

IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING SELF-IMAGES IN DRAWINGS BY DELINQUENT ADOLESCENTS (IN 2 PARTS)

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Part I: The Study-Rawley Silver

Can art therapists identify self-images in drawings by troubled adolescents without meeting and talking with them? It is usually assumed that we are likely to project our own feelings into drawings by others unless meanings can be clarified through discussion. The assumption is examined in this study. Its purpose is to determine whether self-images can be identified even when discussion is not possible. If so, we could facilitate early intervention by expanding access to the ways adolescents see themselves and their worlds. Part One of this paper examines the assumption and an assessment technique. Part Two focuses on the adolescents who took part in the study.

Background

Wadeson (1975) observed that the most frequent themes in drawings by hospitalized depressed patients were isolation, hopelessness, anger and being harmful to others. Her findings paralleled diagnostic criteria indicating that recurrent thoughts of death and aggressive behavior are characteristic of major depression (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, III R*). Schaffer & Fisher (1981) found that a majority of 100 children who committed suicide in Great Britain had manifested antisocial behavior, in-

dicating that suicide is related directly rather than indirectly to aggression.

Silver (1988) examined drawings by 350 depressed and nondepressed subjects, finding that the depressed groups drew strongly negative themes to a significant degree, supporting Wadeson's observations and suggesting that strongly negative drawings are associated with childhood and adolescent depression. In a later study, 261 children, who responded to a drawing task, chose and drew principal subjects the same gender as themselves to a significant degree (Silver, 1992). In a follow-up study, 531 children, adolescents and adults also chose same-gender subjects to a significant degree (Silver, 1993). These findings suggested that the principal subjects of response drawings tend to represent self-images and that further investigation would be worthwhile.

The present study asks three questions:

1. Can self-images in drawings by delinquent adolescents be identified without discussing their drawings with them?
2. Do art therapists agree in identifying self-images?
3. Do social workers agree in identifying self-images?

The term self-image, as used here, refers to the char-

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JoAnne Ellison, a registered-board certified art therapist with experience in the special education of severe disorders of language (dysphasia) and court school juvenile offenders, is currently the educational assistant at a juvenile boys correctional facility. She has also provided art for children whose families are impacted with the problems of HIV or AIDS diagnosis.

acters in a drawing who represent the person who drew it, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Method

The *Draw A Story* (DAS) Form B (Silver, 1993) task was presented to 53 male adolescents in a detention facility. After responding, they were asked to identify their self-images. Two art therapists also identified self-images: the therapist (Ellison) who interviewed them and a therapist (Silver) who did not meet them and knew only that they were adolescents incarcerated in California. The degrees of agreement between respondents and the two art therapists were then analyzed. In the second part of the study, three additional art therapists and five social workers identified self-images in 10 of the 53 drawings selected at random.

Judges

Three of the five art therapists were credentialed professionals (A.T.R.); the other two had not yet received credentialing. Four of the social workers were credentialed professionals (MSW); one had not yet received credentialing. It is our understanding that one of the credentialed social workers had attended a conference of the Florida Art Therapy Association and a clinical art therapy program sponsored by the South Florida Art Therapy institute. It is not known whether the other four social workers received training in art therapy.

Subjects

The subjects were wards of a Juvenile Court committed to a residential treatment facility for adolescents ages 13 to 18. The facility was managed by law enforcement personnel but included mental health personnel and classroom teachers. Most subjects were incarcerated for the first time. They included all students attending four English classes in the facility.

Procedures

The drawing task was presented by Ellison to the four groups of students in their classrooms. After discussing their drawings with them individually, she recorded their responses and her own ratings. Retaining the data in a sealed envelope, Ellison forwarded the 53 drawings (identified only by number) to Silver who rated them blindly. After receiving Silver's rat-

ings, Ellison then forwarded hers. The three other art therapists and the five social workers rated every fifth drawing. They identified self-images, if any, as well as attitudes, such as self-images portrayed as fortunate, unfortunate or aggressive. The data collected were then analyzed by Madeline Altabe, Ph.D.

