

# CATHARSIS TECHNIQUE®

*An innovative, original method for practitioners who wish to complement  
their treatments and therapies through music.*

## APPLICATION *of the Technique at*

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### OPICA

*Adult Day Care & Caregiver Support Center*

*11759 Missouri Avenue - Los Angeles, CA 90025*



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*by Mrs. Chantal Desmoulins,  
trainer and co-inventor of the technique*

Chantal Desmoulins

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# CATHARSIS TECHNIQUE ®

*WORKSHOPS of Graphic Expression Under Music Induction*

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## *Introduction*

Chantal Desmoulins had the opportunity to present the Catharsis Technique to Dr. Karen Miller at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior (NPI).

At Dr. Miller's recommendation, she made contact with the Opica Center, which offers a weekly program for individuals experiencing early memory loss, who might, therefore, benefit from a program of musical listening with drawing offered by the Catharsis Technique.

Emily Carvill, Program Supervisor at Opica, was indeed interested in this program and directed Chantal Desmoulins to Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling. Anne works with a group of 8 people with early memory loss.

On a demonstration basis, a few sessions of the Catharsis Technique were offered to these 8 individuals.

## *Presentation of Catharsis Technique*

The Catharsis Technique is a psycho-musical technique, a supplement to traditional medical therapies, designed to improve the care and well-being of the patients, as well as the doctor-patient relationship.

Dr Alain Amouyal and Chantal Desmoulins created this "Program of Graphic Expression under Musical Induction" and used it with great success in medical and pedagogical settings in France. It is an innovative therapeutic tool, offered to practitioners who wish to complement their treatment with music.

The technique facilitates:

- stimulation of verbal or non-verbal expression of past or present emotional experiences,
- support for self-exploration and more open expression of emotions.

The technique provides a unique therapeutic framework by the virtue of its application rules: the size of the paper, the specific drawing tools, and the CD, which determine the length of time for expression. For people experiencing memory loss, this method is calming and reassuring and allows them to express themselves, all the while holding them in a safe space, without the need for a therapist's direct intervention.

Indeed, when the organizations (Adult Day Care Centers or Retirement Homes) take advantage of a qualified staff of care-givers specialized in psychological accompaniment of aged individuals experiencing memory loss or other pathologies, this technique, simultaneously creative and therapeutic, can serve as a support for a more in-depth psychological work. Work that often results in spectacular behavioral improvements and well-being for the elderly, including those with very poor memory or significant behavioral issues.

## *Medical Staff Involved*

*Chantal Desmoulins*, designer and trainer of the Catharsis Technique.

*Anne Galbraith* MFT/ATR - Group leader of the art therapy support group for high functioning people with dementia. The group offers emotional support, cognitive stimulation, and helps maintain social skills. The art is used to help track and retain conversation, sensory stimulation, and as a way for members to connect with each other.

*Nikki Andrews* MFT/ATR Trainee - Co-leader training to conduct art therapy groups for people with memory loss. In the process of co-leadership, the trainee will learn to address the needs of this population and the applications of group art activities.

*Georgi Marshal* MFT/ATR Intern - Co-leader training to conduct art therapy groups for people with memory loss. In the process of co-leadership, the intern will learn to address the needs of this population and the applications of group art activities.

## *The group: High Functioning Support Group at Opica*

- Bud K.- **DOB:** 6/7/25 **DX:** MCI. **ADL's:** Can perform with minimal assistance. **Behavior:** Social, appears open and in good mood. Shows mild depression but is able to track and initiate conversation.
- Herbert L. - **DOB:**12/20 **DX:** Dementia. Overall good health. **ADL's:** Can perform all ADL's with reminders. **Behavior:** Quiet. Appears to track conversation of the group. Responds when directly addressed. Profession: Fighter pilot.
- Gabby L. - **DOB:** 3/27 **DX:** Dementia. **ADL's:** Can perform most ADL's. Needs assistance. **Behavior:** Depression, agitated, severe STM impairment, however her awareness of this is intact and she will let the group know when she loses track of the conversation. She can also initiate conversation. Profession: actress.
- Leslie M. - **DOB:** 1/16/15 **DX:** Dementia. **ADL's:** Needs assistance with dressing, bathing, prompting to go to the bathroom. **Behavior:** Quiet, pleasant, does not initiate conversation.
- Ron R. - **DOB:** 5/29 **DX:** Dementia/AD. **ADL's:** Can perform all with minimal assistance. **Behavior:** Good mood, imitates and follows conversation, quiet tone of voice. Profession: UCLA research dermatologist.
- Martin S. - **DOB:** 2/22/27 **DX:** Dementia. **ADL's:** Can perform most ADL's. **Behavior:** Depression, fatigue, pleasant demeanor, good sense of humor. Martin struggles with fatigue due to lack of sleep and medications.
- Chuck S. - **DOB:** 12/16/34 **DX:** Dementia. **ADL's:** Can perform all ADL's. **Behavior:** Pleasant, good mood, initiates conversation and can track flow of conversation, good sense of humor.
- Arnold S.- **DOB:** 4/18/23 **DX:** Dementia. **ADL's:** Needs assistance with bathing and dressing, needs to be prompted to go to the bathroom. **Behavior:** Quiet, pleasant demeanor, does not initiate conversation and has difficulty tracking flow of conversation.

## *Description of the workshops*

### *Musical Listening with Drawing Workshop*

Usually, the workshops are comprised of four-session series.

As a first try, we offered these 8 individuals a special program of 5 consecutive once-weekly meetings.

This program includes a first session without musical listening where the individual crafts a “free” (reference) drawing, as well as a final session without music, where an assessment of the drawings is offered. The sessions take place in the same location, at the same time, and with the same individuals. Each person is invited to express his or her experience on drawing paper using water-colored crayons while s/he listens to the music (variable duration according to the session). Then a time for exchange is offered. Each person has an opportunity to talk about what s/he drew and/or experienced.

## *The Music*

For the most part, the technique uses improvised music. It was not composed with the intention of creating a certain effect on listeners, and can thus be considered as “non-conditioning”. As studies have shown, the spontaneous nature of music is of undeniable importance to music therapy. It is probably this aspect that incited a sophrologist who regularly uses the technique to say: “The music allows listeners to break through mental barriers without setting off a self-protection mechanism.” The technique is based on a single work of music; its musical continuity allows for an extension of thought and affective expression, which is conducive to psychotherapeutic work. The music can thus be considered as having a “convergent”(\*) effect.

