

A Description of Pregnant Women's Perceptions and Abstract Drawings of Being Pregnant

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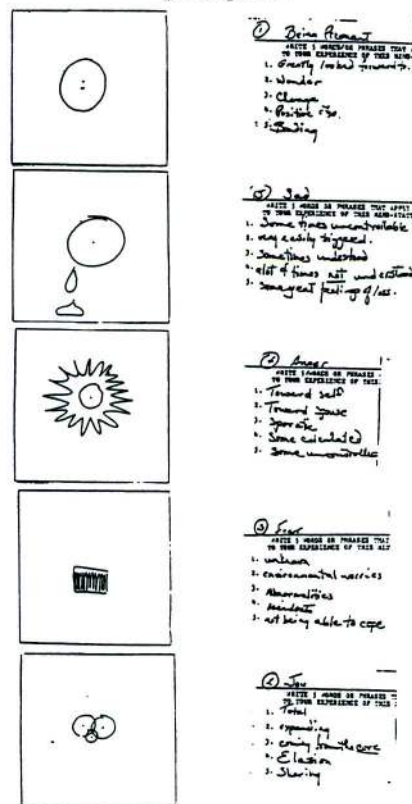
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Abstract: None available.

Full Text: Headnote ABSTRACT: This article explores the use of visual language as a means of examining and communicating the subjective experience of pregnancy. The participants, eleven women in their final trimester of pregnancy, were asked to complete five abstract drawings accompanied by verbal descriptions of their own perceptions and feelings. Using specialized concept cards developed by Rhyne (1979), participants were invited to consider four distinctive "mind states" or feeling states - sadness, anger, fear and joy. An additional card designed specifically for this study explored the broader physical and emotional experiences of 'being pregnant'. In order to understand the personal meanings of the responses and validate the researcher's interpretations, a personal interview was conducted with each participant. The majority of drawings for being pregnant were drawn with curvilinear lines and the images for the abstract drawings were graphlike lines, abstract lines and figure shapes. The drawings aided the participants in expressing feelings and gaining a new awareness of their pregnant bodies. While participants responded differently to the positive and negative aspects of being pregnant, and came with different life situations they all reported "joy" to be the essential underlying emotion that was most similar to being pregnant. KEY WORDS: Images, feelings, pregnancy, expectant women, third trimester. INTRODUCTION Statement of the Problem Changes in body image and self image during pregnancy have been widely reported in the psychological and medical literature (Fawcett & Frye, 1980; Fawcett, Bliss-Holtz, Haas, Leventhal & Rubin, 1986; Hassid, 1978; Jourard & Secord, 1955; McConnell & Oaston, 1969; Strang & Sullivan, 1985). Attempts have been made to document and understand the pregnant woman's subjective perceptual experience through the use of verbal descriptions (Kitzenger, 1967; Hassid, 1978; Kumar, Robson, & Smith, 1984) but little is known about the visual images and emotional states that tend to arise during pregnancy. The purpose of this study was to obtain visual images from pregnant women through their drawings of being pregnant and to explore their emotional states through verbal descriptions. Emotions, or feelings, were assessed according to the four "mind states" proposed by Rhyne (i.e. sadness, anger, fear and joy). Rhyne's original concept cards were used to elicit emotional projections and an additional card depicting "being pregnant" was created specifically for this project. Participants were invited to compare the "being pregnant" cards with each of the "mind states" and determine which was the most similar and the most different from their own experience of pregnancy. This adds another dimension, or depth of meaning, for the mother to understand and express the emotional and physical aspects of her pregnancy. As pregnancy is a time of change in body image and physical wellbeing, the study set out to examine the possibility of a connection between body/mind awareness and the participant's drawings. It might also be assumed that participants would gain a greater degree of self expression and understanding through this awareness. The exercise was designed to encourage participants to express and assess feelings and perceptions during the last trimester. This study not only provides workable tools for further research but the data obtained offers more in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences of pregnancy for professionals in medicine, psychology, art therapy and education fields. LITERATURE REVIEW Pregnancy and Body Image Women experience complex physical and emotional changes during pregnancy. Kitzenger (1967), an anthropologist and childbirth educator, described a state of vulnerability of emotions where women become especially sensitive. Kitzenger and Jourard (1955) identified the following issues concerning body image: loss of figure and weight gain during pregnancy, and weight loss after pregnancy. Weight gain and body parts such as bust and waist most likely to change during pregnancy are examined in this study through body image attitude scores (Jourard, 1955). McConnel and Daston (1961)

believed body image during pregnancy was isomorphic and compatible with actual bodily changes taking place. "Body image" referred to one's perception of one's body as a psychological experience. In examining multiparous (women in second or subsequent pregnancies) they found that attitudes toward pregnancy seemed to relate to the body attitude of each participant. Participants expressed general feelings of happiness or displeasure toward being pregnant and whether or not the pregnancy was planned. The results indicated a range of responses rather than clear negatives or positives. The researchers concluded that attitudes toward pregnancy seemed to be significant in evaluating one's body and to the degree of invulnerability of body image boundaries. McConnel and Daston's research was important, as they believed that changes during pregnancy were compatible with the body image changes. Pregnant Women in the Third Trimester Numerous studies have investigated changes in women's body image during the third trimester of pregnancy when the fetus is fully formed and developed (e.g. Hassid (1978), Kitzenger (1967), Fawcett (1980, 1977, 1978), Strang and Sullivan (1985) and Rubin (1984). The uterus grows in weight and size resulting in increased awkwardness and fatigue for the mother-to-be. Hassid (1978) found that during this time, the pregnant woman is often anxious and this is centered around thoughts about herself as a mother and the wellbeing of the newborn. Typical question from the mother included: "Will I be a good mother?" "Will I be able to love my baby?" and "Will my baby be perfect?" Mothers were also concerned about male support. Kitzenger (1967) and other researchers (Fawcett, 1977; Strang, 1985; Rubin, 1984; and Kumar, 1984) have observed that women need emotional and physical support such as nurturing during the moodiness as well as help with household chores when fatigued. Kitzenger also described a depressive state that sometimes occurs one month before delivery where self-confidence decreases. In the current study, these physical discomforts of pregnancy and fears of the unknown may be elicited by the being pregnant card and the four mind states cards.