The Instruments

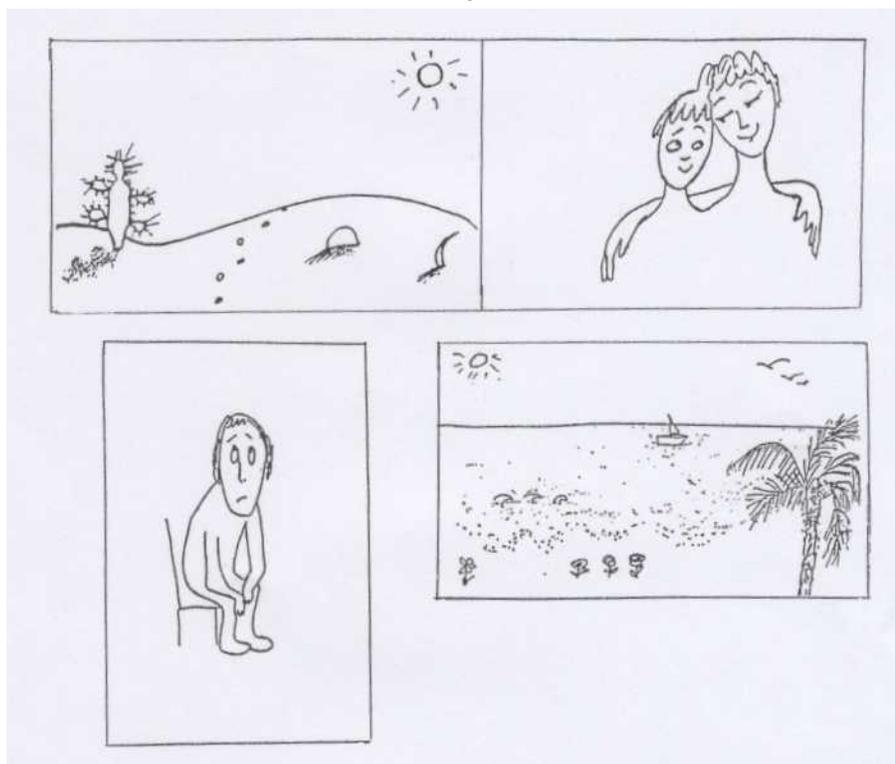
The *Draw A Story* (DAS) instrument (Silver, 1988, 1993) is a semi-structured interview technique for assessing depression and emotional needs. The drawing task asks examinees to choose two subjects from a set of stimulus drawings, imagine something happening between the subjects they choose, then show what is happening in drawings of their own. Respondents are encouraged to change the stimulus drawings and to add their own subjects and ideas, then write titles or stories after they finish drawing. Discussions follow in order to clarify meanings, then responses are evaluated on 5-point rating scales. The manual includes studies of reliability and validity. Ellison recorded her interviews and interpretations using the form shown in Table 1. The social workers and other art therapists used the form shown in Table 2.

The DAS instrument includes two sets of stimulus drawings, Forms A and B. Examples of Form B, the form used in this study are shown below.

Results

Part One of the study addressed the question whether self-images can be identified even without discussion or knowledge of case histories. Of the 53 adolescents, 39 identified characters in their drawings as self-images. Ellison, who knew their histories and conducted the interviews, accurately matched 76.9% of the adolescents in identifying self-images. Silver, judging blindly, matched 71.8%. The average inter-scoring validity index was 74.4%. Across 53 respondents, the inter-scoring agreement found between Ellison and Silver was 94.3%.

Part Two of the study examined the agreements among five social workers and five art therapists. The average agreement among social workers was 54.0%, among art therapists 78.2%, and among the sub-group of registered art therapists (A.T.R.'s) 93.4%. Overall, the sample of 10 judges agreed 61.9% of the time. There was some inconsistency in rater's responses. Specifically, not all raters rated each individual and some raters gave an individual more than one rating.



Examples of stimulus drawings in a Draw A Story, Form B. Copyright © 1987, 1992 by Rawley Silver.

Discussion

Agreement Among the Respondents and the A.T.R.'s

The level of agreement among the two A.T.R.'s and the 39 respondents can be seen as an index of the validity of the self-image measure. Approximately three of four respondents agreed with the A.T.R.'s (74.4%). Ellison agreed with two respondents who disagreed with Silver, suggesting that the absence of discussion may have caused Silver to judge incorrectly two of the 39 responses.

Five respondents disagreed with both Ellison and Silver who agreed with each other in identifying self-images. Because their inter-scorer agreement of 94.3% suggests strong reliability, the five drawings that prompted disagreement were reexamined.

Figure 1, for example, is the response made by Chris, age 16, who was enrolled in the Special Education program because of perceptual-motor problems and scores on the Wide-Range Achievement Test (WRAT) which indicated that he performed at the 8th

grade level in reading, the 7th grade level in math, and at the 4th grade level in spelling.

Chris selected two stimulus drawings: the dejected person seated on a chair and the couple with arms entwined, then simply copied them. Asked how he imagined the characters in his drawing would feel, he replied that the man was "sad and depressed" and the couple, "happy." They had received As on a spelling test whereas the man received F. Asked how he would feel if he had been included in his drawing, Chris replied that he "would be part of the group." The art therapists, judging independently, disagreed. Both identified the seated man as his self-image, suggesting that he felt a need to deny feeling sad or unfortunate as well as a need to gratify a wish-fulfilling fantasy.

Roy, age 14, who drew Figure 2, had selected stimulus drawings of an angry person, a sword and the couple with arms entwined. Asked how he imagined his characters would feel, he said the man was very angry, the girl and boy were happy and, if he were in the picture, he would be the boy with the girl: "I'm the good guy. I couldn't kill nobody." Both art

Note: Names of all adolescents in this article are pseudonyms.

Table 1
Evaluating Self-Images in Responses to the DAS Task

Respondent	Age	Gender	Evaluator
Ask the following questions, filling in the blanks later on.			
1. How do you imagine the			feels?
	largest or only subject		
Reply			
2. How do you imagine the			feels?
	smallest subject		
Reply			
	(If useful, add other subjects)		
Reply			
3. (optional) If you were in this picture, how do you imagine you would feel?			
Reply			
<u>Check where appropriate:</u>			
This respondent seems to identify with a subject portrayed as			
unfortunate	fortunate	aggressive	other
with more than one subject	unclear	no apparent identification	
Score on the 5-point scale			
<u>Comments:</u>			

therapists identified the angry man as Roy's self-image, which they characterized as aggressive.

It may be that these and other agreements between Ellison and Silver merely reflect their knowledge of art therapy codes. On the other hand, their agreements may reflect perceptions of covert wishes and concerns. Chris may have been concerned about his performance on the spelling test and passing up (or wishing for) caring assistance. Roy, like many detainees, may have been concerned about losing his girl to a

rival while he was incarcerated, and for his fantasy chose the stimulus drawing sword.