## *Schedule of Sessions*

*Music Appointments: one session per week on a set day: Monday at 11:00 am.*

<i>Session</i>	<i>Lenght</i>	<i>Day</i>
Reference drawing #1 without music + evaluation	1/2 h	June-8
# 1: music session with CD # 1= Ph IV CD1	1/2 h	June-8
# 2: music session with CD # 2= Ph IV CD2	1 h	June-15
# 3: music session with CD # 3= Ph III CD6	1 h	June -22
# 4: music session with CD # 4 = Ph IV CD6	1 h	June-29
# 5: music session with CD # 5 = Ph IV CD4	1/2 h	July-6
Reference drawing #2 without music + evaluation	1 h	July-6
Evaluation with the group: Group leaders & Chantal	1 h	July-13
Evaluation: Anne & Chantal	2 h	July-13

*Note: some of the participants attended a catch-up session on Thursday when they had missed a Monday session.*

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(\*) “...convergent in this sense meaning the effect of withdrawing from the body; relaxing, feeling secure and slowing biological rhythms...” Introduction à l'acousticothérapie. D. Feldman, P. Gardey, J. Reynaud, 1985.

## *Goals of the Workshops*

### *General Goals of the Catharsis Technique:*

- To use a new tool with therapeutic aims;
- To increase the subjects' well-being;
- To bring physical relaxation, change of posture;
- To create a feeling of security and of belonging to a group;
- To create bonds between the participants, recognition of and interest in others;
- To increase verbal exchanges between the participants and the leaders;
- To enrich individual verbal and non-verbal communication;
- To relieve distress and emotions linked to the re-surfacing of traumatic events (grief, unresolved conflicts, etc.,) by giving voice to the individual's experience and anxiety;
- To create more holistic and personalized relationships with each person;
- To emphasize more reassuring relationships with others;
- To work out the issues of separation, processing of grief, and/or progression of an illness;
- To prevent isolation and withdrawing;
- To enrich the caregiver-patient-family lines of communication.

In addition to these generalized effects, there are also specific effects for each person. These specific effects can serve as the basis of a deeper psychological work.

### *Specific Goals at Opica:*

The musical program being offered is a simplified program specifically conceived for this group. It serves as an introduction to the complete Catharsis Technique program and has the following goals:

#### *For Opica:*

- to discover a new activity that could be integrated into their program for optimum health and healing,
- to play a leading role in the improved understanding of dementia and to use this new technique to advance and disseminate more effective treatments for Alzheimer's and dementia.

#### *For Dr. Amouyal and Chantal Desmoulins, creators of the Catharsis Technique:*

Building on the results of the Opica project, to create an interdisciplinary research team for the collaborative study of Alzheimer's and dementia through Art and Music Therapy. An important objective of this research program would be to provide training for professionals, families, and communities, to develop partnerships, and to create a forum for the exchange of ideas.

## *Evaluation of the Workshops*

The Catharsis Technique workshop was introduced and presented by Anne Gailbraith as a recognized and established program in France that is not yet known in the USA. We thus specified that all results, drawings, and commentaries could be used as preliminary findings in a research project aimed at helping individuals suffering from cognitive illnesses.

The introductory presentation proved to be quite rewarding for the 8 participants, who enthusiastically welcomed the idea of a new activity. They showed great cooperation with Chantal Desmoulins by accepting her difficulties with the English language with good humor, all the while participating in the workshop with seriousness and commitment.

The instructions and the reasons for the workshop were often repeated during the first three sessions. This was no longer necessary for the remainder of the sessions for most of the participants.

After the 4th session, 6 out of 8 participants recognized the space, and 4 of the 8 were able to reiterate the goal of the workshop.

Chantal Desmoulins' presence was integrated from the 3rd session on.

During the first three sessions, including the reference session without music, the drawing time was fairly short; everyone finished his or her drawing before the end of the musical piece, or the time fixed.

After the third session, 6 out of 8 individuals drew for the entirety of the musical piece. After the fourth session, 6 out of 8 individuals finished their drawing after the musical listening.

When asked by the leaders, some of them were happy to give a title to their drawing and to let the others guess what title they had chosen. This provided special moments, mixing humor and question-response exchanges that grew more and more connecting.

The verbalizations, at first hesitant and without significant emotional or personal implications, gradually transformed into rich experiences with expressions of rage, or tears, or joy. With more sessions, these kinds of revelations and sharing would have certainly increased.

### *Important note:*

The titles of the musical pieces were never shared with the participants.

No explanatory information was given on the possible effects of the music.

*Reference drawing #1 without music + evaluation*

*Number of participants: 7*

*Number of absent participants who completed the session on the following Thursday: 1*

*Quality of the session:*

Each participant needed a lot of help to complete the space test. The reference drawing without music triggered the habitual reaction of unease due to the fear of being judged by what one produces.

Nevertheless, the desire to do a good job was such that everyone really tried to contribute to the idea of a research project that was announced at the beginning of the session.

This group was used to communicating. So, right away at the first session, each person was able to share the key points of their history in a clear and direct manner.

*Commentaries:*

Gabby: "I feel like I am in kindergarten." She wrote: "May be" and asked several times, "What are we doing?" "I am thinking Chaos. I am in ecstasy. What are we doing now? **I want to learn how to grow old. I am angry because nobody teaches how to grow old and it's hard. We need guidance.**"

Bud: He copied a drawing of a house that he brought in from a newspaper. "The house I like."

Chuck: He wrote down "drawing reminds me of a trip down the Colorado River in a raft (that was a great trip)." When asked to say something about his image, he looked at it for a while and decided to call it "pleasure".

Ron: "I don't know how to draw. Let it flow. What I think I tried to do, I titled it 'complexity seeking structure'. Reality of daily life with this disease. Things that used to be straightforward are now complex. Keep seeking structure. Find chaos discomforting. Interesting experience. Title flowed from "picture" created. It was without an organized plan from the unconscious."

Martin: "I am having trouble; I won't admit it (what I am feeling). Confused. **A lot of unresolved situations in my life (why I am confused).**"

Leslie: Had some difficulties figuring out how to use the pastels to his "complete satisfaction".

Arnold: "What is to be done? Info wanted? I think OPICA is a unique excellent source for information."

