role and as such his art experience brought him 'heightened vitality' through 'active and alert commerce with the world' (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 18). Thus, through his art Lee was able to gain empathetic interpenetration of himself with the world of people in a context of familial trust (his sister and mother), events (involvement in homework and language learning activities) and objects (use of worksheets and labels).

Art also provided a way through which to channel emotional experiences and to reconstruct complex feelings. Such art actions helped the children to cope with challenging situations. For example, when Lilly had an argument with her mother and sister she expressed this through a drawing (Figure 65, right). This drawing then acted as a shared point of reference for her to talk about how she felt and to co-construct some shared understandings. For Lilly, her art experience was not just a dissipation of anger, but a transformation of an emotion that was 'informed by material that is grasped and gathered' (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 73) through the act of drawing. As Dewey pointed out, there was a fine balance between being overwhelmed by emotion and harnessing it, for 'without emotion, there may be craftsmanship, but not art' and conversely 'a person overwhelmed by an emotion is thereby incapacitated for expressing it'. What was required for Lilly's artistic expression was the compression of emotion, through art media, into artistic expression.

I came to see that an understanding of the way each child harnessed his or her emotional energies through art, and were then able to talk to others about their art, thoughts and feelings, provided me with insights into their artistic development. Returning briefly to Dewey's (1934/2005) words, I point out that 'actions and its consequences must be joined in perception' (p. 46) and it was the relationship between these that gave experience meaning. According to Dewey (1934/2005), development and growth resulted from a person's interaction with their environment as they transformed 'factors of opposition and conflict' into 'differentiated aspects of a higher powered and more significant life' (p. 13). Because of the longitudinal nature of this current research, access to the children's home-based art and an understanding of children's own perspectives on experience, it was possible to see some of these transformations taking place.



Figure 66. Lee's increasingly complex computer artworks.

It was over time, for example, that I came to realise that Lee's series of computer drawings were not only related by theme, but they were progressively more complex in design. I also came to see how his earlier struggle to communicate about his shark drawing, by using the Battleship game as a prop, was an episode in which his compression of ideas and emotions had led to further expression. For Lee, communicating about his computer drawing mattered and in being able to then engage with his mother and me this sense of 'participation' following a 'phase of disruption and conflict' bore 'within itself the germs of a consummation akin to the esthetic' (p. 14). In other words, the struggles involved in communicating about his art were rewarded with a sense of completion, communication and participation with others. As seen in Figure 66 (left to right), to begin with, in his efforts to communicate with another person he transformed his two-dimensional drawing of a shark computer game (left) into part of a three-dimensional model of the game within a computer (centre left). The concept of creating a three-dimensional model was advanced further at preschool when he created a structural form, from card, to accommodate his laptop drawings (centre right). This extended further when Lee utilized the structural properties of an exercise book and used this in conjunction with a more complex drawing (centre right). As each of these new developments provided resting places for future development, it was important for Lee to have ongoing support in developing these ideas, access to a variety of materials and people who were interested in his endeavours.

Thus, looking at the development of ideas and themes over time, and relating these to Dewey's (1934/2005) notions on art as experience, it can be seen that Lee's art experiences were part of a pattern of surges and ebbs of growth and development. While all of the children created 'spontaneous' artworks in the forms of drawings, paintings, design work and constructions, these creations were not instantaneous, so much as being important artistic-esthetic moments in a rhythmic pattern of processing and producing, of movement and rest. The movement forward, as evident, for example, in

Lilly's increasingly complex drawings of Dorothy, was not always a smooth transition from one point to another. Furthermore, times of little activity (as evident with Sophie) did not necessarily mean that an artistic activity or exploration had come to a conclusion. For, as Dewey (1934/2005) reminded us, 'each resting place in experience is an undergoing in which is absorbed and taken home the consequences of prior doing and...each doing carries in itself meaning that has been extracted and conserved' (p. 58). Therefore, these rest periods are times of consolidation and Dewey said that 'if we move too rapidly we get away from the base supplies – of accrued meanings – and the experience is flustered, thin and confused. If we dawdle too long after having extracted the net value, experience perishes' from a lack of vitality (p. 58).