Variations in Agreement Among Art Therapists and Social Workers

The strongest agreement (93.4%) was found in the sub-group of three registered art therapists, two judging blindly. Among the five registered and unregistered art therapists, the average agreement was

Table 2
Evaluating Self-Images in Responses to DAS Form B by 10 Male Adolescents in Detention

Evaluator		Profession, Degree, Registration			Date		
<p>Please look over the response drawings and indicate which subject (if any) seems to represent each respondent as an overt or covert self-image. Then enter a check-mark to indicate whether the self-image seems to be represented as fortunate, unfortunate, or aggressive. If, however, a respondent seems to identify with more than one subject, or with no visible subject, or if identification is unclear, please indicate with checkmarks in the appropriate boxes.</p>							
Respondent	Seems to Identify with (Subject)	Portrayed as			More than One Subject	No Subject	Id is Unclear
		Unfortunate	Fortunate	Aggressive			
1. #5.							
2. #10.							
3. #15.							
4. #20.							
5. #25.							
6. #30.							
7. #35.							
8. #40.							
9. #45.							
10. #50.							

78.2%, among the five social workers 54%. These differences were surprising. Both social work and art therapy require training in psychological theories and practices, and both require a Master's degree. Nevertheless, as judges they tended to perceive the drawings differently.

For example, Figure 3 is a response by Larry who

chose three stimulus drawings (king, queen and kitchen) then drew his parents cooking breakfast for him on Sunday morning. When Ellison asked where he might be in his drawing, he replied, "I'm in the other room at a table waiting for breakfast." The three registered art therapists agreed with Larry that he had omitted himself from his drawing. The seven

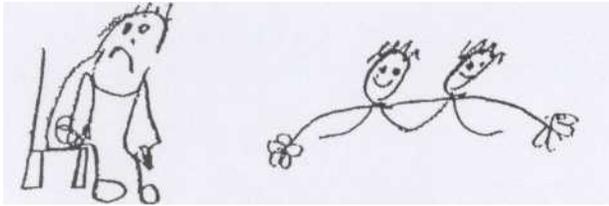


Figure 1. By Chris, age 16. "The man hear is very sad because he got an F on his spelling test. He is really depressed because he tried his hardest and faled. He doesn't have ansers to a better grade. The other people in this story are very happy. They both got As in their spelling test. They got that good grade by helping each other. The other person who got an F was mad that he had the chance to be part of these peoples group but he decided to do it alone."

other judges, however, identified the man, or both the man and woman, as Larry's self-image (see Larry's case history in Part Two).

How can the inconsistency among raters be explained? Perhaps the judges received inadequate instruction. Some did not assign categorical ratings to all drawings and others assigned more than one category to particular drawings. The inconsistency may also be explained by differences among judges in experience, training and skill. According to Tinnen (1990) the ability to perceive and interpret nonverbal messages expressed through art forms is based on

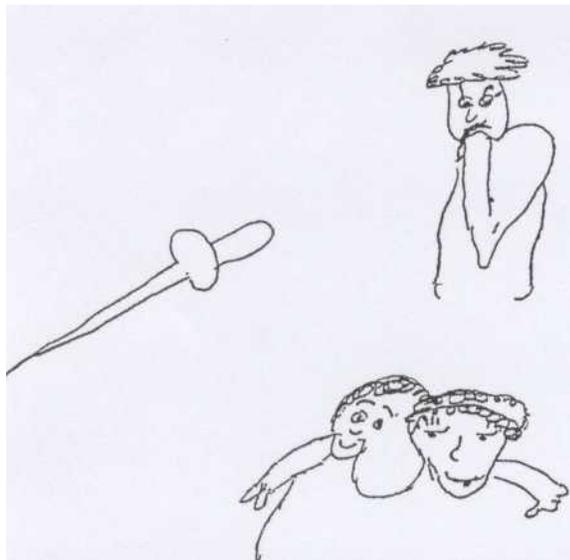


Figure 2. By Roy, age 14. "This man is very mad because a boy going with his girl friend, the two couple don't know her boy friend is watching, so he's going to grab the knife and kill both of them."

unconscious mimicry. As he observed, mimicry underlies aesthetic sensibility, empathy, and emotions and belongs to the realm of primary process thinking, inaccessible to consciousness. If art therapists are artists with psychological training rather than mental health professionals with training in art, they may be using unconscious mimicry to perceive and interpret visual messages.

Observations

Findings of the first part of this study suggest that discussion is not required for identifying self-images. Although discussion is preferable, and the more discussion the more accurate interpretations and assessments are likely to be, the findings suggest that discussion can be bypassed in order to expedite screening particularly in urgent situations, such as the need to identify someone who may be depressed or at risk for suicide, when circumstances or time limitations make interviews impossible.

Findings of the second part raise questions about the training and skills required for assessing the content of drawings. Can training programs for mental health professionals develop the requisite skills or are the skills limited to those with innate abilities combined with training in therapy? It may be useful to repeat this study with clearer instructions and larger samples of mental health professionals.

The findings also suggest that this assessment method can provide access to wishes, concerns and attitudes toward self and others. Access can facilitate early intervention by identifying adolescents who may benefit from clinical or remedial programs. Early intervention can provide them with greater understanding of themselves and their abilities and opportunities to explore alternative behaviors. The assessments can also provide their families and other professionals with greater understanding as well as additional opportunities to consider problems, abilities and alternatives.