### *Music session # 1*

*Number of participants: 7*

*Number of absent participants who completed the session on the following Thursday: 1*

*Musical theme:* CALLING OUT (invitation to take a journey) - Duration: 10 min.

Initial hypothesis: The first stages of a successive descent into the layers of one's being, much like taking a personal inventory. A moment of inspiring contemplation when faced with oneself: one listens, observes, and rediscovers what the music triggers and reveals.

This is the beginning of the "listeners' mental preparation", conditioning them for the slow revival of their emotional past. Opening listeners' consciousness is an important experience that allows them to connect with the riches of their inner worlds and join the community of humankind.

Frequently reported effects:

- aids in self-reflection,
- develops self-awareness,
- injects enthusiasm and relaxes listeners at the end of the piece, if they accept this deep self-exploration.

*Quality of the session:*

The members all enjoyed the music, commenting that the rhythm exactly matched what they needed. They left calmed. Six of them expressed that they found their interest in participating in this work surprising and that the work spoke to them. Two of the participants shared that the music created a kind of connection that allowed them to no longer feel alone and lost.

*Commentaries :*

Gaby: She picked up a red pastel and drew to the music. She wrote, "Where are you?" "I feel tranquilized. I was looking for something lively but it didn't turn out. I would like to be involved in something lively." Gabby began drawing without prompting.

Bud: "Fear. My landing at Normandy. I was very scared."

After the session: "I feel tranquil and relaxed. Reminiscing."

Chuck: "Very much enjoyed listening to the music."

Ron: "The music gives a feeling of peace, tranquility, in a funny kind of way. Gives me a sense of connection with nature. Beauty. Safely connecting with beauty of nature. It was a very pleasant and relaxing experience." Ron began drawing without prompting. "Peace. Pax liquidis. Drawing from the feeling of peace, tranquility and safety found in this brief "voyage" to a calm, free and welcoming place on a sunny, quiet day."

Martin: "Very calming. And the music plays on..."

Leslie: Hand movement to the music. "Restful. I used to write songs."

Arnold: No drawing. Wrote the word "music" and also what he was noticing in the other members. He ripped his paper and refused to give it back. "It was very helpful. It focused my attention. Music was an excellent addition, it was an interval to focus on. Music helps to clear concentration."

Herbert: It was difficult for him to understand this activity. He needed help. He wondered why they were doing this.

## *Music session # 2*

*Number of participants: 7*

*Number of absent participants who completed the session on the following Thursday: 1*

*Musical theme: PLATFORM (refocusing) - Duration: 13 min.*

### Initial hypothesis::

This theme powerfully evokes waves and movements of water that can carry everything. By extension, they can even carry the profound emotional movement in us. It awakens old instincts from the depths of time that orient us with certainty toward a central peace, the center of ourselves, the home of the inner voice which gives us advice on how to survive and act.

### Frequently reported effects:

Carefully listening to this music can help listeners:

- refocus during periods of difficulty and unrest,
- re-live grief and moments of torment, thus freeing the listeners from them,
- feel soothed and relaxed, even to the point of falling asleep while listening.

### *Quality of the session:*

No enthusiasm. Everyone seemed somewhat languid, with little connection to the other individuals. No one spoke before beginning. Everyone seemed tired. The music listening reinforced an attitude of introspection in all participants.

### *Commentaries:*

Gaby : "I feel like I am back in kindergarten. I have lived with musicians all my life."

When asked how she felt, she answered: "Hungry!"

Bud : "I love music. Usually at home I find it very soothing and relaxing. But drawing to music... I don't know. I find flowers very beautiful."

Chuck : "I never went to kindergarten. Hard time getting started - couldn't think of what to do. I feel fine."

Ron : "The abstract music brought up feelings about life and its meanings. I went through sadness to hope."

Martin : "Looking at it in one direction could be harming. It helps you, I didn't know I was that good. But I liked it." Experience during the session: "Some things I liked and some I didn't like."

Leslie : "I came in wondering what's going on here. I learned. I find it fulfilling - to see where you sit and belong. A feeling of being grateful for all of my blessings. I hear, see, feel. Lucky to be here. I wrote songs all through the war."

*Note: Leslie shared a lot during this session. He even initiated certain conversations. After this day, Leslie often began sessions with a song that he said he composed.*

Arnold: "I love the music. It was beautiful. I am very grateful. Music-colors."

Herbert : "I like drawing with music and the music is like parade soldiers."

### *Music session # 3*

*Number of participants: 6*

*Number of absent participants who completed the session on the following Thursday: 2*

*Musical theme: PASSAGE (maturation) - Duration: 18 min.*

#### Initial hypothesis::

We learn good reflexes and repeat good gestures; this transforms us into adults, at which point we let go of the helping hands for a moment. Now we must face the trials of the passage to adulthood and experience the stages of growth. At the end of the passage, on the other side of the bank, we find that we are renewed, enriched, more beautiful, and ready to overcome difficulties.

#### Frequently reported effects:

- encourages action,
- helps listeners watch their lives play out before them like a film,
- relaxes and creates a sense of well-being,
- offers serenity to both the body and mind.

#### *Quality of the session:*

All participants showed a change in the drawing process. They took more time for the drawing and gave more attention to certain details. Everyone was much more interested in what the others created. They really enjoyed the game of guessing the titles of the others' drawings.

Leslie was in good form, singing a song and engaging in conversation with everyone. A mood of humor and happiness. At least 4 of the participants shared that the rhythm and tonality of music corresponded exactly to what they needed. Everything seemed to be right in their individual worlds.

#### *Commentaries:*

Gaby : Before the session, she said that she felt nothing, that she had no feeling. During the session, she smiled a lot, fell asleep, and drew again. Changed the position of her paper from horizontal to vertical. She spoke in French: "the music is sad. The mood is dark." At the end, she said: "I don't know how I feel. I like the music. Who plays the music?" About her drawing, she said: "I don't know what's going on, it doesn't connect with me." Title: a face, an abstraction.

Bud : Seemed to be experimenting more with the media. Made a lot of circles with different colors then added water to the circles. "Relaxed, the music relaxed me. I feel very relaxed. I drew things that came to my mind."

Chuck : "I don't know what to do." - Then he started drawing a tree. He was delighted to have the group guess the title of his drawing. "I enjoyed the music but I was so busy drawing that I didn't listen."

Ron : "Life is a complex mixing of joy and sorrows, happiness and tears. Life goes on through it all."

