Assessing Personality Through Tree Drawings



KAREN BOLANDER

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Assessing Personality Through Tree Drawings

KAREN BOLANDER

In this important innovative work, Dr. Karen Bolander presents a brilliant new interpretive method for the analysis of tree drawings for psychological assessment. Unlike earlier assessment techniques which focused on either children's drawings or those of adults with serious psychopathology, Dr. Bolander's emphasis is on the drawings of relatively normal, well-functioning adults.

The book provides much-needed normative data and challenges interpretations suggested by other systems which would more likely find signs in the drawings of serious mental disorder or mental retardation where neither in fact exists.

The presentation of the interpretive method is highly detailed, including a large number of figures, schemata, and actual drawings. Its systematic organization facilitates active practice in interpretation without memorization of every

(continued on back flap)

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Assessing Personality Through Tree Drawings

ASSESSING PERSONALITY THROUGH TREE DRAWINGS

KAREN BOLANDER

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FOREWORD

DURING RECENT YEARS, there has been a resurgence of interest in drawings as diagnostic aids and a corresponding increase in the number of publications on the subject. Concommitantly, drawings are being more extensively used by clinicians disillusioned with the failure of standardized psychometric tests to provide the information needed for the understanding and alleviation of the complex and subtle difficulties that afflict their patients. Undeterred by the fact that projectives do not meet the standards of reliability and validity demanded of psychometric tests, clinicians continue to apply more flexible methods of evaluation, firm in the belief that drawings are a personal expression that often reveal clues of diagnostic and even of therapeutic significance. Those among us who have taken the trouble to familiarize ourselves with drawings, consider them indispensable adjuncts in an evaluative process, often expressing sensitive material unavailable in verbal communication. Their value in working with young children, the language impaired, the mentally retarded, and the psychotic is, I believe, beyond question. The fact that the value of projective methods cannot be assessed independently of the skill of the clinician does not mean that they are without intrinsic value. We do not discard the stethoscope or the X-ray because of the skill required in deciphering its message. Standard methods of statistical analysis cannot be effective in evaluating clinical methods wherein experience, sensitivity, intuition, and judgment play a role that eludes quantification, and where the material under investigation is impressively complex.

Confronted with the problems of an indivisible personality that appeals for assistance, the clinician derives little comfort from the piece-meal contributions of the scientific method. It cannot be repeated too often that the whole is vastly greater than the sum of its parts.

The House-Tree-Person Test is widely used in psychological and psychiatric evaluation. It is maintained that both the drawing of a human figure and the drawing of a tree are projections of the body image and tap the core of the personality. Adults are less likely to summon ego-defenses when asked to draw a tree than in the more obviously personal drawing of the human figure. Besides the likelihood of revealing feelings about the Self and its relation to the environment, the tree is believed to represent the subject's life history and to unconsciously express biographical events, particularly those of an emotionally traumatic nature.

Dr. Bolander has devised a detailed method for study and interpretation of the symbolism of the tree. This she has accomplished independently of, and often at variance with, pre-existing procedures such as Buck's House-Tree-Person Test and Koch's Baumtest. She has produced a carefully prepared treatise, lucid in style, highly readable, and as free as possible from professional jargon, though the underlying concepts bear the influence of Jungian analytic psychology. (I read it with unflagging interest.) The sample population is weighted toward intelligent whites. The method, however, can be readily applied more broadly to a representative cross-section of the population. This should prove a fruitful field for further investigation. It is foreseeable that results and interpretation might vary substantially from those derived from the present sample.

After an informative historical survey of the vicissitudes of the projective movement in this country, of its rise, apparent demise, and current resurgence, this last due largely to dissatisfaction with the results of rigidly controlled attempts at quantification, the author enters into the substance of her method by presenting the reader with an incredibly detailed and comprehensive taxonomy of all possible types and shapes of trees and of their individual parts. Although stating that she does not pretend to have included everything, one is hard put to think of anything she may have omitted from the more than 100 schematic figures. This arrangement greatly facilitates classification of a particular specimen. The tree may be large or small, centered or off to one side, up in one or the other quadrant, leafy or barren, realistic or abstract, with exaggerated or understated emphasis on roots, trunk, or crown. This is but a bare sampling of the elaborate inventory of types and items that form the structural, objective base for what is to follow.

Central to the analysis and interpretation of the drawings is the assumption that the three basic parts of the tree—roots, trunk, and crown—symbolize, respectively, the instinctual, emotional, and mental aspects of the personality. Open communication between one part and the next expresses a free flow of vital force from roots to trunk to crown. It follows that a cut-off between the parts is indicative of unconscious repression. The author affirms that the method is intended for application to adults. I personally agree wholeheartedly with this statement, convinced that the drawing of a person is more productive where young children are concerned. There is, nevertheless, a striking concordance between the author's view that the trunk represents the emotional life and the typical emphasis on the trunk that almost invariably characterizes the tree as it is drawn by children. Emotions do play a dominant role in the behavior of young children.

If one accepts the author's basic premise and its logical corollaries, extension of interpretation into the significance of the rich inventory of details (called Special Signs), may be regarded as ingenious, reasonable, and

acceptable, if sometimes seemingly speculative. But after all, how can there be a general consensus where the material is highly complex, imbued with variables, and where the interpretation is, of necessity, largely subjective.

To the serious student of projectives and of tree drawings in particular, the author has rendered a most valuable service by her excellent taxonomy in bringing order out of chaos. Attention to this section will greatly enhance one's perception of a tree. The classification will serve as an objective basis from which to proceed to analysis. The method clearly and thoroughly described, prepares the way for an intelligent, insightful interpretation of the findings.

Case histories and reproduction of drawings are offered in support of the author's views and in illustration of how to go about analyzing and interpreting. I believe this volume to be an outstanding contribution that is destined to assume a prominent station in the literature on projective methods.

Having found the method effective in helping to diagnose and appropriately treat the relatively minor but disturbing and even disrupting "wide variety of psychological conflicts, difficulties in social and family adjustment, marital and other tensions" that beset contemporary adult life, Dr. Bolander shares the results of her labors and experience with professionals in the field of mental health, and offers a guiding hand in an adventurous journey through the enchanted forest.

Joseph H. Di Leo, M.D.
Author of *Children's Drawings as Diagnostic Aids*

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PART I

The Background

It is easier to know mankind in general
than any particular man.

François de La Rochefoucauld,
Les Maximes, 1666

1

Introduction and Origin of the Method

Therefore the tree is the image and mirror of our condition.

Andreas Alciatus,
Emblemata, 1538

THE METHOD of assessing the personality of an individual on the basis of his tree drawings, which constitutes the main body of this book, has been developed—and, we believe, has its primary applications—for approaching an understanding of subjects who are relatively well-functioning adults.

It may at first be distressing to persons who wish to learn the method of interpretation presented in part II that we have provided no system for scoring the elements to be observed in the drawings; neither have we worked out standards for "weighting" the importance to be attributed to the constituent parts. These omissions are deliberate, for all of the meanings suggested for particular details and/or structures in the drawings are to be taken as relative, integrated interpretation being always a function of the rendering of the tree as a whole.

As an alternative to a standardized scoring system, we have compiled information about a great many fine details which may be encountered in the drawings and have attempted to order this information into a system which might be called a "taxonomy of psychological signs."

In connection with the issue of lack of standardization, we want to emphasize that we do not regard our method as a test in any strict sense of the word. We must also state from the outset that this method has not been validated by others, and that our own attempts to justify our find-

ings have consisted primarily of matching synthesized interpretations with data from other tests or from the life histories of our subjects, and then examining them for congruence. These matters, together with our reasons for believing that the usual approaches to test validation are inappropriate for drawing techniques, will be elaborated upon in "Perspective on Projectives" and "The Integral Whole" chapters 2 and 3.

It should be made clear that the analysis of tree drawings—or of isolated "signs" within them—cannot be regarded as pathognomonic for any classical nosological category of mental disorders. Thus, in our view, the drawing is not a clinical diagnostic tool per se. On the other hand, insights pertinent to diagnosis may very well be derived from tree drawings: specific expressions of anxiety, typical defense mechanisms, general level of emotional development, indications of tension and conflict together with clues as to their sources in the patient's past experiences, and other signs of maladjustment which are often expressed would obviously be useful to the diagnostician or therapist dealing with psychopathology, especially when integrated with other methods of evaluation.

Further, in contrast to the views of many others utilizing drawing tests, we do not believe that they can serve in the judgment of intelligence. This point of disagreement with other workers will be discussed and illustrated at several points throughout the book.

INFORMATION CONTENT OF TREE DRAWINGS

For what purposes, then, are the drawings useful? And by whom may they be fruitfully utilized? Originally we emphasized their applications in various kinds of counseling: vocational, marital, and so on. Different types of information may be sought in the drawings, dependent upon the counseling aim and orientation. In general, one might say that tree drawings are particularly rich as sources of insight regarding "life content"—whether we speak about actual biographical events or about the attitudes and feelings which are characteristic of the subject. One finds in the drawings indications of the person's relationship to mother and father; clues to hidden or repressed biographical material; a record of the more important romantic and sexual experiences of the subject; and indicators of traumatic incidents, which can usually be dated approximately by measuring their position in the tree in relation to the subject's age.

In the broad area of personal attitudes, expression of feelings about the self and the larger environment may be noted, and certain aspects of the rendering may be interpreted in terms of the subject's approach to relationships in general and toward sexual partners in particular. One can

also derive a general impression of the tone of the life (eager or fearful, easily influenced or defensive) and of such matters as the subject's attitude toward the future, his capacity for making correct judgments (both about self and others), and the degree to which he is either grounded in reality or living in fantasy.

Among the structural indications which may be read from the drawings are self-containment versus reliance on personal interaction, direction of the mental life and foci of interests, and such factors as a tendency to seek satisfaction in worldly success, or, in another individual, a low achievement drive. These kinds of findings, combined with those bearing on general attitudes, will be of particular interest to the vocational counselor who wishes to use this method, while materials related to more intimate experiences and feelings will naturally be more appropriately scrutinized by the marriage counselor or clinician.

Where the tree drawing is used in the context of clinical counseling, psychodiagnostics, or psychotherapy, it may be pertinent to examine the rendering for expressions of broad conflictual constellations or complexes underlying the particular anxieties of the individual. When these are found, one will seek from other indicators the sources of strain, the direction and manner in which the complex has developed, and the ways chosen by the individual either for escape and defense or for sublimation of the complex. Frequently, conflict material is largely unconscious, but one may find as well expression of irrational fears or developed fantasies which are directly accessible to consciousness. It can be said further that analysis of the drawing will aid in an assessment of the general maturity and internal balance of the subject. Indeed, a judgment of the level of development should be the first step in interpretation, for all further observations must be evaluated in connection with the maturity factor. This will, of course, be aided in most cases by observations made in direct contact with the subject; but as every counselor or clinician knows, it is easy in the first contacts with a client or patient to make an error of judgment through observation alone, especially in the direction of attributing to an adult a greater maturity and higher level of self-integration then he in fact possesses.

We do not claim that a total description of personality can be arrived at from tree drawings alone. We think, however, that it is not only the types of information which can be gleaned from them which make them valuable tools, but also the fact that the skilled interpreter can gain a rapid overview of the individual personality Gestalt, without the complex and time-consuming processes of administration and scoring which are part of so many commonly used personality assessment procedures. Since this technique need not necessarily involve an interview with the subject, it also lends itself well to group administration, and may thus be of considerable interest to those who deal on a regular basis with groups of

individuals interacting with each other, but for whom psychological assessment is not a primary professional duty.

Some individuals present tree drawings which are not particularly rich in content. Others, who may be quite successful at concealing their true nature in verbal interchange, will draw trees which are remarkably revealing. Still, we have found that even the simplest drawings (or those presented by subjects who are deliberately trying to avoid exposing themselves) will yield at least some of the kinds of information discussed above.

Since this book is addressed not only to clinicians and psychiatrists, but also to counselors, social workers, and other professionals, we have attempted to keep the language of the method section (part II) free of technical terms and the current jargon of clinical psychology and psychiatry. This has not always been possible, especially when we have dealt with those formal aspects of the drawings which have been seen in association with severe mental and emotional disturbances. We are also aware that, although our own clinical orientation is in the main eclectic, the influence of studies in Jungian analytical psychology is reflected both in certain underlying concepts and in our choice of language, particularly where frankly nonrational symbolism is being treated.

This is perhaps an appropriate place to mention that although we believe tree-drawing analysis to be of value to persons who are not psychologists by profession, this method is not intended to be used as a parlor game, and certain precautions ought to be observed in its applications. It is hoped that it will be utilized in the general spirit of the Ethical Standards of Psychologists adopted by the American Psychological Association in 1963.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHOD

Some of our readers will be aware that there already exist two systems involving tree-drawing analysis—the House-Tree-Person Test of John Buck (1948b, 1948c, 1966) and *Der Baumtest* of Charles Koch (1949, 1952, 1957)—and may wonder what are the connections with our own technique. The simplest answer is that there are none, although for comparative purposes we shall be discussing these systems at some length in the text.

This method, on the other hand, is not strictly our own, for it did not originate with us. Its main features were taught to us by a Hungarian colleague, who in turn learned it in the late 1940s from Father Károly Ábel, a Hungarian priest of the Piarist order. Father Ábel, who was a diplomat,

psychologist, and an educator, had been developing his method since the mid-1930s, collecting his sample of drawings and case materials from among his students and his fellow priests, and gradually refining his ideas about tree drawings from long experience. In 1951 he was incarcerated by the then ruling regime, and is presumed to have died not long thereafter. To our knowledge he was never able to publish his findings, either in Eastern or Western Europe. It is our hope that this presentation of the technique originated by Father Ábel will come close enough in spirit to his intent that it may represent, at least in part, the preservation and continuation of his creative efforts, brought so meaninglessly to a tragic end.

The Hungarian colleague bringing Father Ábel's method to the West (who prefers to remain anonymous) was an able and enthusiastic disciple, and during the more than twenty years which have elapsed since he was first introduced to the technique, he has collected and analyzed thousands of tree drawings. Our own interest in tree drawings began about fifteen years ago, but was not followed up intensively until the mid-1960s, in connection with our work on a doctoral dissertation. We began our application of the interpretive principles with college-level students, in counseling and in classroom situations. Later we used the drawings in marriage counseling and in clinical psychotherapy, and we found that the more intimate disclosures emerging in these contexts supported the claim that highly sensitive matters are often expressed in them.

While we were aware of the existence of the Buck and the Koch tests relating to tree-drawing interpretation, we proceeded in our own investigations without referring to them, for we wanted to avoid preconceptions which might have prejudiced our own findings.

Throughout this book we refer to the population on the basis of whose drawings and case material this method was brought to its present state of development as one consisting almost exclusively of relatively normal, well-functioning adults. By this we mean mature students and working adults who were of normal and above-normal intelligence and who managed their lives relatively well, although some sought short-term counseling or short-term therapy at critical life points. Naturally, within this "normal" group we found evidence of a wide variety of psychological conflicts, difficulties in social or family adjustment, marital and other relationship tensions, and so on. Nevertheless, with a very few exceptions, our subjects would not be classified as mentally ill, seriously maladjusted, or mentally deficient. We believe that many of the rather marked differences in qualitative interpretations of tree drawings and the resulting personality descriptions which differentiate our method from those of both Koch and Buck, may be in large part a reflection of the distinctly different kinds of populations they studied initially. Koch did most of his normative investigations on drawings of children and then proceeded to extrapolate findings regarding "norms" for late adolescents to the interpretation

of adult drawings. Buck studied institutionalized patients at first—the mentally deficient, and patients with organic or functional pathology. Later he and some of his followers worked with the drawings of school children, college students, and less disturbed adults. However, the interpretations suggested in his most recent manual (1966) do not seem to have changed markedly from those contained in his original publications. Throughout, we shall try to show how application of interpretations from either Buck's or Koch's manuals often seem inappropriate (or even highly misleading) for our typical subjects.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS VOLUME

The ordering of the interpretive materials presented in part II was worked out some time before the decision was taken to present these materials in book form. As we began the task of writing, it became clear that we were not in the enviable position of those writers of the early period of the so-called "projective movement," who could present manuals for the use and evaluation of projective techniques in personality assessment, preceded by relatively brief introductory sections in which they wrote of their rationales and perhaps offered some postulates or basic hypotheses connected with their methods. Unhappily, in the ensuing years there have been many controversies about the place and value of these methods in the armamentarium of psychological assessment procedures; developments which have led to radical alteration of some of the original techniques; rejections or reevaluations of assumptions underlying their use; and a general decline in their academic prestige. Space did not permit examination of the issues surrounding these controversies, but we felt it important to treat briefly the historical development of projective techniques, to deal with the definition of projection, and to discuss possible classifications of these techniques, in order to put our own method into some kind of perspective. Furthermore, even though our technique has had an independent origin and development, it seemed necessary at this point in time to include some descriptive and comparative materials relating to the systems for tree-drawing analysis of Buck and Koch. These matters are addressed in the remaining chapters of part I.

The reader who is not interested in historical perspectives may go directly to part II, which constitutes the core substance for the student of this system. "The Method" is a hierarchical presentation, giving the meanings and/or practical information which may be derived from the various elements of tree drawings—both symbolic and strictly formal ones. Our intent has been to order and classify these materials in such a way that

the student can work directly from the text on the analysis of tree drawings obtained from his own subjects, without having first to commit to memory all of the fine details of interpretation. Part II may thus be regarded as a manual for qualitative evaluation.

In part III, the nature of our sample population is discussed and detailed analyses of eight drawings from three of our subjects are offered. While the subsections are called "case histories," these are not really such in the strictly clinical sense, of the sort one might document in a professional journal. They are rather illustrative examples of how a descriptive synthesis may be arrived at following the notation of pertinent details in the drawings, correlated with data from the life history. In addition, five of the drawings were obtained from a single individual over a period of five years, and it is therefore hoped that they may serve to demonstrate which aspects of renderings from the same subject remain relatively stable and which, on the other hand, may be expected to change with growing maturity, sudden alterations in life circumstances, temporal factors such as the mood of the moment, and so on.

Part IV contains discussions of several questions repeatedly brought up by colleagues who have been introduced to our materials. The matters covered are limited in scope and treat only those issues which have been most frequently raised. These are not necessarily identical with the most significant topics for potential discussion.

Finally, we should like to comment on the inclusion throughout the text of reproductions of a sizable number of actual drawings from our collection (labeled *Illustrations*). These have been introduced in connection with certain tree types, structures, or signs under discussion, and the information provided about the subject is minimal, usually only that which is pertinent to the immediate topic. Another reason for their inclusion is to give the reader a general impression of the wide range of style in the drawings and the variability among persons in their response to the request for a tree drawing.

2

Perspective on Projectives

The mind has lost its cutting edge: we hardly understand the ancients.
Gregoire de Tours,
Gesta Francorum, 591

THE BIRTH of the "projective movement" in American clinical psychology is usually dated approximately from the late 1930s, with its flowering period acknowledged to be the 1940s and 1950s.

However, many of the assessment procedures associated with this movement had historical antecedents, some dating from the late nineteenth century. Word association experiments, for instance, were performed by Galton (1879), Kraepelin (1892), and Wundt (1908–1911), and the considerable contribution of Jung's "association experiment," as he called it, was carried out in the early stages of his professional life (1906; 1907). 1921 is the date associated with the Rorschach test (which was not a prototype, but is the best-known and probably the most widely used of all projective tests, both in Europe and the United States). It was in this year that Hermann Rorschach published his *Psychodiagnostik*, laying down the basic rationale and techniques for utilizing the now-famous test. It should be borne in mind, however, that he had been experimenting with his method during a ten-year period prior to this publication date.

Other well-known European tests—such as the Four-Picture Test (Van Lennep, 1948), the Szondi Test (Szondi, 1943; 1947; 1956), and the Wartegg Drawing Completion Test (Wartegg, 1939)—while not fully described in print until the late 1930s or early 1940s, were created and de-

veloped in the 1920s and early 1930s. Koch's work on his Tree Test, which is of particular relevance to our subject, apparently was initiated in the 1930s, although he, too, delayed publication of his first manual for tree-drawing analysis until 1949. On the British front we also find a relatively early contribution in the Mosaic Test of Lowenfeld (Lowenfeld, 1931; 1949), initially applied in her work with children and later utilized by others for strictly diagnostic purposes with adults (Diamond and Schmale, 1944; Wertham, 1952).

In the United States formal testing focused, during the first three decades of this century, mainly on various kinds of standardized tests, such as those for intelligence, aptitude, vocational interest, scholastic achievement, and so on. Some tests were developed dealing with personality traits or with general adjustment, but these were also standardized—that is to say, they were in the nature of self-rating scales or inventory questionnaires. By the mid-1930s, however, an interest was stirring in qualitative procedures of a much more flexible nature for the evaluation of personality. Murray and Morgan were preparing the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Morgan and Murray, 1935; Murray, 1943), which they referred to initially as "a method for investigating fantasies." Lauretta Bender introduced the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test in 1938. Specialists in individually administered intelligence tests, in particular the Goodenough "Draw-A-Man" Test (Goodenough, 1926), were beginning to take note of the fact that responses on these tests often revealed qualitative aspects of personality adjustment, as well as quantitative measures of mental capacity. Goodenough's drawing test led to the development of Karen Machover's "Draw-A-Person" Test (DAP) (1949), which is, of all the projectives involving drawings, the one most frequently used in the United States.

Also to be taken into account was the influence of European professionals trained in the use of the Rorschach test, as well as of European psychoanalysts, a considerable number of whom emigrated to the United States in the late 1930s. By 1939 a good deal of further work had been carried out on the TAT, groups of students and practitioners of the Rorschach had been formed, and a host of other methods had been introduced as procedures for observing, studying or testing the individual personality. These included such diverse techniques as modeling in clay; fingerpainting; the use of free drawings; dramatic play and psychodrama; drawings with specified subjects; the study of the gesture, gait, and typical movements of the individual; graphology; and story-completion or thematic storytelling.* It was at this time that the general term "projective methods" was

* It may seem surprising that graphology appears among this list of methods, but it should be remembered that the study of handwriting had and still has a much better "reputation" in Europe than in the United States. With the burgeoning of interest in

introduced. L. K. Frank is usually credited with coining the term in an article entitled "Projective Methods for the Study of Personality" (Frank, 1939); however, it appears that Murray had used the same rubric a year earlier in a book-length compendium of studies on personality (Murray, 1938). In any event, to whomever the proper credit should go, with the introduction of this general term, the nascent American projective movement took on a new cohesion—or, at least, an external appearance of cohesion.

Considering the plethora of apparently disparate procedures which have been enumerated (by no means exhaustively), the question naturally comes to mind: "What do these techniques have in common?" One may further ask why there was such an enthusiasm for projectives—at least on the part of clinical psychologists, many psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts of the various schools.

It is generally accepted, even by critics, that the great wave of interest in projective methods (or simply "projectives," as they came to be called) stemmed in part from dissatisfaction with the kinds of information which could be derived from the standardized tests earlier available. Projective methods of assessing personality appeared to fill important gaps in the understanding of the individual as an individual.

By virtue of their ambiguous (neutral) stimuli, projectives seemed to be excellent tools for probing the deeper layers of personality, eliciting responses which reflected either repressed, unconscious materials, drives, and emotions, or revealing attitudes and life events which the subject could not or would not express under more obvious test situations. Furthermore, the resulting protocols were individualized both in terms of form and content. The open-ended nature of many of these procedures, as distinct from the fixed test format, seemed to encourage richness and originality of response on the part of the subject. Finally, interpretation of the responses was supposed to be in terms of the whole person—the indivisible Gestalt of the unique personality—as distinct from the atomistic lists of traits or tendencies characteristic of findings derived from standardized personality inventories.

The projectionists rejected that notion of "individual differences" which is essentially a description of a person in terms of the degree to which he deviates in some trait or behavior from a group norm. They proposed that their methods would provide a kind of X-ray of the personality structure and, at the same time, throw light on the dynamic interaction of the individual with his environment. Others, who thought the X-ray analogy a

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projectives in the U.S. of the late 1930s, graphology was also studied seriously as a means of assessing personality, in the free atmosphere of inquiry prevailing at the time. Many of the earlier books on projectives and on expressive movement contain sections describing experiments and studies with specialists in this subject. The reader is referred, in particular, to the review by Wolfson (1951).

bit extravagant, suggested the simile of a camera. The procedures which were chosen to probe personality were like a lens; the subject would project samples of his typical behavior through this lens; and the resulting protocols would be the screen on which the behavior elicited was permanently recorded.

Time, experience, and experiment have proven many of the basic early assumptions about projective methods to have been false. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to understand why clinicians and psychiatrists embraced projectives with enthusiasm, for they needed better tools than were available to them in order to understand normal emotions, drives, responses, and so on, as well as the underlying workings of overt psychopathological behaviors.

DEFINITIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

One of the problems faced by the early projectionists—especially in view of the diverse methods classified under the rubric "projective techniques" —was to delineate what was meant by the concept of projection in the context of applying these methods for personality analysis. Many felt obliged to pay homage to Freud's definition of projection as a defense mechanism, specifically as he had used the term in connection with paranoid ideation. There is an interesting byplay among at least three of the contributors to Anderson and Anderson's 1951 collection of essays, *An Introduction to Projective Techniques*, which illustrates the general problem in an almost humorous fashion. Harold Anderson, for instance (one of the two editors of the book), stated very definitely in the opening of his own contribution to the volume: "*Projection*, as originally defined by Freud, is a *defense mechanism*. It is in this sense that the word is used by most of the contributors to this book" (Anderson, 1951, p. 3; author's emphasis).

Murray, on the other hand, in the foreword to the same volume, denied this to be the case: "Of projection, according to Freud, I have seen, in this collection of papers, practically no evidence" (Murray, 1951, p. xii).

Murray went on to discuss what he thought to be the essential criteria of projections, according to Freud. He then proceeded to extend Freud's definition in his own manner to include what he called "imaginative projection." He further pointed out that some of the feelings which a subject may project into test protocols will be positive feelings, as distinct from the negatively toned projections of ego-defense. He wrote at considerable length about "supplementary projection," the "projection of self-constituents," and so on. However, having expanded the definition of the

term rather broadly, he ended by reminding his readers that "projection" still has a *unique* meaning. He insisted that it could *not* be extended so as to denote, for example, all forms of expression—"a man's characteristic postures and gestures," and so on.

Anderson, however, on the same page of his essay cited above, seemed to contradict both his own initial remark and the delineation of the "limits of projection" stated by Murray. He wrote that the projective techniques "elicit not only projection, but also expression of almost all other conceivable kinds of mental mechanisms and symbols of human relationships. Projective tests are, in fact, not strictly tests of projection, but tests of mental mechanisms or of personality dynamisms including projection" (Anderson, 1951, p. 3).

Still another point of view, expressing disagreement with *both* Anderson and Murray, was put forth by Van Lennep in this same volume:

> Nowadays in America, *projection* is used to include all kinds of utterances and expressions of the subject as far as these are *personal* and not decided by the rules of his society. This is definitely a broadening of the concept of projection as Freud first used it as a technical term in 1894. He meant principally the tendency, under certain circumstances, to attribute to other persons characteristics, emotional structures, and social relationships that might be more relevant to the critic himself than to the other persons. Since then, however, the term has also been used for entirely different utterances, which are phenomena of a quite different structure. The concept has thus acquired at least five different meanings, and because of this, the typical characteristics of the phenomenon that Freud called projection have somewhat faded into the background. We think that this is not a gain, but a loss. Psychology has no need of a mixture of categories; the need is for sharper differentiation. Therefore, we should prefer the term to retain its original denotation.
>
> (Van Lennep, 1951, p. 149; author's emphasis)

Van Lennep differs with Freud in that he believes positively valued qualities, as well as negatively valued structures, may be projected. Nevertheless, he wants to retain the essence of Freud's understanding of the mechanism of projection, as well as his description of it as a *technique of self-defense*. Van Lennep tries to establish a clear distinction between "revealing expressions or utterances" and projection per se. "For every projection is indeed utterance, but each utterance is certainly not a projection, and particularly not that which is called a person's expression" (Van Lennep, 1951, p. 151).

While we are in general agreement with Van Lennep that imprecise use of words leads only to linguistic confusion, we are obliged to point out that none of these authors, who were so anxious to acknowledge the association of the word "projection" with the work of Freud, appears to have observed the cardinal commandment: "Know they Freud!" Two important passages in *Totem and Taboo* indicate that Freud himself did not confine his use of the word "projection" to an ego-defense mechanism:

> But projection is not specially created for the purpose of defense, it also comes into being where there are no conflicts. The projection of inner perceptions to the outside is a primitive mechanism which, for instance, also influences our sense-perceptions, so that it normally has the greatest share, in shaping our outer world.
>
> (Freud, 1913, p. 857)

> The thing which we, just like primitive man, project in outer reality, can hardly be anything else but the recognition of a state in which a given thing is present to the senses and to consciousness, next to which another state exists in which the thing is *latent,* but can reappear, that is to say, the co-existence of perception and memory, or, to generalize it, the existence of unconscious psychic processes next to conscious ones.
>
> (Freud, 1913, p. 879; author's emphasis)

Surely these early projectionists would have been in much less difficulty had they discovered these more general usages on Freud's part of the term "projection," rather than insisting that they meant what they quite obviously did not mean—i.e., that the kind of projections elicited by their various procedures were closely allied to (if not exactly the same as) projection as an ego-defense.* Or they might equally well have turned to those of Jung's works then in print (e.g., Jung, 1916; 1928; 1939), from which his implications regarding projection emerge quite clearly: that "normal" as well as disturbed persons tend to project onto others or onto the world around them constellations from both the personal and the impersonal unconscious which have not yet been assimilated into consciousness. In other terms, we may assume that when an inner attitude or archetype is projected and experienced by the individual as "coming from" an object or situation "outside" the self, the individual is not aware that these materials really "belong" to the inner world.

It would take us too far afield to discuss the many other conceptions of projection which have been put forth over the years in connection with the projective assessment procedures.† However, we do want to mention the views of Allport (see Allport and Vernon, 1933), since they are pertinent both to our later discussion and to the objections of Murray and Van Lennep that the term "projection" ought not to be stretched so far as to include an individual's "typical gestures" or "every utterance." Allport distinguished among adaptive, expressive, and projective behaviors. Put in the simplest terms, adaptive behavior refers to conformity with culture or "appropriate reality response"; projective behavior involves ascription to

* In another general compendium on projectives which appeared only one year later (Abt and Bellak, 1952), L. Bellak stated that E. Kris had brought his attention to these same passages from *Totem and Taboo,* which were cited and discussed in Bellak, 1952.

† The role played by perception in those methods involving visual stimuli is also beyond the scope of this discussion. This still controversial issue is amply treated in practically all general works on projectives (cf. Baughman, in Murstein, 1965).

others, without conscious awareness, of one's own needs and qualities; and expressive behavior is the manner or style of an individual's responses or typical expressions.

A number of attempts of different sorts were made to classify the projective techniques into distinct categories, but so far as we have been able to ascertain, only J. Precker (1950) succeeded in differentiating two dichotomous groups—basing his separation on Allport's categories, with the recognition that adaptive or coping behaviors are involved in both projective and expressive methods. In a review article dealing with paintings and drawings as psychologically valuable materials, he wrote: "For purposes of clarification we shall call those techniques 'projective techniques' in which the mechanism of *projection* is of primary value, and we shall call those techniques 'expressive techniques' in which the individual forms or patterns his perceptions and movements in his own characteristic way" (Precker, 1950, p. 262; author's emphasis).

We believe it is useful to create discrete categories, if only to shed some light on what one is attempting to demonstrate, and we are therefore in sympathy with Precker's effort, even though we think there is reason to suppose that paintings and drawings may contain much projected material and thus are not, as a class, necessarily primarily expressive modes. However, it must be admitted that in the article in question Precker focused on analysis of the purely formal or stylistic elements in paintings and drawings—as against their symbolic content—so that in context, his emphasis on utilizing art products to delineate aspects of expressive behavior seems justifiable.

Also in Precker's favor is the fact that he at least tried to "separate off" those methods of personality investigation which seemed hardest for many of the projectionists to accept as belonging to their own armamentarium: to wit, methods of investigating an individual's style of behavior, including graphology, gesture, gait, facial expression, vocal patterns, art expressions of all kinds, and related techniques. (In this connection see also Wolff and Precker, 1951.)

In terms of Precker's categorizations, the method of tree-drawing analysis presented in this book would be grouped among the expressive techniques. On the other hand, if we consider Freud's broadest definitions of projection, we could also say that drawings constitute permanent records of inner perceptions and do contain projections.

We wish next to consider why tree-drawing analysis cannot be regarded as a psychological test.

A TEST BY ANY OTHER NAME

In an article dealing in the main with the Koch Tree Test as applied to psychotic populations, Suchenwirth (1965) pointed out that many misunderstandings have arisen and much inappropriate research has been undertaken simply as a result of the fact that the word "test" was tacked on to the name of a number of the projective techniques. The very use of the word, he argued, tends to suggest that either quantifiable measures referable to established norms or exact probes of specific psychological functions are in question, whereas such was usually not the intent of the originators of these methods.

In the United States, L. K. Frank (1939; 1948) tried early in the projective movement to bring home to his colleagues that measurement and relative quantification are not essential in many important techniques or instruments utilized in various branches of science. He drew his examples mainly from physics and chemistry, mentioning such identification techniques as infrared spectral analysis and such means for determining structural configurations as X-ray crystallography. In these contexts we can point out that the standard statistical methods used in psychological test theory would fail abysmally if applied to the above methods, and, reasoning in the same vein, he pointed out that they were not suitable means to check the validity or reliability of projectives. He thought that these latter techniques might better be examined in terms of temporal validity (by which he evidently did not mean test-retest in the ordinary sense, but rather longitudinal studies of individuals), and, for establishing both reliability and validity, he recommended study of the congruence of findings from one projective method with those obtained from others, from true tests (e.g., intelligence tests) and from data gathered about the individual, such as life history. (It will be noted that both of these procedures use the individual as his own control—a well-established approach to the study of certain kinds of scientific problems, but one which is often ignored in general works on the scientific method.)

While Frank's leadership was acknowledged by many early projectionists, the works of others of the same period give the impression that the measurement bias was so powerful in American psychology that even his close colleagues or admirers were unable, or perhaps afraid, to follow the real import of his message and carry further the course of his reasoning. We may consider, for example, certain statements made by L. E. Abt in his monograph, "A Theory of Projective Psychology" (Abt, 1952)—an ambitious, if not too successful, attempt to set out the bases for a "projective psychology." Many of Abt's generalizations about the special pur-

poses of projective techniques seemed almost to echo Frank, and he, too, stated at the end of his paper that these methods would probably not be amenable to standard tests of reliability and validity. However, one finds clues in this work that Abt was unable to shake off the influence of the nomotheticists. In a major footnote dealing with "new" developments in scientific inquiry, he wrote: "No question of science can have any meaning unless it involves a problem of *measurement along a scale*, the order of which is that of a continuum" (Abt, 1952, p. 34; emphasis added). And later in the same text: "Again, it is perfectly obvious that research in projective psychology . . . has been hampered, when oriented along ideographic lines, by the fact that only the first faltering steps in the *quantification* and treatment of ideographic data have been taken" (Abt, 1952, p. 41; emphasis added). Throughout the article he described the projective approach repeatedly as a "protest movement"; nevertheless, he did not seem to have the makings of a real radical, for he readily admitted that there has been "even in the protest attempts themselves, a strong and insistent need to keep the research work in projective psychology well within the bounds of scientific respectability required by contemporary professional prejudices" (Abt, 1952, p. 41). We hardly think it necessary to italicize the final words of this last citation to bring out their significance, not only with respect to Abt's personal uncertainties, but also to the confused state of affairs which later ensued.

During the 1950s and the early 1960s projective methods increased in both number and clinical applications. However, simultaneous with this expansion in their use, concerted efforts were made to test the reliability and validity of these techniques. On the assumption that they were psychological tests, psychometric test validation theory was applied to them. With some minor exceptions, most of these methods failed to prove either reliable or valid in terms of these criteria. As a consequence, their present standing among test theorists is rather low.

When it became evident that projectives were not meeting psychometric standards, numerous attempts were made to "improve" the original techniques and make them into "better tests." One direction of such reforms was represented by increased standardization of scoring, resulting in greater reliability. A second involved reducing complexity by restricting the possible responses to the stimuli or instructions of the method. The best example of this latter tendency is the introduction of the Holtzman Inkblot Test (HIT) (Holtzman, et al., 1961) as a substitute for the classic Rorschach. In the HIT there are 35 cards, to which the subject is permitted to give only one response each. Thus richness of response protocols was sacrificed in the interest of simplification and in the hope that the test would show greater validity.

More recently, another kind of solution has been promulgated so as to permit the retention, for limited uses, of those projective methods which

have not been or cannot be suitably altered in such a way that they will become "tests." Both Anastasi (1968) and Murstein (1968) have suggested that one should make a distinction between projective *tests* and projective *techniques*. Anastasi accepts only the Holtzman Inkblot technique as holding up to test standards, although she mentions the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Test (Rosenzweig, 1945) as another possible candidate. The rest she would classify as clinical tools, rather than regard and evaluate them as psychometric instruments. By "clinical tools" she appears to mean primarily "supplementary interviewing aids." She states: "Their value as clinical tools is proportional to the skill of the clinician and hence *cannot be assessed independently of the individual clinician using them*" (Anastasi, 1968, p. 518; emphasis added).

The solution proposed by Murstein (1968) is essentially similar, although he would probably want to include special adaptations of the TAT and some of the sentence-completion methods as potentially capable of meeting test criteria. In order not to throw out all other methods (or even the less standardized versions of inkblot and thematic picture tests), he, too, distinguishes their uses as "techniques" from their applications as tests per se. As "examiner-technique-instruments," they may be used for "clinic-interpretation," their efficacy varying with the skill of the examiner. As such, however, they have "neuter validity." An instrument used as a technique, he stated, "is just a series of blots or pictures, sentence stems or drawings having no utility until the examiner gives it life" (Murstein, 1968, p. 229).

One must grant that the long overdue admission on the part of these two writers of the importance of examiner skill wherever *interpretation* is involved is a step in the right direction. However, it seems puzzling that Murstein, like Anastasi, insists that the interaction of technique and interpreter leads necessarily to the conclusion that, when used in this manner, there is *no objective means* of finding out whether one technique is generally superior to another, or which might be more useful for special purposes. This must be left to the subjective judgment of the individual examiner, and is therefore no longer a matter for scientific exploration. Murstein also takes the position that the examiner-instrument interaction factor implies that the instrument itself has no intrinsic value. Let us examine the last claim by an analogy with microscopy.

The projective technique is a mere stack of cards or list of words until the examiner has brought them to life. This is like saying that a microscope is a mere pile of metal, lenses, and so on, until it is put to use. That is true. It is also true that a highly skilled microscopist may be able to derive far more valuable information from a primitive microscope, subject to spherical aberrations and color distortions, than can a mediocre practitioner from a high-power, sophisticated, modern piece of equipment. However, if the talented investigator knows of the existence of this supe-

rior tool and can put his hands on one, his chances of coming up with even more significant findings may be very much enhanced. Since there *are* superior microscopes, even recognition of varying degrees of examiner talent does not make of the examiner-instrument interaction a one-way street. Surely, even when used as "mere techniques" and not as "real tests," there must also be differences in value among the many projectives —or, at the least, differences in the various qualitative systems for evaluation which have been built up around the most widely used of these techniques. The problem—if we are to forgo psychometric criteria—is to find some alternate means of evaluating the accuracy of the information which may be derived from different methods.

This brings us back to Frank's suggestion that one should examine *congruence* among sets of data about individuals, using several sources. This idea has been loosely pursued by some projectionists but rejected by others on such grounds as the danger of coming up with "negative correlations." We have the impression that these workers must have misread "congruence" as "conformity." In this latter case one would be looking for indicators of the same "trait" or "tendency" or "structure" to show up on the various tests in relatively good correlation. Since these psychological probes vary widely in terms of what is sought, this is obviously not a fruitful approach. However, congruence is quite another matter from conformity.

To illustrate, let us consider an individual example. A single subject is given a large battery of tests on a semiblind basis—not just projectives, but also a standardized intelligence test and several self-report inventories. In highly condensed form we learn the following: His intelligence is in the genius range. He has high ability to abstract and organize information, and at the same time is imaginative, original, and somewhat unconventional. He is emotionally reticent and socially introverted, but he has leadership abilities and dominance needs. His drive for achievement is very high. He is self-confident, self-controlled, goal-directed, slightly compulsive. He has a great deal of frustration tolerance. He is consciously aware of aggressive inclinations within himself, but rarely expresses them overtly. He has rather marked tendencies toward periodic depression, with low manifest anxiety. He is a frank paranoid schizophrenic. He relates well to others on an empathetic basis, but he does not seek out company. His sexual drives and attitudes are normal.

We then learn from his life history that he is married, has a good emotional, sexual, and intellectual rapport with his wife. He has a widowed mother, having lost his father and only brother in war, and he is responsible toward his dependents. His professional successes are such as to make many a man envious, but by self-report he is frustrated because he has not yet had the time or opportunity to do what he considers to be his

really important work. His medical history is uninteresting except for a chronic peptic ulcer of long standing.

From the above it is obvious that the most incongruent information is "frank paranoid schizophrenia." With a single case, and if we still have confidence in whatever test or subtest yielded this finding, we *might* take it to be a predictive danger signal (as distinct from a concurrent diagnostic fact), reasoning that this subject's powerful ego controls are on the verge of sudden decompensation, which will lead to an explosive, acute psychotic episode. However, if, over the course of time, we learn that this does not happen; if we also find that the same technique or test which suggested this incongruent information is equally unreliable in other cases; and if we are supported in this finding by our colleagues, we would probably want to eliminate the technique (or test), or at least the special interpretive aspect of the method in question, which consistently gave a "poor fit" with other data.

For the time being we leave aside the question of longitudinal studies of the projective protocols of the same individual, since these will come up in several other contexts.

The issues and arguments surrounding the place of projective techniques in the psychological assessment battery could constitute the subject of an entire volume. We have mentioned these problems briefly here for two reasons. We want to make it clear that we do not intend the method presented in this book to conform to strict test validation and reliability criteria. On the other hand, we cannot accept that by naming projective and expressive methods "mere clinical tools" all possibility of comparing their uses and exploring their relative worth must be abandoned.

3

The Integral Whole

If a mandala may be described as a symbol of the self seen in cross section, then the tree would represent a profile view of it: the self depicted as a process of growth.

Carl Gustav Jung
The Philosophical Tree, 1954

WE HAVE ALLUDED to the fact that many classic projective methods are amenable to at least partial transformation into "reliable tests." Such attempts all involve decrease in the freedom of response, or increase in the structure of the stimuli, or both. The revised methods derive from parent techniques in which either visual or verbal stimuli constituted the point of departure. With this in mind, we should like to propose a dichotomous classification—somewhat different from that of Precker—represented by selected examples in two lists, the first of which appears below.

CLASS I PERSONALITY TESTS OR POTENTIAL TESTS
(Stimuli Utilized)

First Category: Stimuli are structured
and/or
Responses are limited

MMPI
(stimuli highly structured)
(three possible responses: "true," "false," or "cannot say")
(self-administration)
(computer scoring: reliable)

COMPUTERIZED INCOMPLETE SENTENCE TEST
(stimuli highly structured)
(computer administration and scoring)
(response limited to one word)

COMPUTERIZED HIT
(maximum of one six-word response per card)
(computer administration and scoring)

HIT
(responses limited to one per card)
(personal administration and scoring)

ROSENZWEIG PICTURE-FRUSTRATION TEST
(stimuli highly structured)
(purpose of test limited)

Second Category: Stimuli are structured
Overt responses are limited
Covert aspects of responses are noted

BENDER-GESTALT
(stimuli highly structured)
(overt task is to copy stimuli)
(drawing process is observed)

WORD-ASSOCIATION TESTS
(stimuli highly structured)
(test situation structured)
(deviations are observed)

Third Category: Stimuli are relatively unstructured
Responses are not limited

OPEN-ENDED SENTENCE-COMPLETION TESTS

TAT

CLASSIC RORSCHACH

Although this list is largely self-explanatory, a few comments are in order.

The MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) (Hathaway and McKinley, 1943) is included at the top of the first category, among the modified projectives. This is meant only to illustrate that such a highly structured, self-report, self-administered inventory test is not so very different in kind from the "revised" projectives, especially those which may be destined for computer administration as well as scoring. On the MMPI every subject receives the same number of questions and must respond to each with one of three replies: "true," "false," or "cannot say." Scoring the test by hand is rather tedious, but it has been completely standardized, can be readily handled by computer, and is reliable. (Whether the subject's responses are reliable is still a matter for debate, as is the issue of the suitability of this very famous test for various purposes, but these are matters which lie outside our present area of interest.) A computerized sentence-completion test in which a single word finishes the sentence does leave *slightly* more room for spontaneous response, but the highly structured sentence stem, plus the limitations of

the computer dictionary, may exert such controls on responses that this freedom will prove to be largely illusory. In any event, in spite of its name and operative principles, it seems to us that such a test is more closely allied to the objective questionnaires than it is to its parent congeners in the third category: the open-ended sentence stem stimuli of the older type. We refer to those which consisted of stems such as "I feel . . ." or "My father . . . ," leaving all the rest to the subject.

The other three examples in the first category serve to show how better test standardization can be achieved either by using very structured stimuli to probe a specific and transparent function (the Rosenzweig P-F), or by staying with less structured stimuli (HIT inkblots) but controlling the freedom of response.

In the second category are two classic methods in which the stimuli are highly structured and the responses limited, but where it is the *covert* and not the *overt* responses which are most significant—at least when used for the purpose of personality evaluation. Thus, when taking the Bender-Gestalt, the sophisticated subject assumes that he is being tested for possible brain disorder or neurological damage, and will not be aware that if he continually turns the paper in order to produce nearly perfect reproductions of the Gestalt figures he is told to copy, he may be scoring high points for neuroticism! We are not much impressed by the interpretations suggested by Bender (1938) and others for such behavior (nor, for that matter, with the utility of the instrument for detection of brain damage), but it must be admitted that when the Bender-Gestalt is used as a personality test, few subjects see through its purpose.

The word-association methods illustrate an opposite principle, for while most subjects do realize that they are being tested for "special complexes" and so on, these oldest variants of projectives are probably the least "fakeable" of all the techniques in this class, including the MMPI. It is virtually impossible, even for a trained psychologist, to exercise complete conscious control over the nature and speed of his responses when confronted with an unfamiliar word list.*

In the third category are three of the classic techniques utilizing relatively unstructured visual or verbal material. It will be remembered that the early projectionists thought that the TAT and Rorschach cards represented completely neutral stimuli which would not only probe the deep layers of personality, but would also elicit unique, idiomatic responses. It is now recognized that neither of these suppositions is correct, there being considerable "stimulus pull" from the various cards of both tests, leading to a far greater commonality of responses than had been expected. At the same time, more latitude for conscious control by the subject of what is

* In spite of their relative depth and lack of "fakeability," these tests are no longer widely employed, probably because they require individualized administration and interpretation.

expressed has been demonstrated through experiment, thus throwing into question the assumption that it is primarily the deeper layers of personality which are tapped, or that the responses are in the main projections from the unconscious.

We have called this abbreviated list of methods "Personality Tests or Potential Tests" because it may now be seen that such methods as the TAT and the Rorschach can be modified by increasing the structure of the stimuli, decreasing the spontaneity and freedom of the responses, or doing both together. In this way they can be transformed into "tests" amenable to psychometric treatment and, ultimately, to evaluations of both reliability and validity. Thus, although the classic Rorschach is *not* a "test," the "What do you see in this inkblot?" concept is potentially so, as witnessed by the creation of the HIT.