In essence, then, the children needed time to explore, time to revisit and time to connect experiences through artmaking. So far, this research has revealed some of the ways in which time was an important consideration for promoting art experiences. It also suggested some of the ways in which children's art experiences were limited by time restrictions. For example, at preschool, Lee felt the need to be 'quick to make it up' as he raced to get his computer completed (Figure 66, centre right) as he linked his visual perceptions with art actions. Lilly also commented on time restrictions in making her 'school bus' (Figure 32, p. 146) and, by necessity Jackson's block constructions were temporary as preschool resources and spaces needed to be reclaimed for other purposes. Sometimes, not being hurried was a matter of being able to return to an earlier project and expand on this. For example, Sophie had enjoyed decorating a shoe box, which was found amongst the materials destined for recycling (Figure 45 right, p. 167). However, she was unable to expand on this experience because the box was disposed of. To varying degrees, these circumstances disrupted the 'movement towards an inclusive and fulfilling close' that marked esthetic experiences (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 58).

In relation to thinking about Dewey's (1934/2005) notions about the 'enemies of the esthetic' (p. 42) I also noted that the children were resistant to remaining engaged in art activities that were too repetitive, drawn out or limited in terms of their ability to act independently with the art materials. For example, Jackson's interest in building a second block tower dropped off when a teacher directed the children's attention to a mathematical focus. Likewise, Lilly lost interest in compressed foam when she found that she could not control it fully. Therefore, a clear link between the children's interests and

the conditions that allowed a clear connection between thoughts and actions was necessary to promote and sustain fulfilling art experiences.

I will now draw this discussion to a resting point, for while almost every aspect of the children's art experiences at home and preschool could be carefully analysed through Deweyan perspectives, in this doctoral thesis I must now turn my attention to what the children communicated to me about their art experiences at home and school. Before doing so, I will briefly discuss the notion of spontaneous art and recap on a few key points.

In these few examples, and many more in the previous chapters, the children's art expressions often appeared to be spontaneous. Yet in each case the children had been exploring ideas and art processes that linked past experiences with current experience. Thus, it is fair to say that Dewey's (1934/2005) notion of spontaneous art held true for these children. To recap, he stated that 'most spontaneous outbursts, if expressive, are not overflows of momentary internal pressures'; instead they are 'complete absorption in subject matter that is fresh, the freshness of which holds and sustains emotion' (p. 73). He goes on to say that although spontaneous art may involve 'long and arduous reflection' (p. 73), and be the 'result of long periods of activity' (p. 75), in the moments of spontaneity it is the coming together of these past experience with present experience that gives the air of spontaneity. Moreover, in this current research the children appeared to be most spontaneous in their artmaking when exploring their personal interests and big ideas through art.

Summary

Employing Deweyan perspectives to assist my thinking about the children's home and preschool art experiences was significant for my developing understanding in several ways. It crystalized for me that, for a child to develop artistically, and for them to experience art to the level that it could be regarded as art experience, the children had to have a personal willingness to move beyond dispassionate recognition of their world to a more enthused wonderment that brought freshness to experience. In Dewey's (1934/2005) notion of esthetic experience, it was also vital to avoid those things that were 'deviations...from the unity of an experience' (p. 42). My interactions with each child suggested that unity of experience required conditions of some uninterrupted time, uncontested space, some tolerance of noise and also some contemplative silence and, very importantly, the interested but unobtrusive presence of others during the various

phases of artmaking. At other times during their art experiences, the children thrived on intense and lively interactions with others that led to co-constructions of new understandings. Moreover, if children's fresh perceptions on experience were to have an outlet through art, and therefore some sense of completion (which in itself motivates further action), then children also required ready access to art materials. Furthermore, while not all art experiences were joyful or easily arrived at, the presence of interested others helped children to meet these challenges and to communicate new insights through their artmaking and their artistic expressions.

This chapter draws to close the Part Two of this thesis. Part Three focuses on the children's art experiences in their homes and schools. This third part begins with a preface which introduces the children's schools and briefly describes the variety of art-related activities that these schools provided. This is followed by three chapters in which each child's school and home art experiences are presented and discussed with Deweyan perspectives informing these discussions. The thesis concludes with a chapter dedicated to some overall conclusions and recommendations.