Martin : Appeared to be painting (drawing in sync with the music). "Too remote." "Fine, the music was calm - what I needed."

Leslie : Had difficulty with the second part of the exercise as he did not remember drawing or listening to music previously. He felt comfortable while listening to the music; he started singing. "Comfortable, enjoyable, interesting."

Arnold: He was drawing his usual symbols, shifted from writing words. "Fine, I like the music. Good music, it is soothing and relaxing."

Herbert : He drew more today - wanted to add more to the drawing during the writing phase. "Fine." "I like the music, I liked that it was low and soft. Drawing of a flower box." He made small green lines and colors. "I draw flower boxes, planter boxes. When you have a house and there are boxes around the house and you put flowers in them."

#### *Music session # 4*

*Number of participants: 5*

*Number of absent participants who completed the session on the following Thursday: 2*

*Musical theme:* CERTAINTY (couples) - Duration: 13 min.

Initial hypothesis::

Gradually triggers listeners' emotional past, tied to past relationships with others, allows repressed memories to surface: listeners begin to see their lives play out before them like a film.

Moving into the innermost depths of themselves, they perceive the echo of an inner voice that seems to live deep within. It is a voice which slowly reminds us of mysterious certainty; it rouses nostalgia for an ancient Paradise which supports us and follows us wherever we go, a Paradise that revives the hopes of true love.

Frequently reported effects:

- brings out suffering caused by separations or divorces,
- calls women to their feminine role, whether they have enjoyed this role in the past or not,
- reassures and calms listeners if they accept these zones of suffering that have resurfaced.

*Quality of the session:*

One member was absent and could not take part in the Thursday session. All had difficulties expressing themselves and externalizing their experience.

*Commentaries:*

Bud: Drew a circle and filled it in grey, turning it into a clock showing three o'clock.

Chuck: Made a colorful drawing and spent some time thinking of a title. "Trying to draw something I liked - colors. Yellow-sun, green-grass, blue-blue eyes, pink, it is like Nikki's shirt so I think I'll take you home. I don't think Barbara would like that. I will title it 'spokes'."

Ron: "I responded to the feeling of the music with tears - eruption of fire - sadness, green coming out of sadness. Hope. I draw my feelings. I felt a little depressed and not alive when I came, no enthusiasm. Now I feel more engaged, alive."

Martin: "Multicolor" - "I was in my thoughts, not really feeling the music. Next time better. Bewildered."

Arnold: Wrote "good music" on his paper, closed his eyes, listened, and fell asleep. No drawing. "Nothing to say."

Herb: Said that he did not like the music, so he drew without listening. "I like to see blue and yellow go together. Some colors go together and some don't. I was "thinking" the colors. I played with blending them together and you can work on top of them... I worry about family." Then he stopped speaking.

*Number of participants: 7*

*Absent: one member*

*Musical Theme: THEY CAME TO US (a helping hand) - Duration: 18 min.*

Initial hypothesis::

A real friend is someone who helps you grow.

This theme evokes the companionship present throughout our lives - the parents and teachers who extended their hands to us one day to help us get through an important step by transmitting knowledge that helped us grow. The immaturity present in all of us needs to be supported and protected until our consciousness grows, opening up to a larger, more adult perception of the world.

Frequently reported effects:

- supports listeners and prepares them to take action,
  - brings peace and opens listeners' consciousness,
  - gives listeners a feeling of accomplishment,
  - often produces a profound sleep-inducing effect.
- It seems to be linked to feelings of being helped and protected.

*Quality of the session:*

With the exception of one person who did not enjoy the music (Herb), which surprised the others, everyone found the music very special and moving and involved themselves even more in the drawing, seeking to express their feelings through graphic expression to the best of their abilities.

Herb was quite troubled; the music seemed to bring up painful memories that he tried to get away from. He had increasing difficulty with relating his experience, but said that he didn't know if he "couldn't" or "wouldn't" talk about it. The others felt his distress and tried to ask him questions, but recognized that he didn't want to take it further and respected his decision.

*Commentaries: (Members continued drawing when music stopped)*

Gaby: "Make a joke! Very dreamy."

Chuck: "I don't know what it is. I feel relaxed. It was pleasant. I am trying to think of a title." Chuck asked Herb what he didn't like about the music. Couldn't think of a title: "The multiple tits. I felt relaxed with the music."

Ron: Asked Chuck what he had in mind when he did the drawing. About the music, he said: "It was very evocative. The music evoked anger at my present plight. Sadness represents my present plight. During the session, I gained some perspective, awareness and return of optimism after expressing my anger and sadness."

Martin: "Sweeter."

Leslie: "Very content. I like the music."

Arnold: "The music was soothing and relaxing." Closed eyes while listening to the music: "unusual, excellent music. It was fun; I feel very good. The music was very good." Title: 'Circles, dots, colors'.

Herbert: "I don't like the music. I feel disoriented. I am thinking a lot, I don't know how to explain my feelings. It's a full plate."

*Reference drawing #2 without music + evaluation*

*Number of participants: 7*

*Absent: one member*

*Quality of the session:*

Except for Herb, who didn't complete the space test the first time, everyone completed the test much more quickly than at the first meeting. Only Leslie still asked for help.

At the time of the reference drawing, they were all surprised at the absence of music, but, after an explanation, they all set to drawing quickly and easily.

Despite the lack of time, it was surprising to see them all concentrated and drawing attentively. It seemed as if the idea for the drawing came easily and of itself. Very few used color and, for most of them, there was a large difference between the drawing without music and those made with music.

*Commentaries:*

Gaby : "It was very nice, pleasant."

Chuck : "I feel nice. My title is 'Geometry'."

Ron : "I started the day feeling somewhat depressed - sad about my diagnosis. Then it was a constructive exercise, my mood improved. I finish this morning feeling like I "climbed the mountain" and the day was once again bright and promising. I feel quite happy now. I found this experience of drawing with music fascinating. I really like it."

Martin : "Sweeter than ever."

Leslie : "Connie loves Leslie and Leslie loves Connie."

Arnold : "It was interesting. It feels nice." Title: 'Circles in triangles'.

Herbert : "I feel fine. I was just thinking 'complete the circles' and knowing the direction to proceed with the circles following."

## Conclusion

The goal of the Catharsis workshops is to stimulate the emotions of individuals suffering from dementia or presenting memory disturbances by allowing them to awaken memories, thoughts, and cognitive abilities, allowing them to regain the feeling of existing as an individual.