Examples of methods which belong to the second class of techniques are shown in the following list:

CLASS II GESTALT SAMPLING TECHNIQUES
(Stimuli Not Utilized)

First Category: Test situation is highly structured
or
Instructions are highly specific

HOUSE-TREE-PERSON TEST
(three themes specified, but not in kind)
(highly structured interview follows drawing)

KOCH TREE TEST
(instructions overspecific: "Draw a fruit tree")
(test situation less formal)

Second Category: Instructions specific for theme only

DRAW-A-PERSON TEST
(instructions specific for theme only)
(may be followed by second task:
"Draw a person of the opposite sex from the first drawing")

FREE TREE DRAWING
(instructions simple: "Please draw a tree")
(not always a test situation; no interview)

Third Category: Subject free to choose theme;
materials supplied

PAINTING

FREE DRAWING

Fourth Category: Real life sample,
no instructions,
not a test situation

HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

What we have called "Gestalt Sampling Techniques"—all of which consist of permanently recorded graphic productions of one sort or another—do not employ any kind of structured stimuli, but they do result in idiomatic responses. (The House-Tree-Person Test—as we shall see later—is something of an exception, since it involves complicated observations and verbal phases which make of it a cross between the two basic groups under discussion.) The results or products of this class of methods are always wholes, always Gestalt forms.* They may not necessarily all be especially representative or expressive of the individual's personality in depth, but each will be a unique expression. No two drawings or paintings, nor samples of the handwriting of two persons, will ever be exactly alike.

On account of the Gestalt quality of the protocols, these techniques are even less amenable to any methods for standardized scoring than were the classic Rorschach or the TAT. In our opinion they can never be turned into tests in the "test development sense." Attempts made to utilize any one of these methods for narrow testing purposes have almost invariably been based on the identification of certain signs or clusters of signs with an external criterion, such as a diagnostic label (paranoid schizophrenia) or assignment to a special group (moron, underachiever, and so forth). The use of significant (or unusual) signs and clusters of signs as clues for evaluation of the total Gestalt certainly has merit. In fact, one cannot proceed toward an understanding of the whole without attention to details and what these may represent or mean, unless one is content to offer a completely "impressionistic" interpretation. On the other hand, the search for isolated signs or ways of rendering parts of the whole as definite indicators of diseased mental states or developmental status seems destined to fail, because even the "parts" are ideographic expressions of a unique individual. Thus a "sign" frequently present in the productions of diseased persons may equally well appear in the drawing or writing of a normal subject, whose expression of the supposedly pathognomonic sign occurs in the context of a different Gestalt.

We want to say only a few words here about the four categories into which we have placed these examples of methods leading to Gestalt productions, since the subdivisions are based on the rather artificial criterion "specificity of instructions," and do not necessarily reflect a hierarchy of usefulness in personality evaluation.

The H-T-P and the Koch Tree Test are in the first category for different reasons: The H-T-P because, as administered, it is a highly structured test

* The German word *Gestalt* has been taken over into English because there is no single-word synonym for it in our language. It means not only form, pattern, structure, or configuration, but also an integrated whole which is more than a summation of its parts. We have chosen to use the term "Gestalt forms" for the plural reference, however, rather than the German *Gestalten*.

situation, even though the individual is permitted to draw "any kind of house, tree, or person he likes." Koch, on the other hand, instructs his subjects to draw a fruit tree, thus severely limiting the freedom of response and possibly "inducing" fruits in the drawing of a subject who would not otherwise include them.

The DAP and our own free tree-drawing method have about the same degree of structure in the request to the subject: only the theme of the drawing is specified. We are more casual about administration and less concerned about using standardized materials than DAP specialists, but the two methods seem to be close enough in terms of the nature of the instructions to be placed together in the second category.

Category three is still less specific in instructions, and is usually not perceived by the subject as a test situation, even though the examiner might view it as such.

Finally, graphology, for which samples can be taken from past and present written materials produced spontaneously, is free of instructions and is not a test situation at all. The handwriting sample is widely acknowledged to be the closest of all graphic expressions to a "fingerprint" of the individual's character. However, because of the unfortunate association of graphological studies with charlatanism and the very small number of persons who are trained in psychology and at the same time skilled in the analysis of handwriting, graphology has not gone far as a method for personality study—at least not on this continent.

The interest in studying paintings and drawings to reveal personality characteristics, developmental status, or disturbed mental conditions has a long history and a vast literature. For well over a century physicians working with psychotics have been fascinated with their art products, and a number of contemporary specialists have worked out refinements for the study of the art of psychotics, many of the newer approaches emphasizing the formal elements rather than focusing on content. Psychoanalysts of the various schools—in particular Jung and his followers—have also made a practice of encouraging less disturbed analysands to paint and draw, recognizing the therapeutic value of the process itself, and also seeking symbolic meaning in the end products. And, of course, investigation of children's drawings—both normal and abnormal—has long been of interest to specialists in developmental psychology.

Certainly free drawings and paintings are rich sources for the study of individual expression, and it may fairly be said that when a patient, client, or schoolchild is simply provided with some drawing or painting materials, the resulting productions will undoubtedly be more spontaneous than when he is requested to make a drawing with a particular theme.

However, around the late 1920s certain investigators suggested that

there were distinct advantages to obtaining drawings on a prescribed theme, especially if these were to be utilized for a systematic study of how the facets and structures of personality (normal or pathological) are expressed in drawings. During the ensuing years the idea gained ground, resulting in the creation of the H-T-P, the DAP, the Koch Tree Test, and a host of other thematic drawing tests, most of which are too far removed from our subject matter to merit description and discussion.

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF DRAWING METHODS

E. F. Hammer has written a complete chapter in *The Clinical Application of Projective Drawings* (Hammer, 1958a) on the subject of the merits of drawing tests. We believe it is worthwhile to cite his summary of the special advantages of using drawing techniques in personality evaluation:

> In an abbreviated way, one might say that projective drawings have the following advantages: (a) they are relatively simple to administer; (b) total response time is comparatively short thus affording rich returns in terms of time and energy expended; (c) they can, therefore, serve as a quick screening device; (d) they afford a minimally-threatening, maximally-absorbing introduction to the test battery; (e) the tests' ease of administration and simplicity of handling make them as easily applicable to testing large groups as to testing individual subjects; (f) a non-verbal projective technique has obvious advantages with young children, the poorly educated, the mentally defective, the non-English-speaking, the painfully shy, and those of concrete orientations; (g) drawings more frequently get under the defenses of evasive and guarded subjects, incarcerated inmates of correctional institutions, etc.; (h) experience suggests that organicity is more readily detected with projective drawings than with the Rorschach; (i) empirical evidence is beginning to suggest that drawings may constitute a clinical instrument which descends to the more primitive and deeper layers of personality; (j) "purer" samples of behavior, for research purposes, are obtained; (k) the quick administration of drawings and their somewhat lessened influence by memory allows for easy periodic retests to check progress in psychotherapy and to focus the therapist's attention on conflicts before they come into view in the psychotherapeutic collaboration; (l) because of the graphic picture of the entire personality as a Gestalt, interpretative relationships between various personality components are more readily apparent to the experienced clinician (that is to say, the psychologist does not have to simultaneously keep in mind a long series of scores, a large number of ratios and various content themes as in Rorschach interpretation, but can see the personality elements and their relationship at an extended, perusing glance); (m) data from drawings are more easily explained to, and more readily understood by, psychiatrists untrained in projectives.
>
> These conclusions are hypothesized from empirical observations only and in no way imply scientifically proven relationships as yet. At the present time, they have proven to possess a pragmatic usefulness. It is hoped that these clinical

observations will stimulate research and the gathering of data by psychologists, working in varied installations, in investigation of the presented empirically-derived hypotheses.

(Hammer, 1958b, pp. 609–610)

This enumeration of the virtues of drawings is thorough enough, and perhaps already overstates the claim. We might add, however, in a less serious vein, that in addition to ease of administration and "scoring," drawing techniques have the advantage to the examiner of being more interesting to interpret than most tests.

THE THEME "TREE" AS A PREFERRED DRAWING SUBJECT

Nearly everyone who has worked with tree drawings or written about the H-T-P and the Koch Tree Test has had something to say about the unique virtues of the tree theme as a drawing subject. Koch (1949; 1952; 1957), Mattmüller-Frick (1968), and other European commentators, as well as Hammer (1955, 1958a, 1958b) in America, have written at some length on the significance of the tree as a mythological theme and as an ancient and central symbol which appears in all cultures. Jung and his followers have treated this subject extensively, as have scholars in comparative mythology, the history of visual symbols, and cultural anthropology. We have no quarrel with the argument that the tree has a multiplicity of profound mythic meanings, but we feel that the archetypal symbolism of the tree is a subject beyond the scope of our discussion. Study of works dealing with the tree archetype is, of course, most valuable. The student of tree drawings would do well to turn to the writings of specialists—particularly if he is interested in utilizing tree drawings beyond the level of the information needed for rapid analysis.

Leaving aside discussion of the universal meanings of the tree archetype, one must look for simpler arguments in favor of the tree as a preferred drawing theme. Among the suggested subjects for drawings, some, like The Most Unpleasant Concept Test (Harrower, 1958) or the "Draw a Member of a Minority Group Technique" (Hammer, 1958a), seem to have as their purpose to elicit a "graphic statement" from the subject about a particular fear or attitude—e.g., "What is the most unpleasant thing you can bring to mind?" or "How do you feel about people of minority groups?" The drawing tests of primary interest—such as the H-T-P, the DAP, and Koch's method—utilize broader, less specific themes, the purpose of which is less likely to be obvious to the client or patient. It is probably for this reason that the Draw-A-Person Test of Machover and the use of the House-Tree-Person triad introduced by Buck gained such

great popularity among American clinicians, and that Koch's test came to be widely used in Europe.

It is assumed by nearly all of the investigators working with the broad-theme techniques that the subject will express or project in the drawings various facets of his personality: his self-view, his attitude toward others, his feelings about the environment, his conscious inclinations, and his unconscious conflicts. Of the three themes—house, person, and tree—the human figure and the tree drawing seem most likely to elicit personal responses from the subject: "As to the Tree and the Person, both these concepts tap that core of the personality which theorists, notably Paul Schilder, have labeled the body image and the self-concept" (Hammer, 1958a, p. 171). While Machover thought that human figure drawings could reveal both wide dimensions of the personality and the clinical condition of the subject, Buck postulated that the triad of house, tree, and person could be used to tap the various layers and dimensions of experience and personality of the subject: "Each drawing is believed to arouse both conscious and unconscious associations: that of the house, associations concerning the subject's home and those living with him; that of the tree, concerning his life role and his ability to derive satisfaction from and in his environment in general; that of the person, concerning interpersonal relationships both specific and general—and in each instance the past, the present, and the future, all or any combination thereof, may be involved" (Buck, 1953, p. 689).

Although Buck offers an extensive list of the kinds of information about the personality which can be gleaned from the tree drawing, in attempting to distinguish the uses of the three themes he places considerable emphasis on the idea that the tree is the most likely to reveal the subject's felt impression of himself in relation to his environment. While we would not disagree with the idea that the tree drawing indicates how the individual relates to the larger environment, we would question the implication that the self-environment relationship is the principal aspect of personality expressed in tree drawings. Our own view of the differences in what is revealed through the human figure and tree drawings comes closer to that of Hammer:

> The drawing of the Tree appears to reflect the subject's relatively deeper and more unconscious feelings about himself, whereas the drawn Person becomes the vehicle for conveying the subject's closer-to-conscious view of himself and his relationship with his environment. In this manner, a picture of the conflicts and defenses as set in the hierarchy of the subject's personality structure is provided.
>
> The Tree, a more basic, natural, vegetative entity, has been found to be a more suitable symbol upon which to project the deeper personality feelings, feelings about the self residing at a more primitive personality level than what one has learned about people.
>
> (Hammer, 1958a, p. 172)

Both Hammer and Buck maintain that a further advantage of the tree subject is its suitability for the expression of either painfully traumatic past experiences or negative and disturbing traits: "The deeper or more forbidden feelings can more readily be projected onto the Tree than onto the Person, with less fear of revealing oneself and less need for ego-defensive maneuvering" (Hammer, 1958a, p. 172). One might add that because the tree is felt by the testee to be a more neutral theme than the human figure, even the expression of nonthreatening materials is more likely to be spontaneous and free of stereotype or conventional restraint.

Furthermore, we would emphasize that the drawn tree seems to represent the history of the life process of the individual, encompassing his origins, his experience to date, and his hopes or plans for the future. In contradistinction to a human figure drawing, it is possible to gain an overview of the subject's development through the years, even from a single tree drawing rendered at a particular point in time. It is on this account that we have mentioned the potential of the tree motif to reveal biographical events.

Another reason behind our preference for the tree theme is that resistance to the task is less often encountered than when a subject is requested to draw a person. We have found that normal, intelligent adults—if they do not happen to be especially skilled at drawing—will often refuse the latter request. Aware that delineation of the human figure is difficult and challenging, sometimes even for the art student, our subjects frequently decline on grounds that their abilities are too limited for figure drawing. Even if the subject agrees to draw a person, we would question whether one can judge psychological maturity, mental health status, or personality traits from the production, unless one takes into account the graphic skill (or lack thereof) of the individual. Waehner (1946) showed that artistic training does not interfere with the potential of test drawings to reveal personality traits. However, Whitmyre (1953) performed experiments demonstrating that psychologists judging human figure drawings were influenced by the artistic quality of those rendered by art students, consistently rating these as "better adjusted" than the productions of students without special graphic training. In an elegant double-blind extension of these experiments, he established that psychologists experienced in the use of the DAP were influenced by artistic merit in evaluating the drawings of fifty subjects, twenty-five of whom were hospitalized psychiatric patients and twenty-five normals. Also, in our opinion, too little attention has been paid to the opposite variable: that poorly developed artistic skills (which may very well be coincident with a high level of intelligence and relatively good adaptation) can be responsible for somewhat primitive or distorted figure drawings. The tree, on the other hand, is far simpler to draw than the person. Even those who hate

to draw or are not graphically talented can usually be persuaded to portray a tree of some sort.

Many other fine points might be raised in favor of the tree as a drawing theme, but we are not arguing for any absolute superiority of this subject over all others. Our experience, however, has led us to believe that it is the most appropriate motif where personality analysis of relatively well-functioning adults is in question.

At this point we should like to introduce some discussion of methods other than our own in which the theme "tree" is prescribed as a drawing subject.

DER BAUMTEST

The first edition of Karl Koch's *Der Baumtest* appeared in Switzerland in 1949 as a slim eighty-eight-page volume. This version was translated into English in 1952 as the second edition—also published in Switzerland, and unfortunately rendered into English by someone obviously not native to the language. It is primarily through this translation that those few American psychologists who are aware of Koch's book have familiarized themselves with his work. The third revised edition of 1957, which contains 258 pages, had reached the fifth printing by 1967; however, it is virtually unavailable in the United States.

Koch did not invent the Tree Test himself. It was created, according to his account, by a vocational consultant named Emil Jucker, Canton Zürich, Switzerland, who had been developing his ideas about tree drawings from private experiments commencing in 1928. Koch, also a vocational counselor based in Lucerne, apparently was fascinated with the Tree Test of his senior colleague, and began working out his own method for tree-drawing analysis, basing many of his interpretations on prior studies in graphology. After making some preliminary assays with a mimeographed text circulated among other counselors, educators, and psychologists, Koch felt encouraged to put together the first edition of his book.

Thirty-three pages of the original text are devoted to an introduction, which deals with the mythological symbolism of the tree, analogies between tree-drawing analysis and the methods of graphology, and a discussion of the standardization of the test through what he calls "developmental statistics." The rest of the book consists of one lengthy and several brief analyses from his case files, and the key section called "Tables for the Tree Test," which incorporates eighy-nine figures accompanied by lists of possible interpretive meanings.

There are a number of reasons why the presentation of the material in

the first edition may leave the reader with an impression of confusion. (The revised edition is vastly improved in many respects, but since only the first edition exists in English translation, it seems pertinent to comment on it as it stands.) The first source of confusion is Koch's assumption that all of his readers will be familiar with the literature and the "special jargon" of graphology. Thus he writes, without prior explanations or references: "The space symbolism known from Pulver's graphology, with left and right, upper and lower, rear and front zones, springs to mind immediately" (Koch, 1952, p. 12). He speaks in the foreword of "the scientific study of forms of expression," but it was not until we had read halfway through the first section of the book that we recognized this as a reference to the study of graphology. Later on, still in the introductory section, he attempts to elaborate and clarify the graphological analogies, but even then it is necessary for understanding to have a firm familiarity with the European graphological literature. What is one to make, for example, of passages like the following:

> A clear separation between sign and expressional material is for the moment impossible because of the theme, which leads to absence of movement. In the tables the designation of a sign is accompanied, wherever possible, by that of the feature as recognized in scientific analysis of forms of expression. The construction of the tables follows the main features of the structure of the tree. We are guided, therefore, by the phenomenon apparent to the senses, and when the theme "crown" is treated, the interpretation of course follows the laws of scientific analysis of forms of expression.
>
> (Koch, 1952, p. 22)

None of the terms apparently commonly used in graphology are defined, and it is not until the end of the introduction that there is even a clear explanation that graphological thinking is the point of departure for comments of this sort. Even if we concede that psychologists from continental Europe take graphology more seriously than do the majority of their English-speaking colleagues, it hardly seems permissible to assume that this rather specialized vocabulary should be known to all persons who might have occasion to use what purports to be a test for personality analysis. We do not argue with the notion that there may be an important connection between the methods of handwriting and of tree-drawing analysis. (It is quite possible that the originator of our version of the test, Father Ábel, based his early work on a knowledge of graphology.) Nevertheless, we feel that Koch's naive manner of introducing the graphological background to his version of the tree test may have been one of the factors which has caused his work to be more or less ignored in the English-speaking world.

Another difficulty with the structure of Koch's text lies in the "Tables for the Tree Test." There is very little order in their presentation. One finds first a page dealing with the roots, next a discussion of the so-called

T-trunk (pine trunk in the fruit tree), followed by a section on the base of the trunk. Twenty-two pages later appears a section on the ground and the ground line. In the intervening pages are figures treating branches, matters having to do with the whole tree (such as directional inclination), interspersed with sections on the crown and the general style of the tree.

Furthermore, a rather limited number of possible ways of expressing the detailed elements of form are shown, and those which are illustrated are given long lists of potential meanings, often so inclusive and so ambivalent that the beginning interpreter can learn very little from them. We are aware that any particular sign or aspect of the tree drawing can have a number of differing meanings. A sign appearing in a tree which is basically strong, well developed, and creative could have a relatively positive meaning, or at least not any serious negative implications, whereas the same sign in an extremely hostile, immature, or disturbed tree might require a markedly different interpretation. In our own text we have often found it necessary to give alternative meanings, dependent on the context of the whole. Koch, however, has a tendency to present lists like the following:

> Stroke crossings (branch crossings) [Fig. 59] are extremely difficult to judge because in perspective drawing the dimension of depth is suggested and therefore various planes are projected onto the surface of the drawing. This in itself leads to stroke crossings or to branch crossings.
>
> Only crossings in the same plane are to be regarded as true crossings. Intertwinings are partly to be distinguished from them.
>
> Struggle between affectivity and self-control
> Self-contradiction (ambivalence)
> Capacity for judgment
> Critical capacity
> Weighted and considered judgment
> Undecidedness
> Presenting problems, complicated
> Oppositional
> Divided
> Lack of unity
> Looking surreptitiously in two directions
> Absence of clarity of thought and feeling
> Lacking power of discrimination (Koch, 1952, p. 73)

To state that a particular manner of drawing the branches may have several meanings, depending on the tree as a whole and on other details present, or to suggest one set of interpretations for a "positive" tree and another group of meanings for a "negative" rendering, seems acceptable, for it is certainly true that no one factor in tree drawing can always be said to stand for a definite, invariable personality characteristic. In many of his tables Koch gives a scale of related meanings which can be seen as

positive and negative manifestations of the same trait—as, for example, independence/uncontrolled unruliness. The table cited above, however, is another matter, for it is difficult to accept that the same sign can stand for critical capacity or a potential for weighted and considered judgment in the tree of one individual, while it is interpreted in the tree of another subject as indicating absence of clarity of thought and feeling, or poor powers of discrimination. These are not positive and negative expressions of an identifiable trait, but are rather mutually exclusive.

While most of the tables accompanying the figures consist of equally ambiguous, if not contradictory lists of words and phrases, an occasional figure is accompanied by a brief and definite statement of meaning. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in disagreement with Koch in many of the cases where he does take a strong stand on the meaning of a particular factor. An example is his comment on the "stroke branch," by which he means primary and secondary branches both drawn with single strokes. He writes: "From school age on, a sign of retardation, usually slight, both in intellect and in character. Often a sign of regression in cases of neurosis" (Koch, 1952, p. 65).

In the body of our text we have made a number of statements, especially in connection with specific illustrations, which stand in complete opposition to Koch's views on what he calls "signs of retardation" or "signs of regression." This matter of the single stroke branch is only one among many examples. It happens that, in our collection, single-stroke branches appear in the tree drawings of a Nobel laureate, a philosopher who is the author of important books, a large number of scientists, and several very gifted artists. The extreme upper-range intelligence quotient of these subjects makes us reject out of hand any suggestion that this factor in tree drawings is a sign of mental retardation, or even "slight" limitation of intellect. Of course, it is always possible that these subjects were suffering from "regressive" neuroses at the time the drawings were made, but we rather doubt it. Most of them were volunteers, and they were all functioning in their normal roles.

On close examination of Koch's text, and especially after reading the revised edition, we began to discern that the commentaries in the tables that seemed to bear at least a relatively close resemblance to our own interpretations were very likely those which had been developed from graphological principles, whereas those with which we were in strong disagreement were mostly the result of Koch's developmental theories. He does not specify the source of commentary as either deriving from graphology or originating from his developmental statistics, but in some cases the matter is fairly clear. For instance, in most of the figures dealing with the inclination of the tree or of the crown, its left or right dominance, and so on, the meanings are in accord with graphological principles; in these cases we find parallels between Koch's interpretations and

our own. The same is true to a certain extent of the comments on different types of strokes or on the general style of the tree, characterizations which seem to have had their source in handwriting analysis.

Of the sixteen features which Koch lists on the last page of his first edition as definite indications of either retarded development or neurotic regression, we can agree with him on only three at the most. Why should this be the case? The answer, we believe, lies in one of the underlying assumptions of his method for standardizing the test, and in the marked weighting of his sample in the direction of the very young or of adults who are clearly retarded. From the first edition one can learn very little about his sample population and his developmental statistics. At the beginning of the discussion, however, a key comment may explain the marked discrepancies between his findings and our own. The standardization of the test has been accomplished by investigating fifty different features to determine the number of cases in which each of them occurred in drawings by *children of any particular age between five and sixteen.* His general hypothesis is that there are certain features which are normal at one age (for instance, age six), but which, appearing at a later age (for instance, age ten), indicate either mental retardation or emotional regression. He "proves" this by establishing the statistical frequency with which the particular feature occurs in samples of tree drawings taken from both age groups. If, in his population, the single-stroke branch appears in 44 percent of the five-year-olds, 21 percent of the six-year-olds, and drops to less than 2 percent around age eight, then presumably a ten-year-old who draws a tree with single-stroke branches has either a mental or emotional age of five or six. This strikes us as somewhat spurious reasoning, even if one stays within the age limit of the group under examination—that is, children between the ages of five and sixteen. But the crucial point is that Koch's sample consists principally of the drawings of children and adolescents. It does not seem to occur to him that there might be a complete lack of correlation between standards of normalcy established for the years of development and those for the fully matured adult. He assumes that what he claims to have established as "normal" for the sixteen-year-old or late adolescent may equally well be taken as the standard of normalcy for the mature and intelligent adult. Or there is the negative corollary: If a particular feature appears very rarely or not at all in the drawings of sixteen-year-olds but is common in those of seven-year-olds, then the appearance of such a feature in the drawing of an adult would indicate severe retardation or serious regression to an infantile state.

Our sample has been drawn from a population of relatively stable adults, about 90 percent of whom fall into the upper 15 percent of the general population in intelligence. We do, however, also have a sizable sample of tree drawings of high school students, ranging in age from fourteen to eighteen, and we have collected some from young children. Of a

group of 144 high school students from whom we recently obtained drawings, two drew fantasy trees and only one drew an abstract tree. Out of thirty-four scientists and graduate students in mathematics and the sciences, on the other hand, eighteen drew abstract trees and four drew fantasy trees. Of the trees drawn by children under the age of seven, about half are either fantasy trees or abstract trees.* Is this to lead us to conclude that twenty-two out of thirty-four of the scientists are suffering from serious neurotic regressions? It seems more sensible to postulate that from about the third year of elementary school through the last year of secondary school, standardization of learning and the encouragement of conformist behavior exert psychological pressures which tend to curtail individual self-expression. On the other hand, on reaching full maturity, the life style, values, manner of thinking and reacting, and even the personal idiosyncratic mannerisms of the individual may take on forms which are but dimly suggested in the behavior of the same person at the age of sixteen.

This is in no way to imply that the tree drawings of children and adolescents cannot be analyzed for purposes of personality assessment; neither do we mean to suggest that the drawings of younger persons are uniform. Nevertheless, it does seem that, while basic personality differences may be clearly in evidence even among very young children, the unique self-expressive forms of the developed individual may not become clear, either to the person himself or to others, until the years of maturity. In adolescence (at least in the United States, where this age group places high value on acceptance by age peers and one or another type of conformity, even if it is to an attitude of rebellion against elders), individuality tends to be at least partially concealed behind adaptive masks. Furthermore, in comparison with the adult years, both the social and educational experiences of the elementary and secondary school years tend to a *relative* degree of standardization. Thus the sixteen-year-old who will develop into a creative artist or a research scientist may not seem markedly different from another sixteen-year-old who will later become a

* It should go without saying that the general impression conveyed by the abstract renderings or the fantasy trees of the group of adult scientists is vastly different from that conveyed by the very young children. Among the adult subjects a high degree of organization and control is evident, as well as relative consistency in technique and the expression of details of form. In the children's drawings the fantasy forms find their way to the drawn page without conscious reflection and usually with very little control over drawing technique; the abstractions of the concept "tree" may indeed be, among very young children, a reflection of their limited ability to formulate mentally and express through the drawing the complex ramifications of a realistically rendered tree. To clarify this distinction, compare illustration 40 (215), a fantasy tree drawn by a three-year-old boy, with illustrations 18, 19, and 20 (153, 155, 156), fantasy trees drawn by adults. Illustration 41 (216), which is an abstract tree drawn by a six-year-old girl, can be compared with all of the drawings included as illustrations of the section on "Abstract Trees" in chapter 7.

certified public accountant, working for forty years for the same firm. By the age of thirty-five however, one might expect to find clear differences in manifest behavior and values, as well as more distinct individual personalities. The implication, then, is that certain expressional features in tree drawings may be correctly interpreted by Koch as indicating mental retardation or emotional disturbance, if the drawings in question are those of children, adolescents, young adults, or adults of known limited intelligence. These *same* features, however, may appear in the tree drawings of intelligent, original, and relatively stable individuals, in which case to interpret them as signs of retardation or regression will be incorrect.

Turning now to a brief examination of the revised edition of *Der Baumtest* (1957), one finds a considerably expanded text of 258 pages. In general, the style and presentation of the materials are vastly improved, although the organization of the figures and commentaries which comprise the tables still leaves much to be desired. In this edition the introductory section contains a lengthy, much clearer explanation of the relation between the principles of graphology and the analysis of tree drawings. Also expanded in these pages is the discussion of the mythological background of the tree archetype.

Although the tables for interpretation are still not put into an order which could be called logical, they are indexed on page xv according to the several parts of the tree and also with reference to general subjects, such as "symptoms of regression." The symbolism of the space around the drawing is explained, as well as a way of determining by precise measurement, for different age groups, the "correct" proportions between trunk and crown and between left and right sides of the crown. Also introduced is the so-called "Wittgenstein Index," a method for calculating the timing of events within the tree drawing, as represented by special marks, through the comparison of the height of the drawn tree in millimeters with the age of the subject in years and months. This method was worked out by Dr. Graf von Wittgenstein, a German neurologist, who alerted Koch to its possibilities.

These additions and expansions contributed some added pages to the enlarged edition, but by far the most important change is in the treatment of the developmental statistics. The book is filled with tables and graphs which express the statistical frequency of particular "features" (such as the appearance in the drawings of flowers, leaves, or fruit) as well as statistics relating to more general matters, such as the proportions of trunk to crown at different ages. The sample is broken down according to age and sex of the subjects, and also according to special population groups.

The statistical examination of separate features was based on tree drawings originating from the following sources:

I. Schoolchildren from Zürich (collected from several school districts to obtain a socioeconomic cross-section).
   A. One drawing each from 255 kindergarten children.
   B. Two drawings each from 592 boys of primary classes 1–8, and secondary classes 1–3.
   C. Two drawings each from 601 girls of primary classes 1–8, and secondary classes 1–3.
II. Mental defectives
   A. 822 drawings from 411 mental defectives, ages 7–17.
   B. 56 drawings of 29 institutionalized imbeciles of various ages.
III. 22 Negroes from Rhodesia, ages 14–18.
IV. Unskilled workers—600 drawings of three different age groups.
V. 22 men and women working in stores as salespeople, ages 16–35.

From analysis according to features of this collection, Koch arrives at much more definite conclusions about which characteristics, manner of expression, and proportions of the parts of the tree are normal for any given age level in the school years. Armed with statistics, graphs, and tables, Koch can now confidently state that certain features must indicate retarded development or severe regression, since they occur in practically none of the tree drawings of his adult subjects and older students. In effect, *looking* at the figures which represent the so-called "early forms" or at some of the figures in the tables describing signs of retardation and regression, we would be inclined to agree that most of them, as drawn, do suggest an infantile state, even without the benefit of statistics. We would contend, however, that the individual signs *described* as regressive could equally well be rendered in a particular tree drawing in a manner either controlled or highly creative, achieving an end result within the whole tree of unity and harmony.

In a sense, then, despite all the statistical "proof" presented by Koch to support his contention that certain features are normal in the drawings of small children and imbeciles but indicate regression in older adolescents, the revised edition of his book leaves us just as dissatisfied with his use of the Tree Test as a measure of development as did the first edition. The problem still lies with the nature of the sample population and with the underlying assumption that the manner of self-expression and the psychological development of students who have reached the age of sixteen or seventeen should be taken as the norm for mature adults.

Within the age range from young children through adolescents, Koch's use of the Tree Test as a means of evaluating developmental level seems to have some rationale. More impressive in support of this than his statistical compilations are the interesting hypnosis studies described in the revised edition. Inspired by Klages' experiments using hypnosis to examine changes in graphological forms, Koch, in cooperation with E. Widrig, a Swiss psychiatrist, conducted two types of investigations in which trees

were drawn by subjects while under hypnosis. In one experiment, relatively well-adjusted individuals whose tree drawings in a normal state of consciousness were without marked pathological signs were given hypnotic suggestions inducing temporary states of negative emotion, and then asked to draw a tree. Examples of suggestions (somewhat simplified) are: "You feel very angry." "You feel very guilty." "You feel as though one part of yourself is crippled." The resultant drawings did indeed show marked changes in form and expression which could be related to specific emotions and experiences.

The second type of hypnotic experiment involved regressing a subject back to the age of two, and then bringing him forward in stages to his real age, with tree drawings obtained at each state of the trance. An example is given, with illustrations depicting the uncoordinated scribble of age two, the first recognizable but very primitive tree of age three, and progressively more controlled versions of the same basic tree drawn up to the age of nine.

Although we have some hesitations about the possible dangers of deliberately inducing negative emotions in the hypnotic state, these experiments seem a most interesting method for investigating the relations of formal expression in tree drawings with specific emotions and/or life experiences. They are more convincing, in our view, than statistical compilations, because we see the principal advantage of tree-drawing analysis as its potential for revealing, through the subject's self-expression, the unique qualities of the individual's personality—his self-view, his goals, his interactions with others, his particular struggles, and his life experience. Experimental methods which permit exploration of changes in self-expression in the drawings of individual subjects seem particularly useful, and are certainly more objective than reports from clinical observations, since the latter are frequently prejudiced by the enthusiasm of the therapist. At the same time such investigations are focused on varieties of individual self-expression, rather than on the purely abstract statistical reality of population percentages.

THE HOUSE-TREE-PERSON TEST

John Buck, an American psychologist associated with the Lynchburg State Colony in Virginia, published his first papers on the House-Tree-Person Test in 1948. According to his own account, he came accidentally upon the potential value of using drawings as a point of departure for establishing contact with patients while working with a nine-year-old girl who would not respond to any of his questions. When asked to draw something, however, she willingly complied and freely answered his ques-

tions about her drawing productions. After some experimentation with other subjects—some willing to verbalize and others not—he selected the three items of house, tree, and person as drawing themes for the following reasons: "1) they were items familiar even to the comparatively young child; 2) they were found to be more willingly accepted as objects for drawing by subjects of all ages than other items suggested; and 3) they appeared to stimulate more frank and free verbalization than did other items" (Buck, 1948b, p. 3). This background is important in understanding the way in which the H-T-P is administered, since in Buck's test the verbal responses of the subject—both spontaneous comments and answers to standardized questions—are as important to the evaluation as are the drawings themselves.

After about ten years of experimentation, Buck published a brief paper describing the test in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* (Buck, 1948a). In the same year he discussed his method at the American Psychology Association meeting, presenting some case histories and emphasizing the diagnostic and clinical uses of the test. In late 1948, two lengthy monographs appeared as journal supplements (Buck, 1948b, 1948c) which served essentially as qualitative and quantitative scoring manuals for the technique. These, plus some mimeographed material recorded from "H-T-P workshops," were the major sources for students of the test until the mid-1960s, when a revised manual was finally published in book form (Buck, 1966).

The 1966 manual actually differs very little from the original monographs, with the exception that extension of the test to a second drawing phase, when chromatic drawings (in crayon) are obtained, has now become a standard practice, whereas originally it was only referred to in an appendix written by another author (Payne, 1948). A larger number of case histories (some by other authors) are also included. Buck describes his test as follows:

> The H-T-P is a two-phased, four-step clinical approach to a meaningful analysis of the total personality within its milieu.
>
> In *Phase One*, the first step in testing is non-verbal, creative and almost completely unstructured; the medium of expression is relatively primitive: the freehand, pencil drawing of a House, a Tree, and a Person.
>
> The second step is verbal, apperceptive, and more formally structured: in it the subject . . . is given an opportunity to describe, define, and interpret his drawn objects and their respective environments, and to associate concerning them.
>
> In *Phase Two*, the first step again involves the freehand drawing of a House, a Tree, and a Person, but with crayons.
>
> The second step provides the subject with the opportunity (albeit in more limited fashion than in step two of *Phase One*) to describe, define and interpret his chromatic drawings of a House, a Tree, and a Person, and to associate concerning them and their respective environments.
>
> (Buck, 1966, p. 1)

Now clearly this is a more complex and longer testing process than that of *Der Baumtest*. Not only are three drawing themes involved (each of them repeated in color in Phase Two), but a formally structured interview is conducted in connection with each production—referred to as the Post Drawing Interrogation, or P-D-I.

In his original postulates (which were considerable in number and rather well defined) Buck offered the following explanations about how he believed the various steps of his test served to elicit both self-expressive and projective responses—graphic, behavioral, and verbal:

> (1) That each of the drawn wholes (House, Tree, and Person) is to be regarded as a self-portrait, as well as the drawing of a specific or composite House, Tree, or Person, since subjects are believed to draw only those characteristics of a given whole which they some way regard as essential, and often those characteristics are found on objective appraisal to bear little resemblance to that which the subject says he has reproduced;
>
> (2) That a subject may indicate that a given detail or combination of details or the method of their presentation, proportionally or spatially, individually or as a totality, has special significance for him in two ways:
>
> *Positively:*
>
> (a) by overtly exhibiting emotion immediately before, during, or after drawing a given detail or combination of details, or while commenting upon it or them in the P-D-I;
> (b) by presenting the detail or detail-complex in sequential order deviant from the average;
> (c) by exhibiting unusual concern over the presentation as by erasing excessively (and particularly when the erasure is not followed by improvement in form), or as by returning to the detail or detail-complex one or more times during the drawing of that or some subsequent whole (and the last is the more pathoformic), or by taking an excessive amount of time in drawing the detail or detail-complex;
> (d) by presenting the detail or detail-complex in bizarre fashion;
> (e) by perseveration upon the presentation of a detail; or
> (f) by his frank comment (spontaneous or induced) concerning a whole or any parts thereof.
>
> *Negatively:*
>
> (a) by presenting a detail or detail-complex incompletely;
> (b) by omitting altogether one or more so-called essential details;
> (c) by commenting evasively or refusing to comment at all upon a whole or any part or parts thereof;
>
> (3) That interpretation of these "significant" details, detail-complexes, and/or the method of their presentation will provide information concerning the subject's needs, fears, strivings, conflicts, etc.
>
> (Buck, 1948b, pp. 4–5)

From this it becomes evident that the drawing products themselves are only one of three factors from which interpretation may be derived. Equally important are observing the subjects drawing behavior and spon-

taneous comments while drawing, and questioning him in detail about his productions. Buck believes that the drawing process is an emotion-arousing experience and that through it, the subject's defenses will be lowered, so that further projection takes place during the P-D-I.

Unfortunately, the nature of the questions in the P-D-I leave much to be desired, being both somewhat awkward and rather transparent. A few examples of questions posed about the tree drawing may serve as examples: "Which does that tree look more like to you, a man or a woman?" "What is there about it that gives you that impression?" "Whom does that tree remind you of?" "What does that tree need most?" In practice, it is tacitly acknowledged that many clinicians dispense with the P-D-I or ask informal questions, but Buck still regards it as an essential part of his test.

With respect to the drawn objects alone, a chapter on qualitative evaluation offers some definite or suggested interpretations for details, proportions, line quality, perspective, and placement on the page. However, individual signs are given even less interpretive value than in Koch's method. It is perhaps on this account that a separate catalogue for qualitative sign interpretation was compiled by one of Buck's co-workers, I. Jolles (1971).

By way of contrast with the vagaries of Buck's qualitative interpretive suggestions is his highly quantified and definite manner of utilizing the drawings as indirect measures of intelligence. Buck thought that the rendering of the three themes could be utilized as indicators of mental ability. He therefore performed a standardization study in the attempt to establish norms for seven groups at the following intellectual levels: (1) imbecile, (2) moron, (3) borderline, (4) dull average, (5) average, (6) above average, and (7) superior. The system for scoring the drawings to determine intelligence level is complicated and not worth going into here. The interested reader will find it described in Buck's H-T-P manual (Buck, 1966), essentially unchanged from the original 1948 presentation. Although as early as 1948 Sloan and Guertin criticized Buck on the grounds that his original normative experiment used only twenty subjects for each of the seven groups, and although this criticism has been repeated by others, neither Buck nor his followers appear to have undertaken new experiments with larger sample populations.

Among Buck's "twenty-subject groups," items of detail, proportion, and perspective were identified which seemed to best differentiate among the various intellectual levels. Each item was assigned a factor symbol consisting of a letter and a number. Factors with the symbols D_3 (very inferior), D_2 (imbecile), and D_1 (moron) were grouped in the gross category "flaw." Factors with the symbols A_1 (borderline), A_2 (dull average), A_3 (average), S_1 (above average), and S_2 (superior) were grouped in the gross category "good."

In his sample, most of the items scored S_1 or S_2 were items of detail

and/or realistic rendering. The assumption apparently followed that there is an increasing tendency to draw details in a realistic manner, and to include a greater number of what are termed "relevant details" in each drawing, as the intelligence level is raised from the imbecile to the superior group. It is probably true that the *lowest* scores based on omission of details—the D_3's—are signs of inferior intellectual functioning, for such matters as failure to include walls in a house would seem to reflect mental limitations of a serious kind. However, the supposition that the greater the number of realistic details included, the higher the intelligence, does not seem to follow logically. Why should it be necessary to draw in the roof material, or show window curtains, or put a window in the door of the house; or to show bark on the tree trunk and grass at its base (both of which we regard as extraneous and somewhat suspicious signs); or to include a cane in the drawing of the person, in order to obtain any of the above-average scores? By what logic is the drawing of a porch with pillars or a railing a sign of superiority? We are not impressed with the fact that Buck derived these standards from the frequency of their appearance in the drawings of his above-average and superior groups, for when we gave Buck's test to twenty of our own superior subjects, none of these items appeared in more than one or two drawings.* Furthermore, it does not seem sensible to us that an item such as "arms attached to the head or the neck" should be given the same intelligence rating as "the tree extending beyond one margin of the page."

Buck readily admits that the H-T-P is not intended to be a highly refined measure of intelligence, and that it is far less meaningful in the IQ ranges below 50 or above 125. Its principal values, according to him, lie in the possibility of revealing concealed mental gifts in those who for any reason have difficulty with the more structured verbal tests of intellectual function, and in pointing up the emotional causes of the depression of potential intellectual function.

However, even though he tempers his claim that H-T-P is a valid device for measuring intelligence per se, he does insist that discrepancies between the H-T-P IQ scores and those obtained on other tests point to serious problems. Since all of our superior subjects scored at least twenty points below their measured IQ's from other standard tests, and since all of them also obtained many D_2 and D_1 scores, even though the final average was usually relatively high, Buck would conclude that these subjects were suffering from a disturbance of mental functioning with emo-

* D_2 items could be found in a sizable number of our drawings from subjects of superior intelligence. Buck rates them D_2 because they were identified in more than 50 percent of the drawings from the imbecile group and less than 50 percent of the drawings of the next higher group, i.e., morons. The mean educational achievement of Buck's imbecile group was low second grade. Many of our subjects showing D_2 items are Ph.D's.

tional causes. As this did not seem to be the case, we could only conclude that Buck's original standardization of the quantitative scoring involved both arbitrary selection and an unfortunate extension of hypothetical assumptions into generalized laws.

In the qualitative scoring of the test, Buck found it more difficult to establish definite pathological factors. He makes the sound observation that what may be a sign of pathology in the context of one drawing may be quite "normal" in the whole of another drawing. He therefore cautions the interpreter to consider the whole when evaluating the rendering in qualitative terms. As can be seen from the original postulates, a great deal of qualitative information is derived from observation of the drawing process and from the subject's reponses to the P-D-I. Since we employ neither of these techniques, comparison with our own method of evaluation can only be made on the basis of Buck's statements about the drawings themselves, irrespective of the additional information derived from verbal comments and behavior during the test situation. In this comparison we will confine ourselves to Buck's remarks on the tree theme.

Buck's interpretive discussion on the tree is naturally very limited, since he deals with three themes, and since his technique involves so many other considerations. He makes some insightful comments, such as the observation that when shading is employed, one must first differentiate between its healthy (to show perspective or indicate foliage by implication) and unhealthy uses (reinforced shading, excessively dark lines produced by heavy strokes, and shading which indicates perseveration on a particular detail). In his original publications, many of his remarks were much more arbitrary, and seemed slanted toward negative characteristics. For example, he attributed "strong, hostile impulses" to the "keyhole" tree (a tree consisting merely of two lines for the trunk and a looped crown): "Hostility is presumed to exist because of: (1) the subject's failure to present details usually drawn out or implied by shading; (2) his refusal, in effect, to define more specifically his branch structure (interpreted as revealing the extent, interrelationship, etc., of his satisfaction-seeking in the environments)" (Buck, 1948b, p. 50). We do not find this type of tree to be associated with any frequency with hostility. Furthermore, the argument given for the assumption of hostility suggests that it is really the examiner who feels hostile, because he is frustrated by the subject's failure to provide him with a properly branched tree which he could figure out.

Another exclusively negative interpretation was given for drawing the whole with extremely faint lines. This was thought to indicate generalized feelings of inadequacy accompanied by indecision and fear of defeat. Respecting a tree which is deviant in its size in relation to the page, he also offered mainly negative comments: "The size of the Tree in relation to the form page size is postulated as representing the subject's feeling of

his stature in his psychological field. If the Tree is enormous, the subject is thought to be acutely aware of himself in relation to his environment in general and the suggestion that he is aggressing or about to aggress. If the Tree is tiny, the subject is believed to feel inferior and inadequate, to be indicating a desire to withdraw" (Buck, 1948b, p. 54). In the revised edition of his manual (Buck, 1966), many of these interpretations are somewhat tempered. However, one still may find such strong statements as the following: "Roots shown as if the ground were transparent is pathological; the more so if the subject was or is of high intelligence" (Buck, 1966, p. 117). If all of our subjects who draw roots below a "transparent" ground evidenced pathology, there would definitely be a local shortage of mental hospital beds wherever we are working. We see this form regularly in intelligent and mentally healthy persons.

The tendency to interpret any deviation from what the examiner regards as "normal" as indicating emotional pathology is typical of many of the psychological tests designed to evaluate emotional stability. Their design is so heavily slanted toward "looking for trouble" that insufficient allowance is made for differences stemming from inborn type characteristics or from originality. The result is a method which may be useful in clarifying the specific nature of emotional problems when some kind of pathology is already suspected or known to exist. All too often, however, these same tests are given to students and other populations of relatively healthy adults, with resulting personality descriptions which are frighteningly dark. Our opinion is that Buck's test is inappropriate for our typical subjects. In the same way that we believe Koch's generalizations about tree drawings would be more precise if he applied them exclusively to the population with which he is used to working—children and adolescents—Buck's generalizations about what is "normal" or "good" in the drawings of house, tree, and person would seem to yield more reliable information when applied to persons who are either mentally deficient or suffering from severe personality disorders.

We may summarize the principal differences between our technique and that of Buck in five points. (1) We use only the single theme "tree," instead of the three items: house, tree, and person. (2) We do not believe that the tree drawing is a proper measure of intelligence or that there is a possibility of establishing a scoring system related to it which would assess the mental ability of an adult subject in a valid manner. (3) We do not place emphasis on observation of the drawing process per se and do not employ a highly structured postdrawing interview. What Buck is attempting to accomplish through the P-D-I is to bring the H-T-P closer to the classic projective devices by using the subject's completed drawings as the point of departure for verbal associations and storytelling. In our method, any questions posed to the subject are asked only after the drawing itself has been subjected to preliminary analysis. The examiner's

insights into the personality of the subject begin with the self-expressive and formal qualities of the drawing itself. Subsequent interviews may center around the rendering, but the questions posed will be completely individual and will have as their purpose to deepen, refine, or correct insights which the examiner has already gleaned from study of the drawing. (4) A more subtle distinction between our test and the H-T-P stems from the nature of Buck's original sample population and from his experience with clinically disturbed subjects, heavily weighted toward mental defectives and persons with severe personality maladjustments. (5) We do not use chromatic drawings because we feel that the color symbolism has doubtful significance and we are not fully convinced that crayon drawings tend, as now claimed by Buck and his followers, to tap deeper layers of personality than a monochromatic rendering. It is possible, on the other hand, that colored drawings may be useful to reveal premorbid states, a matter which we shall return to in the following section, dealing with "variants" on the Buck and Koch techniques.

VARIANTS

The high level of interest in the analysis of drawings sustained from the 1920s through the 1950s has leveled off considerably in the United States, with only the DAP retaining a prominent place in the clinical assessment battery. In Europe the situation is somewhat different, for publications on the drawings and paintings of psychotics continue to appear regularly, and both the DAP and the Koch Tree Test are widely used in clinical and counseling practices.

While we cannot cover all of the developments which have ensued since the thematic drawing tests were introduced, we do want to make brief mention of the research, special applications, or variations in technique treating the tree theme initiated by certain investigators on both continents. Since the Koch Tree Test has much wider applications at the present time than does the H-T-P, our emphasis will be on European innovations. However, we begin with a discussion of the possible prognostic value of the H-T-P chromatic series.

The analysis of chromatic H-T-P drawings did not originate with Buck, but was suggested by Payne, who contributed a brief appendix on the subject to Buck's 1948 monograph. Contemporary H-T-P enthusiasts now administer the chromatic drawing series as a routine part of the test, generally offering a set of eight crayons (red, green, yellow, blue, brown, black, purple, and orange), although a few workers have used more colors and at least one investigator adds water color productions as a

third series. Vague and rather peculiar color symbolism is often used in interpreting the chromatic drawings (for example: yellow tree trunk = overt hostility). The addition of the second set of drawing tasks and a further period of questioning also makes the Buck method even more time consuming for both subject and examiner, a matter which can only be justified if the resulting additional information has value proportional to the time needed.