Figure 1
Imagery of "mind states" and descriptive words from participant 2



Body image was also explored by Fawcett (1980, 1978), Strang and Sullivan (1985) and Rubin (1984). They divided body image into two components: body perception and body attitude. Body perception referred to the

mental experience of the physical appearance of the body. Fawcett (1980) measured body perception by observational methods as well as projective techniques. Body attitudes included feelings, attitudes, and emotional reactions held toward the body. Fawcett (1978) saw body image as "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say the way in which the body appears to ourselves" (p. 228). These pictures were composed of mental images, attitudes and feelings of our bodies in relationship to space. Body image was considered dynamic, being influenced by interpersonal and environmental changes. Strang and Sullivan (1985) also looked at pregnant women's body image with The Attitude to Body Image Scale, a modified version of Jourard's Body Carthexis Scale. Strang and Sullivan measured the degree and direction of feelings towards one's body in the pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and postpartum. They found that "women's dissatisfaction with their bodies seemed to increase as their pregnancies progressed, and peaked in the postpartum" (p. 332). In terms of the present study, it might be assumed that participant's feelings of dissatisfaction with their bodies would be exemplified in words and images in the remaining months of pregnancy. Rubin (1984) also described body image in relationship to pregnancy. She observed that during the physical changes of childbearing, images of the body change for pregnant women. Rubin concluded that a participant's physical sensations and responses to others' perceptions of them were reflected in cognitive constructions or impressions. During pregnancy, body images centered on the structure and function of the body and its parts; that a woman's images were interwoven with impressions of the child; that during the third trimester there was decreased tolerance to movement; and that the mother was acutely aware of the child pushing against the ribs and diaphragm. Again, in terms of the present study, it might be assumed that, with body image being dynamic, participants' drawings would be kinesthetically affected by the ongoing changes of pregnancy. Rubin (1984) suggested that pregnant women and couples are motivated learners because pregnancy is an optimum time for women to explore feelings and to better understand themselves and their experience of pregnancy. For example, she stated that: All behavior, manifest or latent, originates in the mind, in the cognitive processing of subjective experience. The most striking characteristic of maternal behavior is the openness to new and additional learnings, the silent organization in thought, and the high value placed on knowing, (p. 3) (Editor's Note: Some more recent works that have appeared in the literature following the completion of this paper are included here for the interested reader: Luttrell's (2003) book entitled, *Pregnant Bodies, Fertile Minds: Gender, Race, and the Schooling of Pregnant Teens*, and Swan-Foster's (1989) article, *Images of pregnant women: Art therapy as a tool for transformation*, and England's & Horowitz's (1998) book, *Birthing from Within*). In summary, pregnancy is an important life event during which bodily changes are experienced. Body image is an important factor to examine during pregnancy and issues concerning body image consistently relate to weight gain. Feelings of depression, concern and anxiety are common during the last trimester and, as pregnancy progresses; there is a normal fear and decreased sense of self-confidence. In terms of the present study, these physical discomforts and fears may be depicted in drawings and words. One's perception is a psychological experience. An explanation of how specific body changes affect the pregnant woman's attitudes and perception facilitates understanding and appreciation of pregnancy. By paying attention to the concerns of body image, women adjust to the process that occurs during pregnancy. As Rubin (1984) has suggested, pregnancy is an optimum time to learn. Using words to describe experience and images to portray feelings connects both the head and heart of the pregnant woman. Women have reported in pregnancy outreach class an increased ability to express and access their feelings through drawings. *Imagery and Childbirth* The literature reveals a significant amount of information about the verbal descriptions of being pregnant while information about the imagery created through pregnancy is sadly lacking. When Chicago (1985) surveyed existing images of birth for her Birth Project, she found few. Historically, signs of pregnancy have been camouflaged. Once hundred years ago, women remained at home during pregnancy and their clothing disguised their condition. While pregnant women today venture out of the home, clothes conceal the fact of pregnancy. In the psychology literature, there are a few references connecting projective drawings and pregnancy. For instance, Hammer (1958; 1968; 1969),

used the psychoanalytic approach to look at projective drawings of the clients. In his research with "The House-Tree-Person" test, he found that pregnant women drew trees bearing fruit. In another reference to pregnancy in the "Draw a Person" part of the study he reported: "An unmarried, pregnant young girl, [suffered] feelings of terrible shame in regard to the stomach contour which was so revealing to her condition [that] she drew a lithe, graceful, slender, dancer twirling unencumbered by any burden" (p. 197). It might be significant how an unmarried person depicts drawings and feelings. Her drawings may reveal denial or shame by having no lines or straight instead of curved lines. If there are feelings of shame, images of pregnancy may be denied. Hammer (1958) pioneered the examination of drawings and their use in studying body image and developed specific aspects to examine drawings. He described "body image" as the "individual's inner conception of his [or her] own body and its function in the social and physical world." (p. 7) Projective drawings are often based on the principles listed in Table 1. Hammer's research was based on the assumption that both physical and psychological aspects were projected in the drawings of his subjects. Hammer (1969) stated: The drawing page serves as a canvas upon which the subject may sketch a glimpse of his inner world, his traits and attitudes, his behavioral characteristics, his personality, strengths and weaknesses including the degree to which he can mobilize his inner resources to handle his psychodynamic conflicts, both interpersonal and intrapsychic. (p. 6) Unconscious levels tend to be expressed in symbols that can be interpreted. Hammer concluded, "The rules of symbolic disguise appear to fit into certain generalities or to make up a language and symbolism." (p. 27) The psychoanalytic approach is useful in identifying repressed material. Content can be suggested by the therapist and ultimately help the client gain insight into her feelings and ideas, which are projected into images. While this study was designed to elicit drawings, and not in-depth therapy, there is some potential for interpretation.