The music joined with the graphic expression helps with re-centering and thus brings a feeling of stability and re-organization that can considerably improve their daily lives.

This path often passes through a phase where it is necessary to understand the origin of a deep wound that can fester over time and inhibits one's ability to live. Each participant had his/her own way to begin this work:

- *Ron* by expressing clearly his rebellion and sadness when faced with the diagnosis of this illness and the ensuing possibility of finding, deep in his soul, wells of hope that will help him to climb mountains,
- *Leslie* by singing of his need for love in all tones,
- *Gabby* in the search for her real face and for something that can stimulate her desire to live,
- *Herb* by allowing, from time to time, a word on the suffering he experienced during the wars and then by holding fast to the colors of life,
- *Arnold* by clinging to his intellect and mental ability, upon which he has relied his whole life and then by slowly letting go off those in order to explore the emotional realms of his past,
- *Martin and Bud* by drawing with increasing fervor to try to channel everything that the music brought up,
- *Chuck* by using humor and taking interest in the others in order to possibly escape his own conflicts.

# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

- Bud K. -

*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Bud K. - DOB: 6/7/25 DX: MCI. ADL's: Can perform with minimal assistance. **Behavior:** Social, appears open and in good mood. Shows mild depression but is able to track and initiate conversation.

Final results completed together at Opica:

Bud did not complete the final two drawings. He was absent for the evaluation.

Synthesis:

Even without the final drawings, we could still note a change taking place in Bud's drawings, in the way he explored colors and in the growing movement.

It would have been interesting to see what he would have drawn after the clock: for this last drawing, the idea came of itself quite quickly and he took the time to finish all the details that he wanted to represent, even after the music was over.

We could see in him the importance of boxes, and thus a need for structure: for example, in his first space test he made 8 boxes by folding the paper (the instructions are to fold the paper in 4). We could also notice the number of small windows in the house in drawing #1, the portholes in the boat in drawing #2, the four flowers and the five blobs of color in drawing #3, the colored grid in drawing #4. Drawing #5, with its central clock, certainly announced a change that it would have been interesting to observe.

Scale of evaluation



Reference drawing #1 without music



Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

- *Herbert L.* -

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*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Herbert L. - DOB:12/20 DX: Dementia. Overall good health. ADL's: Can perform all ADL's with reminders. Behavior: Quiet. Appears to track conversation of the group. Responds when directly addressed. Profession: Fighter pilot.

## Final results completed together at Opica:

Presentation of his series after Gabby's.

Gabby immediately commented on the difference between her work and Herb's: little drawings in the corners of the paper whereas she had used the whole space of the paper. She commented: "I am extraverted and he is introverted." She turned to him, asking for confirmation. At these words, and seeing his drawings again, Herb seemed touched and close to tears. He said that they reminded him of the two wars he had experienced and the friends that he had lost. Chuck asked if he had killed anyone... Herb was sadly lost in his thoughts.

Chantal commented on one of the drawings of plants growing in a large pot-she especially commented on the beauty of the green and noted that Herb took care to create a watering system for the plants. Herb confirmed that and smiled: "That's exactly what I wanted to do." He calmed down, smiled, and seemed to lose himself in this living part of his drawing.

## Synthesis:

Herb is a veteran, a fighter pilot, who still carries painful war memories that he avoids. These small shapes certainly showed his introspective character, all of the conflicts, everything that he tried to contain, just as he tried to contain his tears during the evaluation when the memory of his friends who were killed during the war resurfaced.

The space test #2 - he only completed the second one at the end of the workshop - communicated the same idea.

He folded a corner of the paper and placed all of the circles in this fold. When he said that he didn't like the music on some days and that he hadn't listened to it because of that, but had been focused on his drawing, he showed that his psyche knows how to establish mechanisms of defense that protect him from emotions that he either cannot or will not deal with, as he expressed himself.

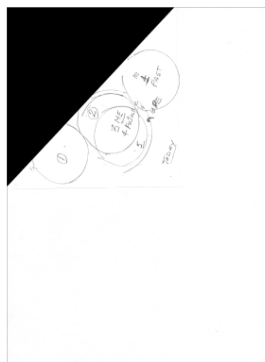
It was interesting to note the variety in his use of space:

- one time bottom left,
- then top left,
- then top right (two times),
- bottom right
- high center
- and, finally, a central position.

It is as if Herb was exploring, with little touches, different parts of himself.

His last drawing, with an arrow and target, seemed to communicate a kind of re-centering.

Scale of evaluation



Reference drawing #1 without music



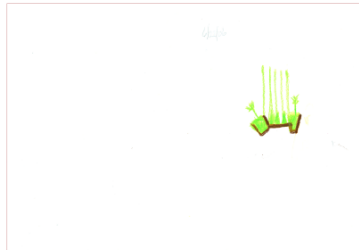
Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



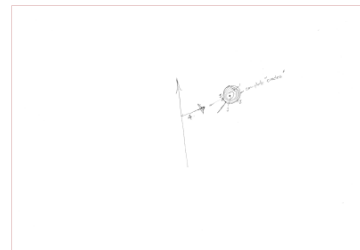
Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



Session # 5: music session with CD # 5



Reference drawing #2 without music



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

## - Gaby L. -

*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Gabby L. - DOB: 3/27 DX: Dementia. ADL's: Can perform most ADL's. Needs assistance. **Behavior:** Depression, agitated, severe STM impairment, however her awareness of this is intact and she will let the group know when she loses track of the conversation. She can also initiate conversation. Profession: actress.

### Final results completed together at Opica:

Gabby was very happy and validated by the fact that everyone recognized the artistic quality of her drawings. She smiled a lot and was very cooperative and remained so for the entirety of the session. This evaluation seemed to interest her and she made pertinent comments on everyone's work. She only interrupted twice to say "I am lost" but then easily re-joined the flow of the conversation. She shared with us that she really enjoyed this process of drawing with music; it reminded her of a happy phase in her life when she did similar things in an art school.

She said to Chantal: "You can say more, I'm ready." She said several times, "That is very interesting." At the end she said, "Very true...!" Several times during the sessions she said: "I am very angry because nobody teaches how to grow old and it's hard. We need guidance." She insisted this time that the session was really interesting and gave her a lot. Her behavior was really different than during the first session where she'd expressed feeling like she was in preschool.