Part Two-JoAnne Ellison

This author, a registered art therapist and educator working as an assistant in the school department of the probation camp, led an investigation into the possible benefits of conducting the Silver *Draw A Story* (DAS) with the boys in this restrictive setting. It was hoped, in particular, that the DAS would provide a

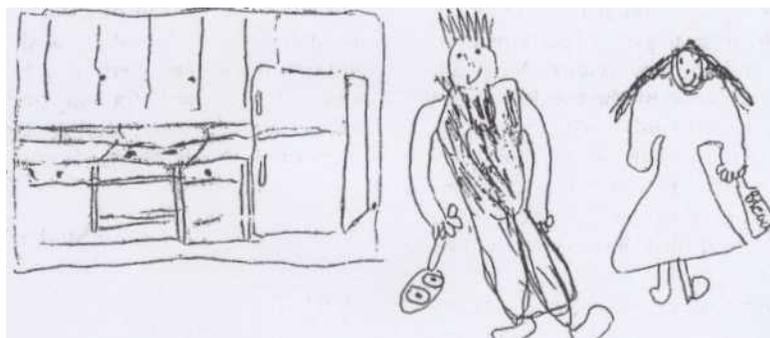


Figure 3. By Larry, age 13. "This is a picture of my Mom and Dad in the kitchen cook me a meal on a Sunday morning."

rapid assessment of the entire group of students so that more accurate and timely mental health referrals could be made. There is no formal art therapy program available in this county's probation facilities and very little art is offered due to educational priorities. Therapy with a half-time clinical social worker is offered to a few of the boys who either request help or are referred by probation personnel or educators. With conduct disorder, however, verbal therapy is generally considered less effective than structured milieu treatment, the preferred treatment being removal from the community and the initiation of a consistent behavior modification program with clear expectations and consequences (Lewis, 1989).

We are living in a time of heightened emotion and awareness concerning crime and adolescent misconduct. As we struggle to pass legislation to curtail juvenile crime, it seems more useful to attempt to gain further understanding of the youths involved. Unfortunately, these hard-to-reach groups are often unavailable for scrutiny because they are scattered, secretive, truant from school and possibly oppositional. Our access to a particular group of young male offenders in a minimum security, court-enforced milieu has enabled us to administer the DAS instrument. In addition to interviews and other investigations currently being conducted, the DAS may prove to be an in-depth, economical, rapid and valid route to greater knowledge concerning the condition of these young male offenders, thereby indicating related therapy.

Several general observations can be made about the particular group of young men studied here. Of the 53 boys who participated in the study (in camp, January 7, 1994) 7 were Caucasian, 10 Mexican or Mexican American, 17 African American, 5 Central American (mostly refugees from El Salvador), 6 Pa-

cific Islanders (Tongan, Samoan, Filipino) and the remainder Asian or Native American. About one quarter of the group are special-education students with specific learning disabilities as observed from their discrepant achievement scores and other history. Intelligence testing is generally not available for these youths due to California court decisions that have made testing problematic because of perceived bias.

With not-to-be-ignored exceptions, most of the young men studied come from working class and poor families, living in low-income suburban neighborhoods. Not hard-core slums, these neighborhoods are often low-cost California housing tracts and apartments. The boys were not taking any psychotropic medications, with the only exception being one who was taking Dilantin for a seizure disorder. Many of the boys have been habitual drug and alcohol users, although after arrest they are not allowed either. A few youths are diagnosed alcoholics. Although most would deny this, some created drawings concerning people smoking "dank" or drinking.

Because adolescence is considered a time of identity formation, and because minority individuals live with psycho-social stressors that need to be recognized, ethnicity is important to consider in understanding these youth. Often they congregate in groups, some associated with organized gangs such as the Los Angeles Crips or the Bloods. More often, however, these boys are "wannabes" (imitators) who belong to self-styled "sets." Theirs is a world seemingly designed for maximum confusion for those outside of it—where "cool" means desirable, "bad" means good, S.O.S. means Sons of Samoa, and "nasty" means superb (to gain power and separation, adolescents have always changed the language). Here wearing the wrong color can get you murdered.

Friends provide "back up" for security, excitement and acceptance. Much of their group behavior concerns power, money and identity issues. Most are impulsive and all are diagnosed by the resident social worker as having conduct disorder. An underlying question in our investigation of the DAS, however, was: Could it help uncover compound diagnoses, including masked depression, dysthymia, cyclothymia, alcoholism, attention deficit disorder, post-traumatic stress syndrome or other conditions?

In this redwood-forested juvenile camp, with its striking contrast of the beautiful and the ugly, the power of the visual image is everywhere—from tattooed bodies to graffitied walls. The Hispanic and Pacific Island males generally have an affinity for drawing as it is culturally congruent for males to draw. Many blacks in the group were also talented and drew, but just as often they regarded art as not being masculine (one African American boy said "Hispanics draw, we rap"). For some of the youths, however, especially those with psycho-motor impairment, drawing was just another avenue toward ridicule and failure. Nevertheless, the DAS was given with very little resistance (in part because of the structured setting) and, for some, it was like giving food to the starving. Much of the spontaneous art among this group is stereotyped, like prison art; the DAS circumvents this stereotyping by providing symbolic pictures as well as by giving a written component, which aids in assessing the recalcitrant (and understanding emotions and circumstances that the subject may have psychologically denied [see case study of Elmer]), making the tool more personal as well as giving clues to the intent of the illustration.