Table 1
Hammer's (1958) Principles of Projective Drawings

Projective drawings are often used as diagnostic tests and often follow these principles:

- 1. that people draw what they feel within themselves, rather than, or at least in addition to, what they see.**
- 2. that people draw their perceptions or reflections of significant people in their environment.**
- 3. that drawings communicate a basic language.**
- 4. that during the creative activity, unconscious material is revealed.**
- 5. that projective and abstract drawings of feelings tap into the creative self.**
- 6. that drawings provide a way to tap into emotional content.**

Imagery and Feelings Ambrogne-O'Toole (1988) and Kaslow and Eicher (1988) believed that the mind and body are interactive and used creative arts therapies to explore body image and female sexuality. They noted that a change in physical functioning, as well as a change in body responses, resulted in alterations in psychological behavior. Body image therapy, used with art therapies and psychotherapy in this instance, became useful treatment. One of these modalities was projective artwork: the use of drawings for the translation of inner experiences into visual images. These drawings facilitated expression and exploration of different issues through gesture and projective drawings. Ambrogne-O'Toole cited Slade (1977) who focused on the emotional reaction to reproductive events. "Menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth, so sacred, yet so unclear, are the woman's primary avenues of self-expression and achievement." (p. 46) Ambrogne-O'Toole found visual expressions provided the participants with not only a greater understanding of their feelings, but also an acceptable outlet for expressing negative emotions. Using visual images created by pregnant women is an alternate and new way for expression of feelings and is relevant to this research project. Combining the visual

and verbal can be helpful in expressing feelings. Ambrogne-O'Toole's belief in "the need to draw on women's individual experiences as well as the collective experiences and support among women" (p. 117) was also reflected in this project. Other researchers, such as Poffenberger and Barrows (1924), Scheerer and Lyons (1957) and Rhyne (1979; 1986), conducted research on the feeling value of words and drawings. For example, Poffenberger and Barrows examined the feeling value of lines for their direction, rhythm and form. They looked at the making of a line as an activity involving motor functions, the association of ideas and the expression of those ideas. They chose feelings such as sad, quiet, lazy, merry, furious, dead, playful, weak, gentle, hard, serious and powerful to be visually described. Participants were also asked to match lines and adjectives. Poffenberger and Barrows compared their experiments with Lundholm, whose participants drew lines to represent feelings. There was an immediate response to lines, and according to their research, participants were able to produce and interpret their lines. This related to the method of interpreting lines as identified by Rhyne. Scheerer and Lyons (1951) examined the possibility of a relationship between chosen adjectives and lines. Their subjects paired words and drawings, drew drawings with given words and matched familiar and unfamiliar words with the line drawings. Scheerer and Lyons found that verbal associations to the lines were due to the participant's immediate responses to the lines. An emotional warmth to curves and feelings of roughness to sharp angles were recorded. The meaning of lines is relevant to this project and will be examined according to indicators of structure and described. The results of the researchers who explore lines and feelings conclude and support the organismic theory that a dynamic relationship exists between the structure of a drawing and the response of the person. It is expected there will be a similar response by pregnant women. Kurtz (1969) examined sex differences and variations in body attitudes. "Body attitude." according to Kurtz, was "an individual's general, overall, global attitude or feeling about the outward form and appearance of his [or her] body" (p. 625). Kurtz's research involving play materials was important because he moved beyond the verbal and to demonstrate its relationship to visual expression. Rhyne (1979) also examined feelings and abstract drawings, combining her interests and knowledge of visual images through "drawings as personal constructs". She referred to concept feeling words as "mind states". For example, participants were asked to write a concept word such as joy on a specialized card. A square space was provided to create an abstract drawing; a space underneath the image was for the concept word and below space to write five phrases or adjectives. The images representing the mind state of joy tended to be depicted by thin and circular, with upward, outward movements. The drawings of mind states were examined for similarities and differences and were looked at individually and collectively. The drawings were interpreted in terms of personal constructs on the grid. According to Rhyne (1987), "the simple abstract drawings are considered as a part of a larger whole; qualities and properties are interactive within the field, the client describes and interprets their own drawings in visual/verbal language" (p. 184). In contrast to psychoanalytic therapy, gestalt therapy assumes that individuals are responsible for themselves and dealt effectively with life. There is a fundamental difference in client and therapist roles. According to gestalt psychology, people make sense of their world by forming gestalte. The primary task of a gestalt therapist is to help people experience being in the present by becoming aware of how they prevented themselves from feeling and experiencing in the present. The approach is non-interpretative and clients find their own meanings and statements in their lives and drawings. In conclusion, the research on the feeling value of words and drawings provides direction and ways to look at the mind states, by examining the structure of the drawings and describing the qualities of lines. Use of projective drawings was a way for pregnant women to understand their feelings.

METHOD Design This is an exploratory and descriptive study, which incorporates a number of dependent and independent variables in order to examine pregnant women's perceptions, feelings and body images. The independent variables included mind state cards, word associations and post-test interviews. The participants were pregnant women who volunteered and were registered in pre-natal classes held through Malaspina University College in Duncan. Third Trimester Pre-Natal Classes and Refresher Classes, which provided the sample, were designed for first and subsequent pregnancies. Eleven

participants were obtained from three consecutive pre-natal classes held in June 1989. The mean age of the sample was 27.9 years (ranging from 19 to 37 years old), and the participants were 30 to 38 weeks pregnant. The number of pregnancies in each participant's history ranged from 2 to 5. Their educational backgrounds and marital status varied. (see demographic data, Table 2.) A total of 28 couples attended the three classes and 11 of those couples participated in this study. Permission was granted by Malaspina University College, Cowichan Campus to conduct the research with pre-natal classes in June 1989.

Table 2
Demographic Data

<i>Item</i>	<i>P1</i>	<i>P2</i>	<i>P3</i>	<i>P4</i>	<i>P5</i>	<i>P6</i>	<i>P7</i>	<i>P8</i>	<i>S9</i>	<i>P10</i>	<i>P11</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Age	19	31	19	27	32	23	28	27	30	34	37	28
*Grava	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	5	1.9
*Parity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0.5
Complications	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	
Marital Status	S	C	C	M	M	C	M	M	M	M	M	
Ed./Grade	11	12	10	12	12	11	12	12	12	12	12	12
Ed./Post.Sec.	0	1	0	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	4	1.4
Self-Image/Gen.	5	1	1	2	2	4	3	1	1	1	1	2.1
Self-Image/Preg.	5	2	3	4	3	4	4	1	2	3	4	3.2
*Gestation Wks.	37	31	33	33	35	30	36	37	34	33	37.5	34
Planned/Unplan.	U	P	U	P	P	U	P	U	P	P	P	
Wanted	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	