### Synthesis:

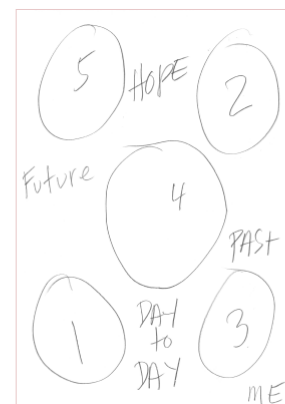
Gabby is an artist; she is expressive and often gently provocative, with a kind of self-derision that is surprising. These character traits were easily observed in her series of drawings. There again it was interesting to note the development of the drawings, abstract at the beginning and figurative after drawing #3. She seemed to make faces emerge from the chaos; sometimes a couple, sometimes a more masculine face, but then finished with a feminine face, maybe her own.

It was also interesting to note that she was the only woman in the group and that she used her paper vertically (the masculine pole). We could see a real attempt to communicate, a real need to be with others. On drawing #1 with music, she wrote: "Where are you?", which, along with the "US" on the top of drawing #6 certainly refers to her country, but also to "US: me and the others". (Note: she was clearly inspired by a cap that one of the participants wore with USA on it, not US, for this drawing.) The space test also showed an enlargement of the circles, and her commentary, which became more and more positive, showed that this activity had met her expectations: "I was looking for something lively but it didn't turn out. I would like to be involved in something lively."

Scale of evaluation 1



Scale of evaluation 2



Reference drawing #1 without music



Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



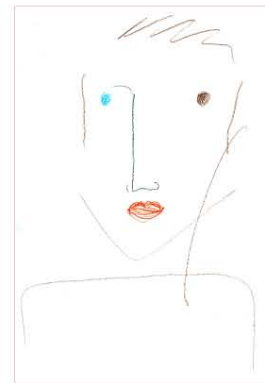
Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



Session # 5: music session with CD # 5



Reference drawing #2 without music



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

- *Leslie M.* -

*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Leslie M. - DOB: 1/16/15 DX: Dementia. ADL's: Needs assistance with dressing, bathing, prompting to go to the bathroom. Behavior: Quiet, pleasant, does not initiate conversation.

## Final results completed together at Opica:

He recognized his own drawings; he drew hearts every time. He asked why we were showing his drawings and then made a little commentary on each of his productions, detailing whose names he had written in the hearts. He didn't really participate in the evaluation, but now and again commented on a detail in one of the other's drawings or asked a question about the meaning of what they had drawn.

## Synthesis:

Leslie had the most difficulty with this workshop, especially at the moment of verbalization because he never remembered listening to the music. In his drawings, we could see the repetition of the theme of a heart cut in two with an arrow exiting on the right. This was not, however, a kind of absolute perseveration, because the use of the page varied: sometimes it was vertical, sometimes horizontal, the colors changed, as well as the position in the space. The space tests #1 and #2 were also very different. The stroke of the circles was more pronounced at the end of the workshops. The paper was folded correctly and used vertically (in the first test, the paper was set horizontally) and the circles were concentrated in the center. At the behavioral level, Leslie also changed. After the 3rd session, he began to initiate conversation more often, or arrived singing, drawing everyone present into his wave of joy.

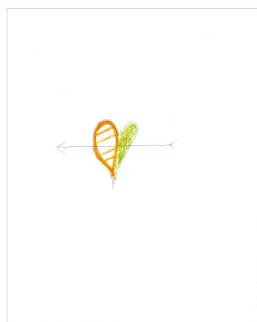
Scale of evaluation 1



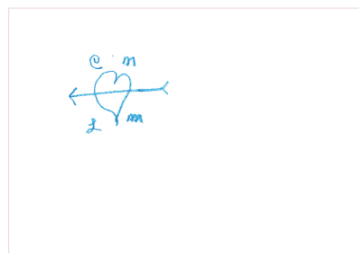
Scale of evaluation 2



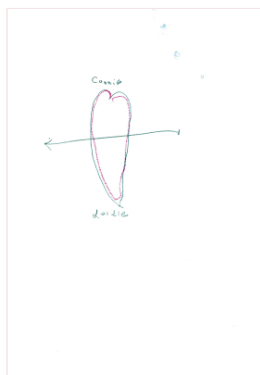
Reference drawing #1 without music



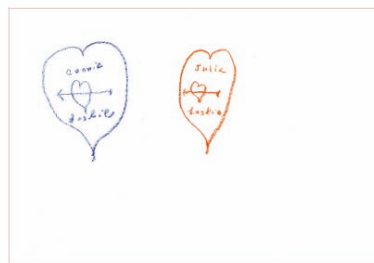
Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



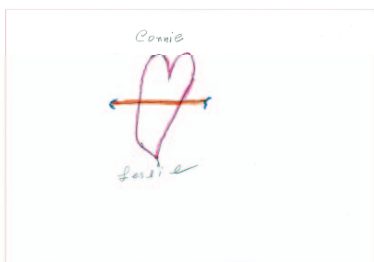
Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



Session # 4: music session with CD # 5



Reference drawing #2 without music



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

- Ron R. -

*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Ron R. - DOB: 5/29 DX: Dementia/AD. ADL's: Can perform all with minimal assistance. Behavior: Good mood, imitates and follows conversation, quiet tone of voice. Profession: UCLA research dermatologist.

## Final results completed together at Opica:

Ron expressed again how difficult it was to accept the diagnosis of his illness. Having used his brain in his work his whole life, he didn't think that he could be struck with this illness.

The positive aspect of this experience, according to him, was that it permitted him to give more space to his emotions. He loved the music and this process of drawing while listening to music interested him greatly. He was able to easily connect to his emotions and express them on his drawing paper without being worried about the result.

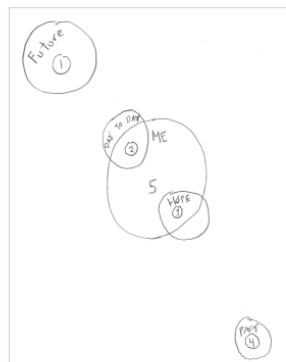
He appreciated seeing the diversity in everyone's universe, represented through their drawings. He said that he couldn't remember when he made one or the other drawing but when he saw them again he got back in touch with his feelings: often sadness or even depression, followed by a feeling of liberation. He admired his last drawing and the hope that it transmitted, and he communicated that he remembered a feeling of well-being after each drawing. This process stimulated his desire to live. He said that he even dared to speak of hope.