A special use of the chromatic series has been explored by Hammer, whose preliminary investigations (Hammer, 1958c) suggested to him that marked discrepancies between the achromatic and the chromatic renderings might be used for diagnosis and/or prognosis of mental pathology. He followed up these leads in an elegantly planned, quasi-blind experiment (fully described in Hammer, 1969) in which he analyzed the achromatic and chromatic productions of sixty subjects referred to him. The H-T-P was given first in the testing battery, and the analyses arrived at were recorded prior to administration of other personality tests. He classified the subjects in the following categories: normal; neurotic; character disorders; latent conditions (ambulatory or prepsychotic); reactive conditions; frank schizophrenia; and organic disorders. Six months later he requested that the referring psychiatrists offer their own diagnoses in terms as close as possible to the nosological categories which he had defined. (The waiting period was intended in part to assure that the psychiatrist should not be unduly influenced by the original analyses and would have made up his own mind.) In forty-eight of the sixty cases Hammer's diagnoses were in agreement with those of the attending psychiatrists. His success in recognizing prepsychotic states was particularly notable. At the time of the initial testing Hammer predicted that a number of patients who were seemingly coping with the problems of everyday reality reasonably well were latent psychotics who would sooner or later suffer a frank psychotic breakdown, and in these prognoses he was 80 percent correct.

He pointed out that the chromatic productions of these patients showed considerably more "imbalancing factors," for instance, loss of contact with reality, than did their achromatic drawings. Hammer thought that the first task—i.e., the achromatic drawing phase and subsequent P-D-I—loosened the subject's ego-defenses and that, as a consequence, he would project new materials during the second (chromatic) drawing task. He further postulated that the use of color per se taps deeper layers of the personality, bringing more unconscious material to the surface, both with respect to the subject's self-image and his attitude toward the environment. It is difficult to judge whether or not Hammer's second hypothesis is correct. Nevertheless, it is impressive to see the illustrations accompanying his case histories, where definite signs of disintegration and loss of touch with reality can be discerned in the chromatic productions of the

premorbid patients—signs which cannot be gleaned from the pencil drawings of the same subjects. In this context the sequential use of achromatic and chromatic renderings may be a valuable adjunct in the early recognition of certain kinds of premorbid psychological conditions. However, it remains to be demonstrated whether the technique yields more insight than the simple achromatic drawing where well-functioning, normal adults are concerned.

While nearly all of the European investigators working with tree drawings use the Koch Tree Test as their point of departure, the French psychologist Stora has written about both Buck's and Koch's methods and has developed her own approach to tree-drawing analysis (Stora, 1963a; 1963b; 1964a).

For the most part, Stora's attitude toward drawing analysis is closer to Koch's than to Buck's, for she works with the tree theme only, and the principal focus of her work is with children. However, she objects to Koch's intuitive, symbolic treatment of his material and also to the vagueness and inclusiveness of the many interpretations he lists for specific signs. Trained in clinical psychology, she prefers the greater precision and orderliness of Buck's method. Her own approach constitutes a kind of bridge between the two systems.

Stora's experiments with the drawings of 2,416 normal children between ages four and fifteen have led to the statistical determination of a maturity scale, which includes ninety items. She has also attempted to study qualitative indications with statistical methods, defining what signs and groups of signs are most frequently associated with certain emotional states—that of fear, for example. One of her most important findings, by her own account, is having established the notion of "sign clusters" as a basis for qualitative analysis.

In administration, Stora follows more closely the procedure of Koch than that of Buck, since she does not include formal questioning of the subject as part of the protocol. However, she requests *four* drawings in the following manner:

> a) One presents a sheet of white paper with the proportions 21 × 27 [cm], a well sharpened 2B pencil (eraser, ruler and compass being forbidden) and one requests: "Draw a tree, any kind you wish, except for a pine."
>
> b) After the first drawing has been completed, one takes away the paper, replacing it with a similar sheet, and says: "Draw *another* tree, any kind you wish, except for a pine."
>
> c) One removes the second drawing, offers another sheet of paper, always white and of the same size, and requests: "Draw a dream tree, an imaginary tree, a tree which does not exist in reality, drawing it as you please."
>
> d) One removes the third drawing, presents a fourth piece of paper of the same type and requests: "Draw a tree, any kind you wish, but do it with your eyes closed." It is important to check that the eyes are completely closed and not to accept simple staring into space.
>
> (Stora, 1963b, p. 261; our translation)

The first drawing is thought to represent the subject's interactions with his wider environment and with strangers; the second with the close environment and intimates. The dream tree gives insights regarding the testee's unsatisfied desires and his inclinations. The fourth tree, drawn with the eyes closed, is thought by Stora to reveal nonintegrated past experiences.

Another interesting development in France dealt with the drawings of adults, presumably free of mental pathology. Mathieu and Defayolle (1964) came to the conclusion, after more than five years of experimental applications of psychometric techniques with Koch's Tree Test, that tree drawings can be analyzed to establish the subject's IQ. (They apparently proceeded unhindered by the related efforts of Goodenough and Buck.)

They maintain that drawings are superior for judging innate intelligence to tests involving verbal skills or performance tasks, and they chose the theme "tree" for their standardization experiments. They first selected ninety-six signs from the tree renderings of adults whose drawings had been separated on the basis of above-normal, normal, and below-normal scores on the Niveau Général (N.G.) (French military intelligence test). After having eliminated those which did not correlate well with either inferior or superior ability, they retained eight signs characteristic for the former and eight for the latter. The lists of indicators of inferior or superior mental gifts strike us as equally arbitrary as those of Buck. We cannot see any reason why a tree without leaves (winter tree) should be a sign of a low level of intelligence, whereas "black coloration of the trunk outline" should stand for the opposite.

At any rate, the authors assigned various numerical values to the presence or absence of these signs and also to several factors referring to the total artistic quality of the rendering, such as internal harmony, line execution, page placement, and so on. They tested their final results for interjudge reliability, and for validity they compared their subjects' scores with IQ's on the N.G., reporting very high correlation coefficients for both.

Intrigued by the simplicity of the method, we asked a colleague to pull at random twelve drawings from one of our collections containing 300 trees drawn by subjects whose Wechsler-Bellevue IQ's were all 125 or above. Applying the scales of Mathieu and Defayolle yielded the results shown below:

SUBJECT NO.	IQ: MATHIEU-DEFAYOLLE	IQ: WECHSLER-BELLEVUE
1	96	164
2	99	132
3	108	144
4	92	128
5	92	133
6	102	125
7	111	131
8	121	136
9	99	126
10	96	143
11	102	145
12	102	137

We do not believe that these "noncorrelations" require further comment.

One thing must be granted, however. Since these investigators take into account the aesthetic quality of the tree drawing—in contradistinction to Buck—at least some of our subjects of superior intelligence who score "imbecile" on Buck's test turn out to have good average or only slightly below average intelligence as measured by the scales of Mathieu and Defayolle.

Other Europeans working with tree drawings are experimenting with requests for several trees or for trees of a special nature. In the Netherlands, at the Institute for Vocational Psychology in Hengelo three drawings are requested from the subject: (1) a normal tree, (2) a fantasy tree, and (3) a dream tree (reported in Koch [1957] and Stora [1963b]; no publications known). Another Dutch psychologist, G. Ubbink of Arnhem, asks his subjects to tell the life story of the tree they have drawn, a technique designated as the "talking tree." The unusual instruction of E. Widrig (Switzerland; reported in Koch [1957]) should be also mentioned: "Draw a crazy tree." Following his experiments with subjects in hypnotic states, he found that he could induce some of the same expressions of deep unconscious materials in nonhypnotized subjects simply by suggesting the drawing of a crazy tree.

In Hungary, Harsányi and Donáth (1962) routinely request two tree drawings from their subjects, both achromatic and without altered instructions. They then grade the products according to their similarities on a scale from one to three. The authors have found that the greatest degree of divergence between the two drawings (grade three) in terms of size, representation, tree type, and so on, is associated with severe emotional tension, the extent of which cannot be discovered from analysis of a single drawing.

A sizable number of publications dealing with Koch's Tree Test have appeared in Italian-, Spanish-, and German-language journals. Many of

these represent attempts to validate his test; others treat special applications, in particular the discovery of indicators claimed to be useful for diagnosis of the psychoses. In most of these papers Koch is automatically acknowledged as the expert on tree drawings.

Much more interesting from our standpoint is the innovative work of Mattmüller-Frick (1968). The author lauds Koch's originality and insight, but at the same time he quietly goes about presenting a systematic ordering of Koch's haphazard tables, and makes some excellent interpretive contributions without drawing any particular attention to himself. He is an educational counselor who finds the Tree Test highly useful in aiding students. Unlike Stora, Buck, and the later Koch, he is not much interested in statistical norms and is unembarrassed to admit the important role played by intuition in the qualitative interpretation of the drawings. It would seem, from his focus on positive comments, that he may be more accustomed than most other investigators to working with persons of normal or superior intelligence and reasonably stable emotions. In any case, he is clearly oriented to a holistic view of the subject as an individual, and his interpretive comments are notable for their common sense, if not for their adherence to the principles of current scientific methodology in psychological testing.

Koch's remarks on the size of the tree amount almost to categorical statements. He says, for example, that very large trees definitely fall into the symptomatology of schizophrenia, whereas very small trees are almost always indicative of endogenous depression. Regarding the size of the tree, Mattmüller-Frick takes a much more flexible position, quoting the old German saying "*Vielen ist die Welt zu klein, manchen is sie viel zu weit*" ("For many is the world too small, for some it is much too wide"). He seems to imply that neither a very large nor a very small tree is necessarily pathological, but may simply be one aspect of the subject's expression of his constitutional type.

Among Mattmüller-Frick's original contributions is the recognition that stroke characteristics correlate well with three basic type categories of perception: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Differentiated, mostly soft, precise, ornamental strokes are characteristic for visual types. Auditory persons tend to use discontinuous, helpless, harsh, awkward strokes. Typical for kinesthetic individuals are dynamic, swinging, single-line strokes. The recognition that there may be different standards of normalcy for different types gives rise to serious doubts about the validity of the statistical compilations of authors like Buck, Koch, and Stora. According to these authors, many trees in our collection which consist merely of a few dynamic and very rapid strokes would be interpreted as typical of either mental retardation or serious pathology. Since most of these trees have been drawn by highly intelligent adults, we are encouraged to discover an interpreter who might see their tree drawings as normal for the

kinesthetic type, rather than attribute to these subjects problems or limitations from which they do not, in reality, suffer. By the same token, while Koch interprets depression from dark, heavy lines, and Buck sees these as expressive of hostility, Mattmüller-Frick would apparently first consider whether harsh and dark strokes might not be the normal expression of an auditory type, before attributing pathological meanings to their appearance in a tree drawing. In part III we will evaluate five simple trees drawn by exceptionally gifted persons to show further what serious misinterpretations can result from reliance on standards derived from population statistics.

The final publication to which we wish to call attention is a thorough evaluation of the uses of tree-drawing analysis in connection with psychopathology, carried out by Suchenwirth (1965). The author recognizes that drawings rendered for the purpose of personality study cannot be considered as tests, since the product represents a Gestalt not amenable to the usual psychometric evaluations. He also questions the validity of the numerous investigations which have been carried out purporting to show that certain signs or clusters of signs are pathognomonic for specific nosological entities, concluding that tree drawings are not diagnostic tools in the strict sense. He thinks that their application in psychiatry lies in their proven value in longitudinal studies—that is, following the disease course (deterioration or improvement) in a patient undergoing therapy. Suchenwirth points out that in psychotic conditions there will be a gradual disintegration of the Gestalt "tree," concurrent with the worsening of the patient's status. During the period of recovery, in contrast, a reintegration of the Gestalt takes place.

Suchenwirth's argumentation is clear and convincing (as are his case illustrations), and it seems strange that they have been so little recognized by American professionals attempting to interpret thematic drawings of schizophrenics. Perhaps this is partly a reflection of the more or less unquestioned assumption that the schizophrenic process represents a gradual regression to infantile behaviors, stemming in turn from a misunderstanding of Freud's discussions of withdrawal and regression of the libido as typifying schizophrenia. In any event, many workers interested in the drawings of schizophrenics describe them in terms of their childish (regressed) qualities. On the other hand, schizophrenic renderings of graphic themes are much more easily understood if one thinks of them as expressions of an internal state in which the Gestalt forms of the external world are experienced as disintegrating or having disintegrated. Gestalt stability is one of the characteristics of normal consciousness. As Woltman wrote: "Various types of deviations may occur, but real destruction of the Gestalt forms and their conversion into new configurations occurs in psychotic individuals only" (Woltman, 1952, p. 347).

Regression to earlier life stages undoubtedly can be brought about

through hypnosis, and drawing expressions in these states will correspond to the "suggested" age of the subject, as Widrig has shown (see Koch, 1957). But to equate "early forms" in the drawings of adults (whether neurotic or psychotic) with age regression seems unfounded. Regression toward the infantile, and mental states in which disintegration of Gestalt forms occur, represent two different phenomena, and it is to Suchenwirth's credit that he has emphasized so clearly that schizophrenic drawings express disintegration of Gestalt.

PART II

The Method

But let us follow the order which we laid down for our understanding.

Phaedrus,
Fabulae, circa A.D. 50

4

Materials, Instructions, and Administration

Warum soll es einfach sein, wenn es auch kompliziert geht?

Why should it be done simply, when one could also proceed in a complicated fashion? —German folk saying

NEARLY ALL of the projective drawing methods involving a theme—no matter how subjective, inferential, or frankly symbolic might be the body of interpretive materials built up around their applications—make at least some concessions to standardization in terms of materials used and administrative procedures. Some provide printed booklets on which the drawings are to be rendered (the H-T-P, for example). Most insist on the use of standardized implements, usually a no. 2 soft lead pencil for achromatic, or a set of crayons for chromatic drawings, to insure that the color quality and base texture will be equal for all subjects. The size and proportions of the page are generally specified. Finally, many of these "tests" involve observation and timing of the process itself; notation of erasures (if permitted at all); and attention on the part of the examiner to any spontaneous comments made by the testee, behavior exhibiting affect, "blocking" in certain drawing areas, and the sequence in which the parts of the drawn whole are rendered.

As we have seen, specificity of instructions varies. Koch asks his subjects to draw a *fruit* tree. Some of his followers—recognizing that he really means a deciduous tree is to be drawn, but that his subjects may not be able to understand this word—have modified the instructions in such

manner as: "Draw a tree, any kind you wish, but not a pine." Buck's instructions do not specify generic type but include the wording "Draw me the *best* tree (or house, or person) you can," thus suggesting to some subjects that rendering as though drawing from nature is required, even though assurances are provided that the H-T-P is not a test of drawing ability. Our request is exceedingly simple, usually worded: "Would you please draw a tree for me," with some variants, depending on the circumstances.

We have abandoned all practices of standardization of materials and administrative procedure, with the single exception of providing paper which is in relatively close proportion respecting the vertical and horizontal dimensions. (The relative factor is a reflection of the fact that when we are working in Europe we use the usual letter paper format of circa 21 × 28½ centimeters as the base proportion; when working in the United States we find it more convenient to use the 8½ × 11 inch format of American typing paper.) The fact that European paper is slightly narrower and longer relative to that used in America does not appear to have any particular effect on the subject's use of space or the analysis of the zones of the page. We would point out, however, that it is our practice to provide paper in several sizes (utilizing these same approximate proportions), for we find that some subjects are more comfortable with smaller paper—regardless of the resultant production seen in terms of relation of size of drawn tree to whole paper space. Thus, when obtaining tree drawings in what might be called a "test situation"—whether individually or in groups—we offer paper of the "office letter size," several reduced sizes in the same proportions, and even a large size, for those few persons who seem to need a lot of space for their rendering.

When we are "collecting" drawings in an informal field situation in order to increase our own understanding of the relation between drawings and personality, we frequently dispense even with the paper-proportion requirement, if no suitable sheets are available. When in the company of a group of interesting persons of special gifts or professions, about whom one either knows or is able to learn enough to establish some connections between their tree representations and their lives or pursuits, old envelopes or lined notepaper will often suffice. If all are willing to draw, it is worth sacrificing standards to learn more about the renderings of creative people who might never be caught in either a test or an experimental setting. In an extreme pinch, even a paper napkin will do, if one happens to be dining with a great man who agrees to draw a tree. One of the most fascinating drawings of our entire collection was produced by a psychiatrist-writer-historian on the back of a paper placemat in a not-too-elegant Chinese restaurant. Such informal methods may sound very unscientific, but they do not differ essentially from the quick improvisations in collecting methods, such as substituting a tobacco pouch for a

formaline vial, which would be used by a biologist who, while out on a pleasure tramp in the woods, observed something he thought might be an as yet undescribed species.

While admitting that comparison of stroke qualities among the productions of different individuals is facilitated by insistence on the use of a pencil of a specified grade, we have found that many of our subjects prefer to use their own drawing implements—often felt, ball-point, or ink-flow pens, or a favored pencil. Since spontaneous self-expression is presumably what is in question, we believe that productions more characteristic for the individual result when free choice of drawing implement is permitted. It also appears that comparative study of the line and stroke qualities in drawings rendered with varied materials is not all that impossible once some experience has been gained.

We have found timing of the drawing process to be completely irrelevant to evaluation. At an earlier period we experimented with observation of the drawing process. It seems to be true, as other investigators have maintained, that one may glean certain hints about particularly problematic areas of life by noting erasures, blocking, and so on—at least when one is dealing with disturbed individuals. But even in such cases, we think that a skilled interpreter can easily recognize those areas of notable difficulties in the *completed* drawing without such observations; hence we have dispensed with observation. (This, of course, makes group administration a process much closer to that of individual "testing.") On the whole, our more-or-less normal subjects draw more meaningful end-products when they are *not* observed, since the "test situation" variable is reduced. We even permit subjects to perform the "task" at home, if they so desire. This may strike some workers as a dangerous practice, since it might be thought that "concealer types" would do all they could to produce a drawing showing as little as possible of themselves. However, it transpires that the majority of persons who prefer to draw the tree at leisure are not "concealers," but rather "revealers." They usually return with tree drawings rich in detail. Furthermore, we are not overly concerned with the possibility that "faking" may result when a person has at his disposal sufficient time for elaborate erasures or many "practice" trees, since we ourselves—even with the advantage of complete familiarity with our own interpretive system—have not yet been more than partially successful in *deliberate* attempts to draw trees which would *not* express certain of our own fundamental characteristics and/or life problems.

We have already announced that we do not utilize chromatic drawings. However, on occasion, one of our subjects brings us a tree production rendered in colors—sometimes even an elaborate oil painting. There is little difficulty in applying to paintings the basic principles of attention to details and to the whole which we have set down herein for achromatic drawings, except that a few elements—such as elaboration of the bark,

which we often find to be an extraneous and rather suspect sign in black and white drawings—may be a natural factor when the medium employed is paint.

There seems to be some merit in the practice of many investigators of requesting more than one drawing at the initial session (merely a second achromatic tree without special suggestions, or a second drawing involving new instructions), whether the rationale is that the ego-defenses of the subject will be further loosened, or the interest is simply to compare the degree of similarity of two or more productions. However, for most of our own applications we like to minimize the test situation as much as possible, and therefore rarely ask for additional drawings at one session.

In view of the above, it should come as no great surprise that we regard any kind of *formal* interview with the subject about his production, immediately subsequent to the completion of the drawing, as an unnecessary or even inappropriate procedure. Naturally, we do not intend to imply that we would not utilize spontaneous verbalizations or later feedback from the client in connection with analysis of the drawing, if these aspects are pertinent.

In fact, we would go further and state that we believe semiblind analysis to be the best *initial* interpretive step—not only in the interest of convincing colleagues that the drawing per se is the source of one's observations about the subject, but also to avoid "interpreter bias." (By semiblind analysis we mean having available only the vital statistics of the subject, such as age, sex, educational level, and marital status.) It is, of course, necessary to know the purpose of the inquiry when one is serving as a consultant and has not administered the drawing oneself. In some cases—especially where abstract trees are in question—it is useful to have at least an estimated IQ as well; whereas for the interpretation of fine nuances of personality, some biographical information may be essential. But we feel that it is all too easy merely to emphasize the obvious or find "congruent" indicators which are not in the drawing at all, if one already knows too much about the results of other tests or about the life history of the subject.

A glaring example of interpreter bias may be seen in a publication by Spencer (1969), who utilizes the H-T-P, adding a watercolor series to the achromatic, and the chromatic drawings in crayon.* The subject in question is a thirty-five-year-old electrician who has been addicted to heroin

* Spencer is a life-term prisoner, and one must admire his adaptation in carrying out psychological studies within an institutional setting, while at the same time being forced to play the role of the insider. He is not the only one of Buck's followers guilty of interpretation derived from contact having nothing to do with quality of the drawings; we have selected him for this example chiefly because of the availability and clarity of his illustrations.

for fifteen years, twice caught and incarcerated. He has notable artistic skills, and is in the habit of practicing yoga and other forms of meditation. We shall first cite Spencer's one-paragraph summary on the subject's three tree drawings, and then make a few comments about them. The author writes:

> In his achromatic, crayon, and watercolor Trees he presents a strikingly consistent picture of a highly egocentric, sensuous, pseudomasculine individual who, whenever he can, refuses to interact with his environment. The impression of movement from the ground to the sky, i.e., from reality to unreality, is striking and unusual. He seems consumed in the flames of his emotional drives. It might be concluded that the rigid fixity of his concept of the basic self, reflected in all three Trees, is an unfavorable prognostic sign.
>
> (Spencer, 1969, p. 68)

Of course, verbal description will not substitute for visual impression, but one may briefly say the following. All three trees are graceful poplars, the two colored versions more flamelike in shape than the black and white tree. They are well placed on the page, well proportioned, and rendered with three-dimensional quality. We would infer from the slightly spreading roots that the subject might indeed be a drug user or former alcoholic who feels a strong need to keep himself in balance. There are indications of several life crises involving women and of the need for a well-developed defense system against the influence of the mother. However, so far as we know, there is nothing in the H-T-P literature to support the statements that these trees show egocentricity, sensuousness, being "consumed by the flames of . . . emotional drives," or pseudomasculinity. There *might* be the suggestion somewhere that poplar drawers do not interact very willingly with their environment (although we have not seen this interpretation except in our own system), but that is hardly the same thing as egocentricity. The strangest statement is that the impression of movement from ground to sky is the same as moving from reality to unreality, for there is a well-rendered root and ground section in each of these trees, they do not exceed the page space, and we are of the distinct opinion that there is nothing more natural than that a tree should move from ground to sky, since that is how it grows! Finally, since the trees themselves cannot be described as rigid, one must assume that it is the similarity among the three which leads Spencer to conclude that the subject has a rigid "fixity of his concept of the . . . self," which in turn he supposes to be a poor prognostic sign. This is in direct contradiction to the claims of Hammer (1969), who thought either consistent or improved chromatic drawings to be a *good* prognostic sign.

In any event, the subject in question is not mentally ill. He is a long-term heroin user who would appear, from the other remarks on the case, to be well adapted to his environment, perhaps through his habit, to have

no desire to give it up, and to have as his primary problem that he indulges it in a period of history and a country where heroin use is illegal and addiction is commonly associated with emotional instability.

What might have been the behavioral interactions between these two prison inmates—one a psychologist, the other an addict—we do not know; but it seems clear, if one has the opportunity to examine the drawings themselves, that Spencer could never have arrived at the conclusions and descriptions cited above had he known only that the drawings were those of a thirty-five-year-old electrician. These inferences must have come from his knowledge of the heroin habit, his awareness that the subject does not believe his drug use to be a form of mental pathology (called "rationalization" by Spencer), and/or his observation of the introverted habits of this prisoner, who paints and meditates in his spare time.

It is our general impression that if drawings are ever to be established as having a justifiable place in the assessment battery, and if they are to serve what we regard as one of their most distinctive virtues i.e., pointing to aspects of the life history which might otherwise not be revealed or be completely misunderstood, it is advantageous to arrive at some tentative interpretations without much prior knowledge. *After* the fact of examining, analyzing, and synthesizing the drawing material congruence with other data should be sought.

5

Approach to Interpretation

Particulars are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed.
Samuel Johnson,
Preface to Shakespeare, 1765

FLAUBERT once remarked that the artist not only carries humanity within him, but also recapitulates its history in the processes of his work. He begins with an uncertain view of the whole, with strong impressions, but everything mixed up together. He then proceeds to a level which corresponds to the scientific era: that of analysis, skepticism, methodical search, and disposition of the parts. Finally, he reaches a stage of synthesis which is a partial "return" to the original view of the whole, but which achieves a higher order. Put in other terms, the kernel of his first impression is like that of the primitive, who "feels into" what he perceives; the second is like that of the "atomistic" scientist, who must break things down into their component parts and examine them with care; but if he is to communicate his vision, the true artist must reach a third stage in which he is able to transcend the analytical and resynthesize the whole with a new clarity.

While we object to naming psychologists who attempt to work with "nonobjective" methods "mere artists," those who can do so with any measure of success must proceed in much the same fashion as that outlined by Flaubert. The approach to tree-drawing analysis follows the three stages mentioned above.

Once the drawing has been obtained, the first step is to view the tree in its totality. One should not immediately attempt an analysis of the "zones" or become absorbed in the "specific signs," but should try to perceive the tonality of the drawing and to "think into" the mentality of the subject, so to speak. This first stage can best be described as one of intuitive contem-

plation. Skill in grasping the tone and wholeness of the "message" conveyed by the drawing, being neither an analytical process nor anything that can be learned from a textbook, comes mainly from experience. With regard to this initial approach, we concur with the opinions expressed by Koch and other European authors, who emphasize the necessity of viewing the tree in its wholeness and permitting first impressions to enter the mind without undue interference from the critical intellect. During this period one takes note of the tree type, its shape, and its position on the page. One forms an impression of the nature of the subject's feeling responses, his attitudes toward others, and his receptivity to influences. One will also be able to infer something of his emotional maturity and his internal individual balance or lack thereof.

Only after these broad insights have been allowed to impinge on the nonrational faculties does one begin detailed examination of specific formal elements in the drawing. Some interpreters will work their way systematically through the parts of the tree, perhaps beginning from the root and finishing with the crown, or according to some other regular sequence. Our own practice is to begin the fine analysis with those details which strike us as most unusual or most characteristic of the tree, relating these to the Gestalt, as well as to all other pertinent secondary signs. One may, for example, note a large scar or sawed-off branch on the trunk, combined with unusual detailed strokes in the lower part of the crown, and these striking forms may serve as the point of departure for further specific observations. Much depends, as far as procedure is concerned, on the preferences of the individual examiner; but the purposes for which the interpretation is to be used may also determine what kinds of materials are noted first or will be of greatest final interest.

We will continue to emphasize that there is no single or absolute meaning for any particular sign which may appear. However, in apparent contradiction of this insistent claim, the reader will find that many of the details of form to be discussed in the following chapters have been given specific meanings. One reason for this is that to discuss the variety of meanings which might be attributed to any particular form in the context of different drawings would make the text unwieldy and confusing. A second one is that the "breakdown of component parts" can only treat a large number of details if it is simplified.

The remainder of part II is organized and intended to be used very much in the manner of a taxonomic key. It moves from general considerations, such as the placement and size of the tree, its inclination and internal proportions, and its tonal and generic type, to a discussion of many fine details which may be discerned in the rendering of the drawing. These may be roughly equated with means for identifying to which phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species an organism belongs. The primary difference, of course, is that the end purpose is not to "classify"

the individual as belonging to an identified or identifiable "group" (as have so many investigators working with sign clusters in drawings), but rather to arrive at a description of the person whose drawing is being considered.

To this end, the third phase of interpretation must be one of synthesis of the general and detailed observations which have been noted. Here again, the intuitive faculty is brought into play, for synthesis is not a mere summation of the broad considerations and the multiplicity of details, but entails integration of these into a unified, holistic picture.

With this in mind, we proceed to a breakdown of the general and the detailed "component parts," offering our observations of what these may signify with regard to the personality of the subject.

6

The Space and the Tree in It

Any system as an entity which can be investigated in its own right must have boundaries, either spatial or dynamic.
Ludwig von Bertalanffy,
General Systems Theory, 1968

THE DIVISION OF THE PAPER INTO SECTIONS OF SPACE

THE FIRST broad matter to be taken into account is the way in which the subject makes use of the space represented by the page as a whole. If fifty adults are given clean pieces of paper of uniform proportions and each draws a tree, it will be seen that each person makes use of the space in a different manner. Some will place the tree high on the page; others will begin the drawing at the lower margin. Some will fill the entire page, while others draw very small trees. The subject who draws a tree which is exactly centered on the page is rare, and many will show a clear preference for partial or extreme shifting to either the right or the left side of the paper.

It is our view that the precise position of the tree on the page and its relative size carry more definite meanings than those attributed to many smaller details—the use of the space expressing the person's early experience of parental influence, his felt relation to the environment, and, with certain placements, his affective status at the time the drawing is made. We will shortly illustrate and discuss the implications of specific positions of the tree on the paper. First, however, we will comment briefly on the two schemata dealing with the spatial divisions of the page.

SCHEMATA 1 and 2: The spheres and the zones

If the paper is folded into three sections from bottom to top, one can measure out three divisions of the page which we call the three spheres. As indicated in schema 1, the lower sphere has to do with instincts and

Schema 1: The Spheres

MENTAL SPHERE

spirit

mind

imagination

self-development

conscious awareness

EMOTIONAL SPHERE

conscious responses

socially acceptable attitudes

emotional and sensory experiences

negative attitudes

primitive responses

chthonic emotions

INSTINCTUAL SPHERE

sexuality

sense of rootedness

early conditioning

repressed materials

personal unconscious

collective unconscious

with unconscious materials; the middle sphere refers to emotions, affect, and feeling responses; the upper sphere represents conscious development and all that belongs to the mental life. To a large extent the schema should be self-explanatory. What must be clarified, however, is the relationship between these spheres of the page and the parts of an actual drawn tree. The three sections of the tree—roots, trunk, and crown—carry the same fundamental meanings as the three spheres of the page; that is, the root represents the instinctual nature, the trunk expresses the emotional life, and the crown has to do with mental and spiritual development. This is indicated in schema 3 (p. 73), which is to be applied to the tree no matter which divisions of the paper it occupies.

When the tree has been drawn on the page, it may be placed in such a way that the folds of the paper delineating the three spheres will have no correspondence to the three parts of the tree. For example, in illustration 1 a very small tree occupies only the upper sphere of space, but it still contains the three parts: root, trunk, and crown. With a drawing of this type, one should first interpret the placement in accordance with the meaning attributed to the sphere in which the tree is delineated. In this case, the placement should be read as an indication of striving, of concentrated efforts toward conscious development and achievement. This person will experience his role relative to the larger environment mostly in terms of ambition and mental challenges. When examining the tree itself, however, it will be noted that the three parts are well delineated, with a rather marked emphasis on the roots. The actual rendering expresses the subject's internal experience of his own nature. In this particular drawing, while the emotional and instinctual *spheres of experience* are ignored (left blank) as far as position on the page is concerned, the way in which the tree is drawn indicates that the person is fully aware of his sexual and instinctual roots and expriences a good internal flow among the three realms of his being: instinct, emotion, and mind. In fact, the attention given to the drawing of the roots suggests that he is thoroughly cognizant of instinctual drives. The placement of the tree on the page, on the other hand, indicates that he does not permit his internal recognition of instinct and emotion to interfere with his felt role vis-à-vis the total environment: the drawing is that of a highly conscious, self-controlled achiever. Position on the page thus has to do with the subject's approach to reality and his felt experience of the environment, whereas the corresponding parts of the tree represent internal structures and intrapersonal balance.

Schema 2 divides the page in half on the long axis, establishing what we call the zones of influence. The left side of the page has to do with the mother, the feminine, the past (in the sense of memories or of living in the past), and with the receptive side of experience. When an individual

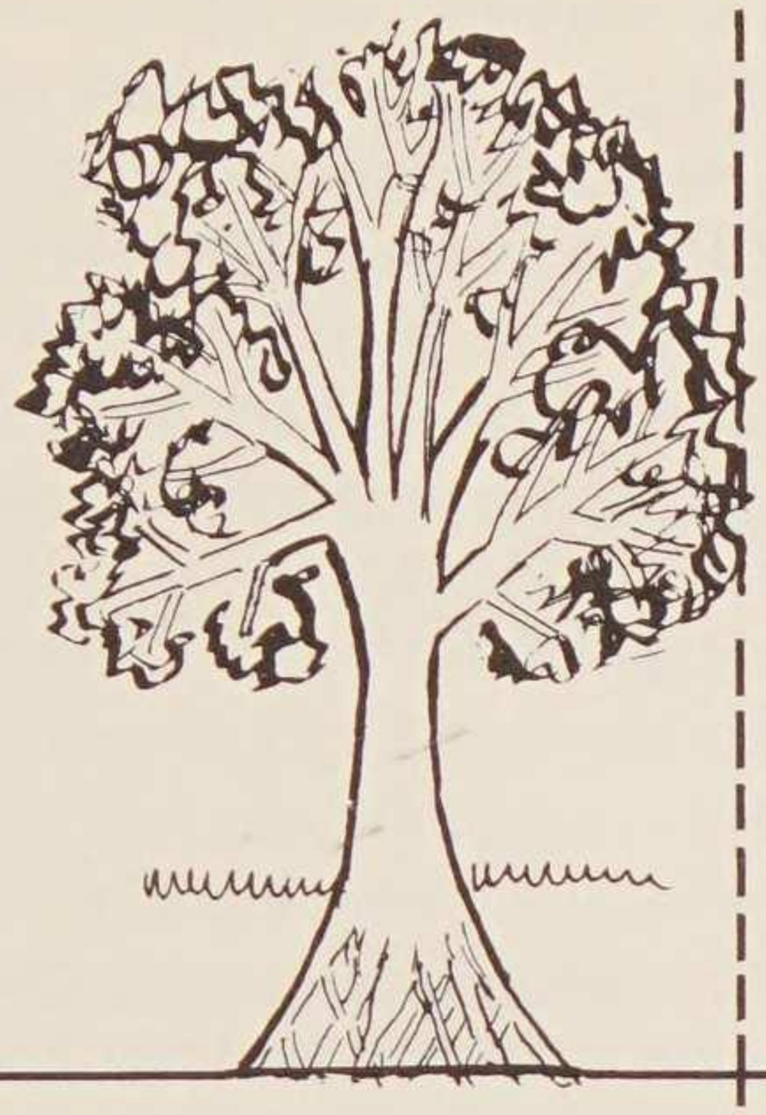


Illustration 1

FUTURE

PASSIVE - RECEPTIVE ZONE

ACTIVE - CONTROL ZONE

ALL THAT BELONGS TO
THE FEMININE WORLD

ALL THAT BELONGS TO
THE MASCULINE WORLD

PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

THE MOTHER PRINCIPLE

THE FATHER PRINCIPLE

PAST

Schema 2: The Zones

shows a preference for the left zone—even a slight one—one can infer that the mother has exercised a stronger influence on the subject than has the father. The degree of maternal dominance will depend on the extent to which the tree is shifted toward the left. In some cases the whole tree will be drawn on the left side of the page; in others only the base of the tree and part of the trunk will be placed somewhat to the left of center, with the development of the crown tending toward the center or to the right. One must look to other indications in the tree (such as shading or other signs of resistance, sharp, defensive branch structures, the inclination of the crown, and so on) to determine whether the subject has accepted or reacted against maternal dominance; but whether experienced as helpful or destructive, placement to the left of the center of the page points toward the influence of the mother. Development of the crown with an emphasis in the left zone refers to the broader symbolism of the feminine, as also indicated in this schema.

The right side of the page has to do with the father, the masculine principle, the future (in the sense of anticipation), and the active side of experience. Here is shown paternal dominance and emulation of the father, as well as development in terms of those areas of experience which can be described as active, concrete, and subject to the control of the will.

One thing which may be confusing in schema 2 is the reference to the unfolding of time on both the vertical and the horizontal axes. Here a distinction should be made between two kinds of time. Just as the tree grows upward, the life develops from the bottom to the top, with the unknown future represented above the topmost branches. Linear time—or that kind of time which can be measured in terms of events in the biography having taken place at a particular stage of development—is thus expressed along the vertical axis. The traces of the past (trauma marks, for example) which are recorded in the tree drawing along this axis can be dated with approximate accuracy, for the full length of the tree can be measured and correlated with the age of the individual at the time when the drawing is made. The other kind of time expressed in the drawing—that which appears on the left side of the page as past and the right side of the page as future—might be called psychological time. The left zone thus refers to the subject's attitude toward the whole of the past. It contains or expresses memories of the past, but these memories are diffused. They may be widely dispersed throughout the whole of the left zone, with materials from the distant past sometimes placed higher in the tree than recent memories. Attitudes toward the future are recorded in the right zone. An eagerness for new experiences (or the opposite, dread of the future) will be shown in right-zone emphasis. Planning, and in general the attempt to gain control over time by anticipating the future, also belongs to the right zone, and by analogy to the right side of the tree.

Just as the meanings of the three spheres have analogies in the three

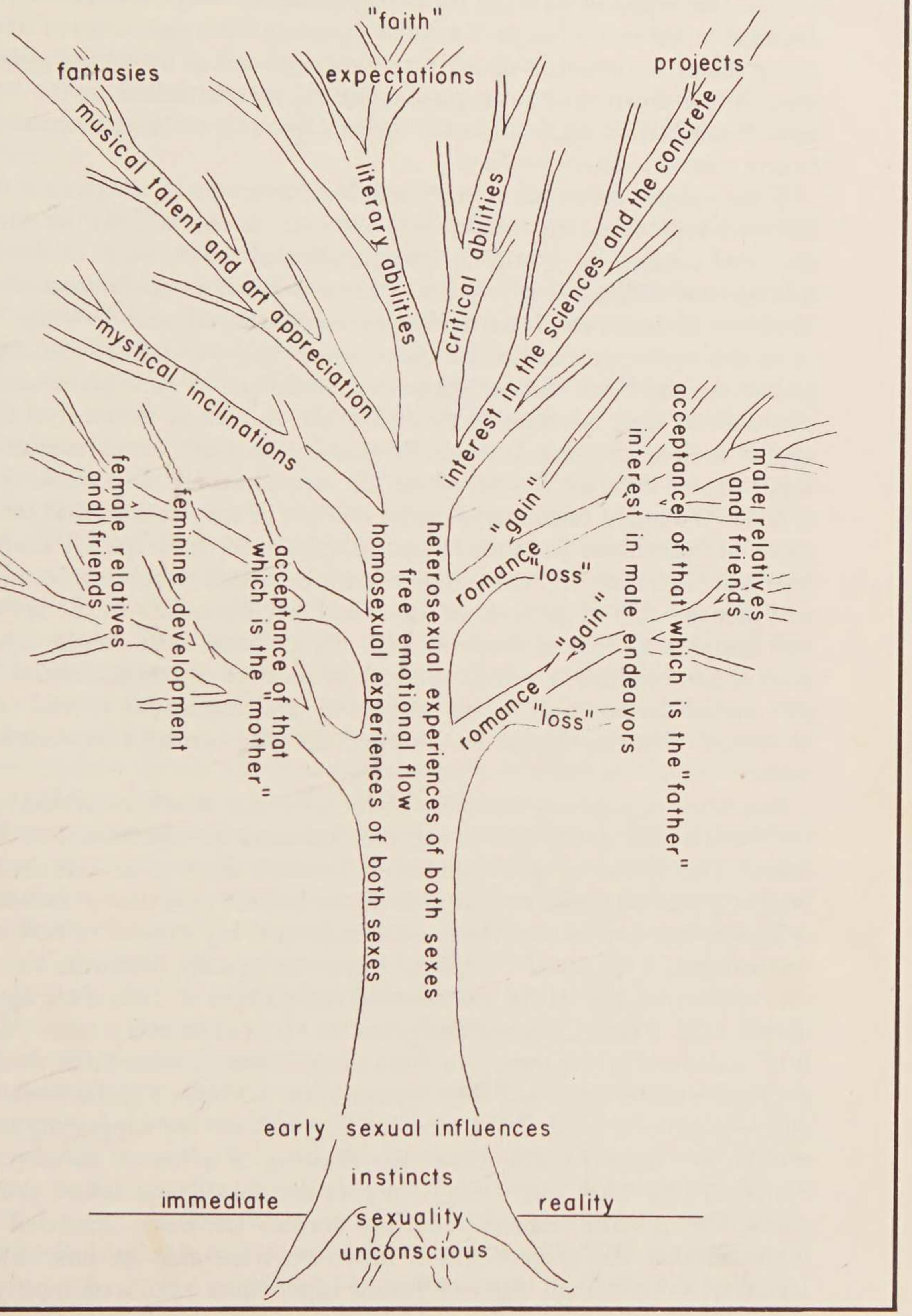
parts of the drawn tree, the two sides of the tree carry information related to the symbolism of the two zones of the page. Once again the distribution on the page refers more to the influence of parental figures, environmental conditioning, and the subject's attitude toward reality in general. The two sides of the tree correspond to his internal development, his inclinations, his tastes, and his personal reactions to environmental influences. In this case the analogy is somewhat more complex than that between the three spheres of the page and the three parts of the tree, for the active and receptive sides of experience have correlates in all the spheres of being. Schema 3 should be studied carefully to gain some idea of what is expressed in the more detailed parts of the tree.

In considering the placement of the tree to the left or right of center and in analyzing the two sides of the tree, allowances should, of course, be made for the sex of the subject.

SCHEMA 3: The parts of the tree

This schema deals with meanings attributed to the various divisions of the tree, rather than with the space symbolism of the paper, but it has been included here to clarify the analogies between the sections of the page and the sections of the tree.

The schema is self-explanatory in most respects, but certain details require special comment. The two main branches forming the lower right part of the crown are both labeled "romances." In general, the heterosexual experiences of both male and female subjects will be recorded on the right side of the tree. Early experiences appear as signs on the trunk or small branches below the crown, while the lower right branches of the crown represent the most important sexual and/or romantic events of maturity. A current romance or present marriage may be represented higher on the right side of the crown, especially if there is a close connection between the subject's intimate life and his projects or his efforts toward self-development. When the tree is drawn with detailed branches, it is possible to assess the nature, course of development, and outcome of each deeply significant relationship. The secondary branches marked "loss" and "gain" constitute one of the indicators for this assessment—although there are many others, most of which are discussed in chapters 10 and 11. Downward-turning secondary branches indicate a subjective sense of loss through the experience, more markedly so if they are barren or broken. Secondary branches growing upward from the main branch indicate a subjective sense of positive enrichment. When there are secondary branches going in two directions from the main branch (as in this tree on the second main right branch), then the longer or more prominent of the two will represent the subject's predominent attitude. This matter of the direction of secondary branches applies to all of the main branches on the tree and is therefore not in any sense exclusive to romantic attach-



Schema 3: Parts of the Tree

ments. The branches all stand for energy channels—ways of exploring and reacting to life events, ways of expressing mental energies, ways of developing the self. Any effort of self-extension may end in a sense of gain or loss; thus a downward-turning secondary branch attached to the main branch marked "literary abilities" might represent a disappointment or failure related to literary efforts.

If the subject draws an unbranched deciduous tree or a tree of a very different type from the winter oak outlined in the schema (a multibranched conifer, for example), interpretation of the divisions of the tree will be more difficult, but it should still be possible to apply most of the structural divisions to the particular representation. All tree drawings will include irregular marks, breaks, indentations in the crown, special signs, and so on, and these can be interpreted according to their placement in the tree and their relationship to each other, as well as in terms of their special content meaning. It would be almost impossible to schematize the expression of different aspects of the life experience for all possible types of trees. We might recommend to the student of this method that for his early interpretations he request from subjects who draw special kinds of trees a second drawing which represents a branched deciduous form. He will then be able to analyze the branched tree according to the schema and compare its formal elements with the perhaps more subtle expressions of the original. A certain amount of practice in comparison of this sort should develop skill in the analysis of nonbranched or special types of trees, so that the request for a second drawing can later be dispensed with.

One other explanatory comment about schema 3 should be added here. On the left side of the tree is written: "homosexual experiences of both sexes." This is put in quotation marks because there is no intention of implying that all marks in that area of the tree are necessarily indicators of homosexual experience. However, homosexual experiences of both men and women, if indicated by special signs, are usually drawn on the left side of the tree, just as the heterosexual experiences of both sexes appear on the right. There are some exceptions to this (as to every other "absolute" statement in this book). In these cases, however, some other discrepancy will usually serve as a clue. Recently, for example, a social worker of our acquaintance handed us a tree drawing without any supporting information. We assumed that it was the drawing of a female subject. We remarked that "she" was strongly mother dominated and rather promiscuous, but in other respects relatively normal. On being corrected and informed that the subject was a man, we were able to infer homosexuality, even though signs of sexual experiences appeared mostly on the right side of the tree. The subject is an extremely effeminate passive homosexual.

SCHEMA 4: Symbolism of the Page

This schema is intended to expand the basic, deliberately simplified meanings ascribed to the divisions of space in both schema 1 and schema 2 and to the sections of the tree in schema 3. The numbered sections of schema 4 can also correspond to divisions of the page on which the tree is drawn.

In the interest of economy of language and clarity, we have given specific meanings to the structural and detailed elements of form illustrated in the text. We wanted to avoid the ambiguity and confusion which can result from discussing all of the many possible meanings which might be appropriate to a particular formal element in the tree or its placement on the page. On the other hand, we cannot emphasize too strongly that each tree is a unique Gestalt and that no single meaning attributed to a formal factor will hold true of all trees containing that factor. Thus, for example, in the tree of one subject who draws many complex branches in section 7, the indication may be of passive daydreaming and escapism. In a second person these branches may express highly developed psychic or occult gifts. (Trance-state psychism, on the other hand, belongs to section 2a, for this state requires a preliminary cessation of all conscious activity and a complete yielding of the ego.) In a third individual they may have to do with music. To anyone familiar with the ancient (nonrational) systems of symbol interpretation, this should be perfectly acceptable, for within such systems the same indicator may stand for the fine ear and the "tuning" capacity of the gifted musician; the potential to receive cosmic or unconscious signals which characterizes the intuitive or the psychic; or passive escape into the vague clouds of daydreams.

The experienced dream interpreter will also be aware that the appearance of the same symbol may have highly variable significance in the dreams of two different persons. Furthermore, a dream symbol may have multiple meanings within a single dream. This is equally true of the symbolism of the tree. Thus, for example, emphasis on section 9 may suggest both positive gifts for intellection and negative tendencies toward sophistry. These two qualities can be seen as two sides of the same coin, which often coexist in a single individual.

Since most interpretations will be supported by some information about the subject, it should not be too difficult to decide in which way an indication should be read. If the subject drawing in section 7 is a musician or is known to have musical or artistic gifts, the choice will be obvious. Even in blind interpretations it is usually at least possible to distinguish whether an emphasis on one area of the tree or section of the page is to be read primarily as a negative or a positive factor. If the tree is basically weak and filled with conflict indicators, it is fairly safe to assume that stressing of section 7 points to passive dreaming and escapism. On the

7	8a	8b	9
mysticism art music intuition contem- plation inspiration (muses) fantasy yearning illusions dreaming (passive ambition) martyr complex sapphism	literature religion myth fanaticism idealism imagination conscious attitudes faith altruism wonder	wit philosophy history striving purpose awareness conscious mind hope achievement precision	completion intellection science, mathematics projects prestige competition sophistry delusions high finance independence experimentation
4	5a	5b	6
feeling judgments moods memories acquiescence longing passivity withdrawal fixation of affect	joy peacefulness protectiveness devotion needing caring sympathy resignation sorrow resentment shame remorse envy	determination leadership responsibility pride self-control vanity self-sacrifice rejection resistance anger greed lust hate	will experience sensory perception business practical realism common sense the concrete positive anticipation activity; restlessness tradition emulation repulsion dread
1	2a	2b	3
dependency security needs sleep regression oral fixation the womb the preconscious archetypes of origin the primordial	unconscious desires unconscious memories the trance state maternal instincts reproductive sexuality female archetypes fertility cults the earth mother the daemonic the mysteries	unconscious power drives subliminal perceptions the hypnagogic state ego instincts genital sexuality collective male archetypes phallic cults sacrifice cults transcendent sexuality (tantric)	heaviness negativism narcissism fear; confusion latent development anal fixation ideation death personal hell the furies hades return

Schema 4: Symbolism of the Page

other hand, in a strong, highly developed tree which is balanced, well grounded, and mature, emphasis on this section will point to the potential of the individual to make creative use of his receptive tendencies.