*Grava = # of pregnancies

*Parity = # of live births

*Gestations = # of weeks pregnant

S = Single, C = Cohabiting, M = Married

N = 11 Participants

Instruments A brown envelope containing the following items was distributed to each of the participants: a consent form, a demographic data sheet, a body image scale chart, an interview questionnaire, directions for the completion of abstract drawings, and five concept cards with areas marked out for abstract drawings and verbal entries. Participants were asked to either choose a thick or thin black felt pen to draw the images. The materials package, which would be later distributed to all the participants in the research, was pre-tested successfully on two pregnant employees from the Duncan Health Unit. Each participant was asked to enter visual and verbal depictions of being pregnant and four mind states: sadness, anger, fear and joy. Being pregnant referred to the participants' perceptions of physical and emotional experiences in the last three months of pregnancy. Space for one abstract drawing and five descriptive words were presented on each card. Each of the forms and cards were completed during class time and the interviews were completed later the same week. After the data were collected, individual interviews were arranged with each of the 11 women. Interviews ranged in duration from 30 to 90 minutes during which time eight questions were answered. Participants also discussed the meaning of their drawings and personal images and interpreted their own drawings, revealing their own ideas about their personal constructs. Their thoughts and feelings concerning the graphic representations were obtained using 8 probes (below) designed to obtain feedback, glean meaning from the images and examine similarities and differences to being pregnant. The questions asked for interviewing and debriefing were: 1. How was the activity for you? 2. How does the image relate to your pregnancy and being pregnant? 3. Describe the image you have drawn. 4. Is your attitude different when you are not pregnant? 5. Describe and show me which of the four other drawings are most similar to being pregnant. 6. Describe and show me which of the four other drawings are most different in image to being pregnant. 7. Do the words describe similarities and differences? 8. Do you have anything else to add or say? Procedure Observations and interviews were conducted in a large room at the Margaret Moss Health Unit where pre-natal classes were held. Chairs were arranged in rows in the center of the room, with two large tables found at either end of the room. Participants sat randomly in the room.

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It was possible for participants to see one another's work although they were asked to complete their drawings individually. The procedures took place thirty minutes before classes on infant feeding. This class was the fourth class in the series. During the third prenatal class, the researcher attended the first of two classes in a series that reviewed labor and delivery. After a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study, the participants were oriented to the verbal terminology and the research materials. Artistic ability was not a requirement for this project. In order to acquaint the participants with the meanings of the phrase "abstract drawings" they were invited to consider three concept phrases written on the blackboard - being sane, going crazy, and acceptance. Participants were asked to describe how each concept might be drawn. They were then asked to consider direction, shape and form in the description of the lines. Would the lines go in or out? Would the whole or part of the page be covered? The brown envelope package containing items described above was distributed and the contents of the packages were discussed. Participants were asked to sign the consent form, complete the demographic data and rate their body images on the scale provided. The five concept words were written on the blackboard and explained via the instructions, which were read aloud by the researcher as each participant read their own copy. The participants then completed the abstract drawing and verbal associations on the cards provided. Questions were answered individually and extra blank cards were available. To help the participants focus and begin their abstract pictures, they were asked to sit quietly, take a breath, close their eyes and be aware of whatever they noticed in their bodies. They were then asked to transfer those impressions to paper by putting marks in the space provided on the being pregnant card. Impressions of the four mind states were rendered in a similar fashion. Verbal descriptions for each card were also completed at this time. Participants were asked to complete the activity quickly. The thirty-minute period before the participants' pre-natal class was adequate. When the participants had completed the drawings and verbal associations, the data were returned to the brown envelope and participants were asked to put their first name and phone number on the outside of the envelope. The researcher assigned a participant number (P1-P11) on the envelope and to all the data sheets. The interviews, which were arranged after the pre-natal class, took place in the participant's homes and places of work, as well as the researcher's office. Interpretation Rhyne's Gestalt Approach. Rhyne's approach was useful and important for the purposes of this study. She focused on expanding the understanding of visual imagery and said, "art therapy involves expression and communication. Our job requires that we have some understanding ... we must broaden and clarify our knowledge of visual communication forms as they are presented by the persons with whom we work." Her practical approach was helpful for obtaining abstract drawings. She also demonstrated the practical methodology of construct theory. In this particularly study, participants constructs were measured by a "repertory grid" originally invented by Kelly (1955). Although this research did not replicate or repeat Rhyne's entire 1989 study on mind states, it did attempt to integrate some of her approaches and tools. With Rhyne's permission, certain tools were incorporated into the research method. These included instructions, the format of the mind state card, and a repertory grid. Where as Rhyne instructed her participants to complete the personal constructs and transfer them onto the grid, this project translated the dimensions of the image and described the trends. In contrast to Rhyne's use of 15 mind states, this research project used four primary emotions, sadness, anger, fear, and joy, because they incorporate a wide spectrum of human feelings and because they have also been validated in other studies (Travis, 1981; Poffenberger & Barrows, 1924; Scheerer & Lyons, 1957). Rhyne discovered a pattern among visual forms and concepts. She found consistent images were used to describe emotional experiences or mind states. For example, representations of sadness tended to involve darker lines with down movements and curvilinear lines. Fear was often represented by dots and darker lines that were angular and jagged. Representations of anger tended to involve darker lines with arrows going outward. The participants' interpretations of their own drawings played an important role in Rhyne's research. This research paper reinforces, the importance of the participants meaning of the images by conducting interviews to obtain descriptions of the images by the participants. Through talking about their drawings in the interviews the pregnant women described their perceptions, clarified them verbally

and made meaning out of their experience of their drawing. Hammer's Psychoanalytic Approach The second interpretative technique was drawn from Hammer's psychoanalytic approach. This method of examining size, placement, line, pressure and content was applied to the drawings collected for this study. Hammer identified a variety of emotional indicators in drawing style: size, pressure, strokes, detailing and placement. He believed that a drawing's size was indicative of self-esteem. Tiny drawings indicated inadequacy and withdrawal tendencies. Lines over the margin reflected constriction and feelings of aggression. Heavy pressure or strokes within the drawing denoted assertiveness or organic problems; light strokes denoted low energy, repression, and feelings of inadequacy and/or depression. Straight lines meant assertiveness or aggressiveness, and circular lines indicated dependency, emotionality and femininity. Jagged lines represented hostility, and sketchy lines denoted anxiety, timidity and a lack of confidence. Attention to detail was described as significant of affect where inadequate details in participants' drawings suggested withdrawal tendencies, sometimes depression; excessive detail denoted obsessive-compulsive tendencies; highly structured and repetitive details suggested fear of the environment. A participant's placement of drawings on the page was also significant. Central placement indicated the capacity for self-direction and self-control. A drawing sitting right of center was indicative of controlled intellect and introverted personality, whereas one left of center indicated impulsivity, extroversion and the need for gratification. The therapist made interpretations and connections are made explicit for the client. Hammer's research provided an excellent framework for evaluating the data collected. Since my project was exploratory in nature, Hammer's method of looking at drawings was helpful. The participant's drawings were analyzed by size, placement, line, pressure and content. Analysis was done looking at common trends in the drawing styles and noting Hammer's interpretations.