## Synthesis:

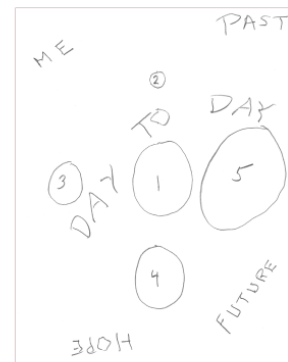
It was easy to see the evolution of his drawings: anxiety and anger (black vortex in the center) expressed in the first drawing without music as well as depressive elements well illustrated by the direction of the arrows pointing from the top to the bottom. The tears and the ascending movement of the last drawing indicated enthusiasm and courage. The other drawings gave voice to a range of obsessions (points, details), anxiety and sadness (black, tears), and hope (yellow and green colors) in a struggle where, little by little, hope and optimism seemed to gain footing, until the final drawing (reference drawing without music #2) where the artist declared himself ready to "climb every mountain."

The space tests confirmed this progression of liberation. The round #1 at the center indicated that a re-centering was underway. The little circles that encircle the numbers (sign of inhibition and withdrawal) had disappeared and all of the space of the paper was used.

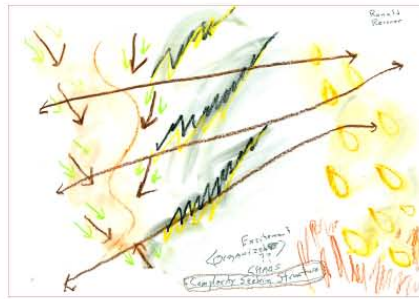
Scale of evaluation 1



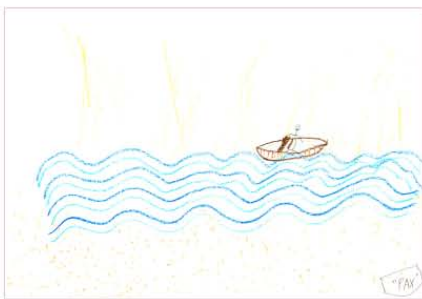
Scale of evaluation 2



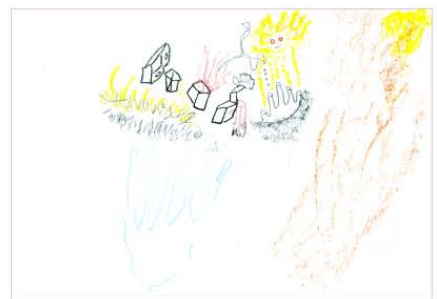
Reference drawing #1 without music



Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



Session # 5: music session with CD # 5



Reference drawing #2 without music



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

- *Martin S.* -

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*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Martin S. - DOB: 2/22/27 DX: Dementia. ADL's: Can perform most ADL's. **Behavior:** Depression, fatigue, pleasant demeanor, good sense of humor. Martin struggles with fatigue due to lack of sleep and medications.

Final results completed together at Opica:

Absent when the evaluation was done.

## Synthesis:

Martin was the one participant who revealed himself the least. He found increasing pleasure in using color and being careful to harmoniously combine the colors. He spent a great deal of time on his drawings. He didn't want to talk about himself and often disappeared in his thoughts for a long time without sharing them with us. Once at the beginning, he expressed that he knew that there were things in his life that were unresolved but he did not return to this.

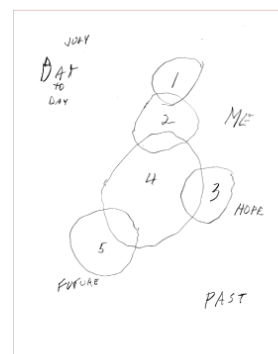
Like Herb, as soon as the music touched him or threatened to draw him into painful emotional realms, he clung to the colors and his drawing.

A very important change was perceptible in his two space tests: the first was confused, all the circles were superimposed; the second was more clear, the paper was used vertically and the circles were more clearly seen. We might say that the second test continued the work of ordering that was begun in reference drawing #1. In the reference drawing #2 as well, there was a sense of ordering: the colors were separated from each other. It was interesting to see the energy that was released in Martin's drawings. There was no evidence of the impression of fatigue and slowness that he exuded in daily life.

Scale of evaluation 1



Scale of evaluation 2



Reference drawing #1 without music



Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



Session # 5: music session with CD # 5



Reference drawing #2 without music



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

- *Chuck S.* -

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*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Chuck S. - **DOB:** 12/16/34 **DX:** Dementia. **ADL's:** Can perform all ADL's. **Behavior:** Pleasant, good mood, initiates conversation and can track flow of conversation, good sense of humor.

## Final results completed together at Opica:

Chuck didn't really recognize his drawings at the beginning. It took some time before he began to speak. He especially remembered something that he called 'The Garden of Eden'. This man, who often had a very good sense of humor, seemed closed to this evaluation without ever expressing that overtly.

Each of the other participants commented on what they saw and Chantal made a few comments. At the end, when Anne asked him how he felt, he answered, "I guess pretty all right."

Chuck seemed to doze off several times while we were looking at the others' drawing series, but when he opened his eyes, he asked a question or made a pertinent remark on the work at hand. This evaluation seemed to be difficult for him. His good mood and sense of humor seemed affected. Moreover, his comments on the others' work provoked little reactions, sometimes even intense emotion. That was the case with Herbert, who was already emotionally distressed by the painful memories of the two wars he had experienced.

## Synthesis:

Chucks' first drawing seemed to announce the transition from one bank to another, with a boat that was just setting off on its course. This drawing symbolized the work that begins and which can sometimes allow a deep exploration of certain subconscious realms. The blue and green of the beginning could be traced through practically every drawing, as if he were exploring an aspect of this journey in each of his drawings.

The sparse nature of his drawings reinforced their archetypal significance:

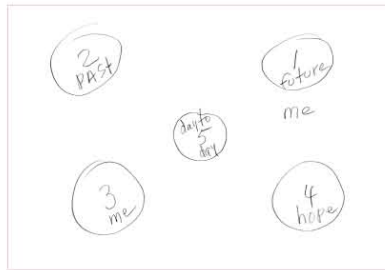
- the high mountain and progressive spiral of drawing #1,
- solitude and difficulties with communication conveyed by the closed house of drawing #2,
- recalling the original sin with drawing #3 of the Garden of Eden (a drawing that he immediately recognized during the evaluation, even though he made few comments on the other drawings),
- inner re-centering of drawing #4 with the rays of different colors that join together in the center (yellow circle),
- the discovery of 'hot zones' in drawing #6.