Over a four-month period after the initial drawings in January, additional drawings were collected when possible. In total, 79 drawings, mostly DAS Form B and some DAS Form A, were studied by Ellison. Most drawings characterized the subjects as victims. Thirty depicted a man abandoned, most often appearing in hope of rescue—an image particularly evident in drawings completed shortly after arrival at camp. Wish-fulfillment drawings depicting successful love relationships were also very common. Often the youths depicted themselves as heroes, a Robin Hood or Sir Galahad-type character, defending the weak and warding off the enemy. There was an apparent sadness from missing girlfriends and evident fear that the girls would not be faithful. A few drawings created soon before the wards' release dates show ambivalence, fear of returning to the "jungle" and anx-

ety about feeling out of control. Of the eight recognized alcoholics, four drew wish-fulfillment fantasies and four drew depressed, afraid, anxious and sad figures; Clearly their drawing and writing concerned their current concerns and/or wishes. The following cases (with names changed) are offered as examples.

Case Studies

Elmer

Elmer, age 16 (WRAT scores: Reading [R] 12th-grade level, Math [M] 10th-grade level and Spelling [S] 11th-grade level) was considered immature and angry. Unlike most of the boys who are small of stature, Elmer was 6'4" tall and weighed 240 pounds. His drawing of a sick mother ascending into heaven with two brothers, one on each side of her bed (Figure 4), however, was minute, occupying less than a third of the page. "The brothers both express emotions about their dead mother, who left them alone—one is sad; the other, very angry."

A second drawing, made just before his release, shows a boy breaking up with a girlfriend. "Although he is sad and depressed, he expresses his emotions in the form of anger and rage." This drawing was very direct, but equally small on the page as the Figure 4 drawing.

Elmer adamantly denied that either drawing had anything to do with him personally. He insisted that the drawings "are just stories" and that "my mother isn't sick." The camp staff, who often regarded him as a troublemaker, was puzzled by both his behavior and his choice not to go home on passes, especially because he had a younger brother who adored him living there. It was known that his father had been killed in an automobile accident a few years earlier and that his mother was living on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) funding, with both a very ill grandmother and a drug-addicted uncle who had recently been released from prison. If the mother was not ill, could his image of her death indicate that she had become emotionally unavailable to Elmer when the father died?

Close rapport had been established with Elmer, both through art experience and tutoring for his high school equivalency certificate. He feared graduating as he didn't trust himself to avoid drinking with his friends, rather than going on to college. Quickly replying "yes" when asked if he would like to talk to

DRAWINGS BY DELINQUENT ADOLESCENTS

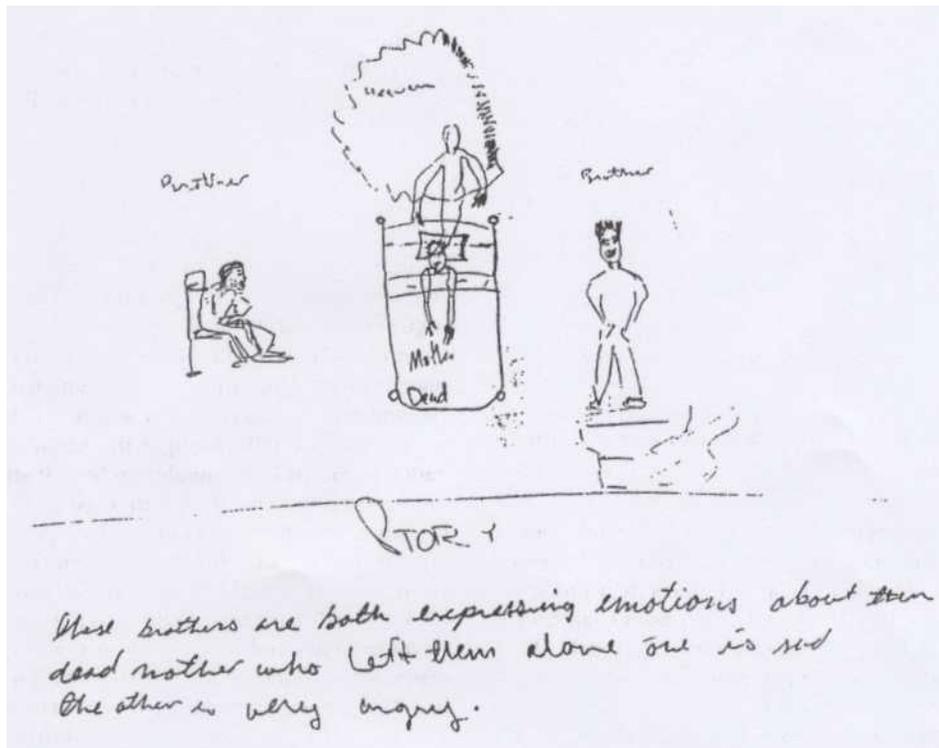


Figure 4. By Elmer, age 16. "These brothers are both expressing emotions about their dead mother who left them alone one is sad the other is very angry."

the mental-health social worker, his request was facilitated, but not until shortly before his release. She saw him only once, afterward expressing regret that she hadn't seen him sooner. Several months later, his younger brother was arrested. Could it be that Elmer felt he needed to be the responsible father figure in his family? Perhaps he both feared, and was enraged at, the loss or unavailability of his mother? In the current triage environment, mental health services are limited to a half-time social worker and many individuals are not seen. This is an example of how a routine DAS assessment in place could have provided more timely assistance (Figure 4).