Participant 1 Participant 1, age 19 was 37 weeks pregnant. She was pregnant for the first time and had complications during her pregnancy. The pregnancy was unplanned and she was single. There were common trends with the images. Sadness and fear tended to be tiny in form. Being pregnant, anger and joy had large form. Being pregnant, anger and fear had heavy pressure. Sadness and joy had lighter pressure. Being pregnant and joy had circular lines. Anger was predominantly depicted by jagged strokes. The image of joy tended to be symmetrical. Being pregnant and joy were vertically placed on the page. Being pregnant and joy were centrally placed. Images of Sadness were placed at the bottom of the page. In the joy picture, there was reference to the baby. Her images tended to be caricatures; in three of the pictures, her figure had no arms. Hammer believed that omissions are significant. The omission of arms in the drawing therefore may be indicative of not accepting nurturing or feeling out of control. There was a strong sense of Participant 1 being in her body and experiencing the discomforts of the third trimester. This was in accord with the findings of Fawcett (1980) and Strang (1985) who pointed out that as pregnancy increases there is more awareness of the discomforts of pregnancy. Joy was chosen as most similar in image to being pregnant because of the growing baby. Anger was described as most different to being pregnant. Her lines tended to be thick which may indicate (according to Hammer and Thyne) the degree of emphasis and amount of emotion expressed. Words used related to fatness, roundness, discomforts of pregnancy, and the fact that she was excited at the prospect of having a healthy baby. In most of her images, roundness played an important role. Pregnancy, for Participant 1, was a time for reflecting on her own personal experiences of family and parenting. Her pregnancy provided her with an opportunity for re-establishing contact with her father and family. Participant 2 Participant 2, age 31, was 31 weeks pregnant. Although this was her second pregnancy, she had no children. She had been in a common-law relationship for two years. Her self-image was strongly positive, and she perceived her pregnancy positively. In her drawings, themes included references to herself, the baby and her spouse. She used abstract forms for all of her drawings, which were all in the center of the page. Central placement on the page is important according to Hammer. Pregnancy is the central focus. All of her mind state images related to pregnancy with the exception of anger. Anger related to other people and her emotional experiences with her father and spouse. Fear stood apart from her other images. Joy was the most similar to being pregnant and anger the most different. The lines tended to be drawn

thinly. This could have denoted energy and lightness or low energy. The personal meaning of joy for this participant was that pregnancy was the central focus. The participant suggested, "each circle is similar and an entity unto itself." There was roundness to the images. Anger was most different as it was projected outward and was different from "the internal preparation of pregnancy." Pregnancy, for participant 2, was a time of updating past experiences and focusing on the present. The pregnancy was wanted and she felt centered. This was depicted in her images. The pregnancy enhanced togetherness and communication for her and her spouse. Participant 3 Participant 3, age 19 was 33 weeks pregnant. This was her second pregnancy; her first ended in miscarriage. She was in a common-law relationship often months. This young woman's health was considered at risk during her pregnancy because of her difficult family history. She lacked formal and practical education. Participant 3 identified strongly with her drawings. Her images tended to remind her of concrete possessions in her life and she had difficulty abstracting ideas. She chose joy as the drawing most similar to being pregnant. Perhaps this choice was made because both images were caricatures. Fear differed the most from being pregnant. Her drawing of fear implied much emotion; many (thick and thin) lines covered the drawing space. All of her images encompassed the entire drawing space and spilled over the boundaries. According to Hammer, size was indicative of self-esteem; over the margin drawings imply feelings of constriction, aggression and some fear of the environment. There was clearly a sense of feeling overwhelmed in this woman's drawings. Participant 4 Participant 4, age 27, was 33 weeks pregnant and was delighted with her pregnancy because it took over one year to conceive. Her spousal relationship was well established; she and her husband had known each other for 10 years and had been married for four of those years. Participant 4 used heavy lines in her being pregnant drawing in order to accentuate her backache experienced during pregnancy. She used symbols- an exclamation mark, a question mark, a sun and a frown- to depict images for the mind states. She identified her ambiguous and ambivalent feelings and fears toward pregnancy. Her drawing of joy bore the most similarities to her drawing of being pregnant. Placement of the image on the page was important to her. She described her pregnancy as being central to her life. Her drawing of anger was focused more on the left side of the page. Hammer identified left placement of images as signifying introversion. If anger was more on the left, we might assume like Hammer that it was held in. Pregnancy, for participant 4, was more of a thinking place, with anger being more an emotional place. With the end of pregnancy, she experienced more Joy and was very focused on her pregnancy. Participant 5 Participant 5 was 32 years old and was 35 weeks into her first pregnancy. She was in a stable relationship, having lived with her partner for seven years; they were married for seven months of that time. With two university degrees, she was the most educated of the participants. In her image of being pregnant, she identified herself, her child and her partner. For participant 5, the position of the image on the page meant "highness or lowness of feeling". Her drawing of joy bore the most similarities to her being pregnant card although the former did not share the focus on family. Her image of anger related to a general expression of feelings not specifically related to pregnancy. There was variety in the images, the expression of feelings, the quality of lines, and the use of different parts of the page. Of all the participants' drawings, those of participant 5 seemed to best capture the concept words and an energy was sensed in the lines. Participant 6 Participant 6 was 26 years old and was 30 weeks pregnant. This was her second pregnancy; the first one ended in a miscarriage three years ago. She was in a three-year common-law relationship. Although this participant expressed an interest in the research, she felt that she was unable to complete any images. She expressed a preference to verbally describe her feelings and how the images might appear. She described the image of a pregnant person as most similar to joy. Sadness differed the most from being pregnant; however, Participant 6 expressed some worries about the pregnancy and its outcome. She indicated that her images of joy and being pregnant would have depicted energy radiating out from the center of the drawing area, and that sadness would have been indicated by a frown. The verbal descriptions used to describe the mind states all related to being pregnant. Participant 6 needed more time than the rest of the participants to complete the exercise. Participant 7 Participant 7, age 28, was 36 weeks into her first pregnancy. She had been