Each of the other sections of the page to which expanded meanings are attributed in schema 4 can be used in the interpretation of the placement of the tree. It ought to be mentioned, however, that many other words could also be added to these lists, for one never arrives at an inclusive, definitive set of inferences. The schema has been included principally to point up the multiplicity of meanings which may be associated with each division of the symbolic space. The schema can serve as a guideline to the student in making more flexible interpretations, once he has mastered the fundamental idea of the spheres and zones of the page. It is expected, however, that the individual interpreter will develop his own understanding of the expanded meaning of each section.

This schema can also be applied to the parts of the drawn tree. For example, in illustration 2 the whole of the tree is placed strongly to the left of the center of the page, and if we apply schema 4 to the spatial divisions of the paper, the tree will be seen to occupy mainly sections 2a, 5a, 7, 8a, and 8b. These same divisions can, however, be reduced to the space occupied by the drawn tree (as shown in the lines added to the illustration), and the meaning attributed to each section will then be seen to amplify the understanding of the various parts of the tree, which are only suggested in schema 3.

Some information about this particular subject will perhaps clarify the distinction between the sections of the page and the sections of the tree. The tree was drawn by a twenty-six-year-old graduate student in microbiology. He was raised by a widowed mother, together with his twin sister and one older sister. The marked emphasis on the left zone of the page may be seen as an expression of his background in an all-female household. Within the tree, one notes the shading on the left (shielding against the feminine influences) extending all the way down into the left roots of the tree (which, falling into section 1, may express resistance to the regressive pull of the early symbiotic relationship with his twin sister).

What is most notable in the delineation of the crown, is the strong inclination toward the right. With respect to the page, the central, topmost branch falls into section 8b of the schema, denoting the striving, hopeful stance which he takes toward the challenge of life. Reducing the schema to the space occupied by the tree, we see that this upper branch then falls into section 9, suggesting his career preference in science.

The lower branches on either side of the crown are good examples of the graphic representation of relationships. The first two branches on the right side refer to his first two affairs, both of which are experienced subjectively as failures (secondary "loss" branches). The second of these is related (see dotted line) to the shaded secondary branch off the lower

page center

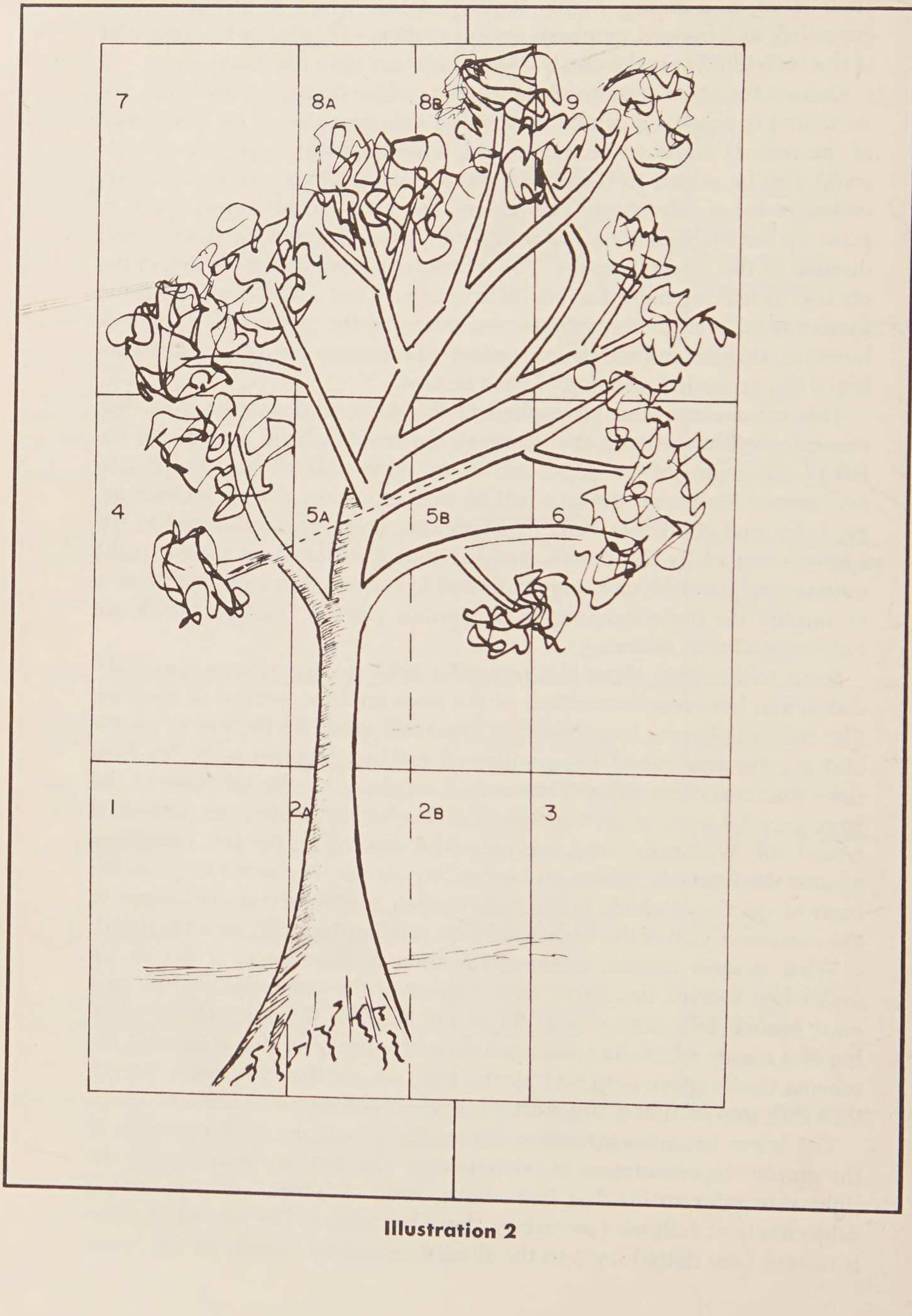


Illustration 2

left branch, pointing toward his feeling that the failure of this relationship was partially caused by too strong an influence from his mother. (He reported, on being questioned about this, that his mother was outwardly "neutral" about this girl friend, but was always making subtle negative comments which he only later saw as destructive to the further development of the relationship.) The third and most recent affair (third right branch) is felt as positive and enriching (two upward-turning secondary branches, one of them ending between the topmost branches of his own line of development). This represents a romance with an older woman physician, who has aided him in his mental development as well as given positive reinforcement to his emotional and sexual expressions of masculinity.

Looking at the lower left branches, the first can be seen as associated with the mother and the older sister, while the twin sister is represented by the second branch on the left—a three-dimensional branch which develops above the shaded part of the trunk. This relationship has not been without difficulties, but it is essentially one of trust and free emotional interchange. The subject's twin is a musician, and although he does not play an instrument himself, he is highly appreciative of her artistic efforts and states that he experiences vicariously her pleasure in musical self-expression.

SCHEMA 5: The space schema of Grünwald

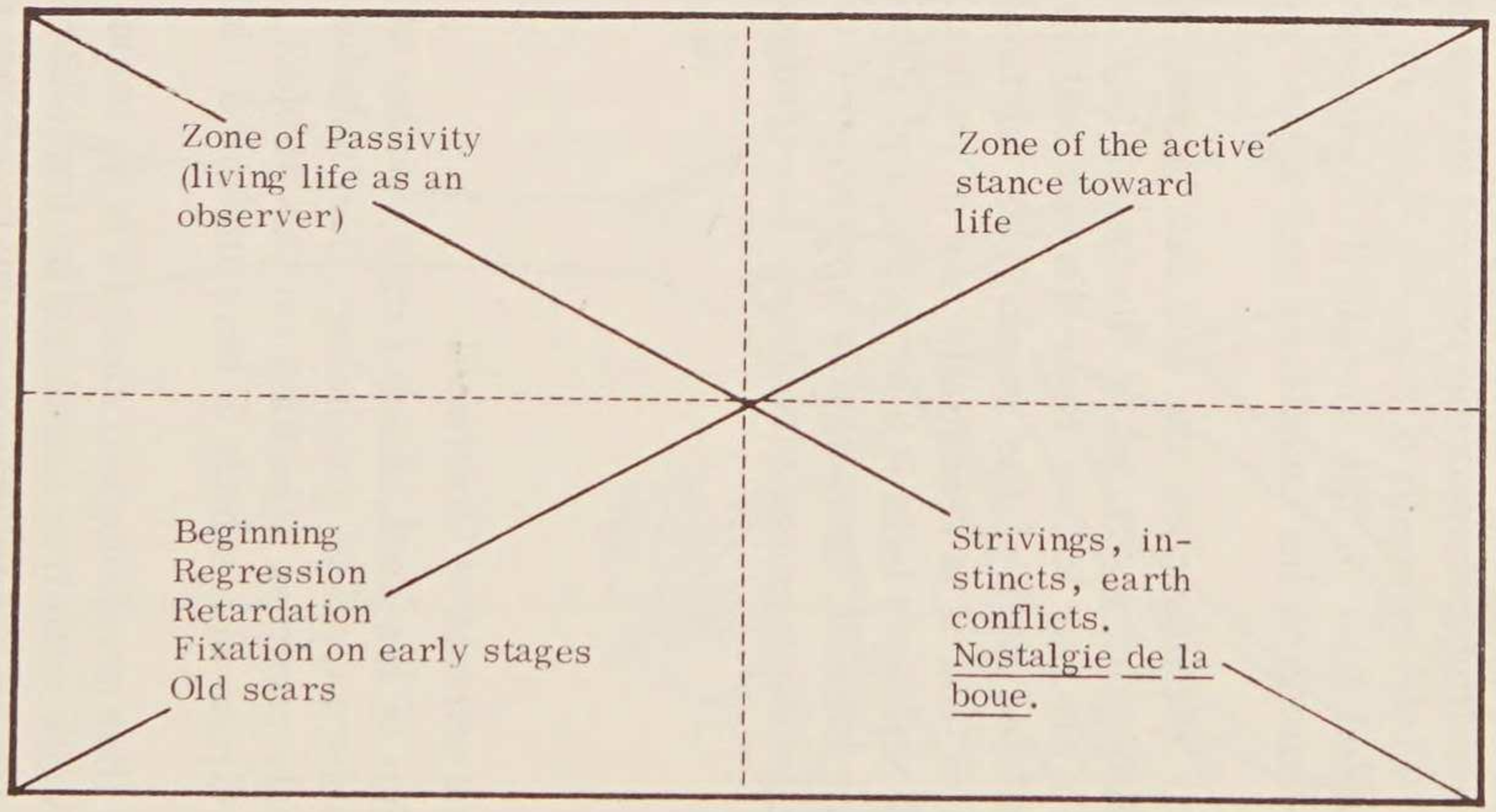
In the revised edition of his book, Koch (1957) writes at some length about the space symbolism used in graphology. He includes in his text a number of progressively complex schemata on this subject, among them the space schema of Grünwald, which is here included (in our translation) as schema 5.

Although it is clear that graphological analysis is an important point of departure for Koch's work with tree drawings, he immediately points out in his discussion concerning the relevance of the two types of analysis to each other that there is a major difference between the process of writing words on a piece of paper and the technique of drawing a tree. Handwriting progresses characteristically from the left to the right of the page, whereas the tree grows from the bottom to the top. In handwriting analysis the beginning or "origin" is considered to be the lower left corner, while in tree drawings the origin is the center of the lower margin. In the analysis of handwriting, space is apparently considered primarily in terms of a rectangle on its long axis, drawn around the individual word or line. The way in which the writer expresses himself in space may be analyzed in terms of the space surrounding a single word, thus, as shown here.

Air
Emptiness
Nichts
Light; Cosmic Influx
Longing
Desire
Withdrawal

Spirit
The Transcendent
Godliness
The Conscious Mind

Fire
Highest Point
Goal
End
Death



Mother
Past
Introversion

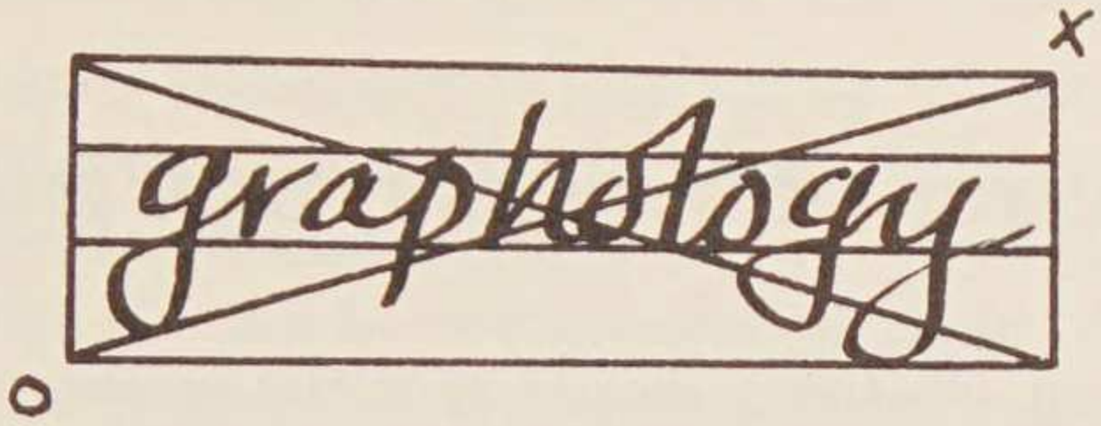
Father
Future
Extroversion

Beginning
Birth
Origin
Water

Matter
Subconscious, Unconscious
Collective Unconscious

Matter
Cave
Falling
The Daemon
Earth

Schema 5: The Space Schema of Grünwald



The o point is seen as the beginning and the x point as the end (death). The line from o to x is the "life line" of the individual's unfolding development, while time is expressed in the left to right linear flow. In a tree drawing, as Koch rightly points out, this progression of the developing life is compressed into the center fold of the vertical page. The whole length of the tree represents the subject's life, possibly even from the time preceding his birth, since the roots may be seen as representing the collective unconscious. The tree develops upward toward the top of the crown, which expresses the expectations and goals of the individual. But, in Koch's view, death does not enter the symbolic picture in the tree drawing.

On account of these differences between the manner of representing a tree in the form of a drawing and the progressive flow of handwriting on the page, Koch does not feel that the space symbolism so well worked out in graphology can be directly applied to the analysis of tree drawings.

While we would agree that it is always unwise to make an exact transfer of analytic techniques from one system to another, we have included the space schema of Grünwald, as recorded by Koch, because we were struck by its marked similarities with our own attributions of meaning to the space symbolism of the page.

It is rather surprising to us that Koch has not given more of his attention to the placement of the drawing on the page, since we regard it as a matter of fundamental importance. He does indicate that the question should be investigated, but, for the most part, in his own practice the analysis of space is confined to the space contained within a rectangle which he draws around the complete tree, *excluding the roots*. When he does occasionally take account of the placement of the drawing on the page, he ascribes to these positions only the most generalized and hesitant meanings.

Toward the conclusion of his section dealing with graphology, however, Koch implies that he intends to investigate further the significance of the use of space in tree drawings:

> Nevertheless, the arguments alluded to should help in bringing into play the hitherto somewhat narrowly approached discussions concerning the "Space Schema" chapter. In these matters there is yet much to be done and to be clarified through experiment.
>
> (Koch, 1957, p. 39; our translation)

POSITIONS ON THE PAGE AND SIZE OF THE TREE

Although the general schemata should give the reader some idea of how to interpret placement of the tree drawing on the page, in this section we will attempt to clarify this question by illustrating a number of possible positions and commenting briefly on each of the figures. The tree designs in figures 1 through 6 have been standardized with respect to type and detail; therefore, the interpretive remarks must be understood to refer exclusively to the variations in position and size.

FIGURE 1: The tree more or less well centered, equidistant from all four margins of the page

This denotes a well-balanced individual, receptive to both masculine and feminine influences and able to relate to both men and women. A background of healthy family conditions is probable; at least neither parent has been an overweening influence. The subject is rooted firmly in the past and looking toward the future with positive anticipation. Healthy sexual responses are well integrated with mental development.

FIGURE 1

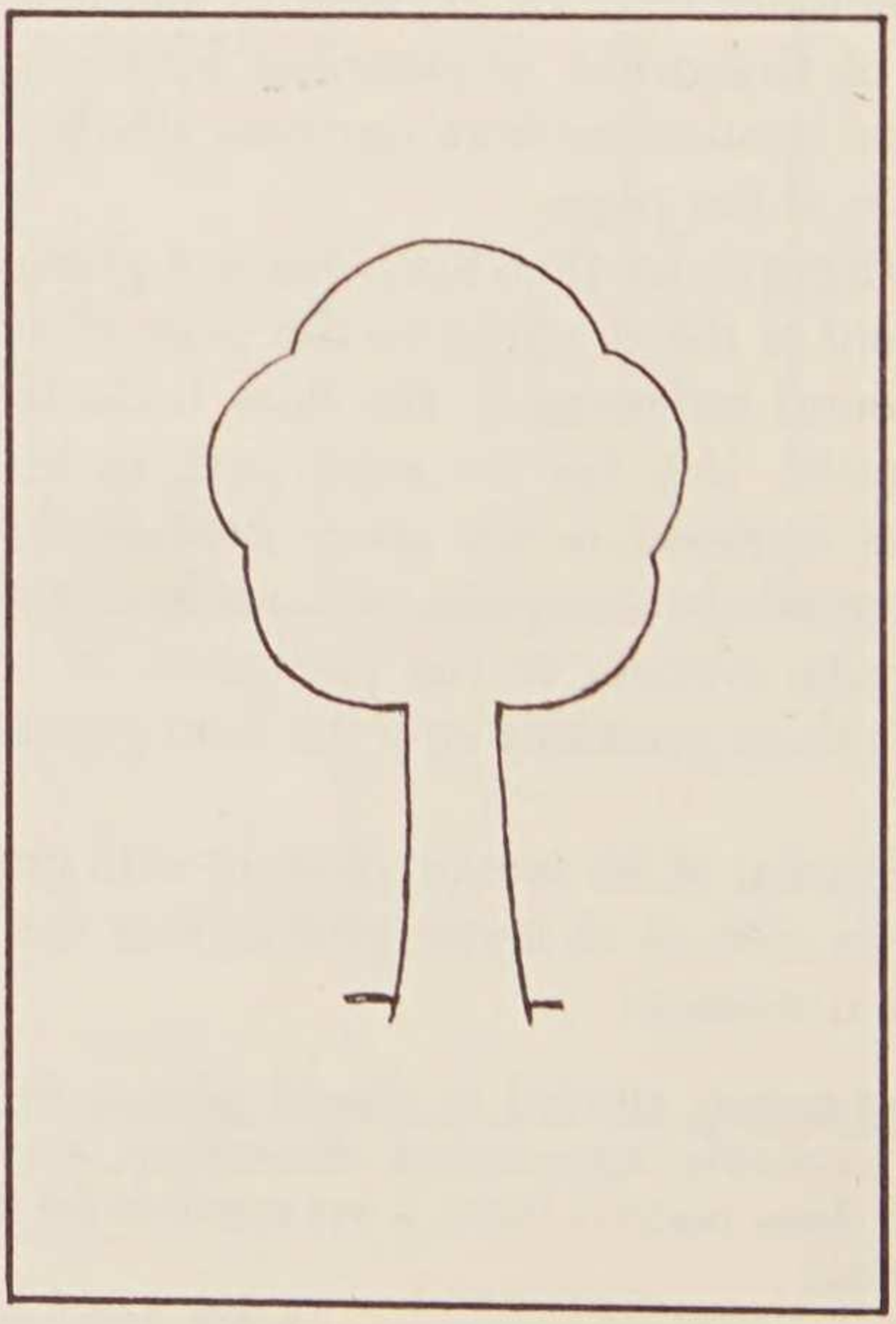


FIGURE 2a: The tree drawn well to the left side of the page

A definite emotional imbalance is implied by this position, characteristic of one who has grown up under the strong influence of a dominating mother. It frequently indicates difficulty in establishing a successful marital relationship. He will be overconcerned about his mother's opinion of his partner and will often select a spouse, if he marries at all, to whom he can subjugate himself.

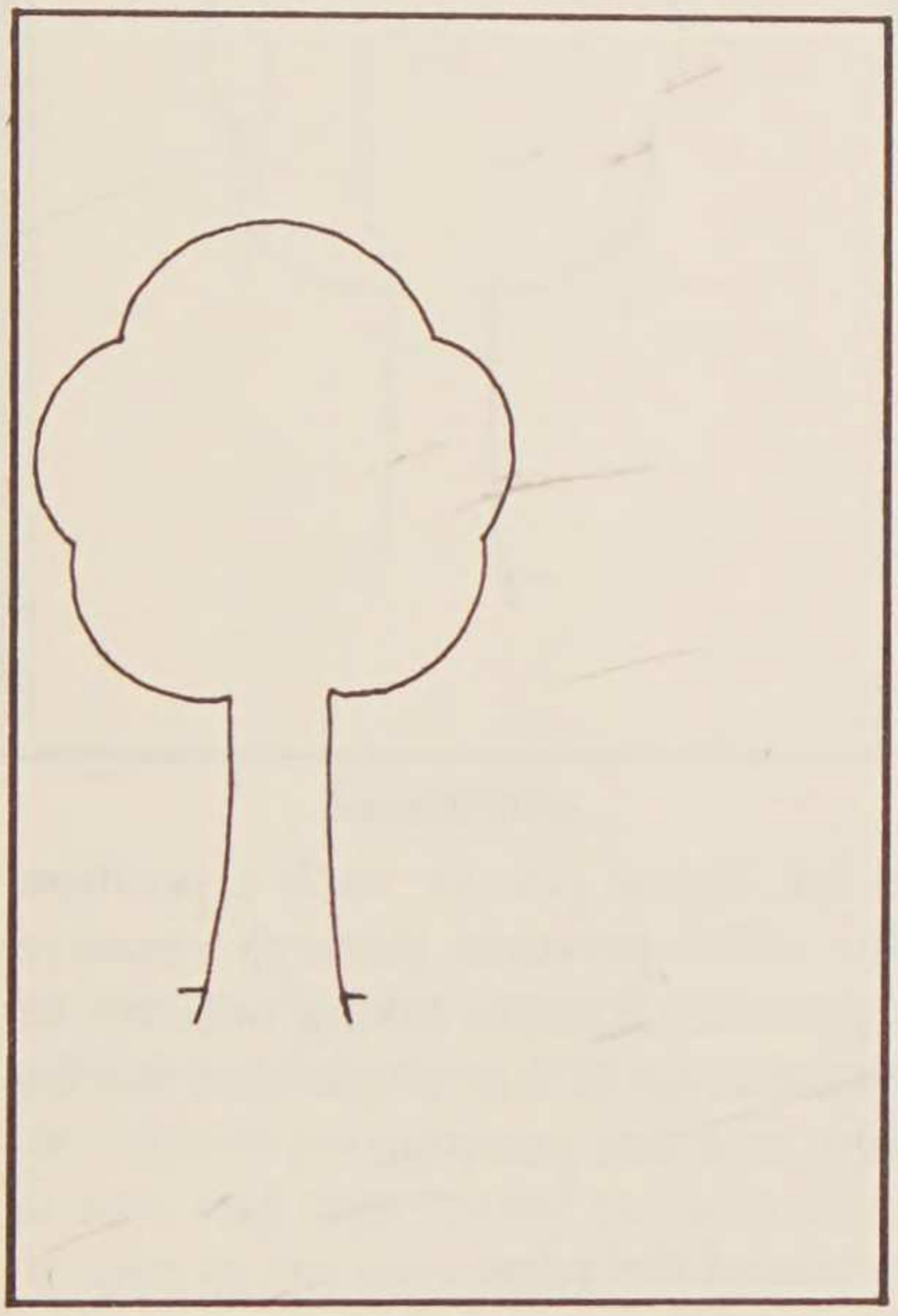


FIGURE 2a

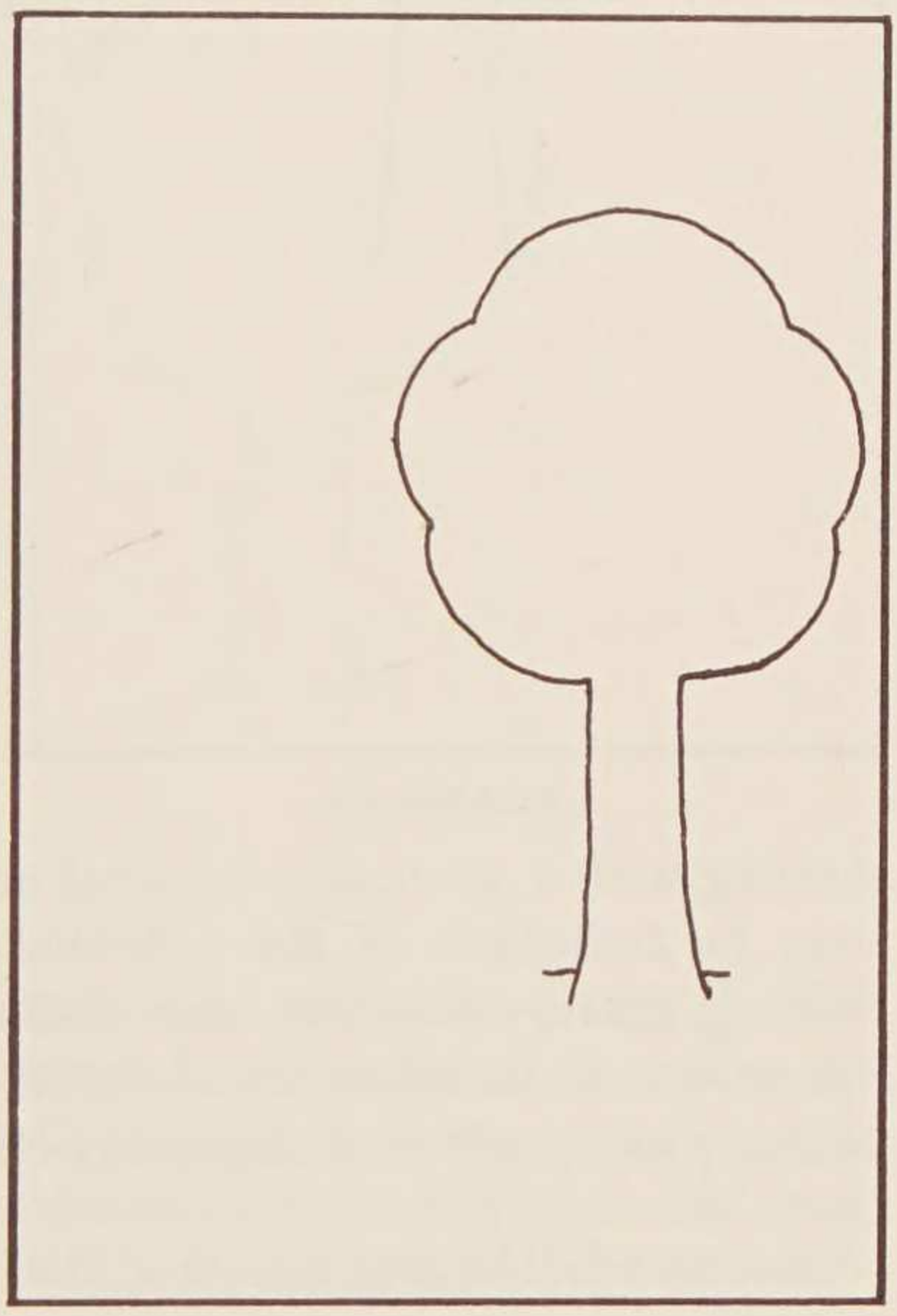


FIGURE 2b

FIGURE 2b: The tree strongly shifted to the right

An almost complete identification with the father and with male peers is indicated here. Early deprivation of maternal care might be a causative factor. Whatever the reasons, rejection or resentment of the mother's influence is marked. If this subject marries, he will seek a meek partner whom he can dominate. A contemptuous attitude toward women in general (even if the subject is female) usually accompanies this position.

FIGURE 2c: The tree drawn at the top of the page

This subject is not well grounded in reality; he is bored by all that is practical and ordinary. His exalted world of fantasy, coupled with a rather inflated ego, gives him faith in himself. Whether this confidence has any basis in reality or is merely the reflection of imaginary self-exaltation will depend largely on the actual giftedness of the subject. If one is

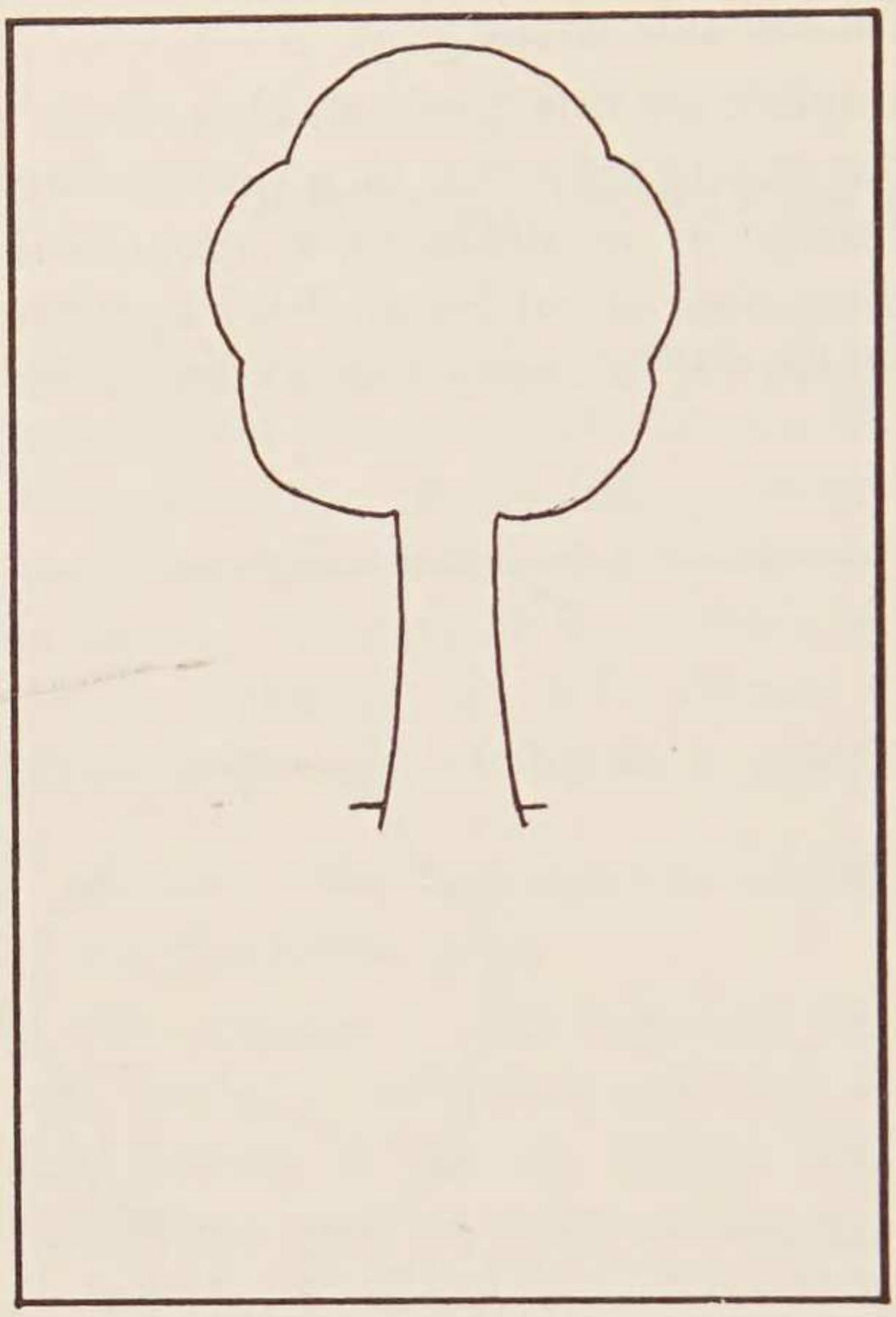


FIGURE 2c

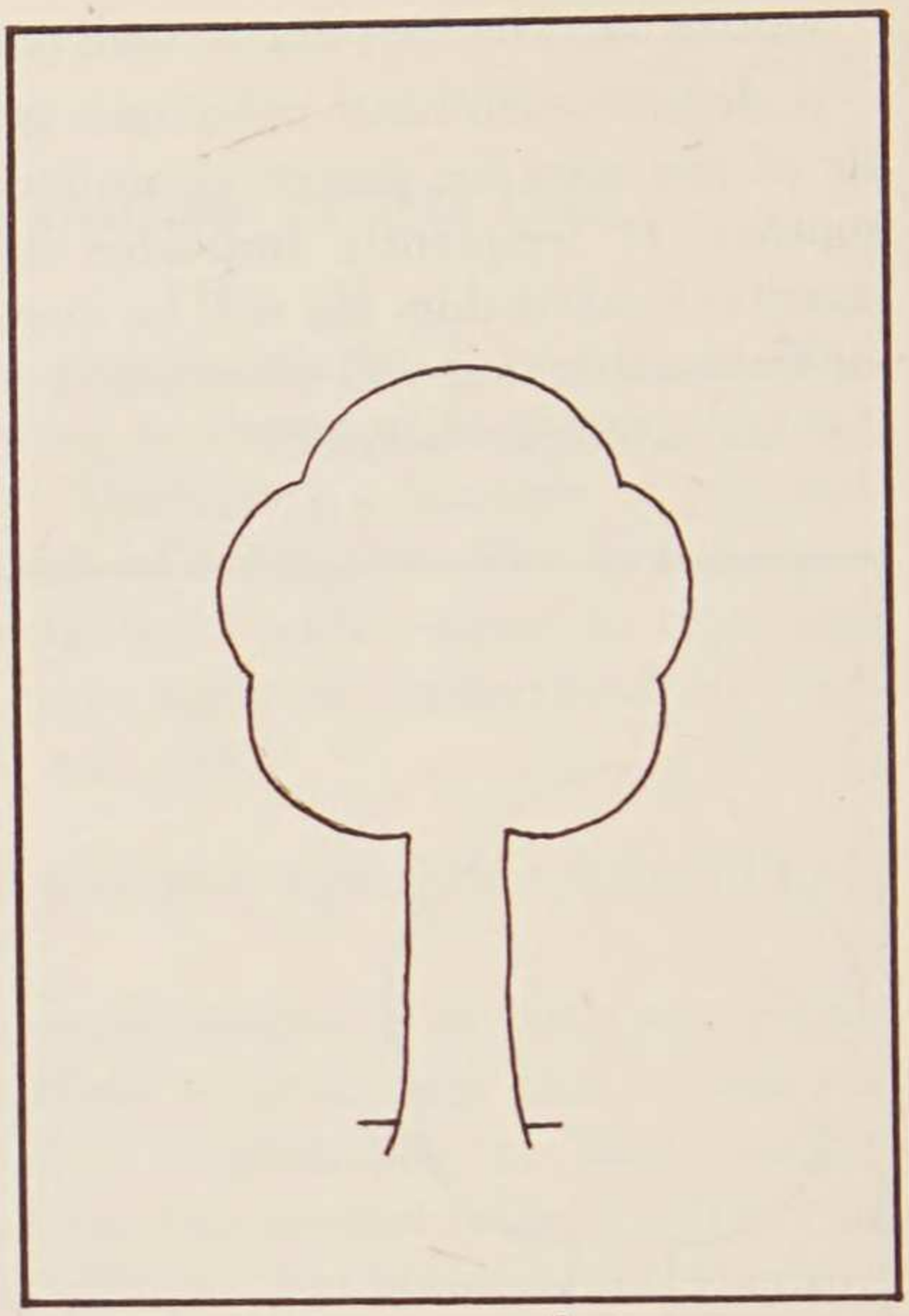


FIGURE 2d

dealing with a genuinely talented and intelligent person, such a position may be indicative of the potential for self-expression through creative writing, literary criticism, and similar pursuits. Besides taking account of talent, one must assess the detailed expressions of the whole tree before arriving at a positive or negative evaluation of this position.

FIGURE 2d: The tree drawn at the bottom of the page

This position always suggests some feelings of personal inadequacy. The world of imagination is deliberately curtailed. Emotions, experiences, and efforts are confined to what is immediate, and in some cases to what is practical.

FIGURE 3a: The tree drawn in the upper left section of the page

Maternal influences dominate, as in figure 2a, with similar meaning. Here, however, mental efforts are made to overcome or to transform creatively the domination of the mother. If the individual is, in fact, talented, there is good potential for success in the fine arts or in music. Otherwise the position indicates escape through passive and illusory dreaming about grand triumphs of artistic self-expression.

FIGURE 3b: The tree drawn near the left and lower margins

A position found quite infrequently, at least in our sample. It is a sign of depression and low self-image, with clear reference to an overbearing

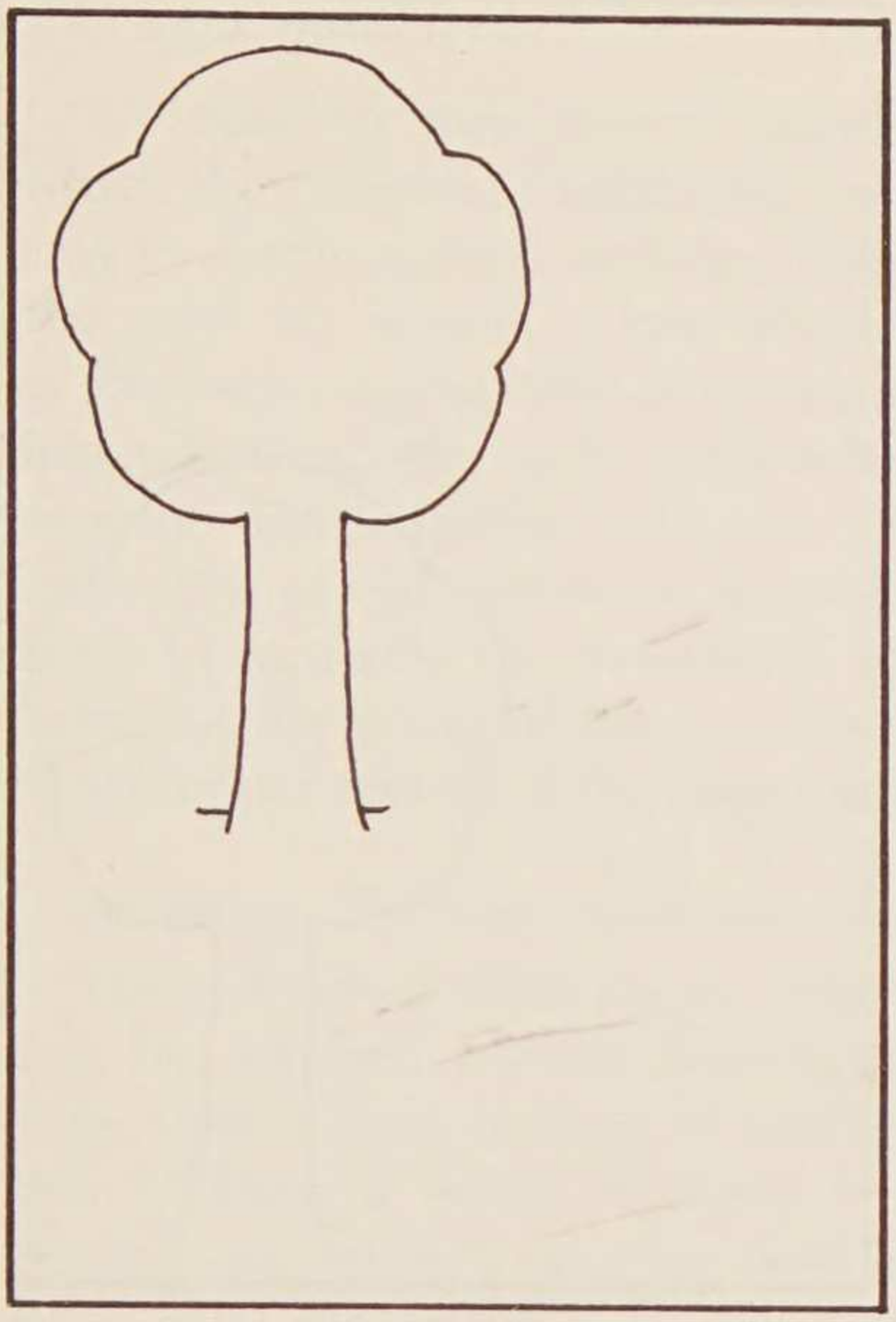


FIGURE 3a

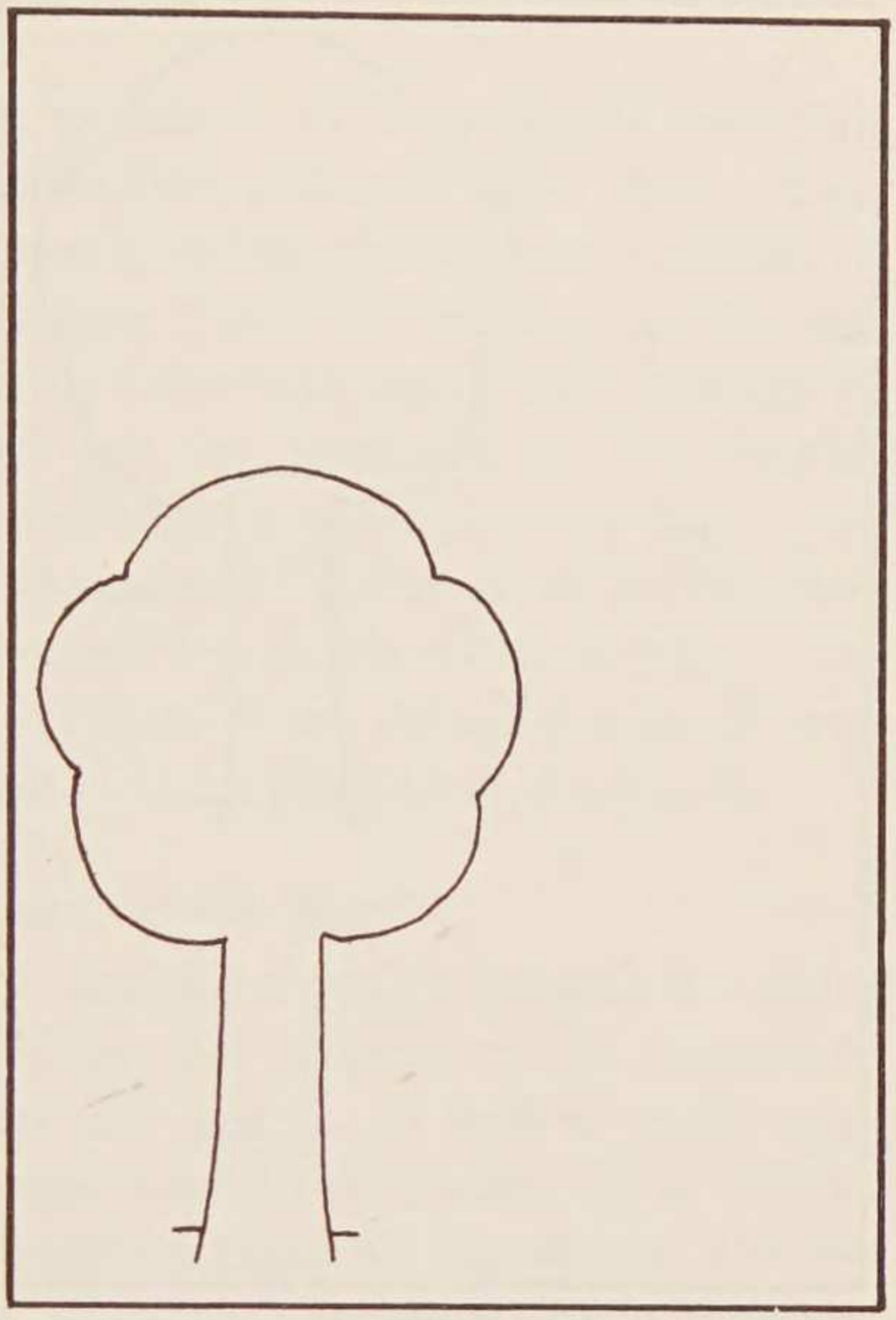


FIGURE 3b

or overprotective mother. Feelings of insecurity are relieved only through positive reinforcement from the mother or a mother figure. Emotion and creative expression are restricted. This type is nearly always fearful of the future and unprepared to make efforts toward self-development. He tends to live in the past, which he recreates in accordance with his ego needs, enhancing it with imagined triumphs.

FIGURE 3c: The tree drawn near the upper and the right margins

Here paternal dominance serves as an inspiring force. Contempt of all things female (typical of figure 2b) is always characteristic of this position too, but less attention is paid to the world of the feminine, for the energy is positively directed toward independent development. In both male and female subjects the ambitions are usually connected either with the world of business and politics, or with the world of science and rational intellectual pursuits. Ambition is often the principal motivating force of the life. Fantasies of success are supported by strong ego drives, propelling the individual toward the future realization of his desired goals. Among our subjects drawing trees in this position, two might be mentioned as examples. The first is an unmarried professor of physics; the second a scholarly priest whose intellectual work ranges over the fields of history, science, and philosophy.