Salvador

Salvador, age 16 (WRAT: R 4th grade, S below 3rd grade, M 4th grade) had been in special education prior to arriving at camp and was considered alcoholic. This small Hispanic boy appeared young and attractive, spoke some Spanish, but remained designated for special education as he had limited language skills. Considered to have a bad temper and to be

potentially assaultive, Salvador was arrested for disturbing the peace, having been arrested previously for stabbing a student with a pencil. He did not adjust well at camp with his peers and comments of immature behavior and disrespect of staff appear frequently in his record. Salvador was raised with his two half siblings in a very violent, dysfunctional home. The heroin-addicted father, who disappeared early in the boy's life, had been incarcerated at the time of his marriage to Salvador's mother. A few years before Salvador's arrival at camp, his mother was killed from bullet wounds in a gang-related incident; at that time he was sent to live with an equally dysfunctional aunt and uncle. Salvador expressed dislike for this living situation and refused to go home on passes. A year before coming to camp, his best friend was stabbed in a gang-related killing. Salvador had often been seen visiting the grave site of his deceased friend and was heard to say, "If I had a gun Carlos, I'd be where you are now." He had also mentioned having little expectation to live much longer and often looked depressed, as if on the verge of tears, and had low energy. His writing concerned hopeless, sad themes,

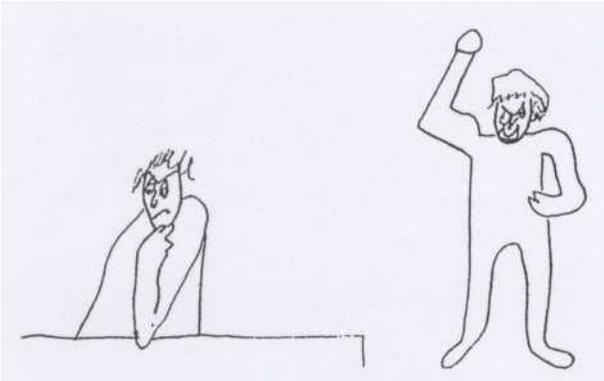


Figure 5. By Salvador, age 15. "Two men are angry is life because nothing gos there way and they didn't grow up with a mother or a father."

as seen in DAS (Figure 5). A few weeks after completing this drawing, Salvador was removed from camp on a suicide watch because he was heard to say that he was going to kill himself. Two weeks later, he was disciplined for angry acting-out. Obviously depressed and having trouble accepting the losses in his life, from the time of his admission he was receiving sessions with the social worker, who felt he was "not

relating to her." Three weeks after his final release and return to the unsatisfactory home environment Salvador took a gun and killed himself.

Pedro

Pedro, age 16 (WRAT scores: R 10th grade +, S 8th grade +, M 7) is a muscular, short youth. He is of above-average intelligence and enjoys drawing. Although English is his second language, he passed high school with little difficulty and he talks of going to college. He is a delightfully social and polite young man at camp. His single mother, who has an excellent job and has arranged for her son to work with her on his release, initially brought the family from El Salvador to South Los Angeles, where Pedro's 19-year-old brother was then killed in a gang-related activity; his father is unknown. Pedro misses the excitement of his life in Los Angeles; he was sent to camp in this county when he stole the family car and tried driving back to see his friends. Pedro has a long scar from his sternum to his umbilicus, a large scar on one arm and three other round scars, all from bullet wounds (he has been shot five separate times). He enjoys taking his shirt off as he receives great admiration from the



Figure 6. First drawing by Pedro, age 16. "He's boat is damage he don't know how to fix it and he's worried. but he doesn't realize that a plane came to rescue him! from the other island."



Figure 7. Second drawing by Pedro. "The dragon is going to destroy the castle, but the brave knight will defeat the dragon."

other boys for his scars. Pedro seems to need to prove his bravery and refuses to "back down." After the last shooting incident, in the attempt to save her son's life his mother again relocated the family, this time to Northern California.

Pedro's first drawing (Figure 6) was completed in class with the group shortly after he arrived at camp. Form A of the DAS (Figure 7) was given to him about a month before his release. This drawing shows deeper involvement than the earlier one, with a brave knight defending a very large castle against a huge monster. The knight is exceedingly small. The social worker recognized that depression and loneliness were factors in Pedro's behavior. Pedro had an excellent behavior record at camp and was released early; however, since the research for this paper was completed he has been arrested again.