in a stable marriage for three years and she revealed a slightly positive self-image. Her images referred to the baby and to the pregnancy. Thin, curved lines represented comfort and "smooth sailing" to her. Her drawing for joy revealed similar characteristics with thicker lines because she was keenly aware of her joy. She saw images from left to right. Whereas all of her drawings of the mind states were depicted within the context of the pregnancy, sadness related more to other people and their inability to have children. Participant 8 Participant 8 was 27 years old and was 37 weeks pregnant. This second pregnancy was unplanned and she had an eighteen-month-old child. Adjustment to the pregnancy was easy and had gone well so far. She described a happy marriage of 3 years. Participant 8 seemed relaxed, and strongly positive. She described the highs and lows of pregnancy with graph-like images. Her depiction of joy was the drawing most similar to being pregnant, although the similarities existed more in her verbal descriptions than in the drawings themselves. Smoothness of line was evident in joy and being pregnant. Her image of sadness seemed to relate to herself and others. Unlike the other participants where the images related to spouses or the unborn children, Participant 8's drawings seemed to exclusively express her own feelings. Even the sadness and anger cards spoke about the miracle of pregnancy. Whereas the pregnancy was unplanned, the participant did express a sense of flexibility and adjustment. Participant 9 Participant 9, age 30 was 34 weeks pregnant. She was experiencing her second pregnancy; she had a toddler at home and had been married for three years. Her graph-like being pregnant image related to herself and to the baby. Placement of her images high on the page indicated for the participant high feelings. Her image of joy was cloud-like and, of all her drawings, was the most similar to her being pregnant image. Her use of a dark pen and line for this image indicated fullness. Her fear of the unknown was represented by a fairly large dot or hole; this image revealed the most differences to her image of being pregnant. Whereas her image of anger seemed to express strictly emotions, her use of graph-like images for being pregnant and sadness seemed to indicate contemplation or reasoning. Participant 10 Participant 10 was 34 years old and 33 weeks pregnant. She had a toddler at home and this was her third pregnancy. She valued marriage and has been happily married for two years. Participant 10 was an outgoing woman; she was positive about herself and about her pregnancy. In her being pregnant drawing, she referred to herself and to the baby. In this image, she referred to many physical discomforts of pregnancy, which are usually more common in second and subsequent pregnancies. She used a thick pen to draw her images. Again, according to Hammer, the heaviness of line was important to note. Participant 10 accentuated and focused on herself and the physical changes of pregnancy. Her drawings of sadness revealed unresolved grief of the recent death of her father. In her image of joy, she referred to her family and her spouse. This participant was an emotional, sensitive person with strong feelings. Participant 11 Participant 11, 37 years old, was the eldest of the eleven participants. She was 38 weeks into her fifth pregnancy. She had two school age children from a previous marriage and was well educated. The pregnancy was very much planned and wanted. Inherent in her being pregnant image were references to the relationship between her body image, the baby and her partner. Her depiction of joy related to her being pregnant card. She described a feeling of continuity and elation in both. Her images of sadness and anger, which both related to past experiences with people in her life, were drawn with thicker lines, whereas joy, fear and being pregnant were lighter in line. She described each concept word with five adjectives, which related to the concept words individually. For example, anger was described with adjectives such as frustration, violence, remorse, nagging and sorrow. These feelings related to experiences with her father who was violent and a brother who died suddenly and prematurely. Through drawing, unconscious material was made conscious. Group Data Group Summary of Data. The eleven pregnant women in the study used curved lines to represent being pregnant. The verbal associations described ambivalent feelings of awkwardness and joy. Common themes referred to the baby, to the pregnant body and to the family relationship. In their images, the participants included at least two of the three themes already mentioned. During the pre-test, the researcher discovered that two of the pregnant women who were experiencing their third pregnancy were unfamiliar with the term 'abstract drawing'. These women found the activities of drawing and using the words to be useful,

interesting and meaningful. As Hammer (1968) and Rhyne (1979) have indicated, the meaning becomes personal to each participant. However, their drawings tended to take the form of caricatures-simple line drawings of themselves-rather than the required abstract format. Rhyne, during an interview, suggested providing examples at the beginning of the class in order to help the participant become familiar with the concept of abstract drawing, with the spirit of imagining and with use of abstract lines, shapes and forms. This advice was carried out and helped the sample participants complete the exercise successfully. The mean age of the participants was 27.9 years. Four of the participants were pregnant for the first time; seven had been pregnant at least once before. Seven of the participants had no live children and the other four had children. None of the participants had experienced any major complications during this pregnancy; although some of the participants did have their blood pressure monitored and did experience physical discomfort. One participant was single; the rest were either married or in common-law relationships. Education varied among the participants from having completed grade ten to eight years of post secondary training. Self-image and scores on the body image attitude scale tended to be most negative for the single woman; the scores of the women with partners ranged from ambivalent to strongly positive. Four of the pregnancies were unplanned, seven were planned; all eleven were wanted. Body Image Attitude Scale. Overall weight was perceived slightly negatively by most of the participants. Some expressed concern about being overweight before conception; they were also concerned about weight loss after delivery. Kitzenger's research on weight and pregnancy supports these concerns. Common attitudes regarding weight create anxiety and depression. It was important to share and discuss the feelings and attitudes to weight as it affected the women's self-concept, which in turn will affect her birth perceptions and relationships. Participants also perceived their legs with slight negativity as size, swelling and varicosities increased. Although weight was perceived negatively, the participants' attitudes toward their abdomens were positive. Group Data of Images and Words Being Pregnant. Predominant themes in the participants' being pregnant cards included a focus on the self, on bodily changes and on feelings of pregnancy. There were ten references to the baby. Participants 1, 8 and 11 referred to the family. Verbal descriptions of being pregnant revealed many contradictions and mixed feelings. Being happy was referred to five times; being scared was referred to three times; healthy and fat each received two references. With the exception of the images by participants 6 and 8, being pregnant drawings had a roundness to them. The participants' images adopted three formats: figurative, abstract and graph-like. Placement on the page tended to be central and above centre. Sadness. Themes on the participants' sadness cards indicated emotional and physical expressions of pain and hurt associated with pregnancy and feelings of sadness in general. Sadness was associated with anger, and feelings of fear and loneliness were common verbal associations made by the participants. Lonely was used four times. Crying, tears and wet were also common themes in words. Images of sadness included tears, a frown, unhappy faces, tiny circles, teardrops and tear shapes, and tended to be placed towards the bottom of the page. The images were similar to Rhyne's findings with the sadness images being towards the bottom of the page and teardrop shapes. One striking difference in these results was the amount of blackness or shading on the image card. The participants did not shade the background in as darkly as Rhyne's participants had done. Anger. Themes common to the anger cards related to individuals and situational experiences. Anger tended to be viewed as a result of external circumstances, while being pregnant was viewed as coming from within. The word "frustrated" was used to describe anger five times and the words mad and tease each occurred twice. Anger images tended to adopt heavier, darker, more angular lines and filled the center of paper. The lines were similar to Rhyne's results where as images used by the pregnant women included symbols such as question marks, and exclamation marks. Whereas participants 1 and 10 seemed to be more contained, the other participants' pictures illustrated the outward expression of anger. Fear. Hassid (1978), Kitzenger (1967), and Rubin (1984) cited examples of common fears during pregnancy relating to health of the baby, motherhood and coping abilities. Predominant themes for participants experiencing their first pregnancy included the participant's performance in the delivery room, a fear of the unknown, and the health of