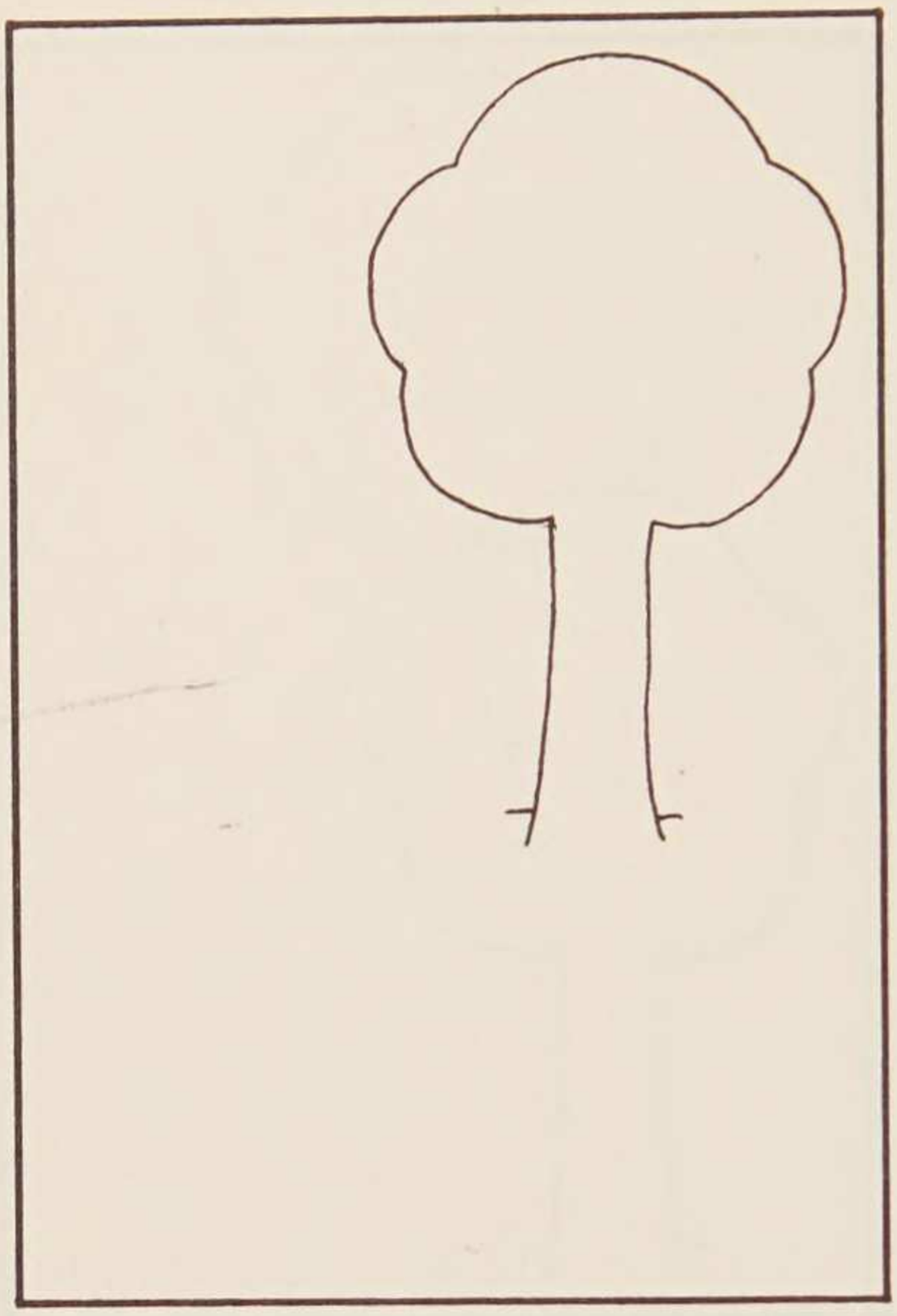


FIGURE 3c

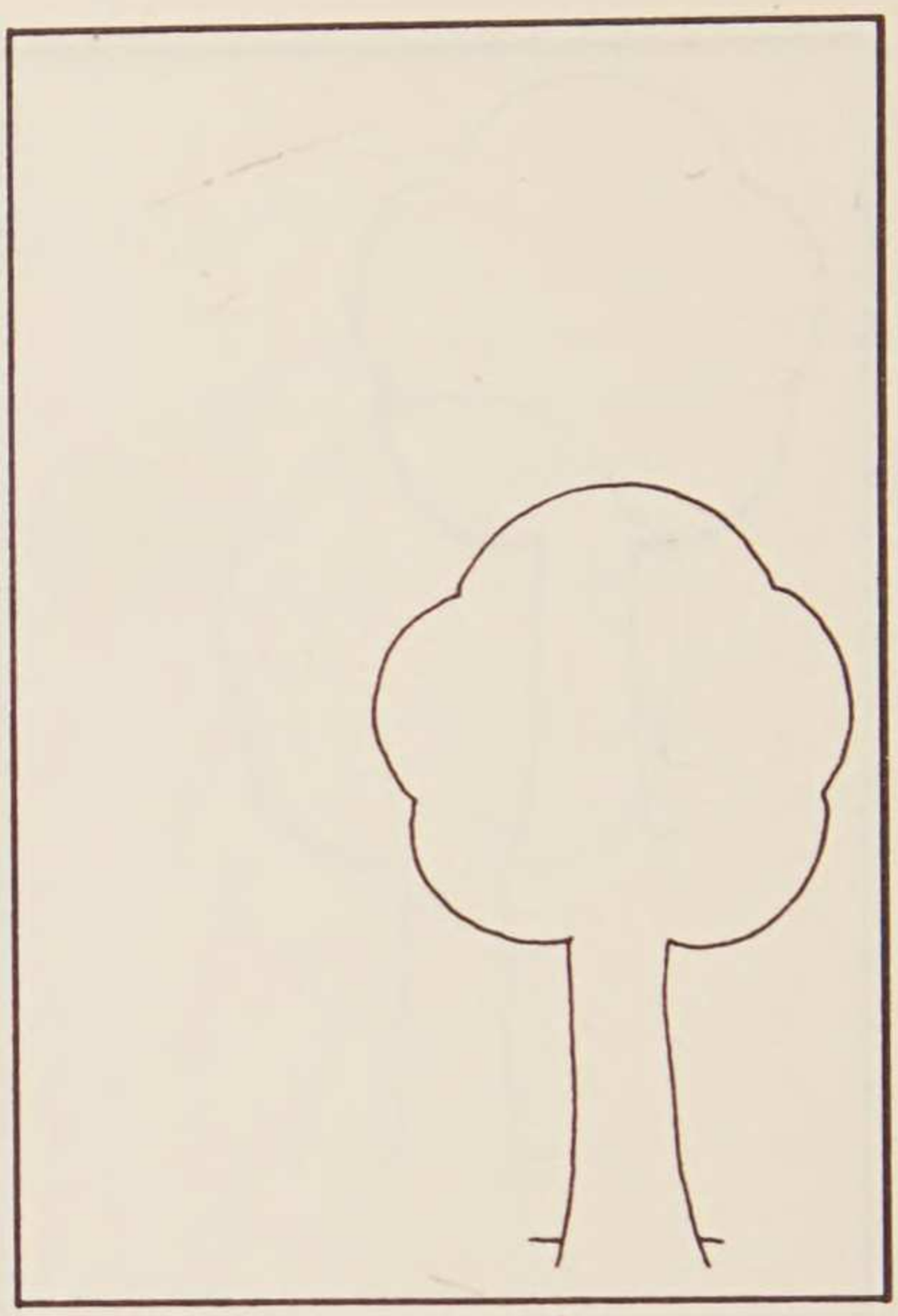


FIGURE 3d

FIGURE 3d: The tree drawn close to the right and bottom margins

Self-conscious feelings of inadequacy are directly related to an exaggerated worship of the father as a hero figure. The world of fantasy reflects almost exclusively the desire to emulate the father. At the same time the person feels incapable of ever reaching this end. Traditionalism and rejection of anything that is new, radical, or controversial are typical. Expression of energy is confined to the immediate present. Thoughts about the future are usually avoided, for this type is plagued by a dread of failure. In many cases these individuals achieve both worldly success and some measure of self-acceptance following the death of the father—particularly when the same profession is practiced, and the father has prepared the way for his son. One of our subjects whose tree falls in this position was in his father's shadow up to the time of the latter's death, but seemed immediately to grow in confidence as well as in managerial skills on assuming his father's position.

It should be pointed out that while, in general, the use of certain sectors of the page is one of the more stable factors in adult tree drawings taken from the same individual at various points in time, those utilizing positions 2d or 3d are the most likely to shift the placement of their drawings upward on the page, when improvement in ego strength through therapy, growth in confidence through training, or alteration of life circumstances are experienced by the subject as positive.

The very small tree

We consider now several possible positions of very small trees for which the placement meanings are somewhat different from those referring to medium-sized or larger trees rendered on the various sections of the page. In general, a tree which is very small in relation to the size of the page suggests one or several of the following meanings: feelings of insignificance; the self overwhelmed by the vastness of the world; extreme dissatisfaction with self or one's achievements; a very high concentration of ego powers; a generalized sense of loneliness. It is often difficult to reconcile the impression conveyed by the small tree with overt behavior, for many of these persons (at least those drawing a small tree in the upper sectors of the page) will manifest a self-assured manner.

FIGURE 4a: The very small tree centered on the page

The individual attempts to maintain balance through normal functioning, but he feels himself overwhelmed by the vastness of his surroundings. Generalized feelings of loneliness are typical, as well as more specific feelings of being set apart in some way from society as a whole. Among our subjects drawing such a tree is a talented filmmaker. He has been quite successful, at least in terms of critical acclaim and in the eyes of his peers. Nevertheless he experiences personal frustration arising from the impossibility of condensing his visions of the vast universe onto two

FIGURE 4a

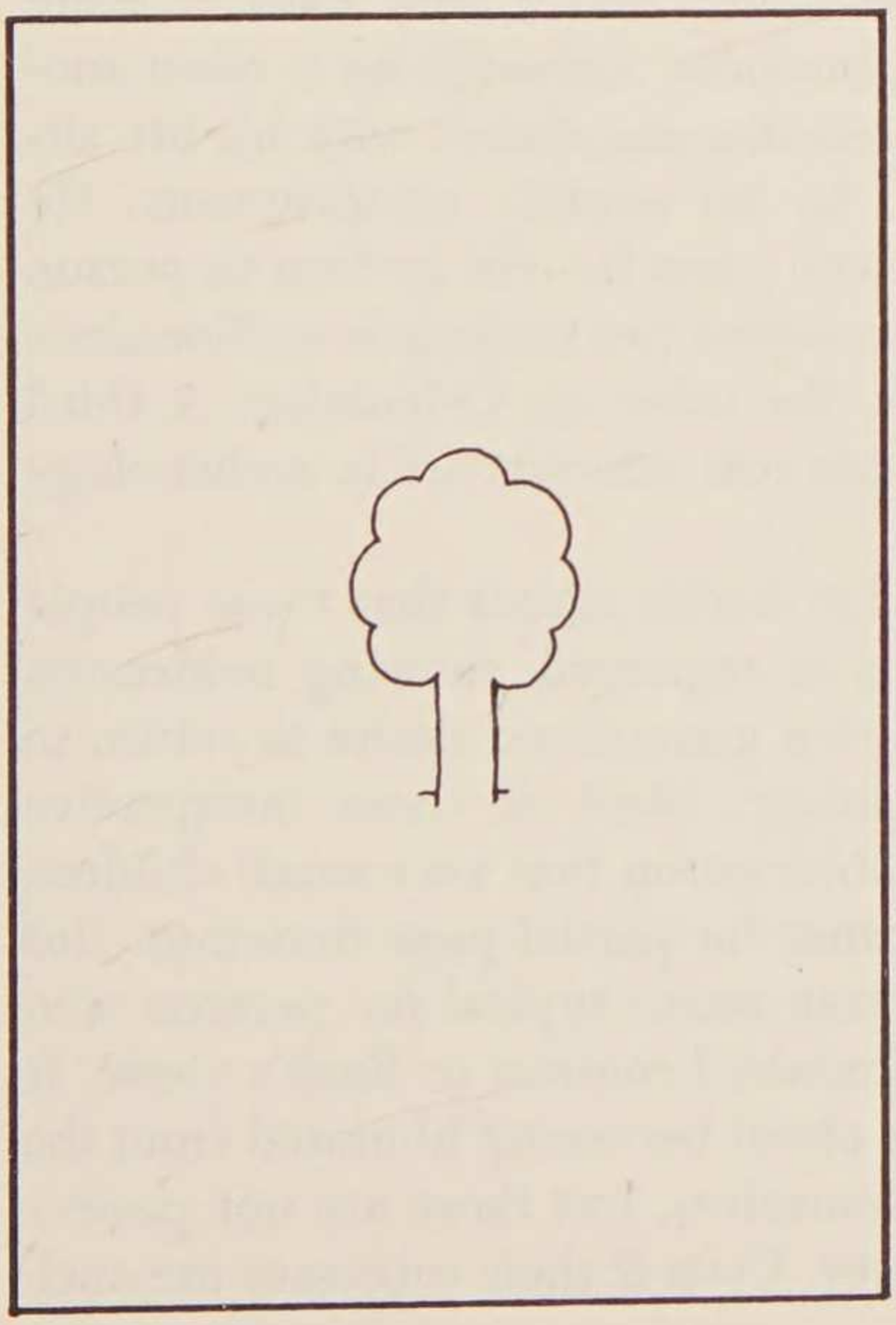
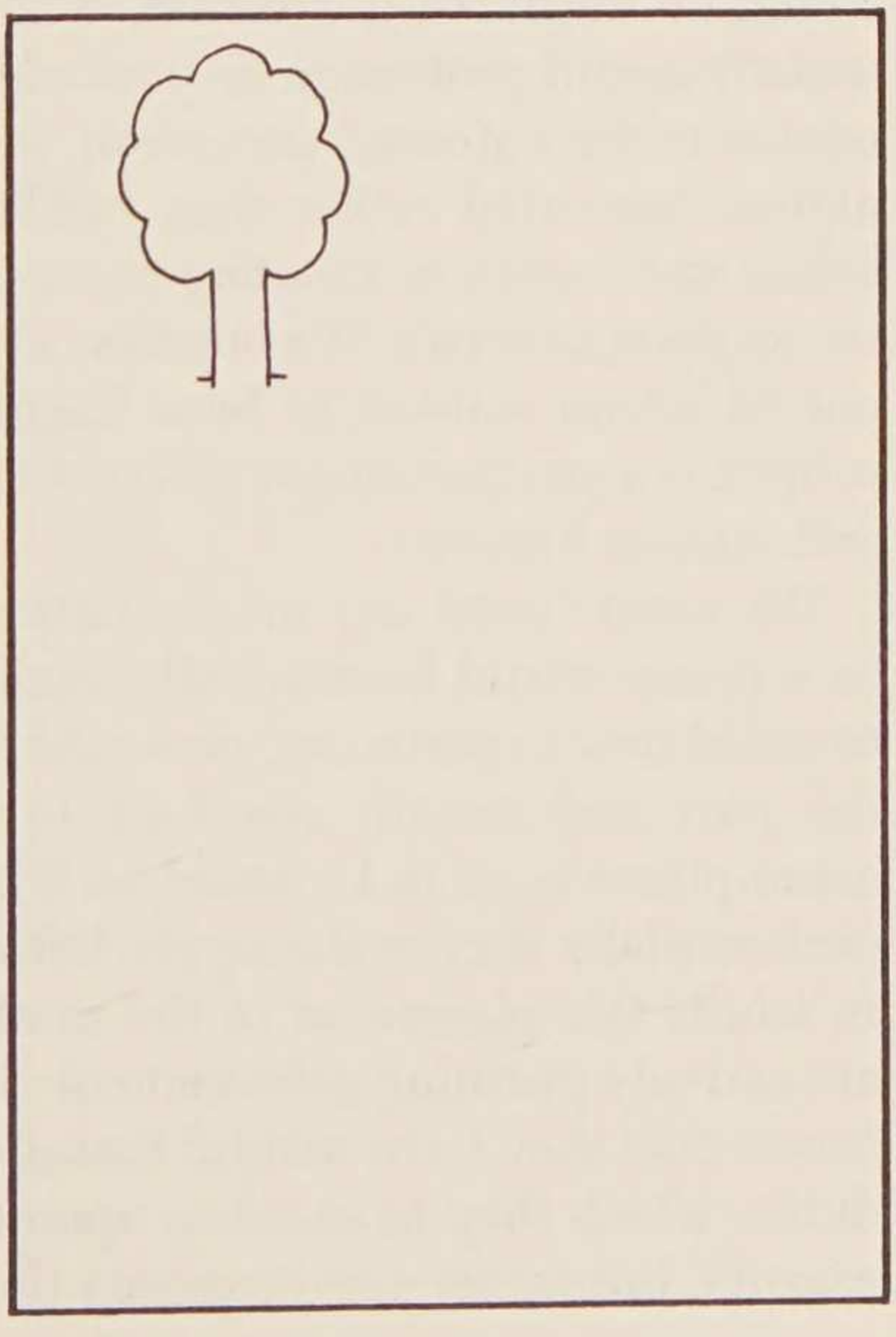


FIGURE 4b



hours of film. Most of the time he continues to make movies, manifesting an impression of strength and confidence; but there have been periods in his life when his sense of creative and personal inadequacy has become intense and overwhelming, and at these times he has sought relief through psychiatric help.

Figures 4b, 4c, and 4d all refer to very small trees drawn near the top of the page. These three positions express efforts to overcome feelings of separateness and insignificance (nearly always associated with humble origins) through a strong drive for achievement and social acceptance. In all three of these positions the ego energy is intensely concentrated. One often finds that these subjects are capable, for example, of working sixteen hours a day. Regardless of their objective accomplishments, however, they tend to remain dissatisfied and unsure of their own worth.

FIGURE 4b: The small tree drawn in the top left corner

This position of the small tree suggests alienation from a paternal influence or a lack of paternal support. Often the father has been lost in childhood through death or as a result of separation of the parents. In many cases the subject has been obliged to contribute to the support of the mother from an early age. Although the natural inclination of this type is toward esoteric or impractical pursuits, the biography usually indicates that the pressure of reality has forced him to give up his dreams in favor of work leading to immediate monetary gain. Thus we have here the would-be impractical dreamer, who in reality works very hard at some socially useful profession or profitable business. Although he is often successful in the enforced profession, he remains dissatisfied with his life situation, frustrated rather than fulfilled by his worldly achievements. He seems to be secretly awaiting the moment when he will be free to pursue his original interests. We mention as examples two self-made millionaires, one of whom wanted to be a linguist, the other an Orientalist. A third subject is a prosperous psychiatrist whose real interests are in archaeology and ancient history.

We never found any substantiation for Buck's claims that these people as a group would be markedly anxious or regressed, showing tendencies to avoid new experiences, or would have a generalized desire to return to the past and remain absorbed in fantasy. Most of these interpretive assumptions seem to be based on the observation that very small children preferentially choose the upper left corner for partial-page drawings. But in adults this placement of the small tree seems typical for persons who are actively pursuing achievement—in marked contrast to Buck's views. It *is* true that they have wishful fantasies about becoming liberated from the duties which they have taken upon themselves, but these are not passive escapes, but rather compensatory desires. Even if their successes are such

that they could retire and pursue the subjects of their waking dreams (which they regard as their true interests), they rarely will actually give up their vocations in favor of their less practical fascinations.

FIGURE 4c: The small tree centered near the upper margin

Neither parent has exercised much influence on these individuals. Among our subjects are several persons who were actually orphans, as well as some who had living parents but became self-supporting and independent of the family at a very early age. Intense striving toward mental achievement, humanistic endeavors, and the realization of rich imaginative gifts through writing are typical, at least among the gifted of this type. Although success may be reached in the area of the subject's true interests, dissatisfaction is nevertheless a strong factor in the personality. Many of these persons are idealistic and interested in social reform, and the source of their frustration may be the recognition that as isolated individuals they will not succeed in effecting real social change, no matter how well thought of or even famous they become. One of our subjects is a playwright (orphaned in infancy) whose reputation has steadily grown with the increasing success of his productions. He is nevertheless embittered and growing more and more cynical, for he is by now aware that the public has not assimilated the true message of his work. On the other hand, these feelings in no way reduce his general capacity for prolific creativity, despite occasional depressive moods.

FIGURE 4c

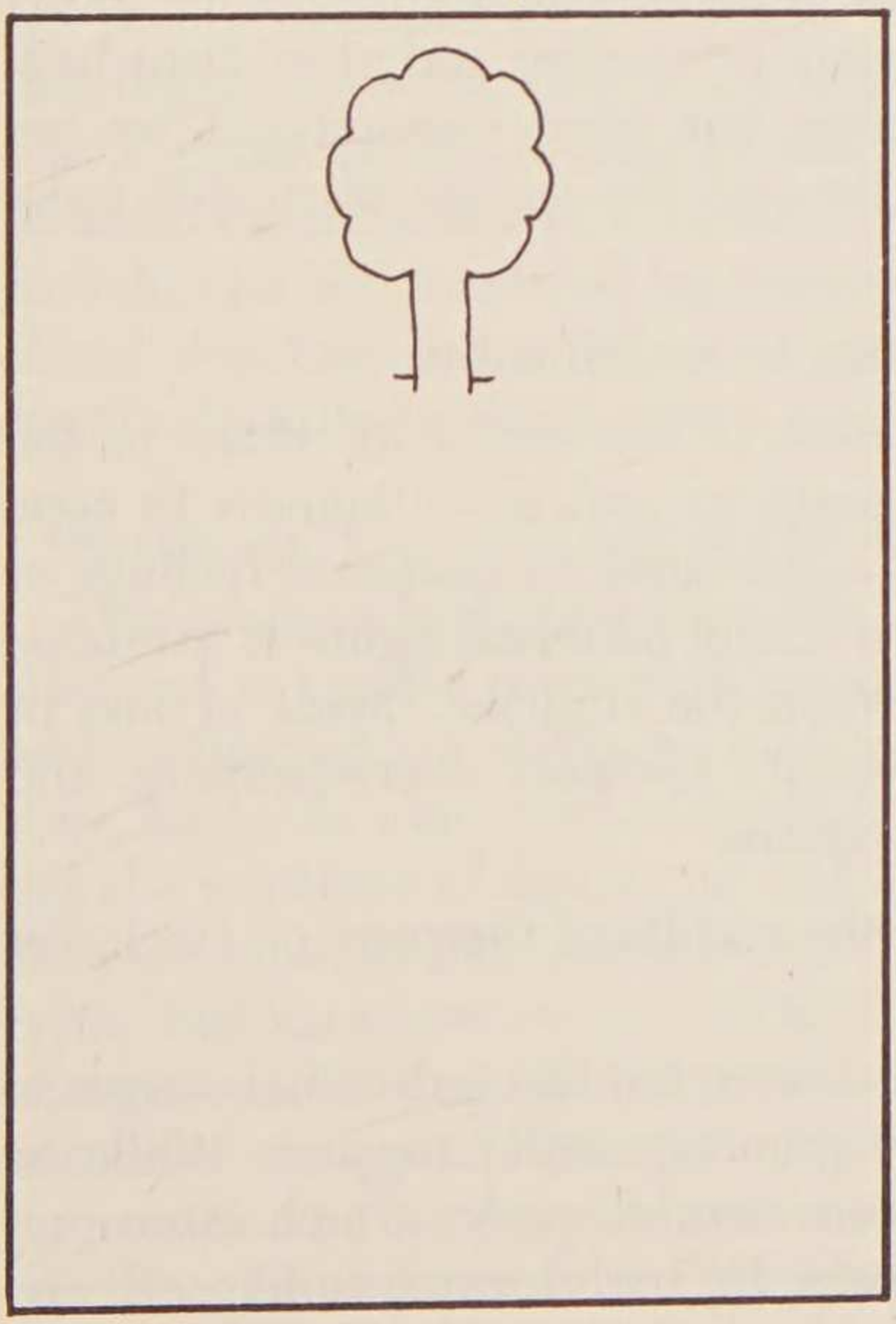


FIGURE 4d

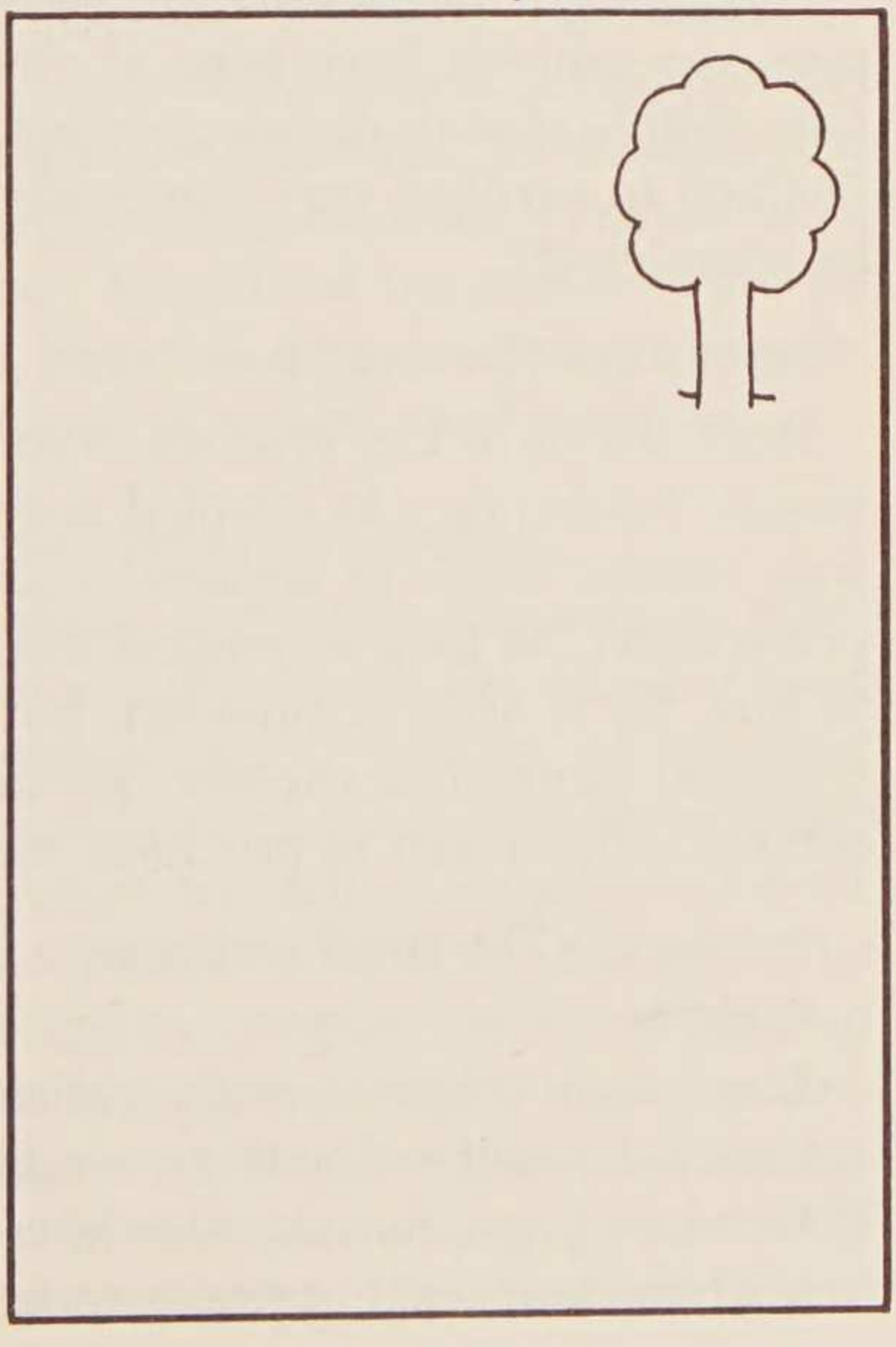


FIGURE 4d: The small tree drawn in the upper right corner

We have only a few examples of very small trees drawn in the upper right corner of the page. One was presented by a young mathematician, who, having lost his mother at the age of four, was sent by his father to live in a Catholic boys' school from age six to age eighteen. There he stayed not only during the school term but also throughout the vacation periods, although the father did pay him occasional visits. He was thus raised and educated almost completely without exposure to women or girls. His feelings of loneliness, abandonment, and inadequacy were sublimated into the abstract reasoning processes of pure mathematics. He won a number of prizes and scholarships and continues to add to his mental triumphs as an adult. Nevertheless, his personality remains permeated by deep resentment regarding his early upbringing, which he quite naturally experienced as abandonment and deprivation of warmth. Obviously, one cannot generalize from this example, but it will be noted that the biography and interests of this subject correlate well with the general meanings we attribute to the upper right zone of the page.

The three positions illustrated in figures 4e, 4f, and 4g—small trees found at the bottom of the page—have in common a subjective feeling of being crushed. It is as though the experienced pressure of the environment were so great that it threatened the very being of the subject. Emotions of deep depression, ideas of persecution, and inability to cope with reality are likely. We stated earlier that most of our sample consists of normal, functioning adults. In the three types now under discussion, however, the subjects have been at one time or another seriously disturbed. Our sample of such drawings is not large, but, when encountered, we are inclined to proceed very cautiously, because the danger of suicide must be considered.

FIGURE 4e: The small tree drawn in the lower left corner

Here we have the symbolic expression of the desire to return to the womb. Inadequacy is coupled with passivity and unwillingness to cope with reality. States of depression are aggravated by paranoid feelings of persecution. As long as support from a strong maternal figure is available to him, he is able to function, but when the slightest threat of loss of maternal protection appears, his insecurity becomes overwhelming, and overt manifestations of psychosis may ensue.

FIGURE 4f: The small tree drawn in the middle of the page on the lower margin

Depression is also strongly indicated here, but the individual strives to maintain himself without parental or pseudoparental support. While he feels inadequate, he may also have considerable pride, which often prevents him from seeking professional help. He withdraws into himself, cre-

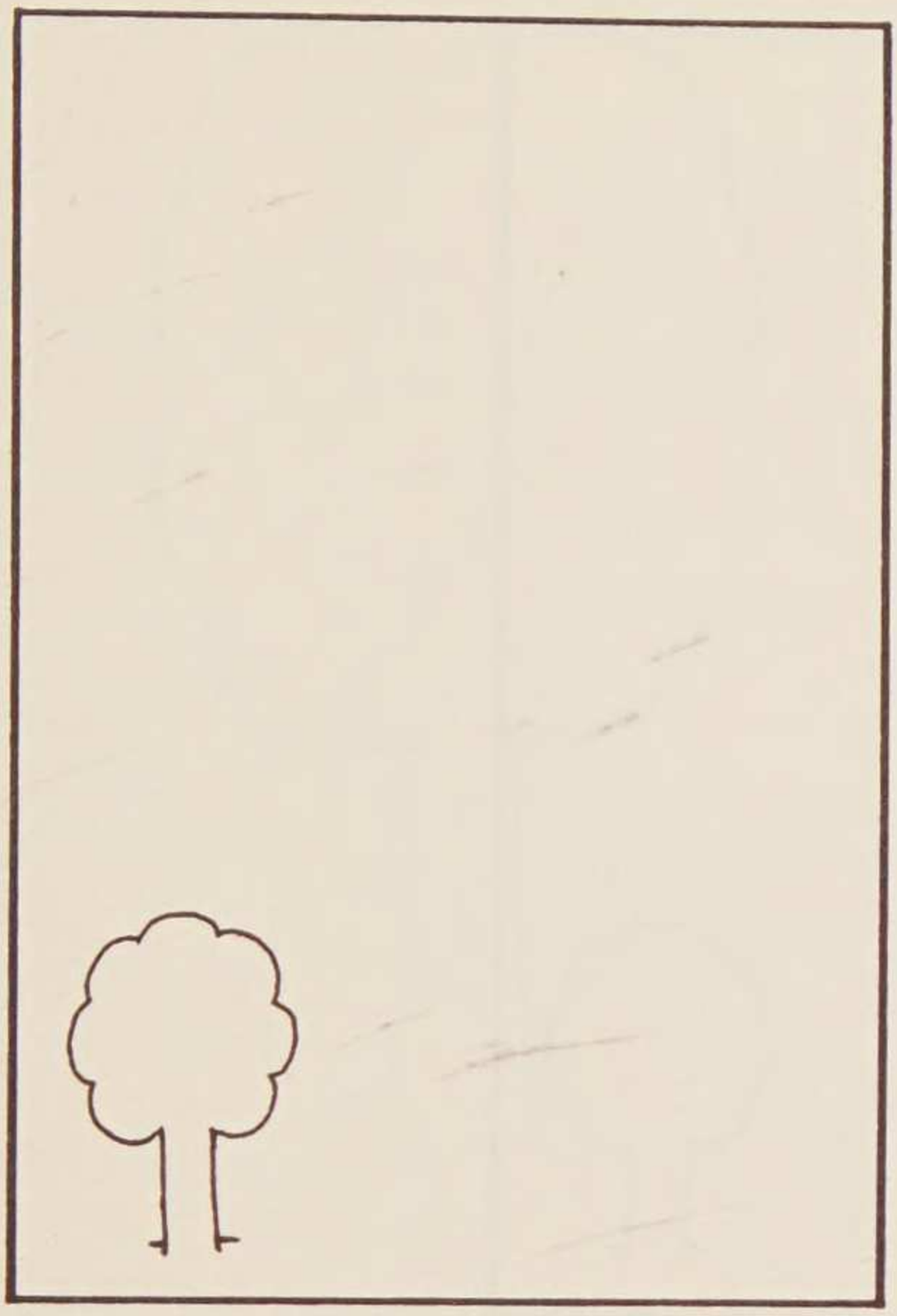


FIGURE 4e

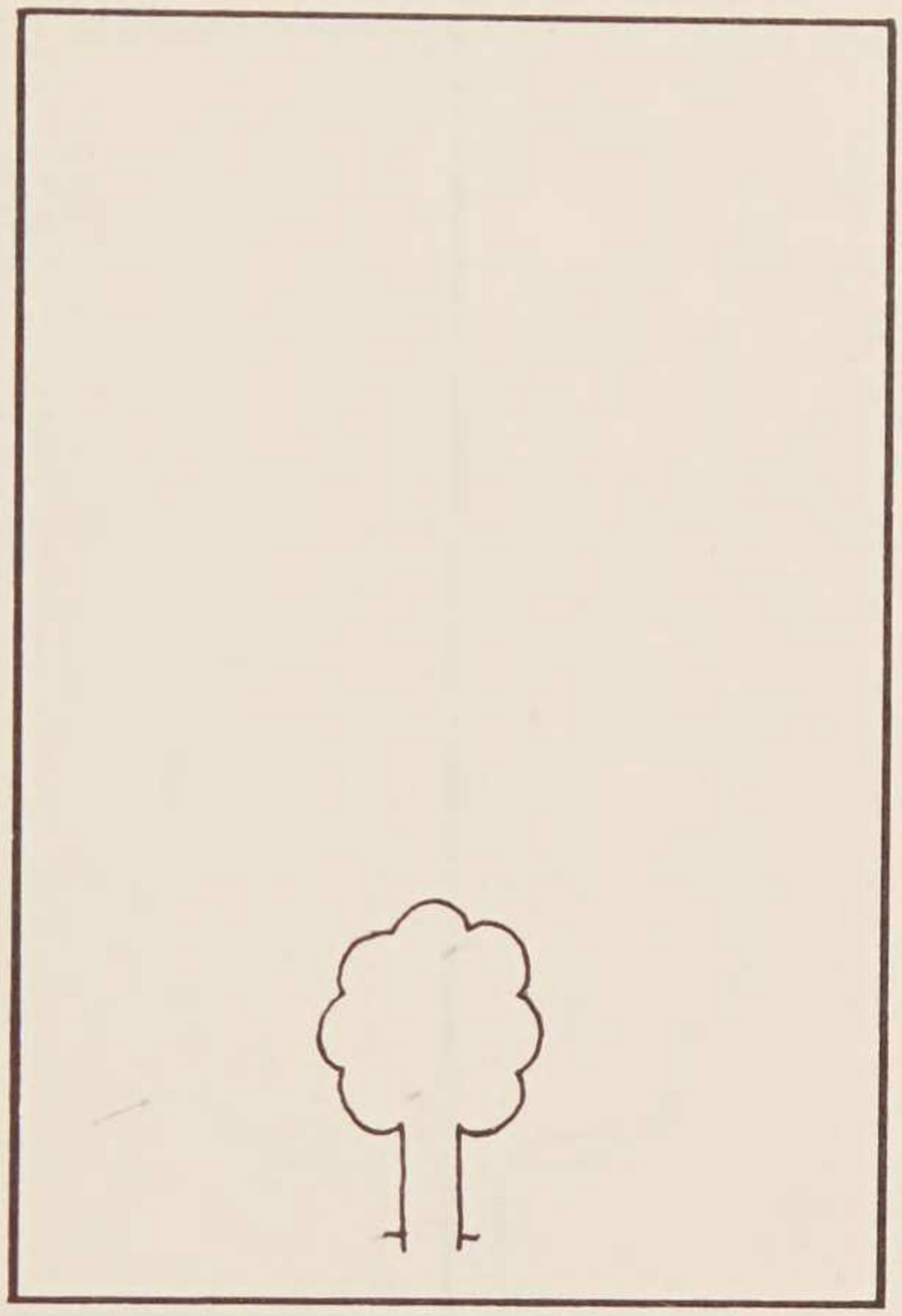


FIGURE 4f

ating a kind of symbolic womb out of his isolation. He may dwell on regrets, or, on the other hand, concentrate on a solitary expression of his talents. Feelings of rejection and incompetence plague him, regardless of his reality experience. Suicidal inclinations are a serious but frequently unrecognized threat. One of our subjects who drew a tree in this position was a gifted bassoonist who played in a major orchestra. He used to stay at home for days in a very small room, practicing incessantly, never satisfied that he had mastered his instrument. In spite of his excellent professional standing and attentive support from his many acquaintances, he eventually killed himself after a long period of self-imposed isolation.

FIGURE 4g: The small tree drawn in the lower right corner

This is also a highly problematic position, suggesting tremendous pressure and a possible premorbid personality. Like all subjects drawing trees well to the right of the page, he is contemptuous of women. At the same time, he needs some kind of symbolic womb, in common with those utilizing the positions of figures 4e and 4f, since he feels inadequate vis-à-vis the environment. He is less passive or withdrawn than the two previous types, but his activities tend to be released in irregular bursts of pent-up energies without specific direction. He may, for example, show sudden outbursts of rage or brief periods of manic activity; but since neither his aggression nor his preoccupations are effective, his release of anger fails to relieve his depression and his sense of frustration and leaves him where

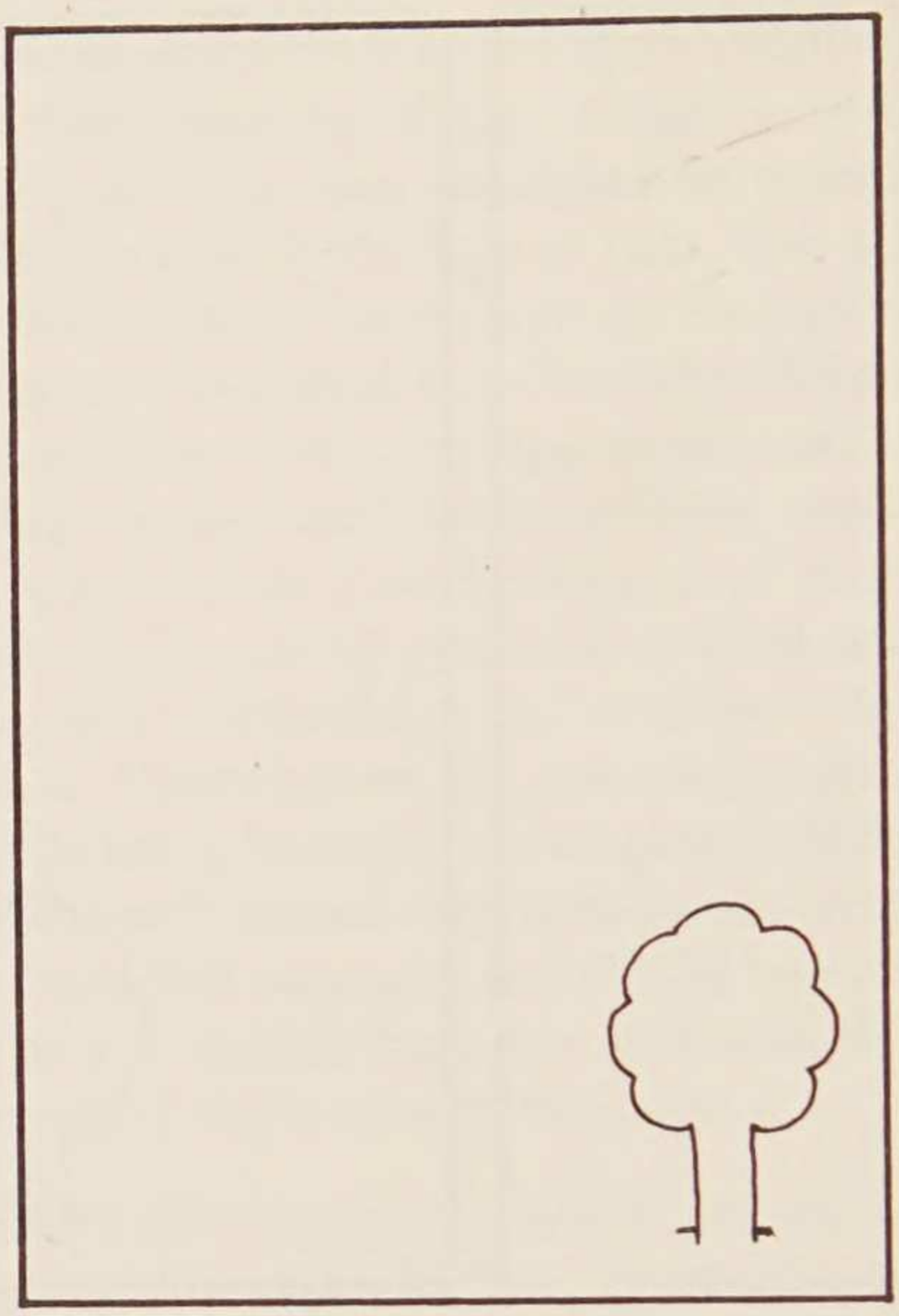


FIGURE 4g

he began. It should be obvious that such inner turmoil combined with feelings of extreme pressure from the environment may often lead to the breakdown of the functioning ego.

Trees which go off the edge of the paper

FIGURE 5a: The tree centered on the paper, with the crown extending beyond the upper margin

This position is usually characteristic of young people or persons with a youthful attitude. The subject is energetic and looking forward to the future, for such a tree expresses optimism, hope, and an almost unlimited faith in his own potential. This confidence is more likely to have a quality of naiveté than of false egotism. He may feel ready to conquer the world, and at the very least he pursues his desired goals with enthusiasm. He tends to lack caution and may even be somewhat reckless, but his optimism is both self-sustaining and infectious.

FIGURE 5b: The lower part of the tree disappears on the bottom edge of the page

Here the whole root and part of the trunk are missing. The tree begins from its midpoint, suggesting both deliberate rejection of the instinctual and sexual sphere and a truncated vision of the self, which is unnaturally

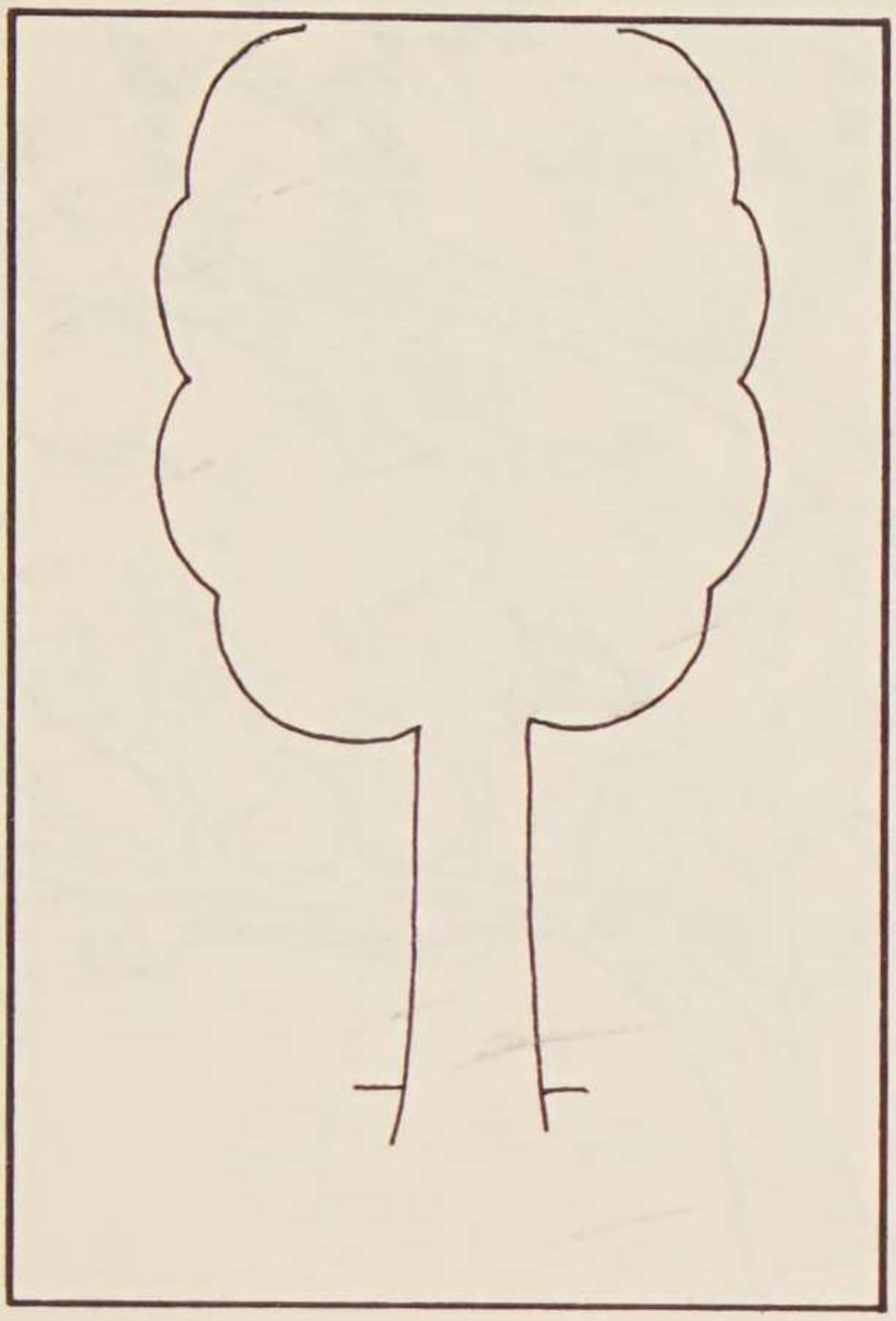


FIGURE 5a

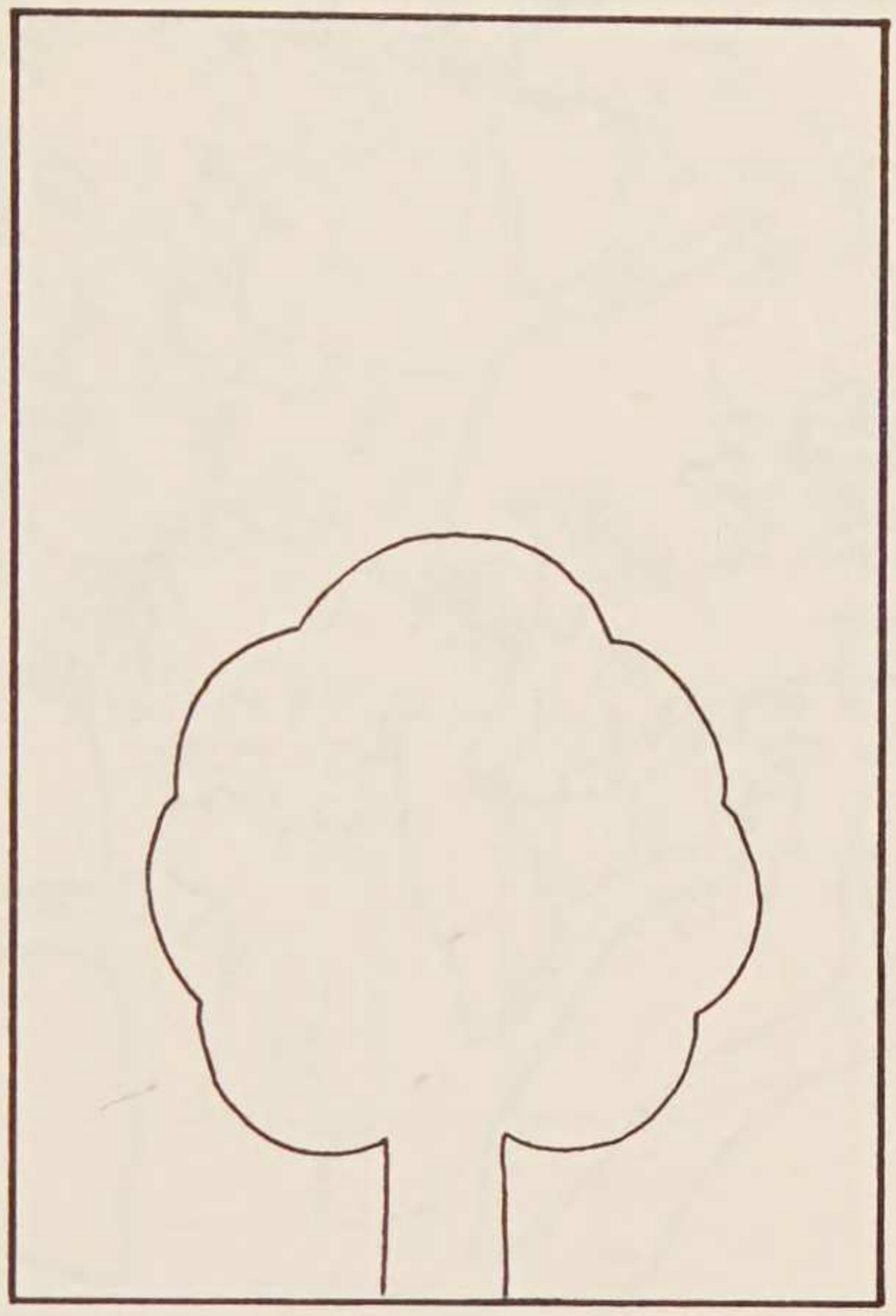


FIGURE 5b

and arbitrarily intellectualized. When the trunk is open at the bottom edge of the page, even though the roots are "denied," so to speak, vulnerability to sexual influences is suggested. Indeed, precisely because of the unbalanced concentration on the upper principles of mind or spirit, unbridled sexual drives or even sexual perversions may be sensed standing behind the personality as a dark unconscious shadow.