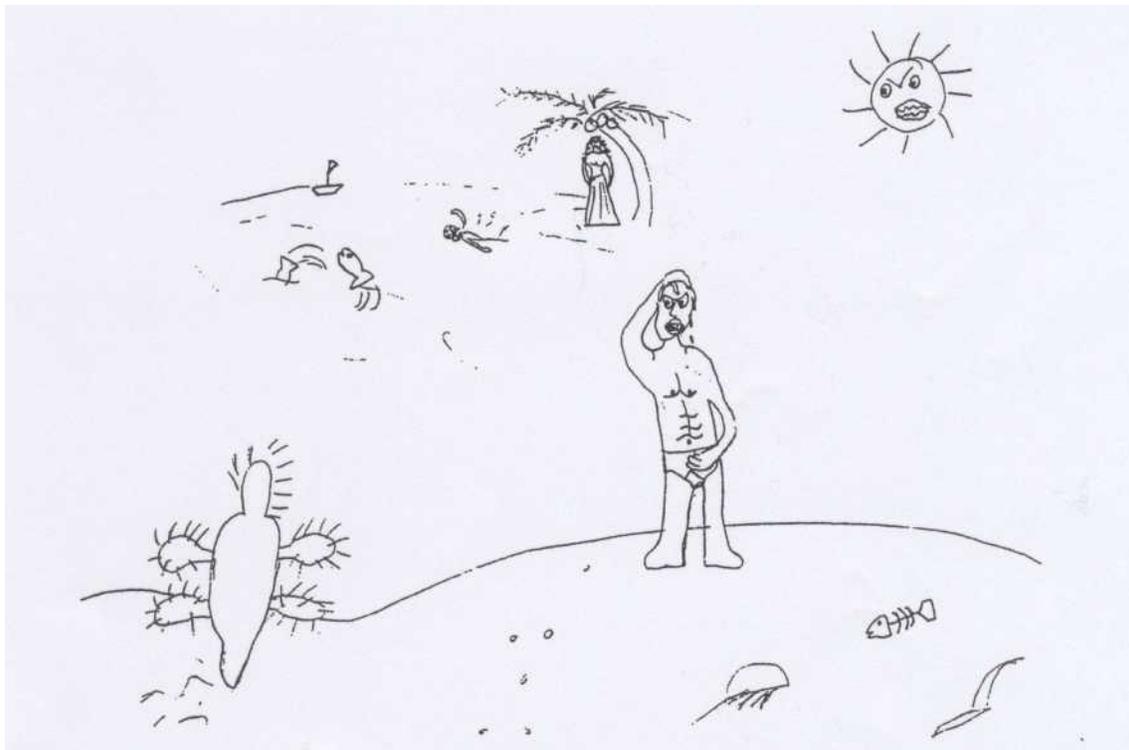
Richardo

Richardo, age 17 (WRAT: R 11th grade, S 9th grade, M 10th grade) is a soft-spoken Chicano living in a neighborhood well-known for crime and drug sales. He is resourceful and bright, possibly gifted—he easily passed his high-school equivalency tests—and has shown considerable initiative and no behavioral problems when in school or at camp. Though he seems to have a supportive family, he belongs to a

gang and was arrested for possession of rock cocaine for sale. It appears that he is an example of the entrepreneurial, defiant individual described by Jan-kowski (1991). He apparently left school to go into the lucrative drug business. His artistic skill is evident in his first DAS drawing (Figure 8), done out of class shortly after his arrival, which expresses his isolation from his girlfriend and his dislike of juvenile probation camp. Another drawing (Figure 9), completed just before his release, shows a hero defending the weak. He might do better if moved to a different neighborhood and would benefit from an Hispanic mentor who could help him fulfill his considerable potential.

Grant

Grant, age 16 (WRAT: R 8th grade, S 7th grade, M 7th grade) more than most boys seems to be a victim of circumstances. His African American father has been in and out of prison most of his adult life. His mother, a Native American, has been an habitual drug user, resulting in her infection with the HIV virus. Grant's sister, age 9, was born infected and has been frequently hospitalized. The family subsists on Social Security and AFDC because the mother is unable to work. The grandmother, who lives near the family and has cared for Grant much of the time, was



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Figure 8. First drawing by Richardo, age 17. "This guy is mad and obviously he is hot and he is having visions of a beautiful girl. He is lost in the desert and has no food. The sun is beating down on him. If he is not fed soon he will die. He hates the deserts he doesn't know how he got the. He is having visions of water and fishing. He hates the world and how it is treating him. He hates where he is at."

recently diagnosed with lymphoma; she died shortly after Grant's release from camp.

Although Grant's behavior is very active and distractible at times, he is generally amusing, cooperative and cheerful, with a wide, toothy grin and a very loud voice. His mother suggested he might have Attention Deficit Disorder. Two years prior to his present offense of selling rock cocaine to a police informant, Grant had been referred to the probation department for sodomy with a young boy, age 6, who resided in his neighborhood. Apparently this was a one-time offense, for which it was required that he attend a sex offenders group for a year. After release from camp, Grant was again arrested for assault with a deadly weapon and was placed in a court-ordered, out-of-home, juvenile probation facility in another county. As Grant's situation at home deteriorated, his drawings became more defended. His last drawing and story, done at juvenile hall after his second arrest, was of a king painting a castle; according to Grant he

was "doing fine." The camp social worker feels he is depressed.

His original drawing (Figure 10) clearly seemed unusual; it may be that both figures express aspects of Grant's personality. Dr. Silver and JoAnne Ellison both chose the aggressor as the most likely self-image. Questions unaddressed in therapy, but indicated in this assessment, might include: Did the youth possibly fear homosexuality in himself? Could he have been a victim of sexual abuse earlier in his life?