the baby. Participants who had previously given birth focused on their experiences. Three of the participants used the words scared and lonely; two used lost, helpless and pain. Themes for every participant included pain and the state of the baby's health. The images tended to vary in their expression and placement on the page. Dots were common shapes used by Rhyne's participants. Two pregnant participants used dots. Whereas participant 3's image extended over boundaries, the others were more focused. Two participants had no experience of fear and no image was drawn. The researcher speculated that no images might relate to lack of ability to visualize or of denial. One participant had no image for fear which according to her related lack of awareness of the experience. The other participant who drew no images spent many hours watching television soap operas. Joy. Themes related to joy included the family and parenthood. Verbal associations denoted energy and extroverted expressions of feelings. Five participants chose the word happiness, two chose exciting and three chose laughing. Images varied in their expression. Smiles were in three pictures: P1, P3, and P10. Figures in the images of P1 and P3 lacked arms. Hammer (1968) indicates omissions of this type were important. Arms may relate to nurturing or lack of nurturing and inability of reaching out. P4 used a sun; P9, a cloud; and P5 waves. P7 and P11 used graph-like images. Each drawing possessed an inherent upward feeling also found by Rhyne's. They varied in size but tended to be larger than the images on the other cards. P2's drawing, however, was smaller, more concentrated and focused on family and wholeness. Comparing 'Being Pregnant' to Other Mind States. Comparison of the being pregnant card to each of the four mind state cards allowed for a greater understanding of each participant's emotional response and imagery by comparing and contrasting. All participants chose being pregnant as most similar to joy. The choice of joy did not seem dependent on positive or negative self-image or body image. The mind state perceived as having the most differences from being pregnant varied a great deal. Six participants indicated that anger was the emotion most different from their experience of being pregnant; three participants indicated sadness as their choice and two indicated fear. Group Data According to Hammer's Emotional Drawing Indicators. The emotional indicators in drawing style as described by Hammer (1968) were examined in-group format. The aspects of the drawings identified as indicators were: size, pressure, strokes, detailing, symmetry, and placement. The forms are described as: tiny, large, over boundaries, heavily light, variable, straight, circular, jagged, sketchy, inadequate, detailed, lack of symmetry, symmetry, horizontal vertical, left of center, right of center, bottom of page or top of page. The following list is a summarized comparison of the mind-state drawing characteristics: 1. Being pregnant: 82% circular, 55% vertical placement, and 45% central and heavy pressure. 2. Sadness: 73% bottom of the page, 64% light, and 36% tiny image. 3. Anger: 73% jagged lines, 73% heavy pressure and 36% large image. 4. Fear: 45% centre of page, 36% heavy pressure, 36% tiny image and 27% lack of symmetry. 5. Joy: 91% circular, 55% large image, 55% light pressure, 55% central and 45% symmetry. Hammer's (1968) indicators in drawing style resulted in the description of the above trends. Group Data According to Personal Constructs and Rhyne's Dimensions: Rhyne used indicators to describe the qualities of the images. She used gestalt principles such as figure/ground and examined the relationship of the image in the space and movement within the space. The concept of the gestalt, the whole being the sum of the parts, was looked at structurally within the configuration and by relationships of the parts. More specifically, the drawing as a figure within a space was examined and the ground was noted in relationship of the position of image on the page. She identified construct dimensions and their polarities in two columns and this grid was the method used to collect the data. Vertically oriented drawings included being pregnant (45%), anger (45%), and joy (36%). Predominately upward-moving lines were evident in the being pregnant (55%), and joy (64%) images, whereas downward-moving lines were found in the sadness images (73%). A circular movement was evident in 64% of the being pregnant images, 45% of the sadness images and 64% of the joy images. Angular lines were found in 36% of the images of anger. Being pregnant images revealed an orderliness (55%), a tightness in the structure of the drawing (45%), and balance (36%); 45% of the joy images were balanced. Heaviness was implied in the drawings of being pregnant (64%), anger (55%), and joy (45%). A repetition in the relationships of parts of the

drawings was found in anger (55%) and joy (45%); however, when asked, 55% of the participants felt that such repetition indicated harmony in their images. Drawings were centrally located on the page in the being pregnant (55%), anger (45%), fear (55%), and joy (64%) images. Those images, which dominated the drawing space, were anger (73%) and joy (73%).