FIGURE 5c: The entire crown goes off the page on three margins at the top

This rendering suggests an egomaniacal type, or the expression of the manic phase in a manic-depressive cycle. The person lives in his fantasies, and there seem to be no boundaries to his imagined self-accomplishments. At the same time he is vulnerable to influences from all directions, especially when his ego is flattered. He is extremely gullible and his judgment is poor. He overextends himself in both activities and ideas. On the other hand, if he is genuinely talented or highly intelligent he may succeed in more than one field of endeavor. When the tree is in other respects strong and well integrated and the individual is gifted, his thinking can be highly original.

It should be mentioned that when a tree in this position is drawn by an adolescent subject, the interpretation must be tempered. Gullibility and

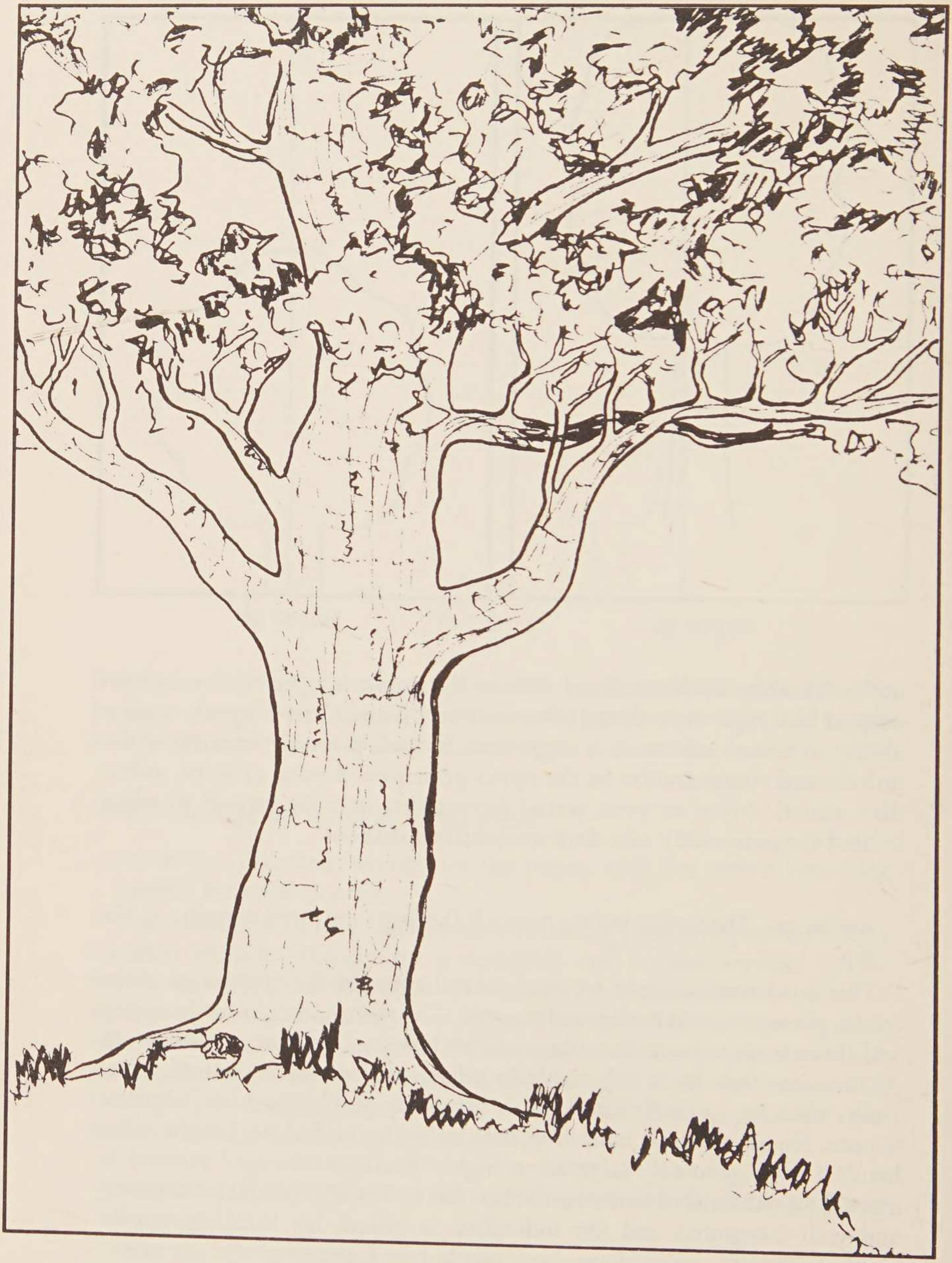


Illustration 3

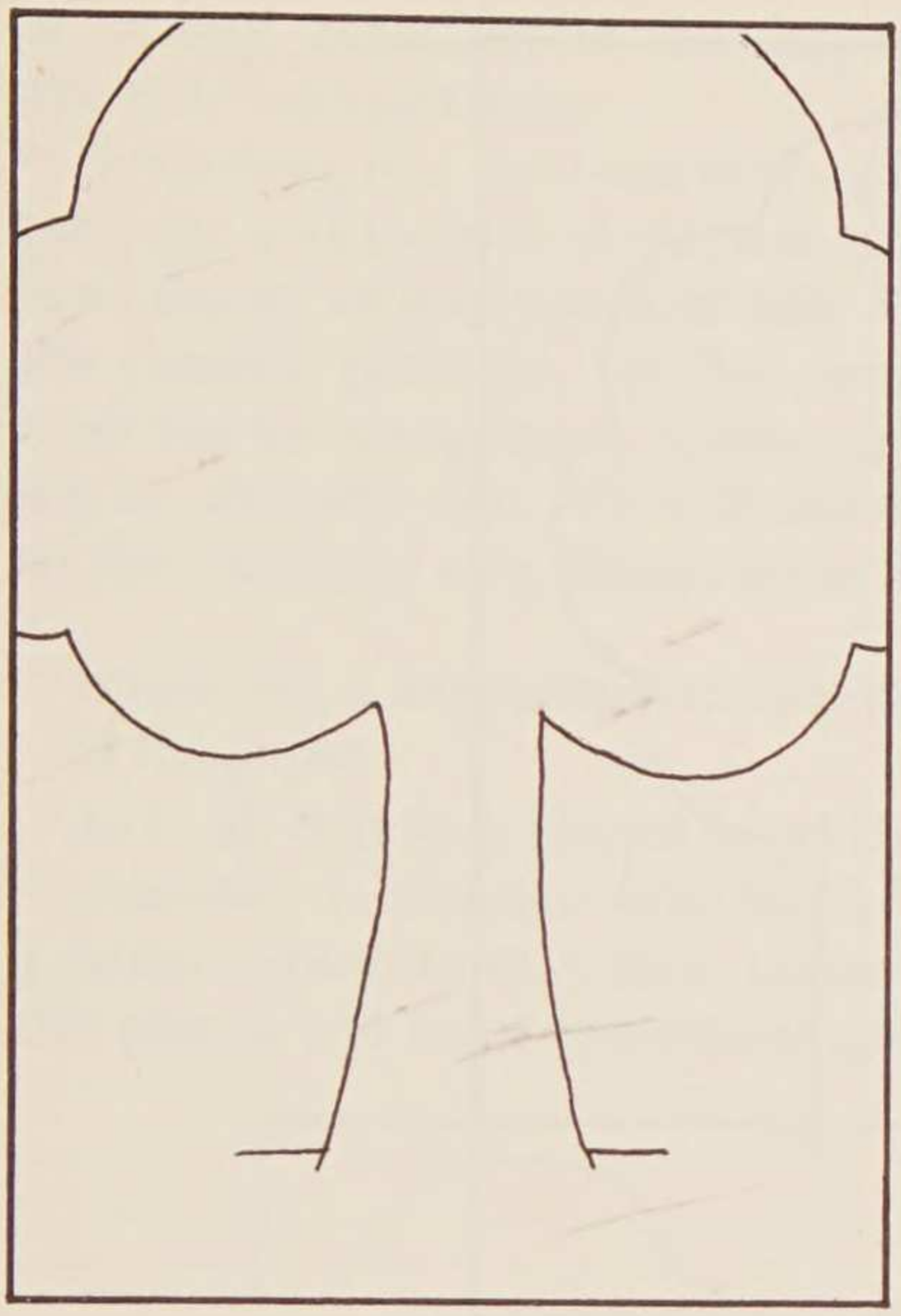


FIGURE 5c

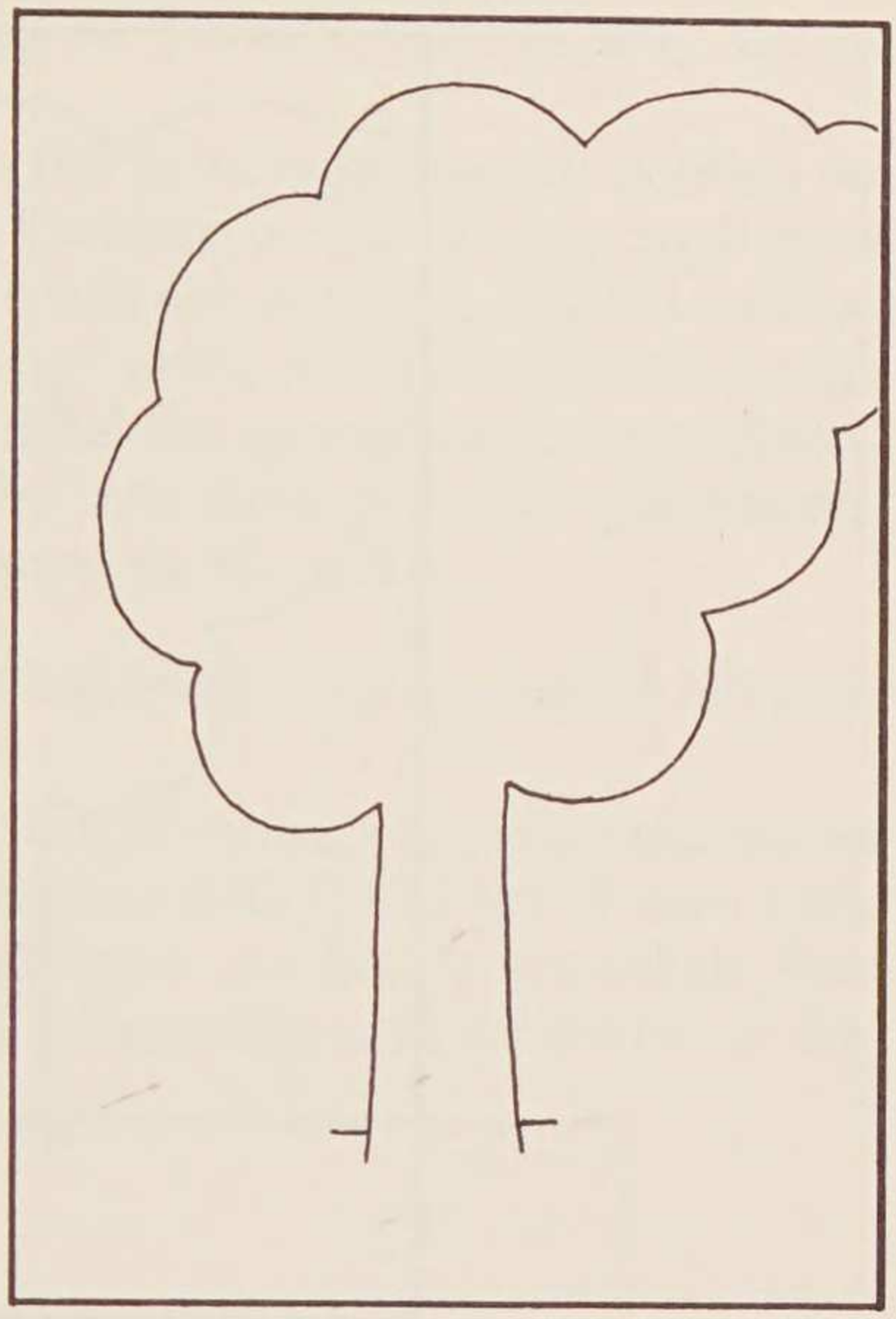


FIGURE 5d

ego fantasies are still characteristic, but these may be seen as relatively normal in the adolescent years.

Illustration 3 shows an actual tree extending beyond all three margins. Although it was drawn by a young man of thirty, he might be said in some respects to be an "eternal adolescent." He has both the positive characteristics of multiple talents and originality, and the negative ones of certain tendencies toward egomania and delusions of grandeur.

FIGURE 5d: The tree running off the page on the right side

This indicates a person who is easily influenced by male peers. He may become possessed by a certain idea and assimilate it into the whole fabric of his being. It should not be supposed, however, that he is strictly a rational type, for he is naive and lacking in critical judgment, tending to accept ideas which are presented authoritatively as facts, regardless of their source.

FIGURE 5e: The tree going off the left side of the page

This person is easily influenced by women, both emotionally and intellectually. On the other hand, he has an uncritical tendency to accept authoritative statements made by either sex, especially when they have to do with either music and the fine arts or with mystical and occult matters. If the subject is a male he will be constantly falling in love, and much of

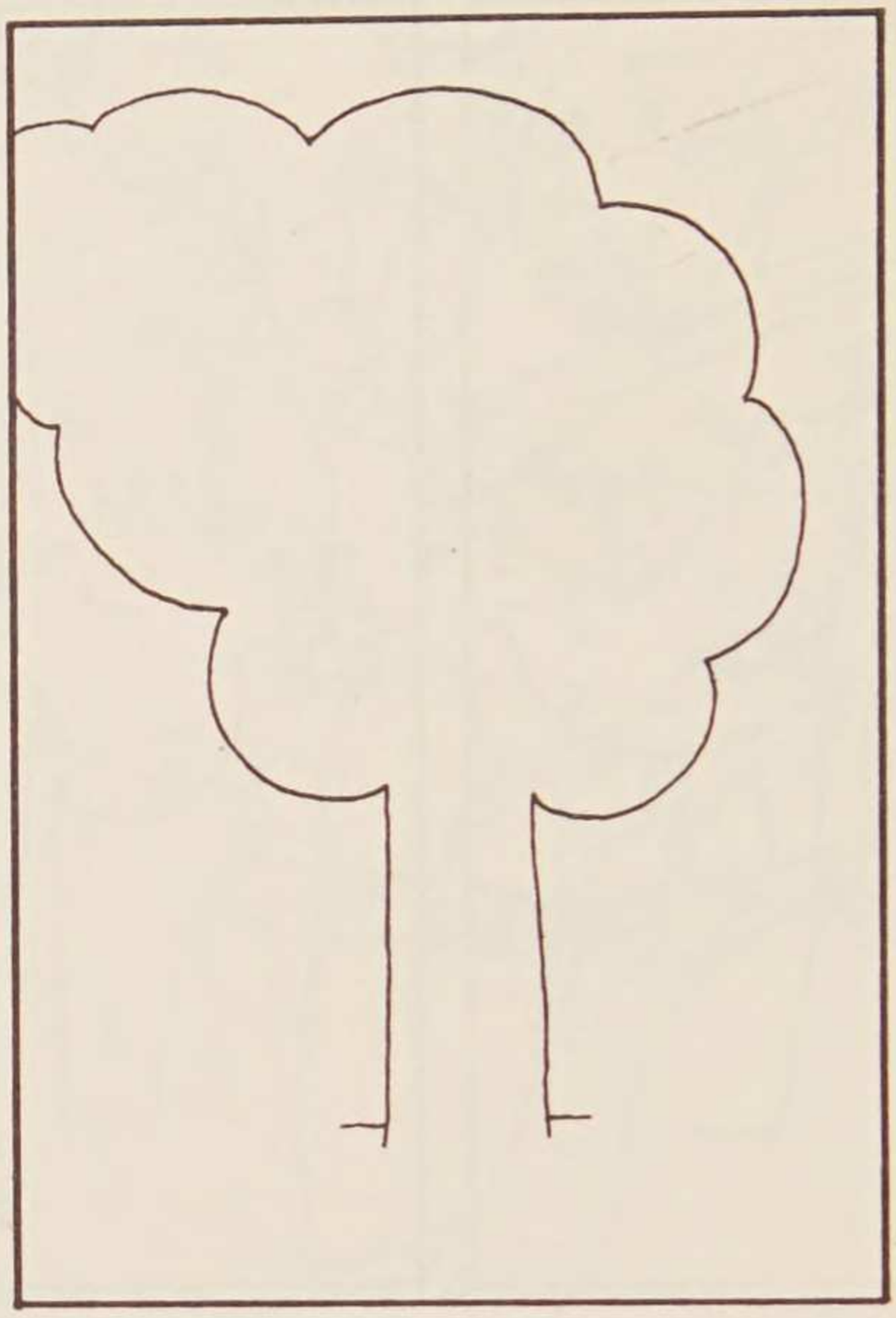


FIGURE 5e

his energy will be absorbed by the magic attraction of the feminine. He is also extremely vulnerable to psychism and other irrational mental enthusiasms. If the subject is a woman she will be absorbed in feminine activities which have a pretense of being intellectual or aesthetic in their focus; but unless other indications in the tree suggest genuine ability, these activities are often quite superficial. One thinks of those women who belong to innumerable women's organizations and regard themselves as culturally most sophisticated, but who are, in effect, often mediocre and sometimes outright bores.

Trees drawn on the wide axis of the page

In our experience only a very small percentage of people (less than 5 percent of our sample) draw the tree on the horizontal axis of the page. The mere fact that the person turns the page by ninety degrees and draws on the wide axis suggests an attitude of dissatisfaction with his immediate or larger environment. In these cases, one nearly always finds an element of conceit, which might be expressed in the statement: "I deserve more than my present circumstances are offering me. There is no reason for me to change myself. The environment should adjust to my needs." Selfishness and inflexibility are frequently characteristic of persons drawing trees in this manner. Marked tendencies to escape into the world

of fantasy, especially in the drawings of younger persons, may be an alternate interpretation.

Everything that has been said up to this point regarding the position on the page and the size of the tree can be more or less directly applied to trees drawn on the horizontal axis. We will not, therefore, discuss each of the possible positions, for the meanings attributed to the vertical axis trees can be interpolated, bearing in mind the general meaning of drawing on the wide axis. We will describe here three particular placements on the horizontal axis, illustrated in figures 6a, 6b, and 6c.

FIGURE 6a: A horizontal axis tree pushed completely toward the left side of the paper

As in all drawings placed far to the left of center, maternal domination is indicated. In this case total lack of contact with the father or even with a father substitute may be a source of major conflict. It is unlikely that this person will enter into meaningful relationship with a member of the

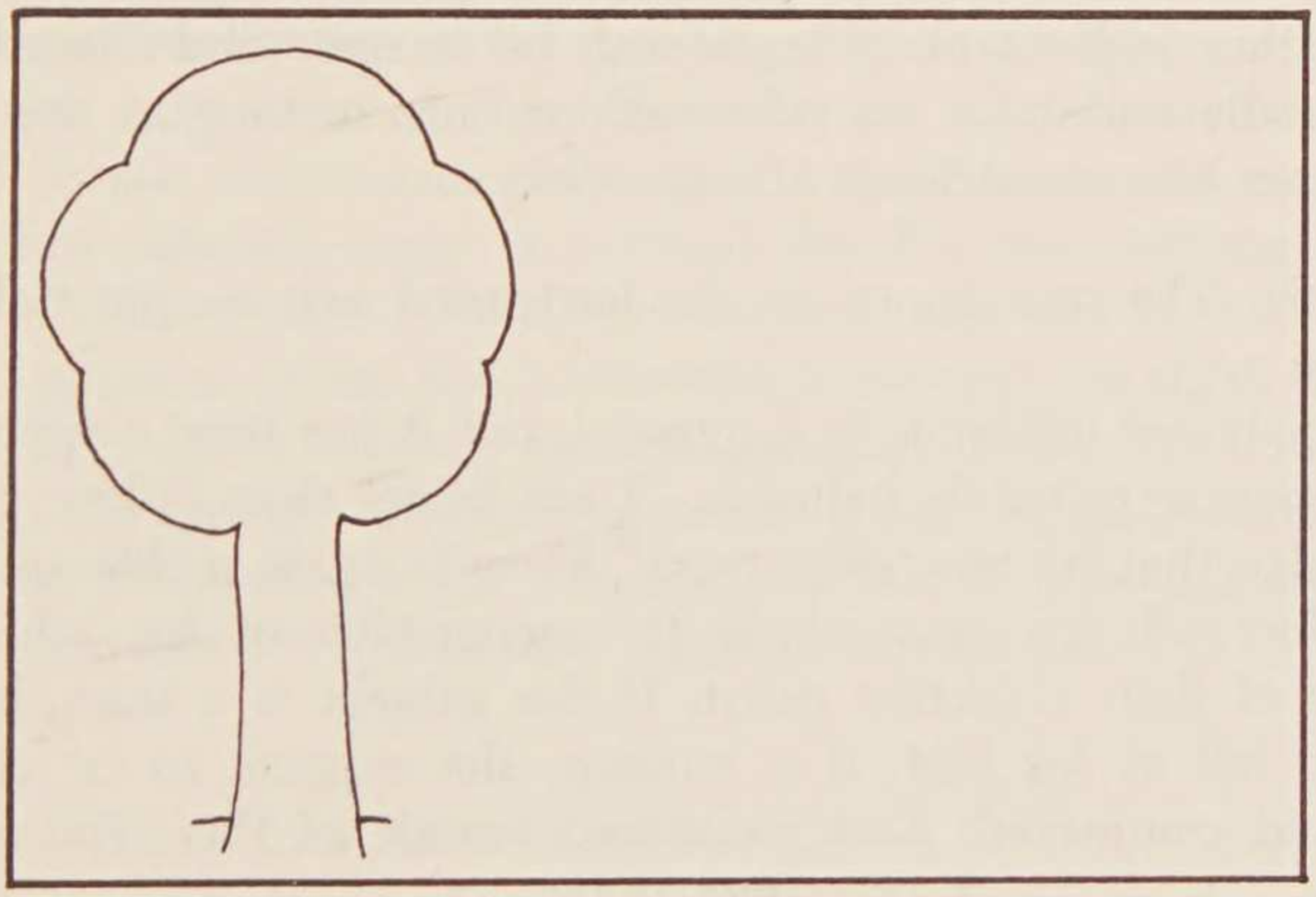


FIGURE 6a

opposite sex, for he tends to view himself as a clearly superior being. Unlike the subject who draws the tree in figure 2a, he does not seek a partner with whom he can replicate the pattern of domination by the mother. He is usually a demanding individual whose development has been marked by excessive maternal support and approval. He has difficulty in yielding and is unwilling to give of himself, while at the same time expects that others should serve and appreciate him.

FIGURE 6b: The tree drawn in the center of the page on the horizontal axis

Here the parental influences are more or less equal, but one may be dealing either with an only child or with a favored last child, equally spoiled by both parents. He is capable of efforts toward self-development,

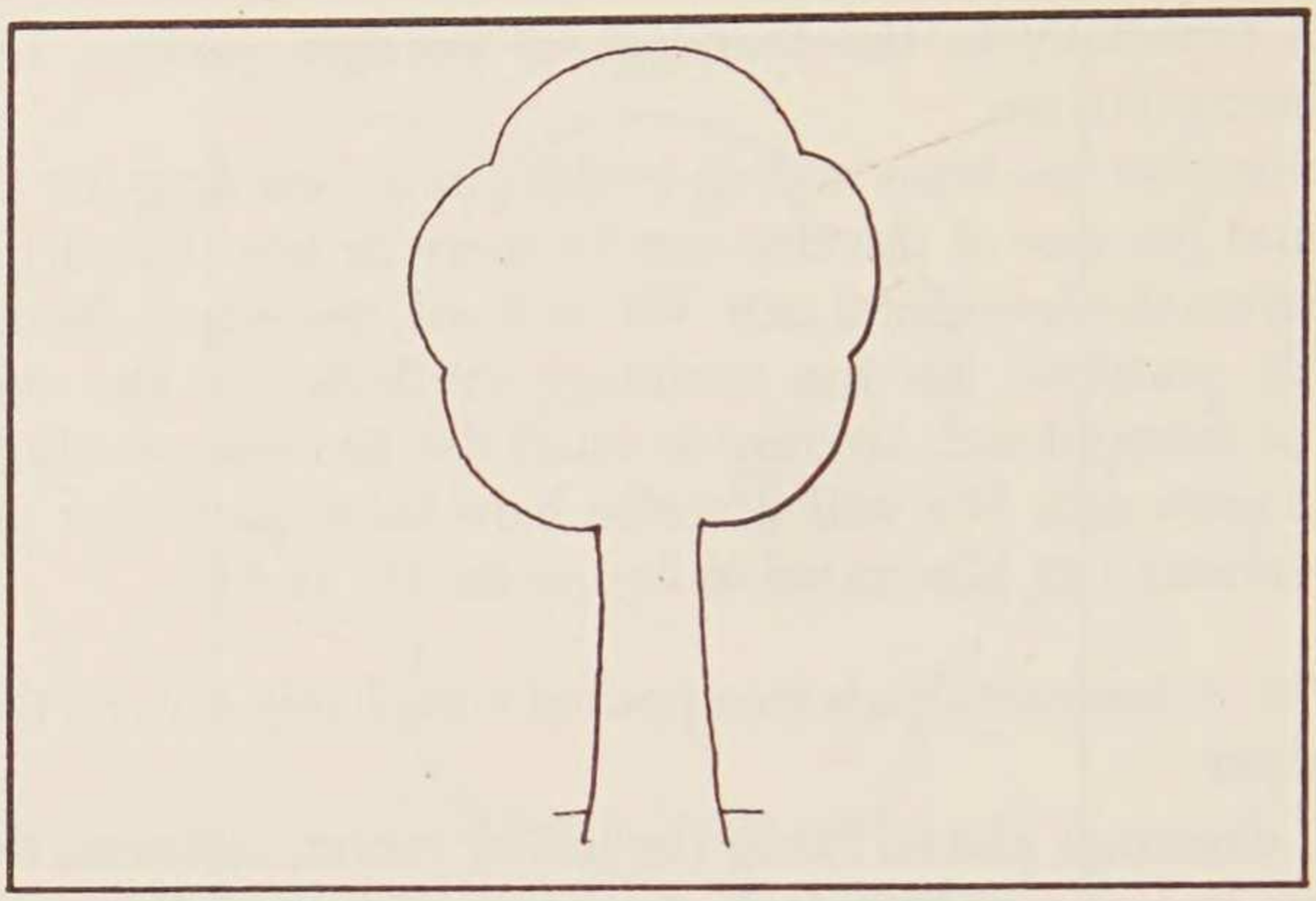


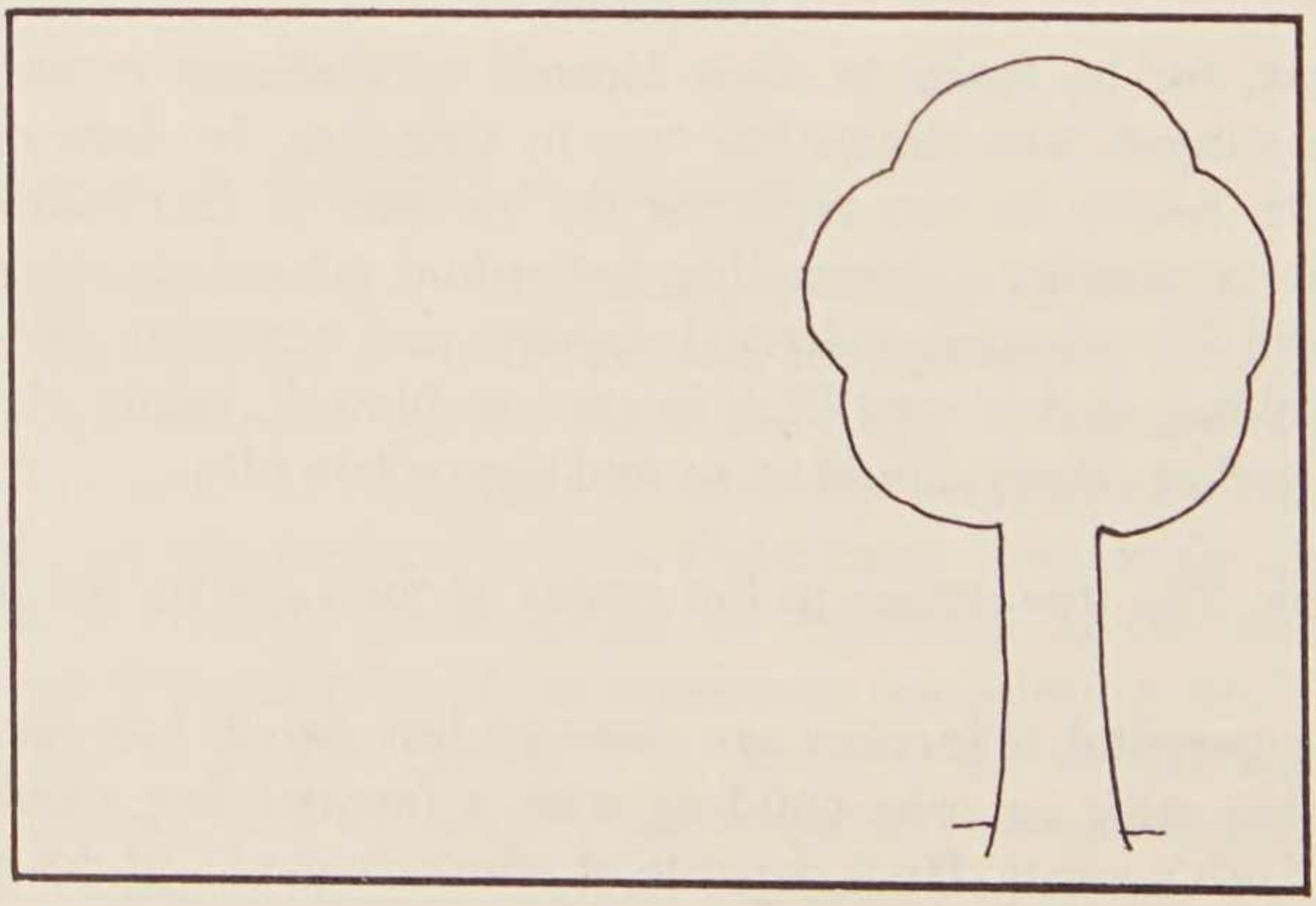
FIGURE 6b

but he tends to expect disproportionate rewards for these efforts. His relationships with others are heavily toned by a patronizing attitude. In spite of these rather unpleasant traits, he may be an open and friendly person, but he usually maintains his relationships only so long as they serve in some manner his own attitude of superiority.

FIGURE 6c: The tree drawn on the horizontal axis on the right side of the page

Strong paternal influence is suggested, but it has here a special meaning. This person privately believes: "I am better than father, although I acknowledge that he was very good." Here is again a demanding type, but the demands are particularly for recognition of his achievements, regardless of their objective merit. If the subject is a man, he expects women to fall at his feet; if a woman, she expects to be continually courted and conquered. Both male and female of this type are highly

FIGURE 6c



competitive, although their ambitions and desire for prestige are rarely supported by disciplined efforts.

If the interpreter feels, as a result of his direct contact with the subject, that none of the attributes of self-centeredness described above are true of his client, he should then consider that the rendering of the tree on the horizontal axis may be an expression of the fantasy life, rather than of the normal attitude stance, and he can mitigate his interpretation accordingly.

DIRECTIONAL INCLINATIONS

The position of the tree on the page is not only a matter of which zones of the paper are occupied, but refers also to a factor which we may call the directional inclination of the drawing. Figures 7a through 7g illustrate seven major variations of this phenomenon. The inclination may be restricted to the crown area only, or it may characterize the tree as a whole. When only the crown is inclined, the direction will express meaning with reference either to the mental sphere alone or to the mental and emotional spheres. When the inclination is toward the right, the subject expresses a positive leaning toward paternal, male, spiritual, rational realms and the father principle in general. When the inclination is toward the left, the preference is for maternal, female, mystical, artistic realms and their correlates. We shall now examine in more detail the seven major possibilities.

FIGURE 7a: The crown inclined to the right

There is a similarity to the tree in figure 5b, but here the crown does not actually go off the edge of the page. This subject is more critical, less gullible than the one who draws as in figure 5b. He finds his life direction in scientific, highly rational pursuits, or in practical, worldly endeavors. His mentality tends to be set in one direction, and he is able to concentrate his drives toward the attainment of definite goals. He can be highly intellectual in fields relating to his vocation, but he is so one-sided that he may be almost an illiterate in other areas. The engineer who has not read a work of literature for twenty years might be taken as an example.

FIGURE 7b: The crown inclined to the left

The mental trend is toward the mystical, history, art, or dedication to service. This type may be highly creative in one of these realms, but at the same time indifferent to the events of what might be called hard real-

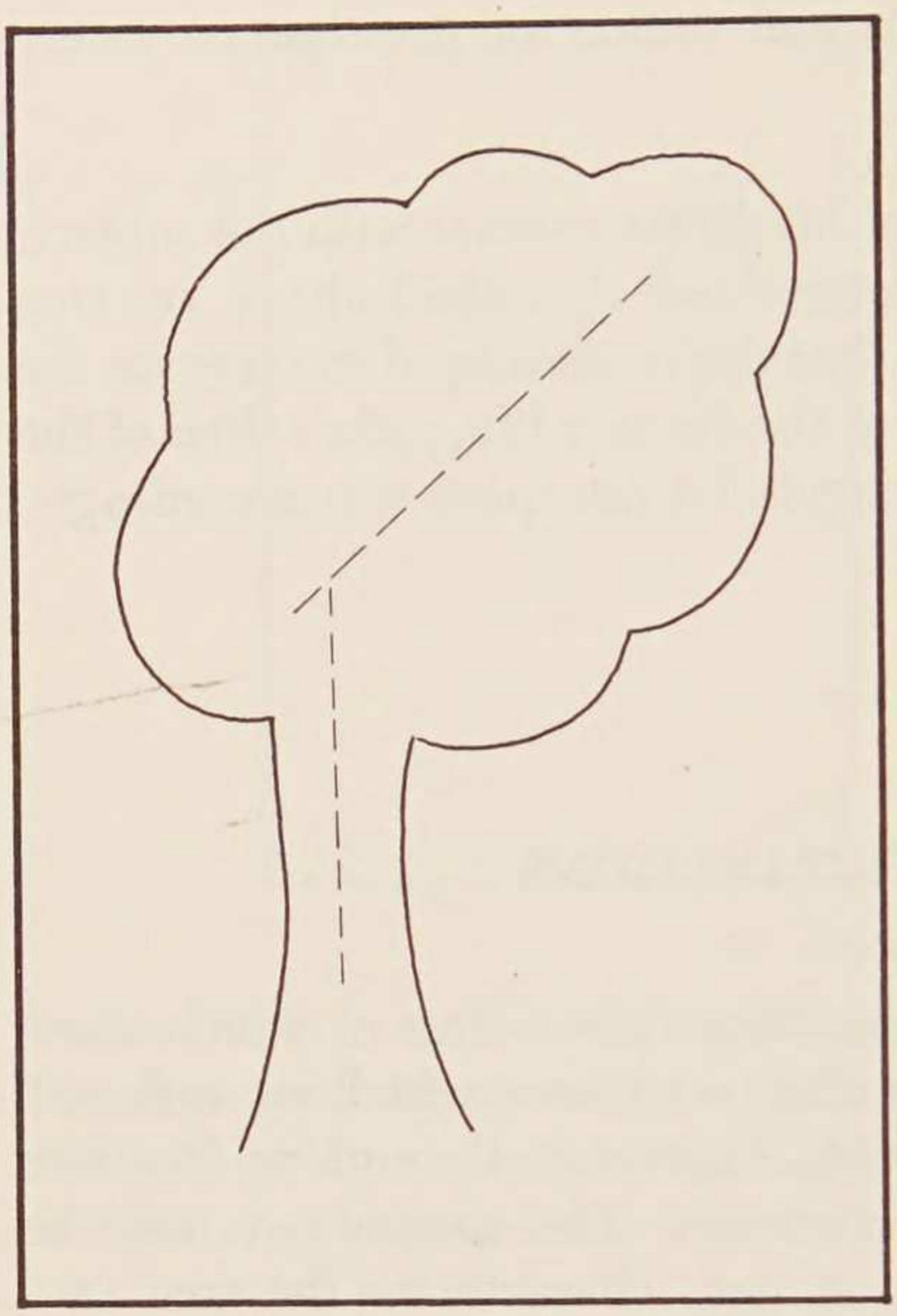


FIGURE 7a

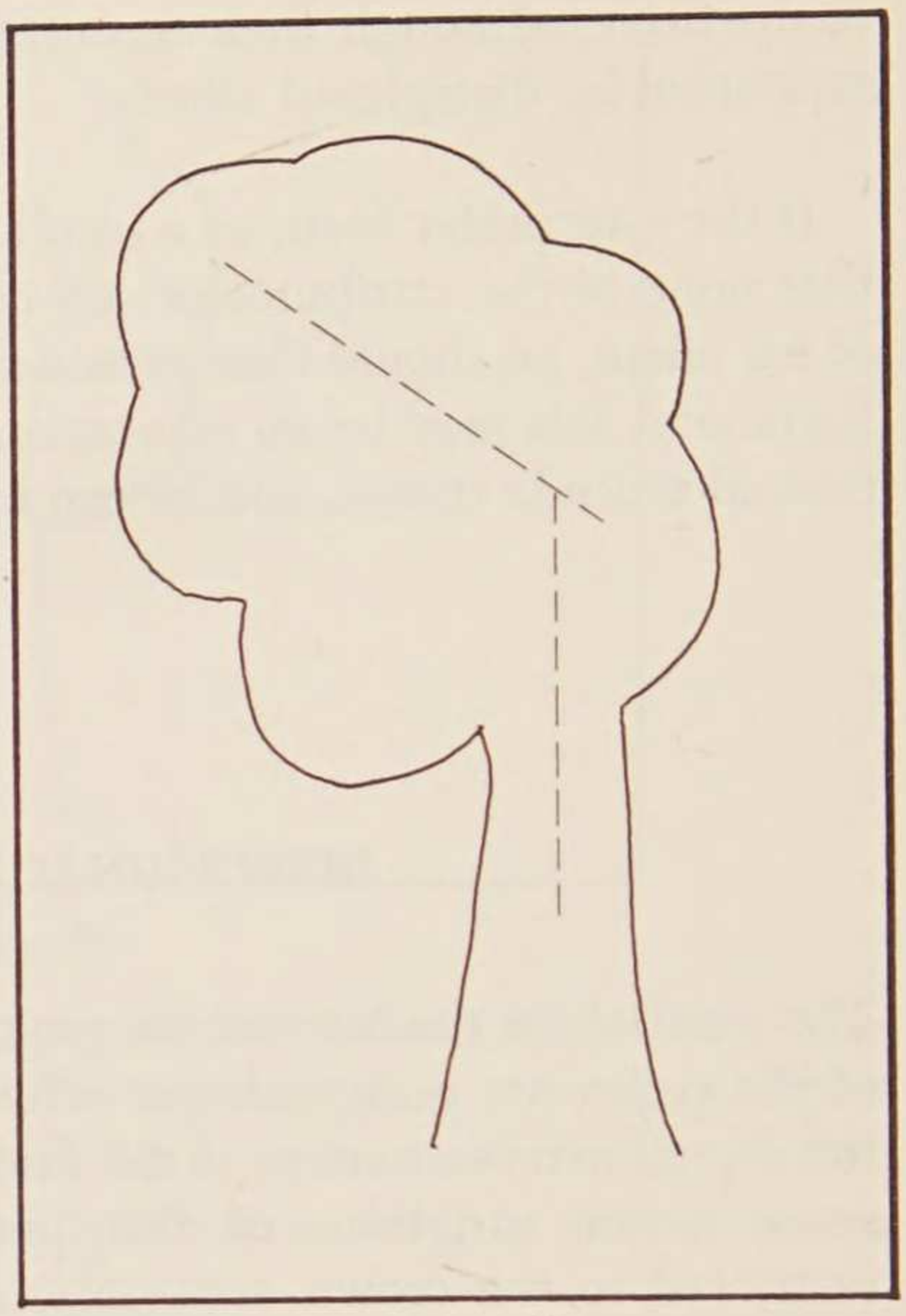


FIGURE 7b

ity. A male subject drawing such a tree might be an artist who regards himself as a humanist but who is oblivious to such obvious manifestations of troubled conditions in contemporary society as urban riots or wars in Third World countries. If a woman, the subject may show real leadership qualities in her area of concentration, but she may understand virtually nothing about the world of men. For example, one woman physician among our subjects commands great respect as a teacher of medicine and is warmly regarded by all of her patients. Because she has demonstrated both her brilliance and her skills, she assumes that she can compete in the male-dominated world of medicine. But she consistently fails to anticipate or assess correctly the psychological motivations of her male colleagues, and she suffers all kinds of puzzling defeats on this account.

FIGURE 7c: The crown inclined from the lower left to the upper right

The weight of the lower part of the crown is on the left, but the direction of development is toward the upper right zone. This person will be heavily influenced by the past. He is often a feeling type who is making an effort to clarify and develop his thinking processes. If the subject is a woman, she may feel somewhat oppressed by the power of her own emotions and desire to increase her self-control through intellectual training. Another type may be fearful of the traditionally dependent situation of women, attempting to free herself from feminine bondage by acquiring

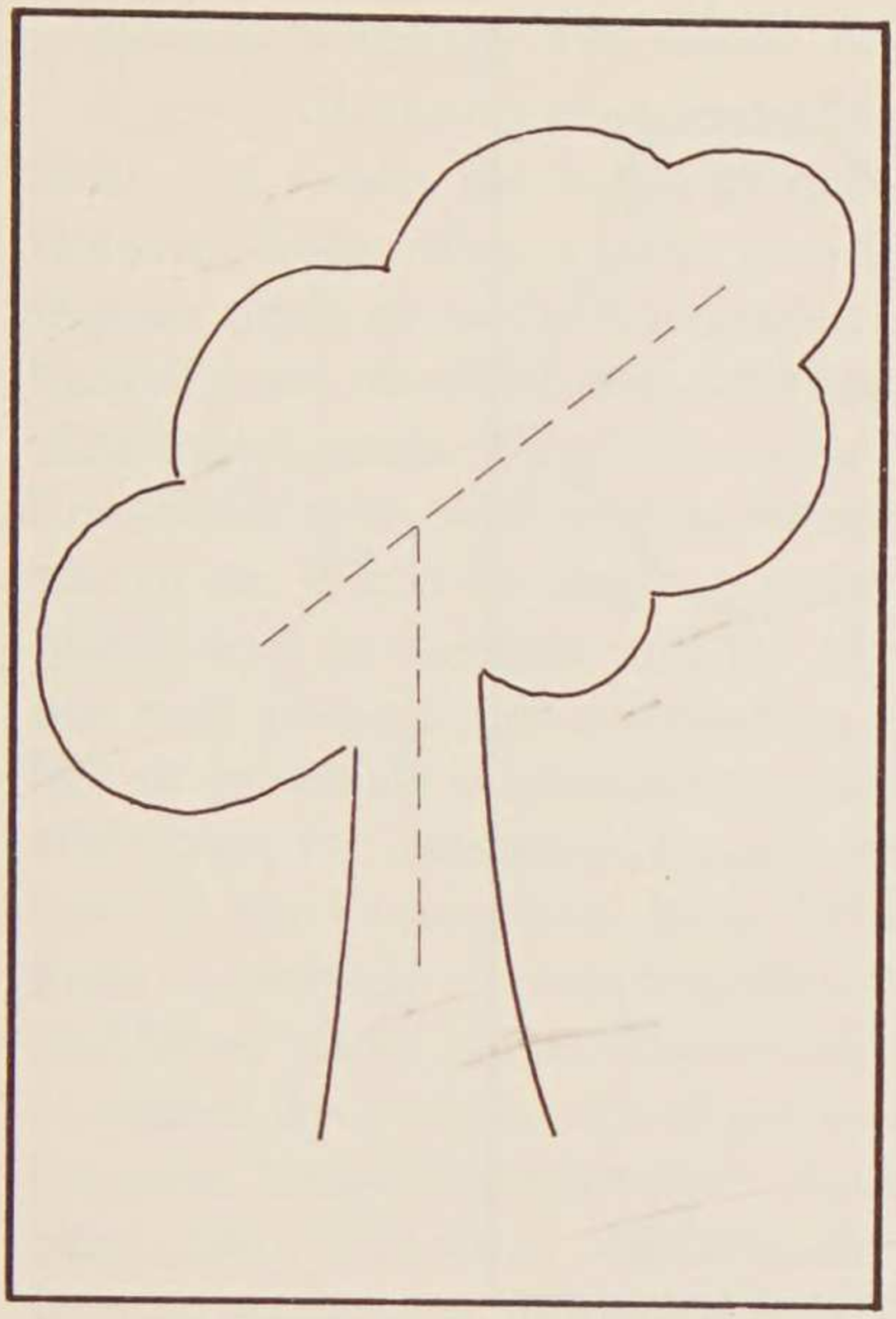


FIGURE 7c

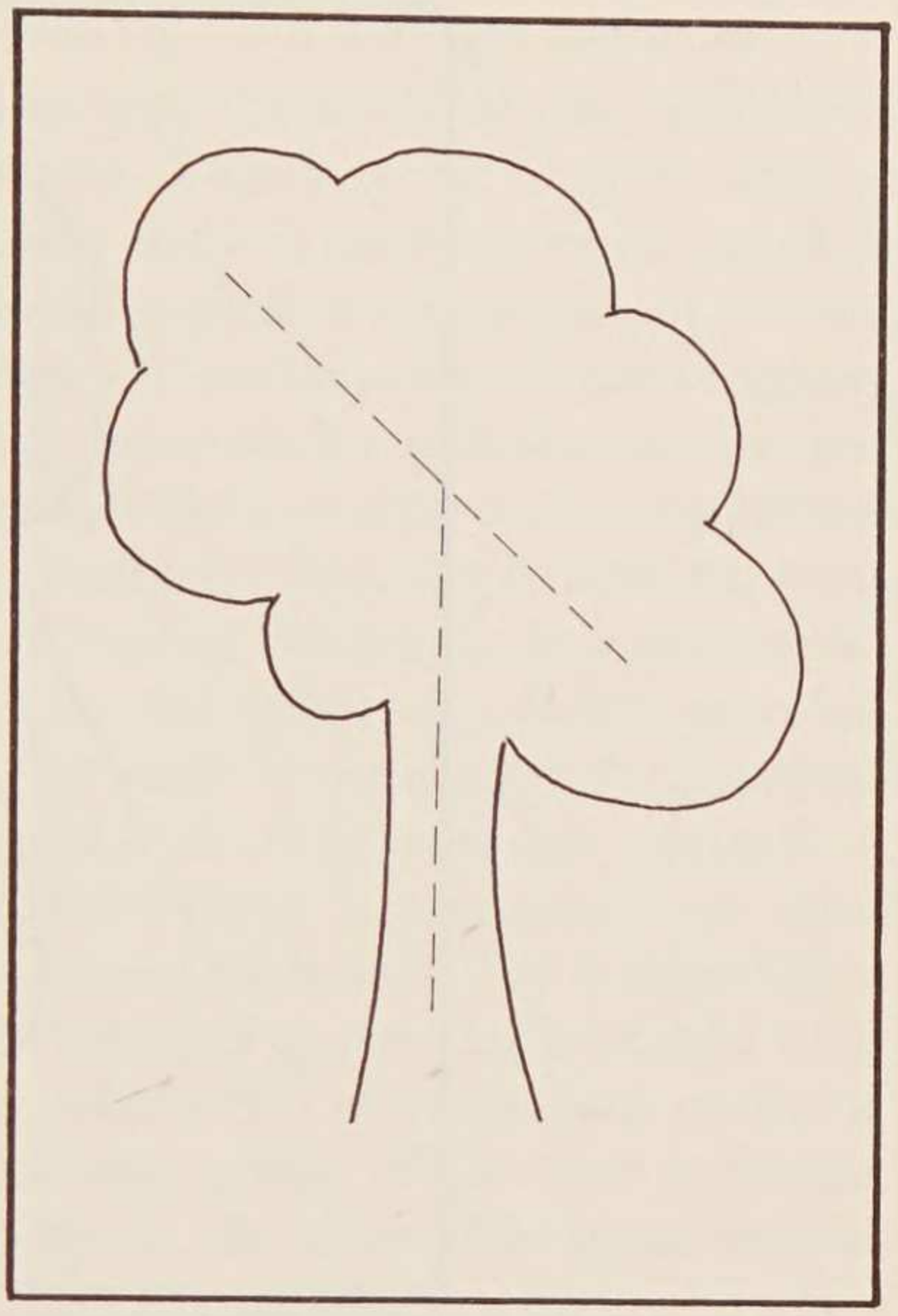


FIGURE 7d

practical or competitive skills. In a male subject, one sometimes finds emotion-toned mystical experiences in the background, which he seeks to justify through rational ordering. He might, for instance, be a parapsychologist who has had unusual, "inexplicable" experiences in which he believes, but who is equally impressed with the "rational" techniques of scientific methodology and is striving to lend intellectual respectability and ordered predictability to these ineffable experiences.