Larry

Larry, an African American, age 13 (WRAT: R 3rd grade, S 3rd grade, M below 3rd grade) has been living alone, selling drugs to pay the rent. He has fathered two children-his first child conceived when he was age 10th; his second, a son born this year, to whom Larry writes letters apologizing for not being able to see him and promising to love him. Larry's

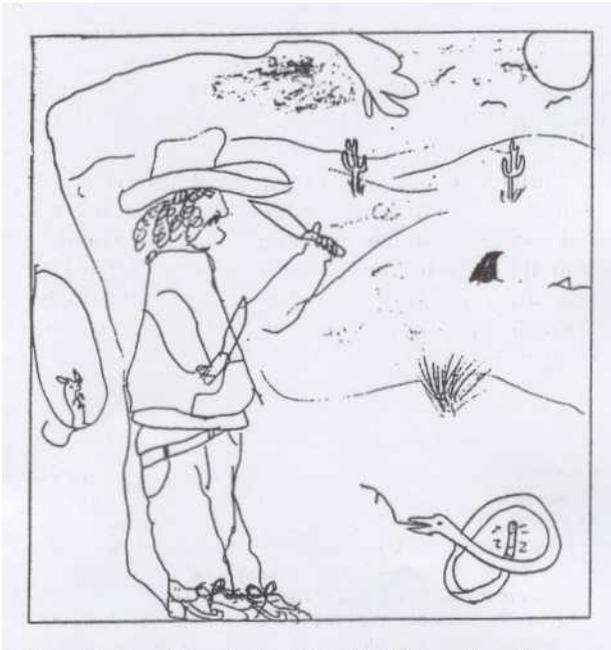


Figure 9. Second drawing by Ricardo. "the rattle snake wants its victim but, dase it know Ricardo is a tough criminal that isn't scared of snakes."

parents were separated at the time of his birth and he was raised by his grandmother. The whereabouts of his mother, who had problems with substance abuse, are presently unknown. His father, who has recently returned from prison, now wants Larry to live with him and his girlfriend after his release from camp. Although Larry earns home passes on weekends to be in his father's custody, he says he is going to live on his own and care for his family.

Described as sophisticated beyond his years, Larry is talkative, impulsive and aggressive. He often fights with his peers and gets into trouble at camp. Larry belongs to an inner-city urban gang and, according to his parole officer, "lies, cheats and steals." His offense was assault with a deadly weapon and attempted extortion. Police observed the youth knocking down his drug-customer victim and kicking her repeatedly.

Larry's response drawing (Figure 3, Part 1) seems to express wishes for the parental nurturing he missed as a child. He was unknown to the mental-health social worker.

Conclusions

This study suggests that a structured art assessment, such as the DAS, Forms A or B, can be useful



Figure 10. By Grant, age 16. "Once there was a prince who didn't like gays. Till one day this gay guy made a pass at the prince. Oh no the gay guy said because he had a prince chasing him with a sword. The prince caught the gay guy and stabbed him. The prince walked away while the gay guy was screaming (I though you loved me)."

in the evaluation of conduct-disordered juveniles. It is possible to present the DAS in a group setting to be evaluated later by an art therapist, even if the therapist is unable to speak directly to the subjects. Access to case histories and information is useful, however, as they can often give clues to highly idiosyncratic drawings and stories. Possibly this instrument could be used periodically in English classes and assessed by an art therapist available for this purpose, if it was agreed to be valuable by the overseeing teachers, mental-health personnel and probation counselors.

The juveniles tended to draw isolated or aggressive, angry figures when newly incarcerated. This could indicate reactions to their immediate situation or underlying feelings of abandonment. Although they tended to draw wishful, loving relationships with girls, they often drew angry, aggressive drawings against male authority figures. The tendency to draw same-gender subjects found in previous studies was again confirmed, supporting the assumption that the self tends to be the subject of projective drawings.

Depression can be an influencing factor in conduct disorder. The suicide of Salvador seems to confirm the observation by Schaffer and Fisher (1981) that suicide is related directly rather than indirectly to aggression. Originally it was hoped that aggressive or "acting out" individuals could be differentiated from

depressed or "acting-in" persons. It appears that this is not possible, as many of the subjects, though depressed, were able to avoid feelings by "acting out" when away from camp, often with groups engaged in seemingly exciting activities to these juvenile offenders. In the structured setting of the probation camp, with highly imposed control, they became more sad, anxious and fearful, and demonstrated more self-destructive behavior. Particular circumstances, substance abuse and opportunity are all influencing factors that need to be considered in determining whether individuals will either "act out" or feel depressed (see case study of Salvador, for an example of "acting-in"; case studies of Pedro and Larry are examples of juveniles "acting out").

It has also been suggested that in some cases "the assessments could be used to communicate with family therapists or probation officers who could be working with relatives and friends in the home setting to which the juvenile is assigned after probation camp experience. Families feel less overwhelmed and helpless, if they have increased understanding of their distressed member and can set concrete goals toward alleviating some of the problems" (editorial critique).

Silver has stated that this access to wishes, concerns and attitudes toward self and others could provide opportunities to identify youth at risk and a need for thorough diagnosis, early intervention and remedial programs.

The drawings help to understand the immediate concerns and sometimes the underlying dynamics of conduct-disordered individuals. Many of these juveniles are more kinesthetic than verbal and many have the language handicap of inadequate English (it cannot be assumed that they are literate in any language).

It appears from this study that both sad and aggressive stories may indicate depression and that happy fantasies may indicate denial on the part of equally depressed youths who may be more resistant to treatment.

Further studies and longitudinal follow-up are indicated. Studies of conduct-disordered juvenile girls and of non-law violating juveniles would be helpful for comparison. A study of the DAS translated into Spanish might prove interesting, particularly because drawings seem to be especially useful with this population.

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