DISCUSSION The drawings indicated that the participants had a unique and consistent way of expressing patterns, shapes and lines. The researcher was able to identify each participant's own style and imagery. Despite the participants' lack of artistic ability, the reviews of the cards during the interviews revealed a beauty and meaningfulness in the simple drawings. The women did have a sense of their imagery. They were able to conceptualize, make drawings and articulate their perceptions. They were also able to identify with the mind states because they were experiencing amplified feelings because of their pregnancies. In spite of physical discomforts of pregnancy, feelings of low self-esteem or a negative body image, each of the women chose joy as most similar to being pregnant. They chose joy because it was most similar to their being pregnant card. Perhaps joy was chosen over the other feeling states because a more appropriate response was not available or perhaps because, by the third trimester, the women in this sample wanted and looked forward to the birth of their babies. Another possible explanation was that the choice of mind states was weighted towards the more negatively perceived states of fear, sadness and anger, while joy was the only positive choice available. Other choices, such as hope or anticipation or serene, could be added for future testing. Originally, the researcher anticipated that a participant's negative experience with pregnancy or with a negative self-image would be reflected in one of the negative mind state cards being most similar to the being pregnant card. Although some of the participants articulated negative feelings toward themselves and pregnancy, they surprisingly chose joy. In summarizing their own research, McConnell and Daston (1961) were surprised to discover that, while their assumptions about attitudes toward impending motherhood as always being strongly positive, the expressed attitudes fell on a continuum rather than being clearly negative or positive. In the present study, however, no identifiable pattern was evident between the mind state cards that were most different to the being pregnant cards. No relationship was evident between body image and mind states and a participant's selection of a thick or thin felt pen. Drawings did not indicate specifically whether the participant had a positive or negative self-image, although there were identifiable characteristics to the drawings as discussed in individual and group results. Common elements in the drawings emerged, such as the use of shapes and their placement on the page. The cards were experienced and interpreted by participants in two ways. Some chose to discuss the being pregnant card as a theme related to the mind states. Others made no connections between the cards, but compared their mind states with experiences other than pregnancy. The images bore some similarities to Rhyne's mind states. Joy was characterized by predominately by upward movement and curvilinear lines, downward and circular movements characterized sadness, and anger revealed more angular and heavier lines. One difference to Rhyne's results was that the image of sadness lacked heavy black shading by the participants in this project. The data supported the view that each participant's experience was unique. The participants' awareness of their roundness and weight was reflected in the curvilinear lines of their being pregnant images. Circular lines according to Scheerer and Lyons (1951) indicate an emotional warmth. Rhyne supports that curved lines represent a joyful state. Drawings representing pregnancy were figurative, graph-like and abstract.

CONCLUSIONS Unlike Rhyne's participants who were familiar with the concepts of abstract drawings and mind states, participants in the current study were not familiar with art therapy techniques; yet they were able to successfully use the concept cards. They reported finding the activity useful, interesting and meaningful. Pregnancy provided a place for them to begin to express their changing experiences into visual images. The drawings were useful in helping them to express their thoughts and feelings in a new and unfamiliar way. The meaning of the concept words and images became clearer for the participants during the interview where they were able to articulate their personal meanings of the images. The interview validated and completed the understanding of the process for the participants. The research also demonstrated and provided examples of women's perceptions in abstract drawings and words being pregnant and the mind states of

sadness, anger, fear and joy. The main conclusion was the life-affirming inference that, regardless of circumstance, pregnancy and joy are highly correlated experiences. SIGNIFICANCE The introduction of a visual language, in addition to a verbal discussion, helped participants articulate and express their feelings about their pregnancy and gain self-awareness. Imagery was used to bridge the gap between the ideal and actual self and verbal and visual language. This research addressed the lack of information and the need for visual language in communication with pregnant women. The findings regarding how joy was perceived as most similar to being pregnant are important for women contemplating pregnancy as well as for those who are pregnant. The study also provides information to psychologists, nurses, childbirth educators, and art therapists. IMPLICATIONS In every culture, pregnancy and birth are celebrated as major events in life. They are times of transition and times of physical and emotional change and transformation. Most women and couples have a need to talk, to learn, to share and to receive feedback during pregnancy. Pregnancy is an optimum time to explore and discuss mind states and to gain a better understanding of the self and the experience of generating life. The being pregnant card and the four mind state cards of sadness, anger, fear and joy can be used to help women to explore their body image and feelings about the experience of pregnancy. This methodology could be usefully incorporated into the curricula of prenatal classes. By the same token, individuals, couples or groups could benefit by having a leader/therapist/clinician or childbirth counselor help them to articulate feelings, gain awareness and knowledge of their own visual communication and create meaning through their birthing experiences. Further research might examine differences across cultural, socioeconomic and age-differentiated groups. In North America, comparisons between Canadian and U.S. prenatal class participants would help to broaden the samples of visual imagery. Additional categories could be drawn from couples and include imagery covering all three trimesters and after delivery. Broader studies might explore a wider range of feeling states and a more in-depth analysis of personal meanings and constructs. Whatever direction such research might take, this researcher agrees with Rhyne that it is important for health care professionals to hear, understand and respect the subjective experience of pregnant women. A GUIDE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH Abstract drawings, as opposed to figure drawings were required to minimize participant resistance. During the pré-test a problem with the term "abstract drawing" was identified. Since two participants were unfamiliar with the term, this problem needs to be addressed in future research. Both participants tended to complete caricatures rather than abstract drawings. The problem in future research would be to develop methods for overcoming this problem through instructional protocols. On reflection, it would have been possible to provide examples of abstract drawings at the beginning of the class and actively encourage participants to use their imaginations when working with abstract lines, shapes and forms. The small size of the sample used in the present study severely limits the potential for making generalizations with any degree of confidence. Additionally, the fact that all the women volunteered to participate creates a significant sampling bias to be considered. For example, it was interesting to note that five of the eleven women in the sample had experienced miscarriages in the past. Could these experienced losses have been a factor in their deciding to join? Was this coincidental and did they have something to say regarding their feelings? In spite of these limitations, the results of this current research are certainly sufficient to warrant further enquiry into the subjective experiences of pregnancy. In the western world we seem to have forgotten that pregnancy is the foundation for the most essential relationship of all—the critical bond between a mother and her child. Childbirth is not only a medical event but also a time for exploration. Such research reminds us all that relationships are personal affairs that integrate body, mind, and spirit. The more we enter that personal world, the more we understand what makes us whole—what makes us human.

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