FIGURE 7d: The crown inclined from the lower right to the upper left

The weight of early mental impressions and emotional influences is on the right side of the page, but the motion is upward toward the left. The individual is at home in the male world, but he may feel oppressed by business pressures or intellectual limitations. He seeks to open himself up to the mystical, artistic, or feminine worlds at the mental level. This position may represent either a passive escape into dreams or an active liberation from the strict confines of the rational and practical world. At best, we may have the financier who becomes an artist, like Gauguin, or the scientist/engineer turned mystic, like Swedenborg.

FIGURE 7e: The whole tree tending from the left to the right

When the degree of inclination is not too acute, one has a relatively normal picture, indicating a childhood colored predominantly by mater-

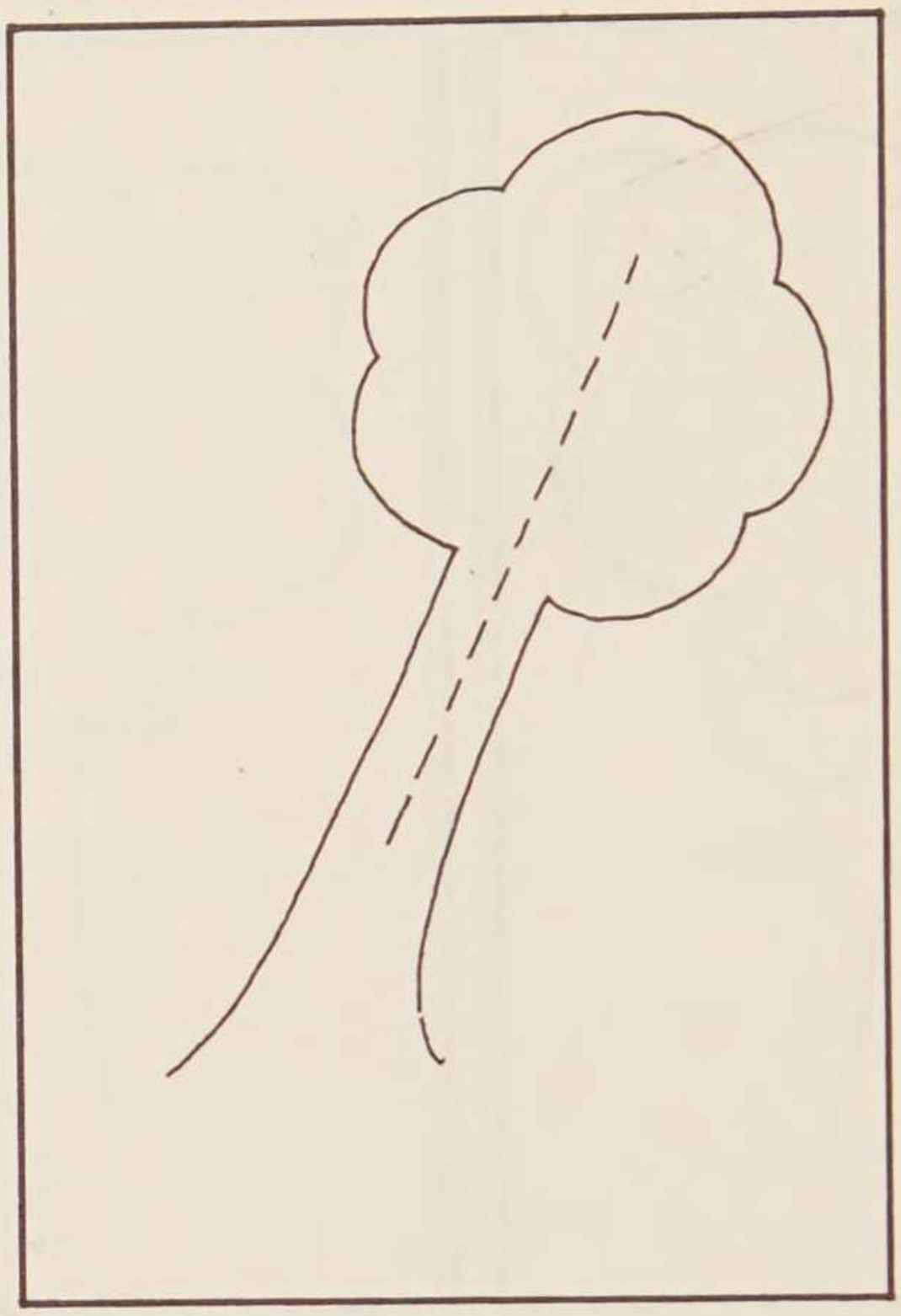


FIGURE 7e

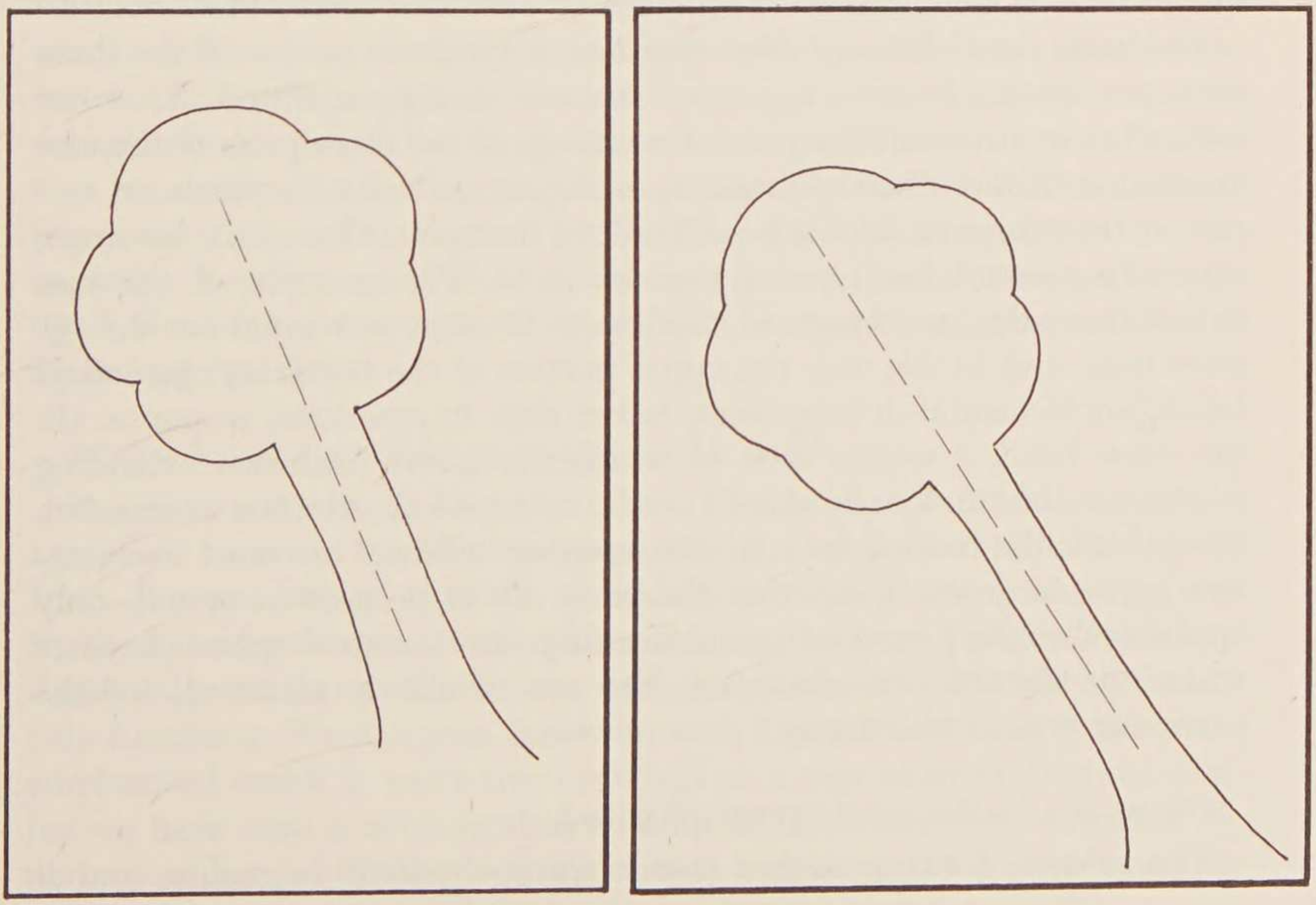
nal influences, with the male principle growing in importance as the emotions mature. While such a person may admire and imitate the father or his male peers, this does not necessarily imply a rejection of the feminine. When the inclination is extreme, however, withdrawal from women or contempt for them is likely. When the subject is a man, he will speak in a patronizing manner about women: their activities, their ideas, and their psychology. He will view women as less developed than men, as unworthy of his serious consideration. He himself will be caught up in the male world. Depending on other indicators in the tree, he may treat women strictly as objects of sexual pleasure; he may view all women as essentially prostitutes; he may regard them as servants; or he may withdraw completely from desire for contact with the opposite sex. In the latter case he will be celibate, for it is most unlikely that a male subject drawing a tree of marked left-right inclination will have overt homosexual tendencies.

When the severe left to right inclination is found in the tree of a woman, she will express her energies in activities which are regarded as typically male. Rigidity and the drive for power are often characteristic manifestations. She will almost never project what is commonly called "femininity," but one must look to other indications to learn how she relates to her own sexual drives. She might have intimate contacts with men in which she is essentially the aggressor, or she might completely sublimate her sexual energies into competitive intellectual striving.

FIGURES 7f and 7g: The whole tree tending from the right to the left

A gradually developing identification with the world of the feminine is indicated, when the angle is not severe. This may be a quite normal drawing from either a male or a female subject. In the tree of an adult woman, such an inclination points toward a greater acceptance of women than of men, identification with her own sex, and pleasure in the company of female friends. When a male subject draws such a tree, one usually has a sensitive type, who may be interested in the fine arts, music, mysticism, and so on. When the angle is severely inclined (figure 7g), with the roots placed well to the right and the crown leaning toward the top left corner, one may suspect either abandonment by the father or a father who has left an extremely unpleasant imprint (an alcoholic or completely irresponsible type, for example). In any case, all male influences are rejected, at least at the unconscious level. When the subject is a woman, one often finds an attitude of complete disillusionment with men. She is dissatisfied and bitter about her unfilled needs, but she has grown indifferent to what is offered by men, or she is markedly mistrustful of them. She yearns to immerse herself completely in the feminine world. While such a woman may marry and have children, she may at the same time have definite lesbian tendencies, hidden or overt. (Note the difference with her counterpart male subject drawing the extreme version of figure 7e, who is contemptuous of women but almost never homosexual. This lack of parallel-

FIGURES 7f and 7g



ism suggests that the dynamics of the male and the female psyche are not, as is often supposed, mirror opposites.)

We have had little experience with trees of male subjects showing the severe right to left slant. Those we have seen have all been associated with negative father imprinting and also, as in the women's trees, with an angry rejection of male influences and an immersion in the feminine world. Some of them have been passive homosexuals, others, while not overtly homosexual, have had dreams or fantasies with transvestite motifs.

PROPORTIONS AMONG THE THREE PARTS OF THE TREE

FIGURE 8a: Normal proportions of the three parts

The ideally proportioned tree is one in which none of the three parts (root, trunk, crown) is drawn with a disproportionate emphasis. Figure 8a shows such a tree in the form of a schematic deciduous tree. It is not necessary that the roots be drawn in or even indicated for the proportion among the parts to be regarded as normal. Many people draw trees for which the roots are not shown, but if the proportion between the trunk and the crown is balanced, this should not be regarded as indicative of disproportionate emphasis on the two other parts. On the other hand, the complete absence of roots does have a meaning, for which the reader should refer to two sections of chapter 9, "The Root" and "The Ground."

The basic possibilities of disproportionate emphasis on one of the three parts are shown, in an exaggerated manner, in figures 8b–8d. Since we have already discussed the general meanings of the three parts of the tree in relation to the several schemata, a disproportionate emphasis on one part or the other should not be difficult to interpret. One must, however, take into account the type of tree involved. For example, if the tree drawn is a palm, an elongated trunk may be seen as normal for the generic type, and in this case the upper portion of the trunk is regarded as belonging to mental development, rather than to emotional response. On the other hand, a willow tree, in which the crown is drawn extending down over the trunk area, should not be interpreted as crown dominated, since this is the natural form of the weeping willow. One must use common sense in deciding whether the parts are in proportion or not—only applying the interpretive comments for disproportionate emphasis in cases where the distortion is obvious to the eye or clearly abnormal for the particular type of tree drawn.

FIGURE 8b: Root system overemphasized

The subject drawing such a tree is firmly "rooted" in reality, and if

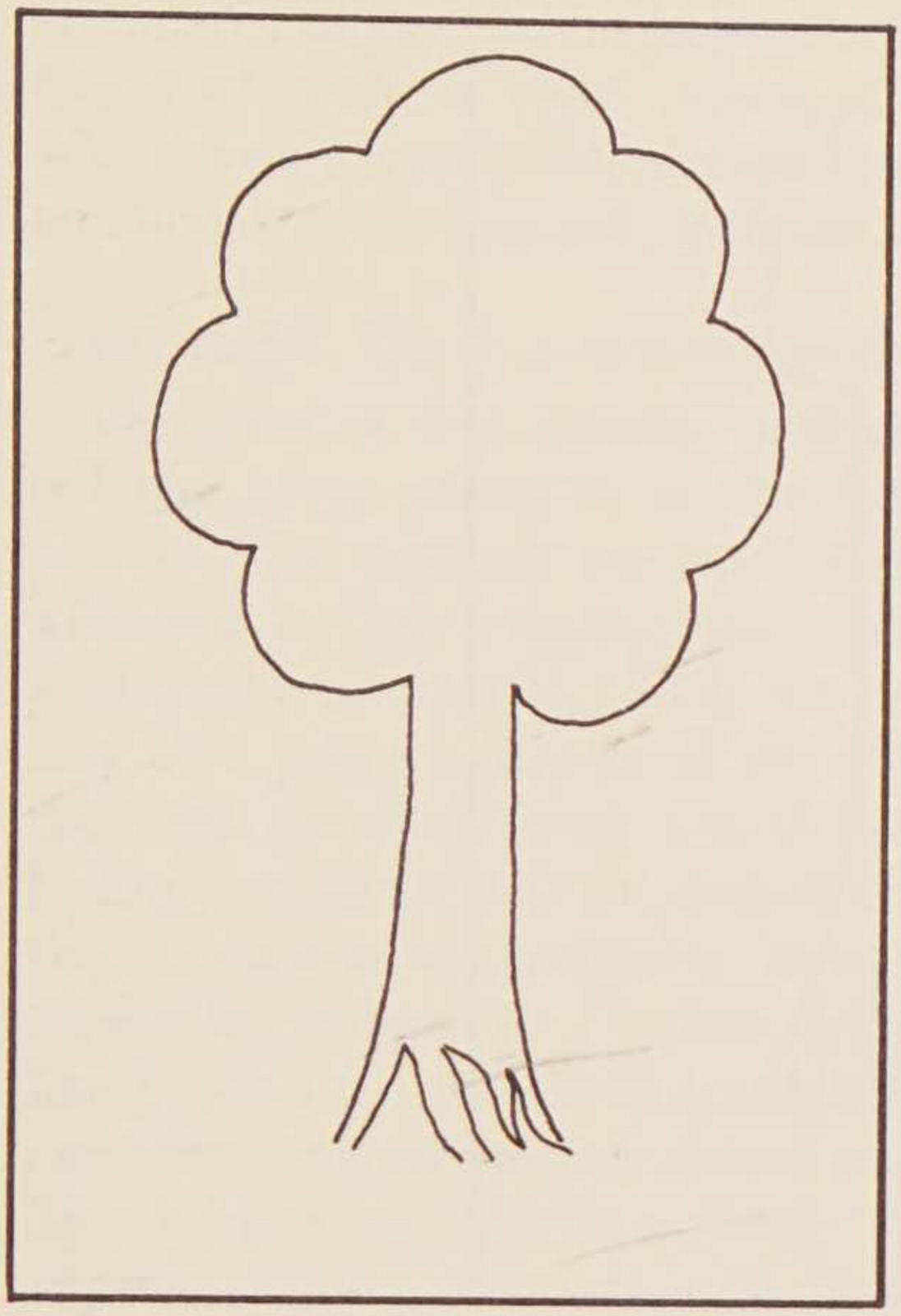


FIGURE 8a

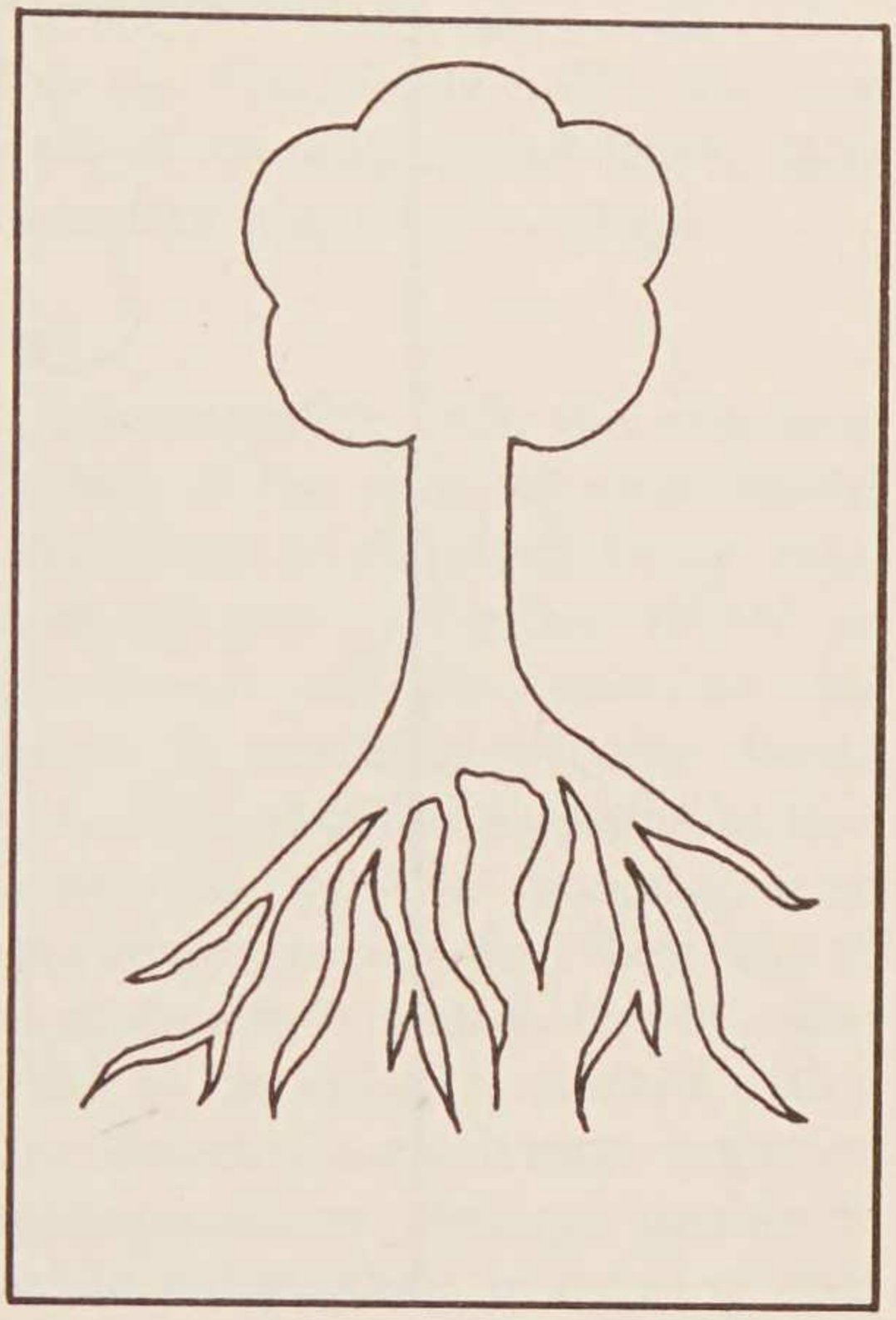


FIGURE 8b

other indications are positive, one may be dealing with a relatively normal type who is only slightly inclined to an overconcentration on instinctual and sexual matters or a certain fixation on the concrete. In a more negative tree, one may have overwhelming instinctual drives (distorted and perhaps perverted sexuality), or an individual who can be completely overtaken by unconscious materials. When the root domination is extreme, the feeling responses are usually shallow and the reasoning powers somewhat limited. Neither the world of imagination nor the capacity to work toward ideal or distant goals are likely to be well developed. Compare, however, with description of exceptional interpretation of figure 59d (p. 246).

FIGURE 8c: Exaggerated emphasis on the trunk

In agreement with Koch, we can state that nearly all children up to the age of six or seven tend to overemphasize the trunk in their drawings of trees. It seems logical that this should be the case if one grants that the trunk expresses the emotional sphere of being, for young children are fundamentally creatures of emotion, with sexuality and rationality subordinate functions. We disagree, however, with Koch's evaluation of the overemphasized trunk in adult tree drawings as a sign of mental retardation, for we have seen a considerable number of these drawings executed by persons of normal intelligence. Emotional immaturity is a more accurate

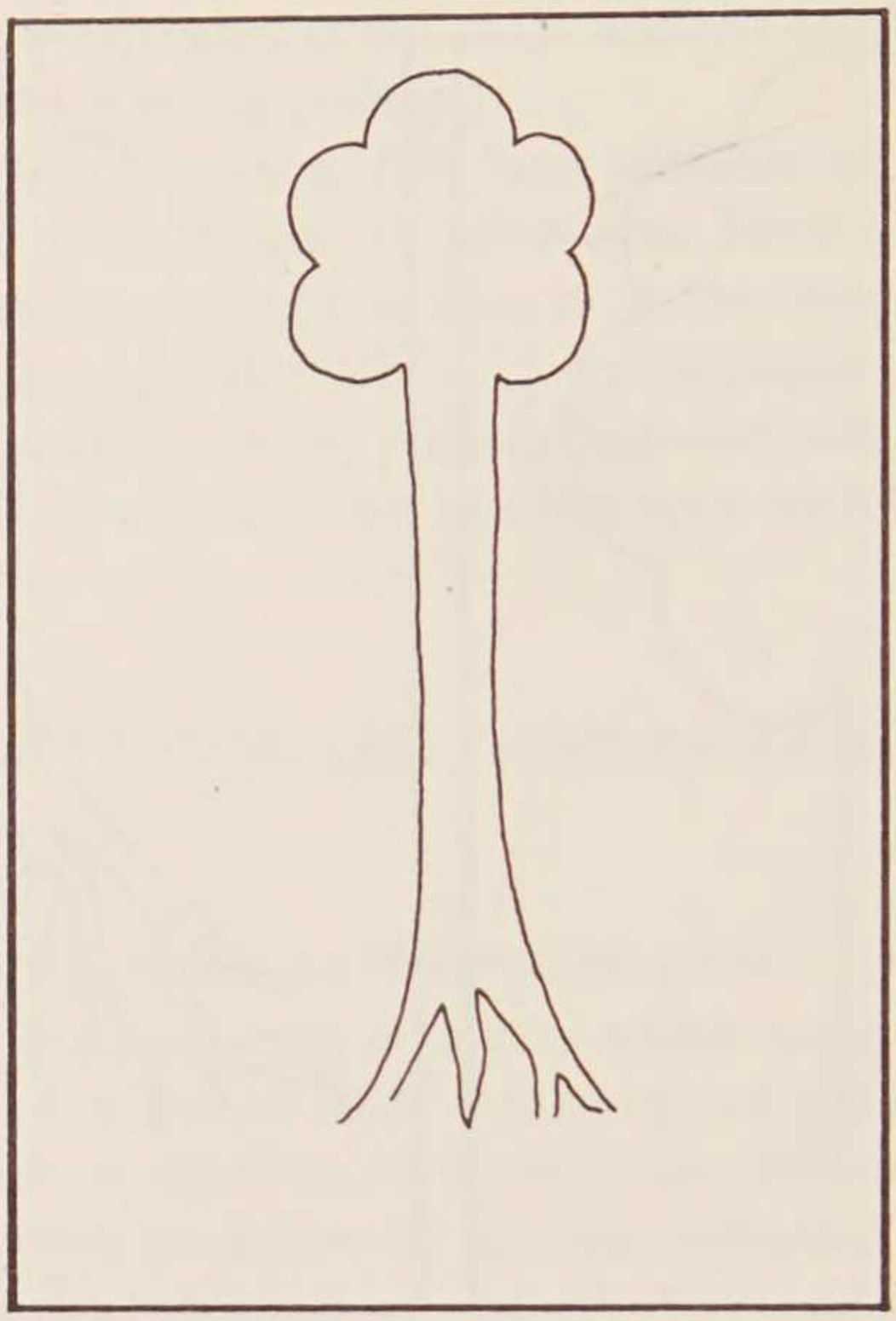


FIGURE 8c

interpretation in our experience, and even this is true only when a small crown goes together with an elongated trunk. When the exaggerated trunk is topped by a small, closed crown, the subject usually lacks mental control and allows himself to be dominated by his emotions. The male who draws such a tree may be a sort of bully or provocateur. A woman of this type is often childish and uncontrolled, subject to violent explosions over completely trivial matters. This is not the same thing as retardation per se, but rather suggests limited education in relation to intellectual potential and/or developmental immaturity.

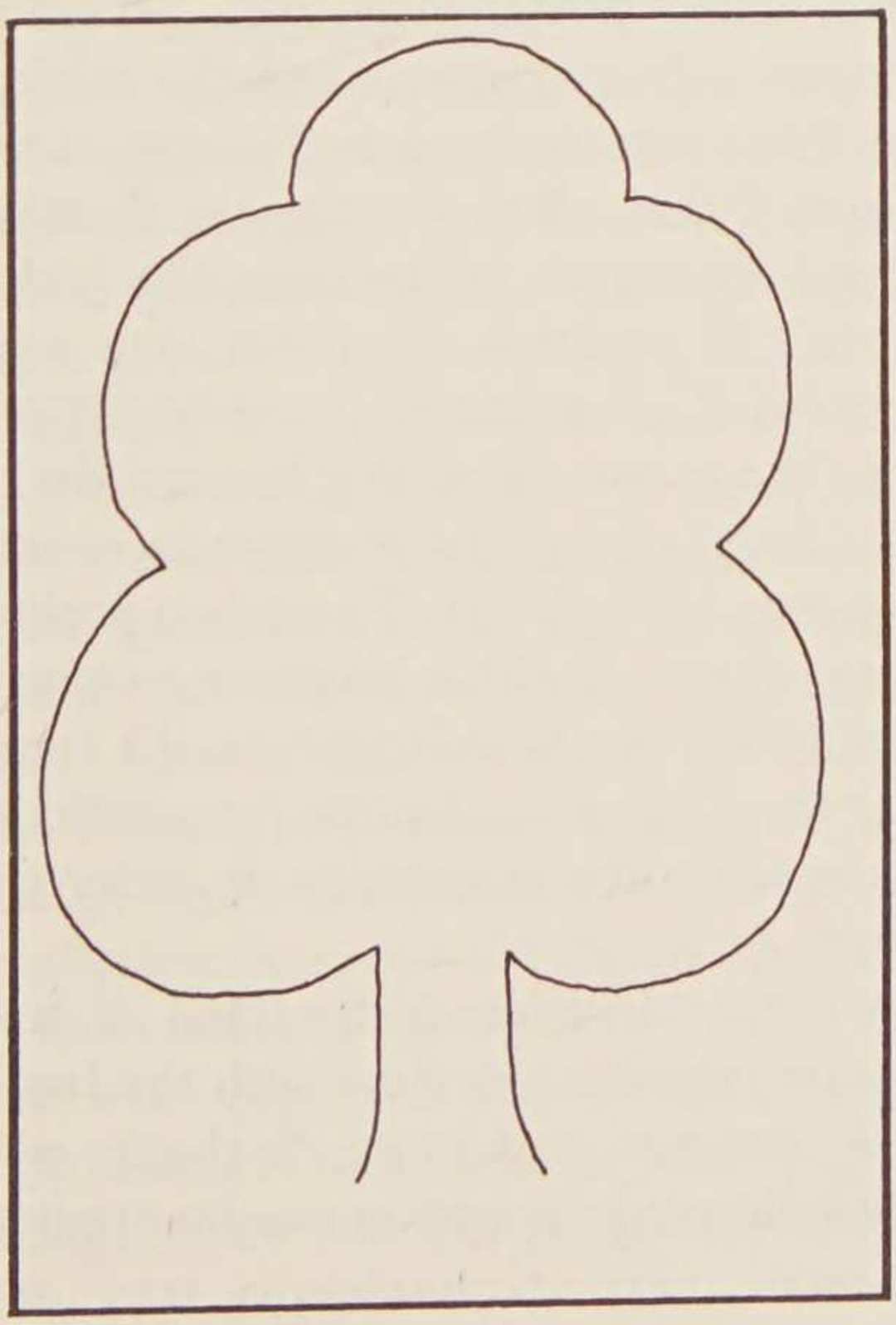
Among the highly intelligent persons in our sample who have drawn elongated or overemphasized trunks, the crown is *never* small and closed (as in the figure), but nearly always runs off the paper at its top margins. Thus, in a sense, one is not sure that the tree would be out of proportion were there enough space to complete the drawing. In general, we do not regard a tree exceeding the top limits of the page as a negative indication. On the contrary, we find it associated with individuals who have rich imaginations, high expectations, and active gifts of fantasy. Such a tree may be drawn by a warm, emotion-filled person, who is easily motivated to act according to his feeling responses. He is compassionate and feels great empathy with others. His fullness of emotion, if it is combined with a developed, upward-reaching, positive crown, will encompass his whole environment and perhaps cause him at times to be "carried away" by his

feelings or to become an impromptu defender of the weak, a rather emotional advocate of good causes, and so on. Completely unlike the type who draws a small, closed crown on top of an exaggerated trunk, these emotional, open-crowned optimists are usually very likeable people.

FIGURE 8d: The crown-dominated tree

This kind of tree usually indicates preoccupation with the conscious self and often points to an overevaluation of the subject's own mental powers. The capacity for emotional expression is curtailed, being overwhelmed by the analytical and rational functions. Attention should be paid to the manner in which the trunk merges with the crown, for this may be a prime indicator of the adequacy of emotional response. When the trunk opens up freely into the crown, there is still the possibility that feeling responses will be assimilated into the cognitive processes, even though rationality dominates. Emotional responses may find their way to expression, subject to a certain degree of conscious control. On the other hand, when the transition from the trunk to the crown is marked with a cross-line or is completely closed off, the situation is much more negative. The subject may be completely contemptuous of feelings, unable to express his own emotions, and inclined to judge others in terms of cold rationality. These persons can be calculating in relationships, and they are rarely capable of genuine commitment to partners or to family.

FIGURE 8d



7

The Types of Trees

Variety does not necessarily suppose deformity, for a rose and a lily are both beautiful.

William Blake,
Marginalia, On Reynolds, 1787

FROM the material which has already been presented, the interpreter can begin to formulate a first impression of the subject. The next broad consideration to be taken into account is the type of tree which has been drawn. It will be noted that all of the figures illustrating position, size, and proportion have been shown in the form of a stylized deciduous tree with a foliated crown. In practice, of course, one never finds such convenient standardization. Certain of the positions illustrated, such as those shown in figures 5a (the crown extending beyond the upper margin) and 5c (the crown extending beyond the margins on three sides), are rarely seen in the closed-crown type of tree. These two positions are much more natural when the tree drawn is either a winter tree or an open-structured tree, in which summer foliage is indicated in the form of leaves. Nevertheless, we felt that the illustrative figures for positions, size, and inclination ought to be as nearly alike as possible, in order to focus attention on those questions alone.

We turn now to a consideration of the kind of tree rendered by the subject. Here we must take into account both the tree's generic type and its type in terms of structure and tone. We begin with the latter, since some aspects of the following discussion can be applied to trees of almost all genera.

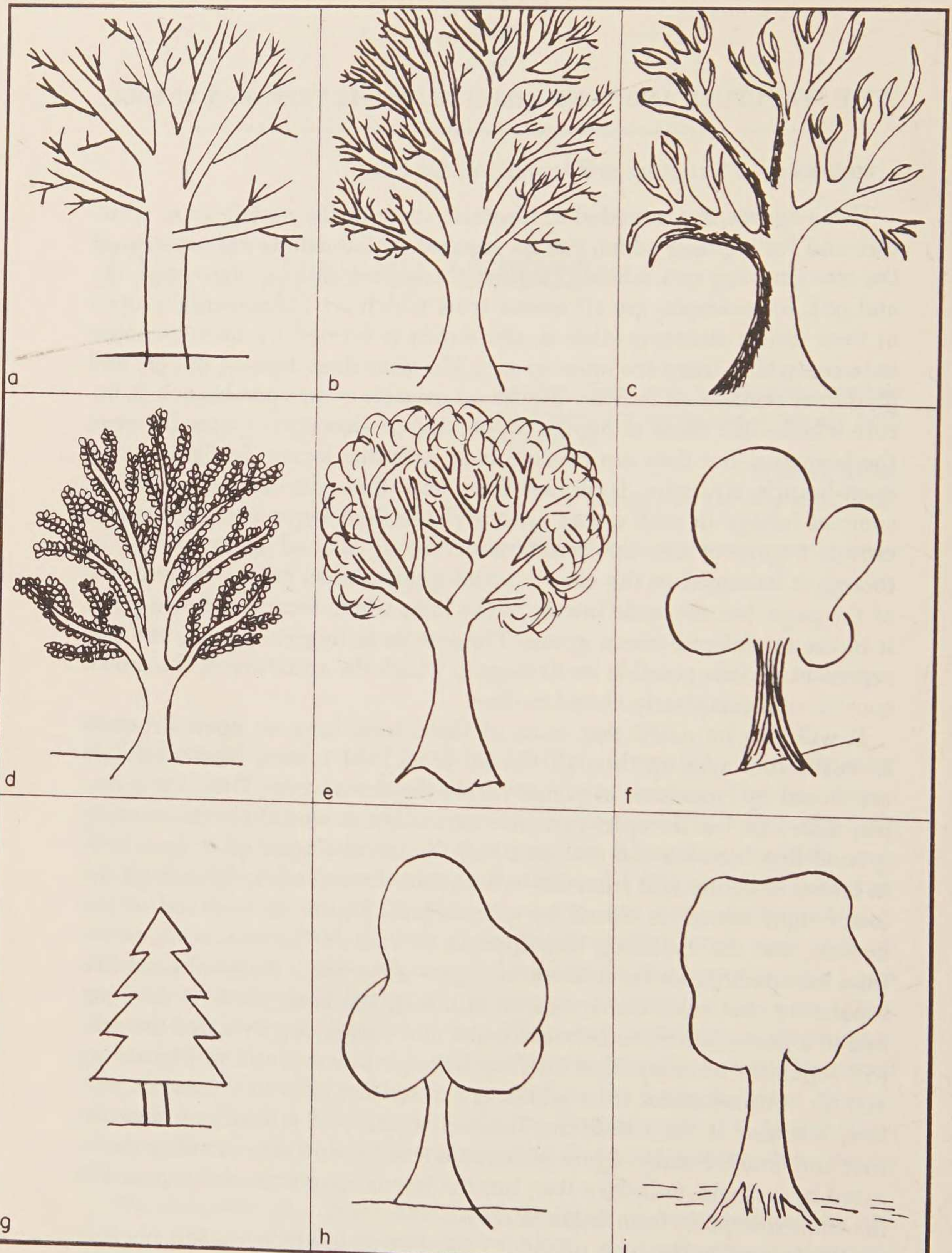
THE STRUCTURE AND TONE QUALITY OF THE TREE AS A WHOLE

FIGURES 9a–i. Structure and tonality of the tree

These figures, are intended to illustrate some of the variations in structure and feeling tone which can be grasped on immediate examination of the tree drawing as a whole. The first three trees shown (figures 9a, 9b, and 9c), for example, are all winter trees which are fundamentally open in their crown structure–that is, the crown is formed by bare branches between which there are open spaces. The next three figures, 9d, 9e, and 9f, depict semiclosed crowns. Figure 9d consists of an open-branch structure which–like those of figures 9a, 9b, and 9c–has open spaces between the branches, but they are covered over with fine leaves. In figure 9e an open-branch structure is drawn first, and then the subject indicates summer foliage in such a way as to give the final impression of a closed crown. Figure 9f has no branch structure at all and looks at first as though it belonged in the closed-crown group shown on the bottom row of the page, but the wide breaks in the lines which form the crown place it in the semiclosed-crown group. The last three figures–9g, 9h, and 9i–represent various possible renderings in which the structure of the crown consists of a completely closed outline.

It will also be noted that some of these trees have an open structure from the root area up through the trunk and the crown, whereas others are closed by cross lines at points within the drawn tree. Thus, for example, figure 9a has an open-structure crown but is closed by the crossing ground line between the root area and the trunk. Figure 9c is open both in crown structure and from the bottom, but the secondary branch off the lower right branch is closed by a cross line. Figure 9e is closed at the bottom, but the enclosing line appears to include the root area, rather than to separate root from trunk. In figure 9f we see a diagonal cross-line separating root from trunk, and, in addition, the bark, while it does not end in a firm obstruction between trunk and crown, suggests that the subject separates emotion from intellect through this expression. Figures 9g and 9h both represent trees which are closed not only in the crown outline, but also at the transitions between trunk and crown and between root and trunk. Finally, figure 9i shows a tree in which the crown is delineated by a single, unbroken line, but the tree is open from the root and at the transition point from trunk to crown.

Distinctions in the tone quality of the tree as a whole are less obvious than those of structure, and it will often be necessary to observe the fine details of the drawing before one can properly assess those attitudes or traits which are in part expressed by tone. Nevertheless, we have



FIGURES 9a–i

attempted to illustrate in this figure some tonal differences which may characterize the total rendering. These fall into three pairs of opposing qualities: rigid-flexible; receptive-defensive; friendly-hostile. Assessment of the meaning of the open, semiclosed, or closed structure of the crown of the tree will be mitigated by the tone quality.

In the most general sense, one may regard the page on which the tree is drawn as representing the environment in which the subject lives. By the word "environment," we understand not only broad social conditions and the physical surroundings, but everything which is experienced as outside of the self. Perhaps the term "other" (which we shall use on occasion) would be more accurate than "environment," but it is not commonly used in English in the inclusive sense we wish to convey. In any case, the structure and quality of the tree drawing may be seen as expressing the subject's attitudes toward environmental pressures and influences, as well as his subjective feelings of self-other interaction.

We have already stated our view that the root area of the tree represents the instincts and the unconscious, the trunk the emotional life, and the crown the mental and spiritual functions. In a healthy individual, a relatively free flow of energy moves through these three parts of the tree. But energy is also exchanged with the other—the individual person draws sustenance from and interacts with his immediate environment. He acts and expresses his feelings, or reacts emotionally to other people, to events, and to the society in which he lives. In his adult years he seeks to establish himself in a satisfying social role and to find fulfillment through some form of self-expression. The nature of energy exchanges between self and environment is expressed principally, in the mature individual, in the way in which the crown is drawn. The degree of openness of this exchange varies greatly with the individual's type, aside from his state of psychological health. Some people are highly self-contained, while others are apparently almost completely dependent upon interaction with others. Most people fall between these extremes. Some of the median types are simply normal "centroverts," to borrow Eric Neumann's term. Others are persons who are desirous of, but fearful about, open exchange. Still others are by nature open to environmental influences, but feel these as threatening; artificial defenses are therefore built up in an attempt to protect the self against too strong an impact from the other.

From the basic structure of the tree, and particularly of the crown, one can get an idea with which of these types one is dealing. In general, the open-structured crown indicates an open exchange between self and other, in terms of both free self-expression and receptiveness to influences. The completely closed crown suggests either natural or enforced self-containment. The semiclosed crown represents an intermediate attitude. However, one must be very cautious in evaluating the matter of open and closed structure, for in many cases what is expressed is not natural and

innate, but rather a protective or assumed stance. It is for this reason that the tone of the drawing should be examined simultaneously with assessment of the crown structure.

Turning again to the nine trees shown in figures 9a-i, we see that figure 9a represents a winter tree with an open-structured crown. However, the tone quality of the drawing is both rigid and somewhat defensive. The primary branches are open at their end points, indicating that influences are easily taken in by the self. But the sharp and almost completely straight secondary branches are defensive rather than receptive. At the same time, the stiff quality of the tree as a whole suggests a person who feels that he must hold himself firmly against the impact of external influences. In drawing an open-structured crown with open primary branches, he portrays himself as one who is vulnerable to environmental contacts, but is afraid to bend or yield to influences. At the same time, he attempts to discourage approach, indicated by the sharp, stiff secondary branches. He also closes off the flow of internal energy from the roots, suggesting that he does not fully trust his own instinctual nature.

The tree shown in figure 9b is a much healthier expression of the open-crowned tree, for it is infinitely more flexible and shows a full and richly developed crown. Here again the primary branches are open at their end points, but the fine secondary branches are curved and more graceful than those in 9a. The tree is also completely open from the root area through the crown, indicating a good internal flow of energy. A subject drawing a tree of this type is often a natural extrovert, who feels his interaction with others to be basically positive. In terms of tonal quality, this tree would be described as flexible, receptive, and friendly, although the sturdy trunk and firm primary branches show that the subject will not be unduly swayed by others.

In figure 9c we have a very negative expression of the open-crown tree. Here the tone of the tree is clearly hostile. While the basic structure is open, none of the branch endings are open; in fact most of them are shaped into clawlike pincers which suggest that anyone who approaches the subject is in danger of immediate attack. Furthermore, the tree is heavily shaded, indicating that the subject feels he must shield himself against others. This is likely to be the drawing of an aggressive extrovert. He is not self-contained, but his interactions with others are neither receptive nor friendly, and his own expressions are primarily hostile and negative.

Figures 9d and 9e both represent trees which are first drawn as open-branched crowns to which the subject later adds foliage. In figure 9d the crown structure remains fundamentally open, whereas in figure 9e the indicated foliage creates a closed-crown effect. The subject who draws a tree of the type shown in figure 9d, which we would describe as open in structure, flexible, and basically friendly, is very likely inclined toward

extroverted behavior. However, the addition of leaves to the open tree—particularly in great number as shown here—signifies that the subject feels a need to protect himself from too much vulnerability. The self-protective stance is neither aggressive nor consciously defensive. It is rather a matter of creating a kind of natural "buffer zone" between self and other. A relatively free exchange of energy takes place, but both the outgoing, self-expressive energies and the reception of influence or energy influx from the environment are filtered through the leaves.

The tree shown in figure 9e is much less vulnerable than that in figure 9d, though also less flexible. The main branches are basically open, permitting an exchange of energy, but the complete covering afforded by the foliage indicates caution and an attempt to control when and how energy is exchanged. The tone quality of this semiclosed tree might best be said to express reserved friendliness, discretion, and prudent receptivity.

The semiclosed outline of the crown in figure 9f suggests a subject who views himself as fundamentally self-contained, but is still quite open to influences, sometimes, perhaps, involuntarily. The crown is graceful and flexible, but there is a good deal of defensiveness shown in the shaded trunk and the covering ground line. Hence, such a subject may be said to be receptive and flexible, though reserved, at the mental level, but fearful of emotional approach and cautious about his own instinctual reactions.

Figures 9g, 9h, and 9i represent three trees in which the outline of the crown is completely closed. A pine has been chosen to illustrate figure 9g because we wished to show a tree which has not only a completely contained crown, but is also inflexible and closed off both at the root-trunk and the trunk-crown transition points. Such a rendering is almost never seen in the deciduous varieties. This is the most self-contained of all the trees among these figures. On the other hand, the extreme rigidity of the drawing and the complete closing of the interior transition points in the tree suggest that this is not a person completely content to be an introvert who concentrates his energies within. There is usually in these persons a secret longing to be approached, but their manifest behavior is such that others assume they desire only to be left alone. They are neither hostile nor actively defensive, but the severity of the tone protests too much. Here the internal controls are excessive, and defenses are against the intrapersonal exchanges of instinct, emotion, and thinking.

Figure 9h, on the other hand, shows a tree which is equally as closed in the crown area and at the two transition points as the pine, but which is at the same time flexible and graceful in feeling. This type of tree is often seen among creative introverts, who have nothing particular against social intercourse with others, but who need to become absorbed in their interior world in order to concentrate creative energies and bring them to fruition.

The last figure, 9i, shows a tree with a closed crown which is open from

the bottom. Here we have one version of a structure which is common to persons who are rather shy in behavior, but who experience a full inner life without any need to block or control the interchange of energies among the various internal functions. Subjects drawing trees of this general structure may be both receptive and friendly (though they rarely make active overtures toward others), but they will attempt to assimilate incoming impressions into their own world in the typical manner of the introvert.

A good deal more will be said in later chapters treating details about how to evaluate the rendering of the various parts of the tree: the tone or feeling as revealed by the use of certain types of strokes, formation of branch endings, and so on. But it seemed important, while discussing the broad factors from which one can formulate a first impression of the tree drawing, at least to introduce this matter of structure and tone.

GENERIC TREE TYPES

As emphasized earlier, we do not specify to our subjects what kind of tree they should draw, because we feel that the type of tree chosen has interpretive significance. In the rest of the chapter we shall try to give some brief idea of meanings which can be attributed to the drawing of special types of trees. Our classifications will differ from the true generic taxonomy of a botanical text, for some trees which are clearly distinguishable as separate types when seen in the forest may look very similar in a drawing. On the other hand, tree drawings include some types never encountered in nature. We distinguish two major categories of drawn trees: (1) relatively realistic representations of different trees found in nature; (2) drawings which are abstractions of particular tree types, or are related to the concept "tree," but are clearly expressions of fantasy.

Realistic trees

The concept of realistic trees encompasses not only the common deciduous genera—fruit trees or other leafy types such as oaks, and so on—but also forms which are somewhat less frequently chosen, such as the weeping willow, with its downward pointing branches, the poplar, with its flame shape, or the palm tree, with its elongated trunk. Furthermore, the conifers—represented by the pine, cyprus, and cedar types—may also be realistically rendered. The last six forms mentioned are not permitted as tree drawing themes by Koch or Stora.