This was a series where the inner development clearly appeared through exploration and a courageous excavation of hidden realms. This could explain Chuck's discomfort during the evaluation and his insistent questioning of the other participants as if he was trying to root out the same hidden realms in the others that he sensed he had uncovered. The last drawing, reference drawing #2, confirmed this hypothesis.

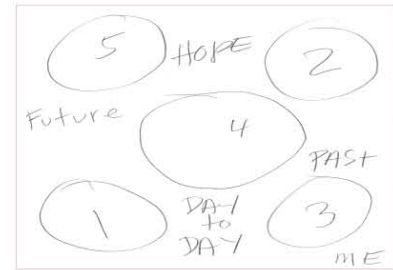
Chuck called his drawing 'Geometry'. The term geometry derives from the Greek "geometres" which means "surveyor" and which comes from "earth" and "metron" (measure). Geometry is then: "the science of measuring the earth". And that was exactly the symbolic work that Chuck was doing: he measured and evaluated his inner terrain.

The space test also translated a kind of beginning of liberation with the words that begin to escape the circles in which they had been imprisoned.

Scale of evaluation 1



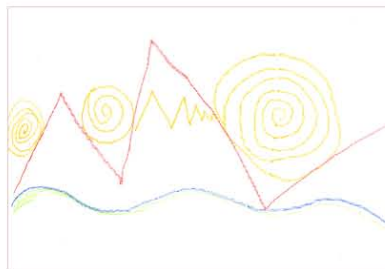
Scale of evaluation 2



Reference drawing #1 without music



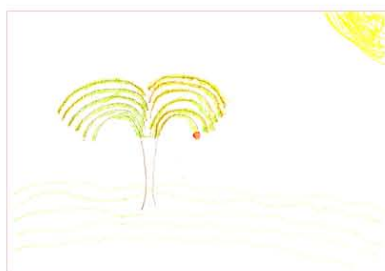
Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



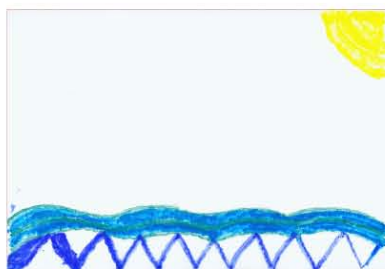
Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



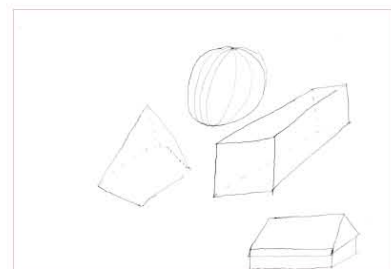
Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



Session # 5: music session with CD # 5



Reference drawing #2 without music



# CATHARSIS WORKSHOP

## - Arnold S. -

*Anne Galbraith, Director of Counseling*  
*Chantal Desmoulins, Catharsis Technique's trainer*

Arnold S. - DOB: 4/18/23 DX: Dementia. ADL's: Needs assistance with bathing and dressing, needs to be prompted to go to the bathroom. **Behavior:** Quiet, pleasant demeanor, does not initiate conversation and has difficulty tracking flow of conversation.

### Final results completed together at Opica:

Arnold, who was very focused during each of the sessions, exchanged very little about his feelings in general. He often closed his eyes and seemed lost in his own universe in a state of calm and relaxation. After each session, he spoke very little about his experience, but always expressed that he liked the music, that it was beautiful and relaxing, and exactly what he needed. During the evaluation, he commented very little on the others' drawings but always paid careful attention. During the few explanations given by Chantal, he was very open and smiling and exclaimed: "Everything is just right; it is not very often that one feels so understood. Thank you."

### Synthesis:

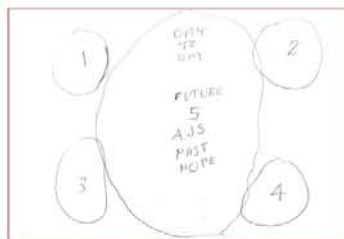
Arnold is very private and introverted and communicates very little. He had the habit, during the other workshops, of drawing colored and very detailed mandalas. For example, reference drawing #1 without music picked up on the figures that he usually drew. He used to be a lawyer, concerned with order and organization. He is very polite and well educated. Right away from the first session with music, it was clear that he felt nourished and ready to open himself to the world of the music. He was greatly disturbed by another participant who tapped his pencil while drawing. He was the only one to show that he was bothered. His controlled self didn't allow him to overtly express his anger, so he wrote on his paper, a paper that he ripped, as if he didn't want to leave any trace of his anger episode.

The 2nd drawing with music surprised Anne, the group leader, because it was the first time that she had seen him come out of his mandala system. There was also a clear difference between the drawings done without music and those done with. The first were centered (drawings #1 and #7) and the others were on the left (the past, interior life, introversion). Moreover, during session #3, he titled his drawing 'Random', and one couldn't help but make an association with 'random access memory', which is often associated with volatile types of memory where the information is lost after the power is switched off.

In his space test #1, Arnold placed the past in circle #1, as if, in the current phase of meditating on certain areas of his past, he saw it as a priority to try to reconnect with what seemed lost in a corner of his memory.

The last drawing without color seemed to be the freest, the most open, and the least obsessive. The space test #2 confirmed this step with a large centered circle where Arnold concentrated all the words, as if he had gathered together certain puzzle pieces of his spirit.

Scale of evaluation 1



Scale of evaluation 2



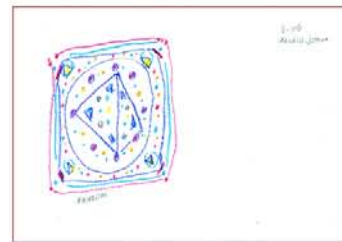
Reference drawing #1 without music



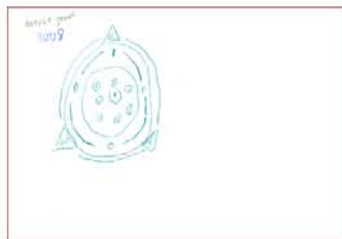
Session # 1: music session with CD # 1



Session # 2: music session with CD # 2



Session # 3: music session with CD # 3



Session # 4: music session with CD # 4



Reference drawing #2 without music