The deciduous trees, realistically drawn

Among the deciduous trees, the most commonly drawn are those which represent fully crowned, leafy trees such as oaks, maples, and many of the fruit trees. We do not distinguish these as separate types, since it is often impossible to tell from the drawing exactly what tree the subject had in mind. Indeed, when a fully crowned summer tree is drawn, the subject often responds in a puzzled manner if questioned as to what kind of tree he meant to represent. Apparently, to many persons, at least in North America, the general concept "tree" is most often associated with branched, leafy trees which are not distinguished from each other. Partly on this account, we attribute no special meaning to the drawing of such a foliated tree as the one shown in figure 9e, for example. Only if it is a fruit tree in which the fruits are shown, or if the rendering of the foliage is extremely detailed, does the drawing of a deciduous tree of uncertain identification suggest special meanings.

FIGURE 10a: The foliated fruit tree

This figure shows a foliated fruit tree, with the fruits drawn into the crown. Depending on where the fruits occur, and also, of course, on other matters of form in the drawing, one can say in general that this type expresses positive feelings about the self. In the drawings of both male and female subjects, the fruits indicate either a present sense of fulfill-

FIGURE 10a

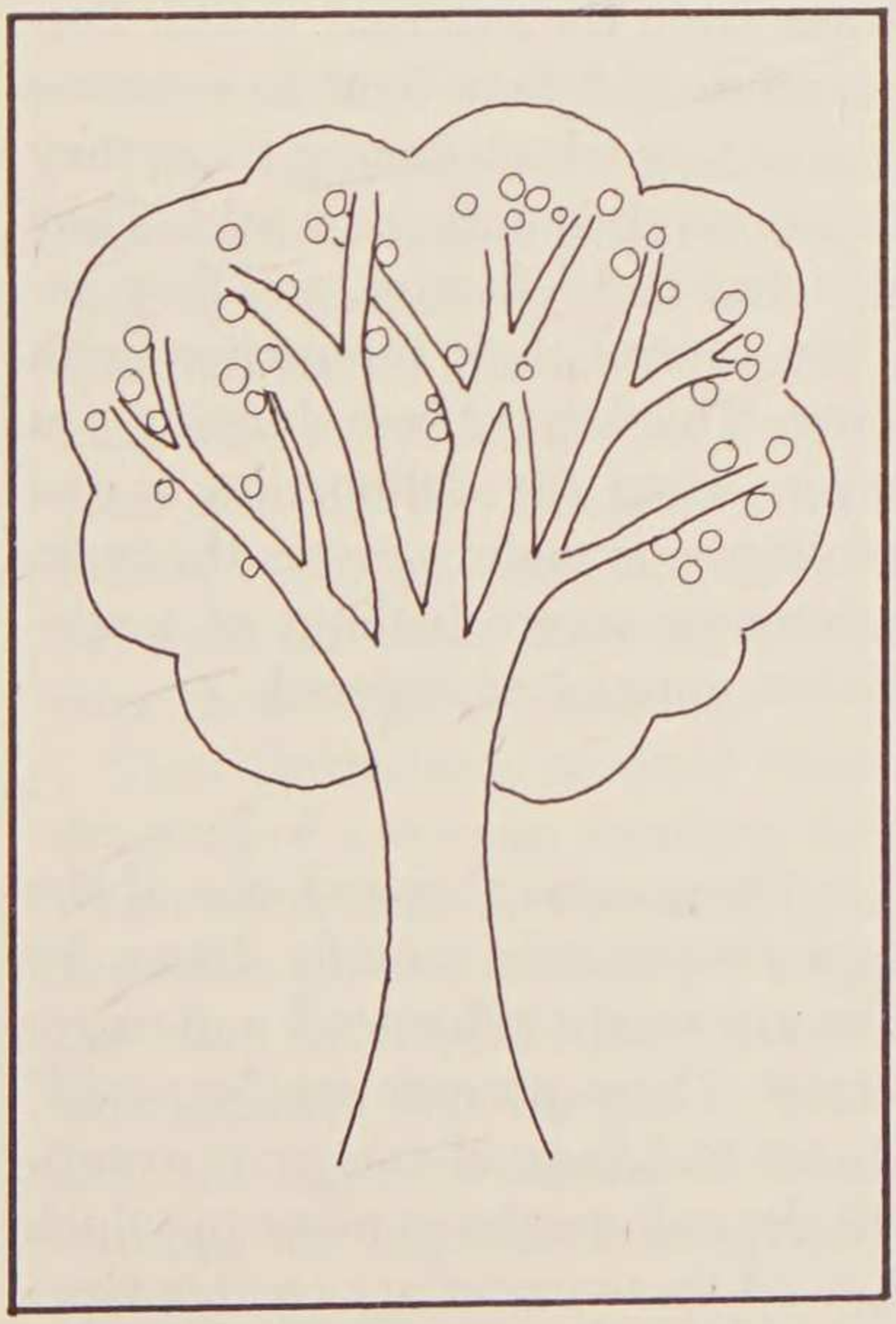
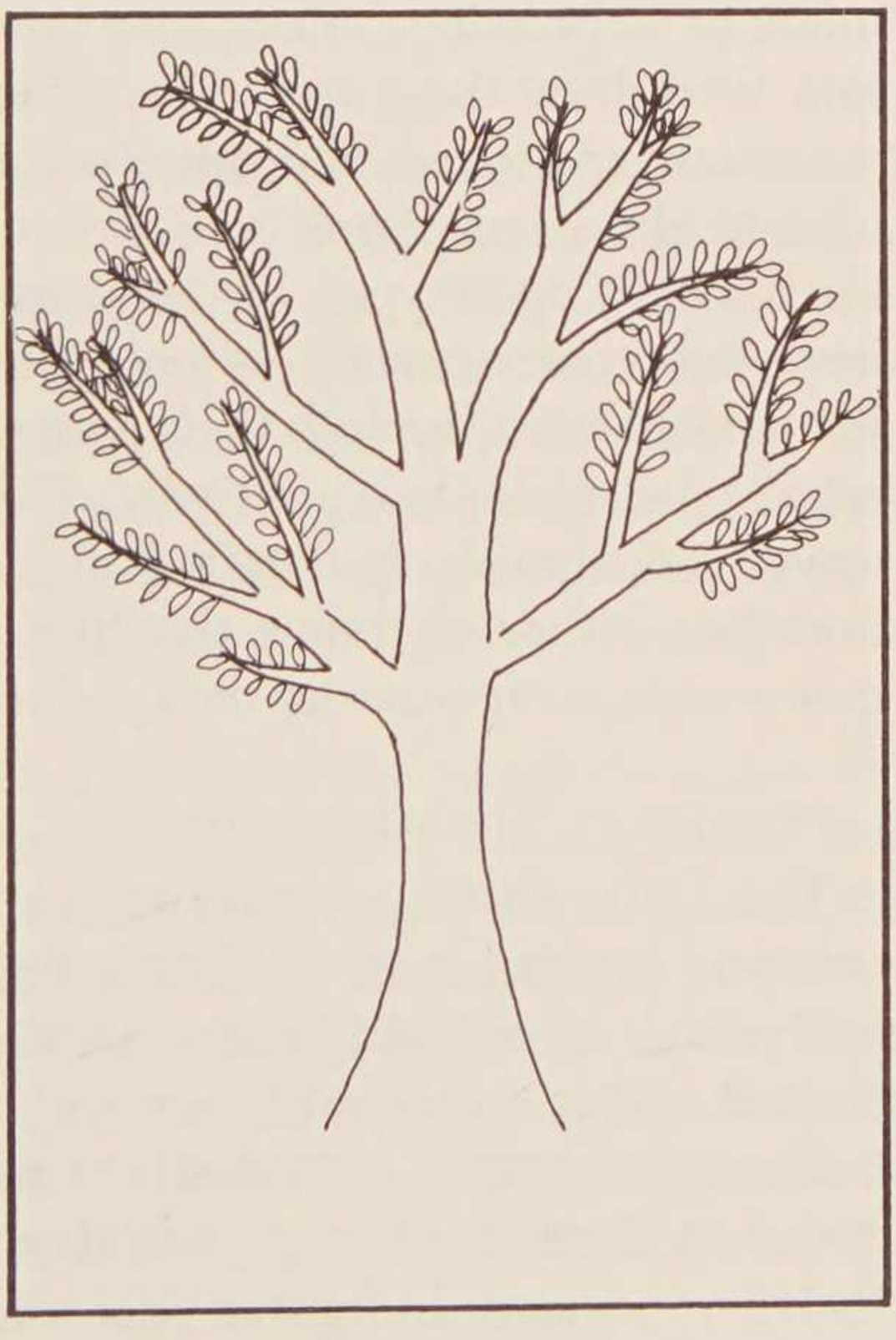


FIGURE 10b



ment or confidence that creative activities will be brought to fruition. In the drawings of women, certain special arrangements of the fruits may represent children. Specifically, if there are a limited number of fruits, often apples, well protected within the crown, these may symbolize actual progeny. If one is interpreting the tree drawing "blind" and sees a large number of well-developed fruits in the crown, it may be that only a few of them represent the woman's actual children, while the rest refer to her fantasies of having others, or to a general expression of her felt role as "mother," which may extend to include her children's friends, and so on. Frequently one finds numerous well-developed fruits in the trees of elementary school teachers or child therapists, regardless of whether they are parents. Several small or vaguely indicated fruits in a woman's tree may represent a generalized desire to have children. The exact positioning of the fruits and the meaning of those which have fallen to the ground will be discussed in chapter 11.

FIGURE 10b: The open leafy tree

Here we see a variation of the common deciduous tree in which the crown is built up of individual branches covered by leaves. Other factors being equal, the drawing of individual well-delineated leaves can be interpreted as indicating a mentality which is precise and inclined to meticulous ordering processes. Also, as mentioned earlier, in this type of semiclosed tree the leaves serve as a cushioning mechanism, expressive of conscious efforts to protect the self against a too-varied and confusing influx of impressions, ideas, and influences from the external world. Persons who draw these trees are rather careful, and they tend to examine potential experiences and other people, selecting which among them they wish to absorb or permit to have an impact on their interior world. They are basically open types, but they are also slow and reflective, and they believe—whether correctly or not—that they control their interaction with the environment through their own choices. This kind of tree drawing can usually be evaluated positively. However, when the delineation of the leaves is compulsively detailed, or fine foliage completely covers the main branches, either obsessive thinking patterns or severe feelings of inadequacy with compensatory overperfectionism must be considered.

FIGURE 10c: The winter tree

This figure shows a winter tree, still in the general shape of one of the common deciduous trees. This is the typical open tree, usually drawn by individuals of outgoing personality, who are easily influenced and move toward others with confidence and interest. These persons are "exposed" to the environment, but whether this direct exchange of energy is experienced as threatening or pleasurable will depend on the manner in which the tree is drawn. In figures 9a-c we showed three variations on this type.

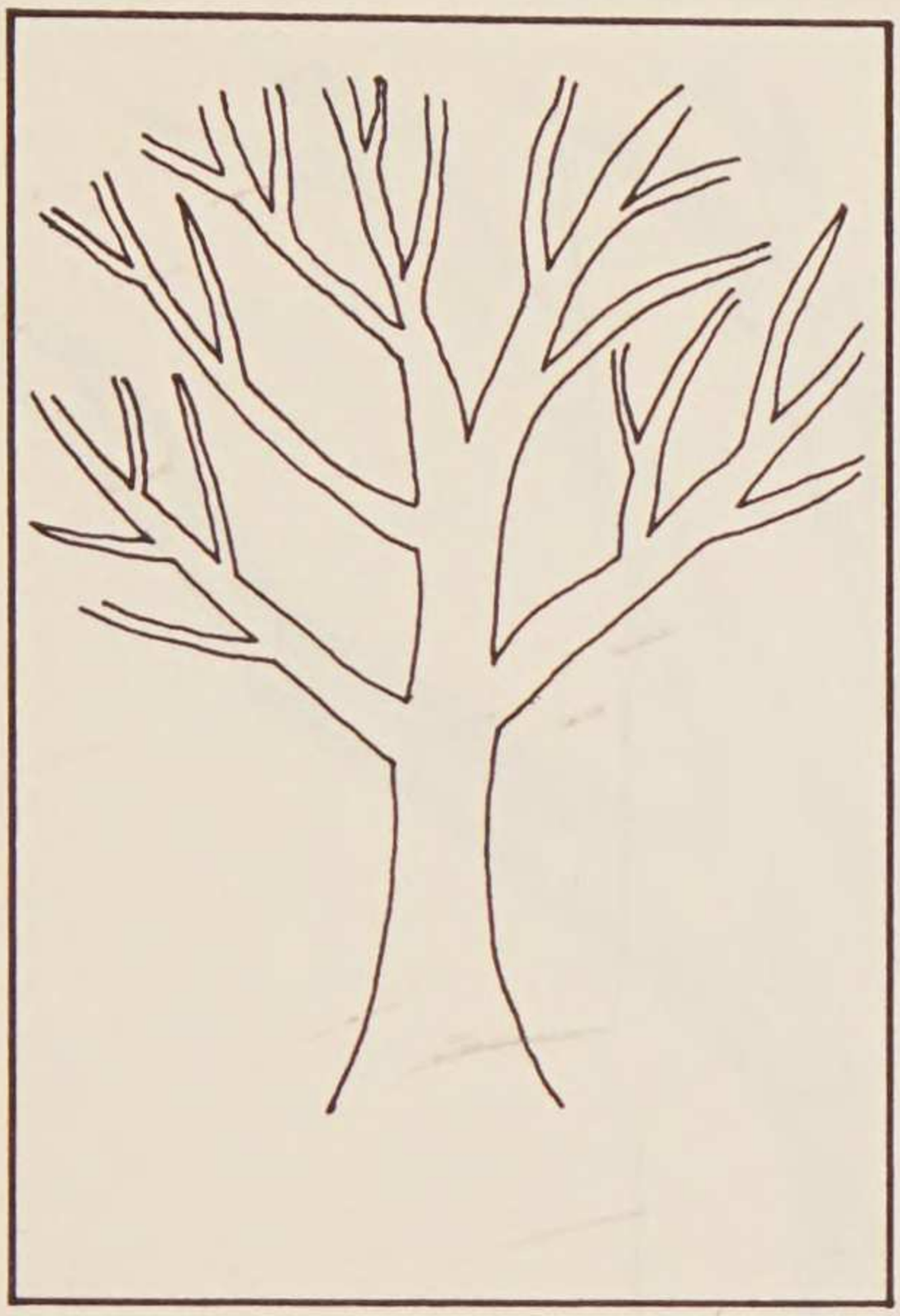


FIGURE 10c

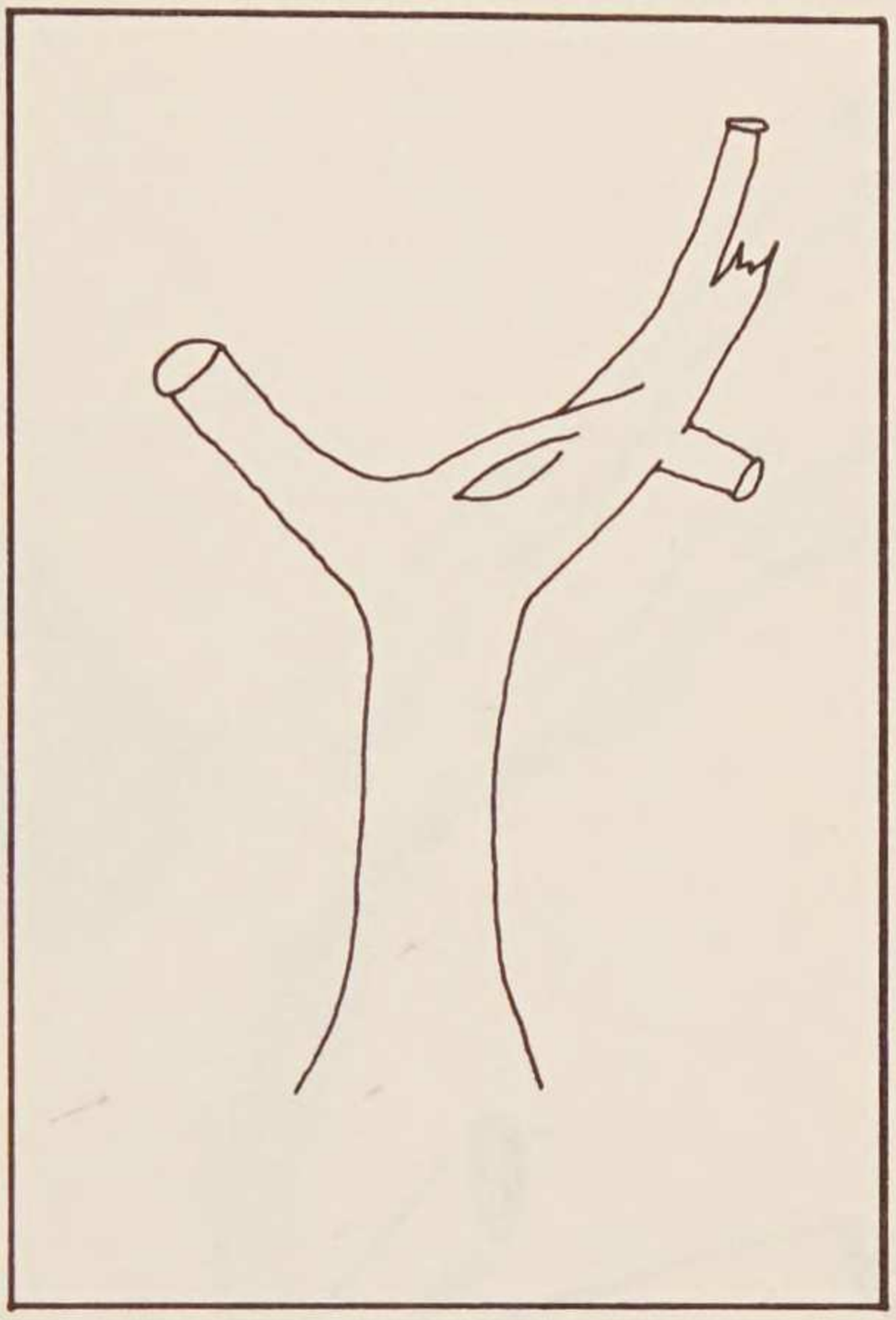


FIGURE 10d

The differences depend largely on the branch structure and branch detail, which will be discussed in chapter 9.

FIGURE 10d: The dead tree

This figure shows a dead tree, which may be seen as the extreme expression of the winter tree. People who draw dead trees often feel that they are completely victimized by external forces. Their defenses have deserted them, for one reason or another. They do not necessarily view themselves as "dead," but they feel hopeless, and tend to believe that their development has been arrested. Usually they feel compelled to place blame, either on "fate" in general or on other individuals. The future does not exist for them, for either they cannot imagine it or they feel it to be overwhelmingly threatening.

Two illustrations of dead trees are included here. Illustration 4 is the drawing of a woman awaiting the impending death of an only infant son, who suffers from an incurable genetic disease. It should be noted that the branches are not broken off or apparently dead from natural processes, but have been sawed off. These artificially severed branches on the right side indicate that she places blame on both her father and her husband for the congenital disease of the child. In illustration 5, on the other hand, one has the impression of a tree which has been devastated by natural causes. The tree has apparently been struck by lightning or overwhelmed

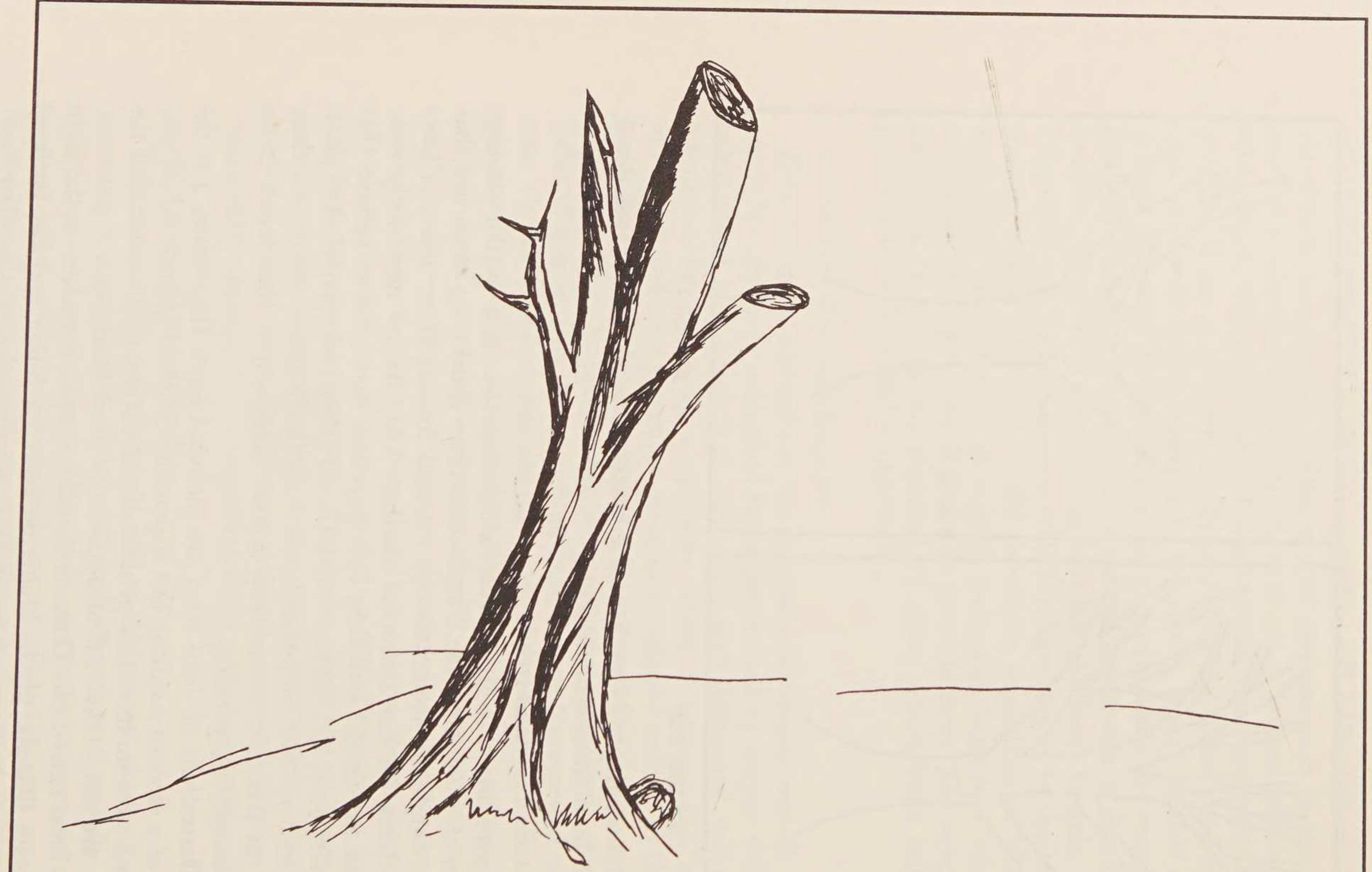


Illustration 4

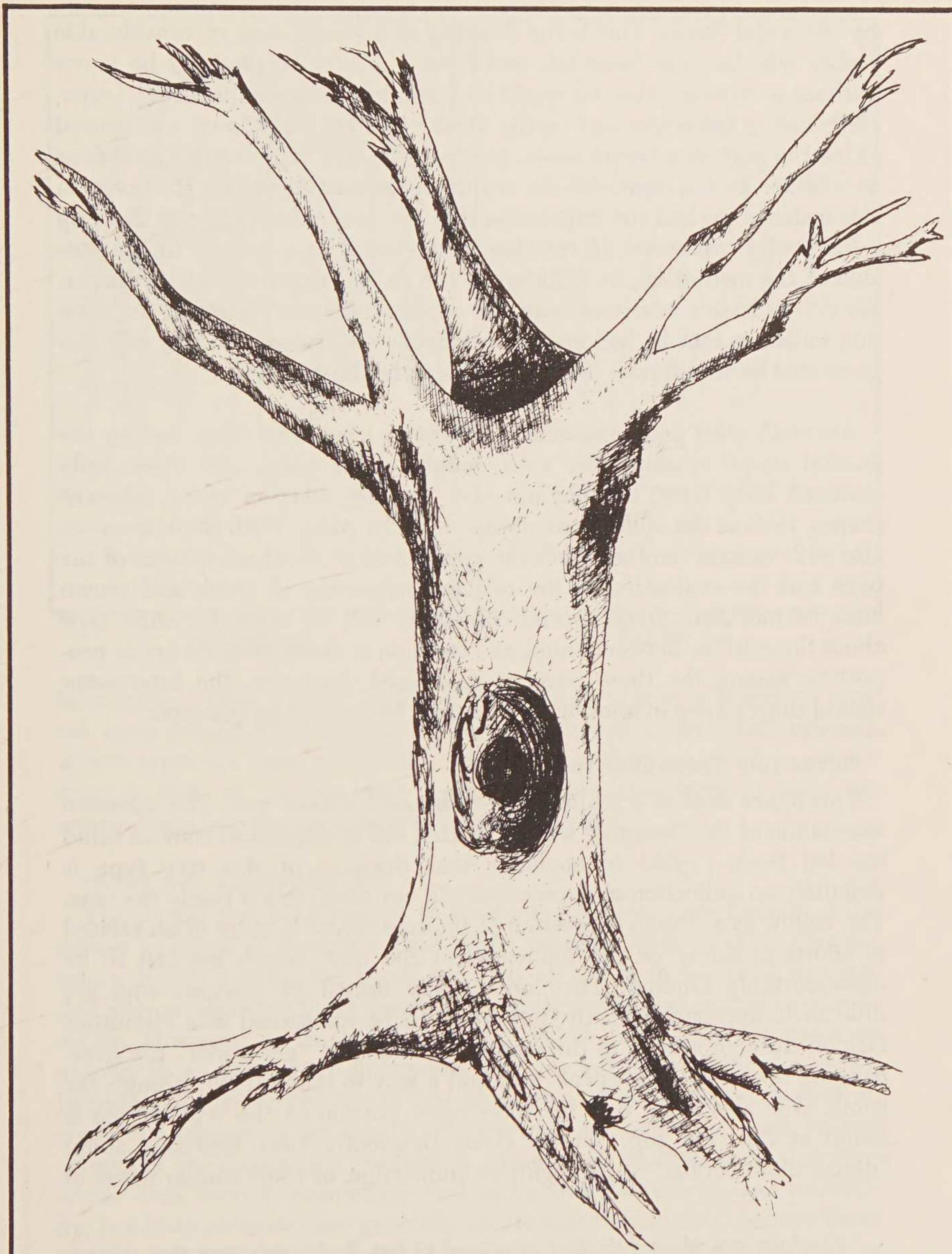


Illustration 5

by elemental forces. This is the drawing of a young man of considerable ability who had just been released from a mental hospital. As he is not without a certain balanced quality of mind, it is quite probable (especially noting the heavy scar on the trunk) that his breakdown was caused at least in part by a severe sexual trauma. The tree expresses his doubts as to whether he can cope with the reality of the outside world. However, in this instance we had the impression that we were viewing in the drawing a temporary expression of reaction to the sudden reexposure to life outside of the institution, in addition to the destructive force of his illness. We do not have a later tree from this subject but some follow-up information indicates that he has made a relatively good recovery, and it is our guess that he would now draw a somewhat healthier tree.

Although most people associate deciduous trees with those having the general shape exhibited by oaks, maples, fruit trees, and other fully crowned leafy trees, the phylum also includes trees of quite different shapes, such as the willow, the poplar, and the palm. With these trees—as also with various conifers—both the application of the three spheres of the page and the evaluation of the relative proportion of trunk and crown must be modified. Some special comments will be made for each type about the relation between mind and emotion in these trees. As far as proportion among the three parts is concerned, however, the interpreter should simply keep in mind what is natural to the type in question.

FIGURE 10e: The willow tree

This figure depicts a realistically delineated willow tree. The common association of the "weeping willow" with a sad or depressed state of mind has led Buck (1966) to conclude that drawing of this tree type is definitely an indication of depression.* In our view, this is rarely the case. The willow as a chosen expression of the tree theme is more often related to efforts to throw off the influences of the past, which are felt to be uncomfortably binding. They are usually drawn by persons who are difficult to approach directly, but who can be influenced in a circuitous fashion through appeal to the emotions. One must "get under" the overhanging branches, so to speak, and find a way to touch them through the trunk. One also notes that the most open portion of the willow tree is found at the very top. Willow types frequently have fantasies about "divine illumination," or precognitive knowledge, or some similar influx of

* Kirschner and Marzolf (1974) attempted to test Buck's statement that subjects drawing weeping willows show a hopeless and defeated attitude by evaluating the Cattell 16 PF test scores of such subjects. According to the hypothesis, such persons should score low on the F factor, which signifies Sober—Happy-go-lucky types. Their findings completely contradicted the hypothesis, showing that drawers of weeping willows were actually assertive and venturesome.

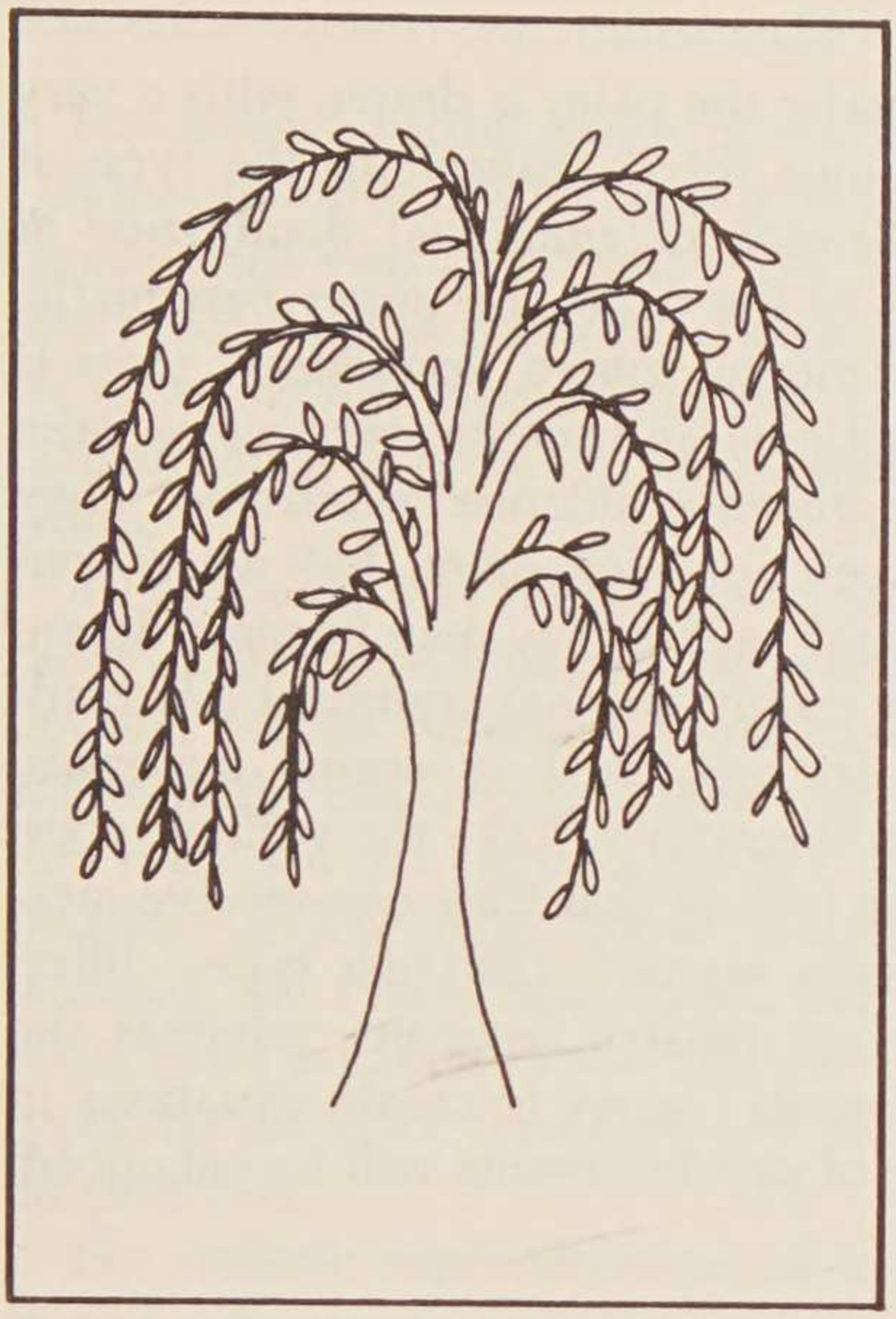


FIGURE 10e

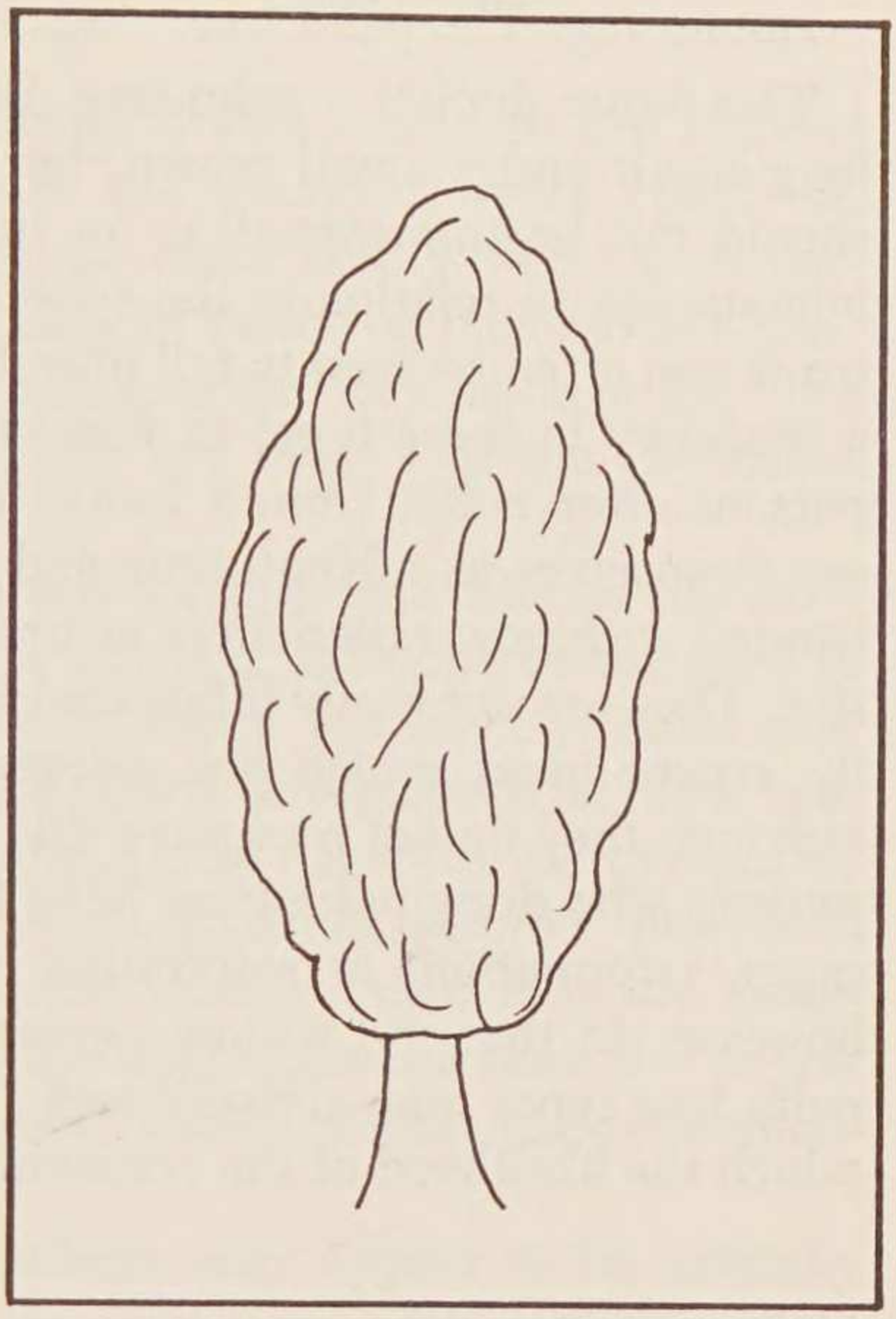


FIGURE 10f

information "from above." Vulnerability to superstition is therefore typical, even among the intelligent. While not always "objectively" rational, willow types are more mental than emotional in their approach to experience, in spite of the fact that the hanging branches tend to bring the crown down into the emotional sphere of the page.

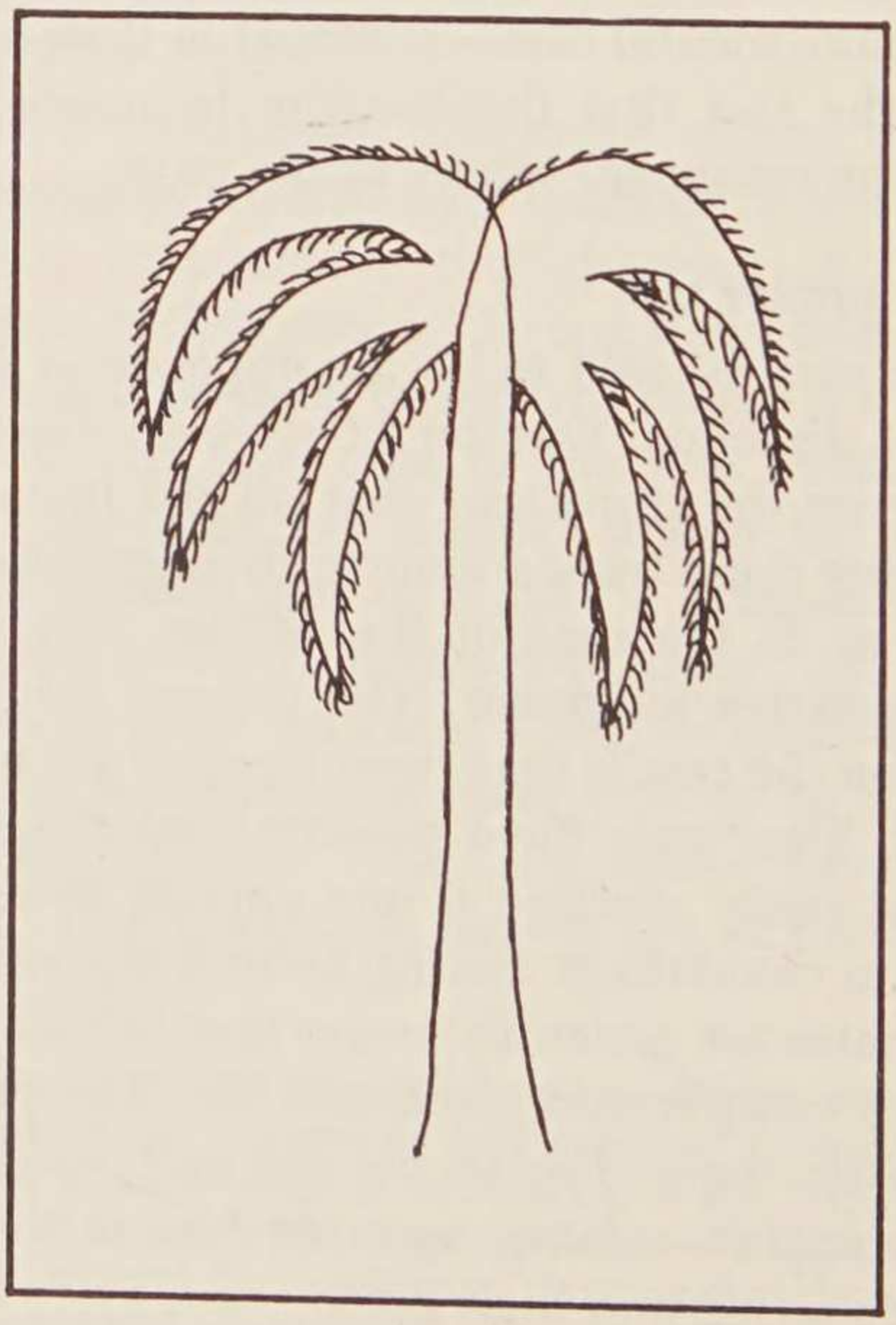
FIGURE 10f: The poplar tree

The poplar tree may be said to be the opposite or complement of the willow in terms of direction. One might suppose, from the fact that the crown begins low on the trunk and that all the branches tend upward, that persons drawing these trees are mentally dominated and always optimistic. However, as in the case of the willow, one must not come so quickly to an associative judgment. The general meaning of the crown beginning so low on the tree is that these persons are not directly open to emotional contact. They may have powerful emotions, but their feeling responses are most easily reached if one appeals to their mental preferences. They tend to camouflage feeling behind a screen of cool rationality, but their intimates are generally aware that behind this coolness there is a deep and often complicated emotional life. The poplar types may or may not be optimistic, depending on the size and position of the tree. The upward-turning branches coming more or less to a point do indicate, however, constant striving and high goals.

FIGURE 10g: The palm tree

This figure depicts a palm tree. Usually the palm is drawn with a very long trunk and a small crown, but since this is natural to the type, it should not be interpreted as an indication of emotional dominance or immaturity. In relation to the spheres of the page, the upper part of the trunk can often be seen to fall into the mental sphere, and indeed, there is a tendency in these types to fuse emotional and mental responses. Palm persons often suffer from a basic "approach-avoidance" syndrome. They see themselves as adventurous and seek out excitement, but when confronted with new experiences or unusual people they may become defensive. They are not easily influenced by purely rational argument but readily accept ideas which are colored by emotional or sexual materials, although they do not recognize this in themselves. Like the willow types, persons who draw palm trees have the feeling that they can receive messages, information, or inspiration "from above." The two types differ, however, in that the willow persons are passive receivers, whereas the palm tree types may actively seek "contact" or try to create situations in which the likelihood of the occurence of psychic events will be enhanced.

FIGURE 10g



The coniferous trees, realistically drawn

The second broad group of realistically drawn trees are the conifers (*Gymnospermae*). This group includes the pinacious trees (pine, fir, spruce), the yew or cypress types, and the cedar family. Some trees correctly classified as coniferous, such as *Gingko biloba*—a decorative Oriental tree—are not included in this grouping as far as drawings are concerned, since in general appearance they are more like the deciduous group.

All of the conifer trees have in common a shape which tends toward a point at the top, which may be taken as a sign of ambition or the need to develop oneself through general upward striving. We saw this same indication in the poplar types. However, the efforts of subjects who draw conifer trees are not as smooth and uninterrupted as those of the poplar people. Conifer types move toward their goals in steplike processes, building the future upon solid past achievements. Also, they are somewhat more inclined to the exercise of feeling judgments than the poplar types. At the same time they are "tougher," more resistant to environmental pressures.

The realistic representations of these trees may appear to be basically open in structure, except when they are delineated with very fine, close branches. Generally, however, these subjects are inclined to hide their real natures, and if they give an impression of complete openness, it is often an adaptive technique. In other terms, the *persona* may be extrovert, but there is usually much in the personality which is concealed, or at least not readily exposed.

FIGURE 11a: The pine type (pine, fir, and spruce trees)

Persons who draw a variant of the pinacious tree are likely to be goal driven, rather stubborn, and not easily distracted from their central ambitions. They generally give an impression of self-confidence, but underneath they may feel socially inadequate or emotionally unadapted. They are people of strong feeling responses, but they do not like to express their feelings openly or reveal their vulnerability to emotion. They are rather afraid of being hurt by others and tend to be suspicious; it is thus not easy to touch the true center of their emotional lives. On the other hand, like the willow types, their ideas can be influenced by an emotional approach, and their intellectual life often has a strong feeling tone. When this type of tree is broad near the top point, one may have an indication of fanaticism. When the top is slightly open, there are usually religious or occult interests, and vagueness or uncertainty about ultimate goals.

FIGURE 11b: The yew types (yew, cypress, and juniper trees)

Many of the comments on the pine types are applicable, but the rela-

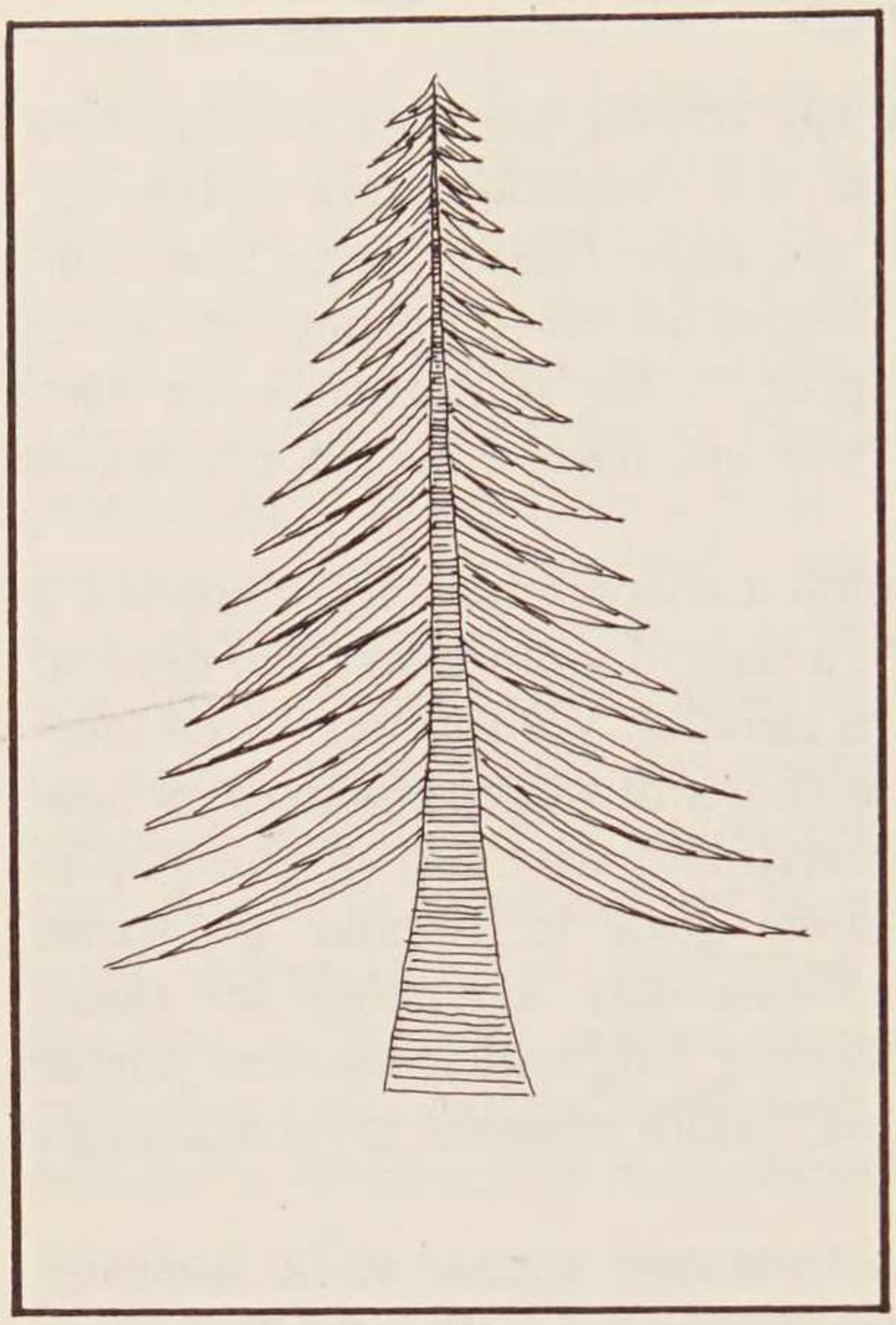


FIGURE 11a

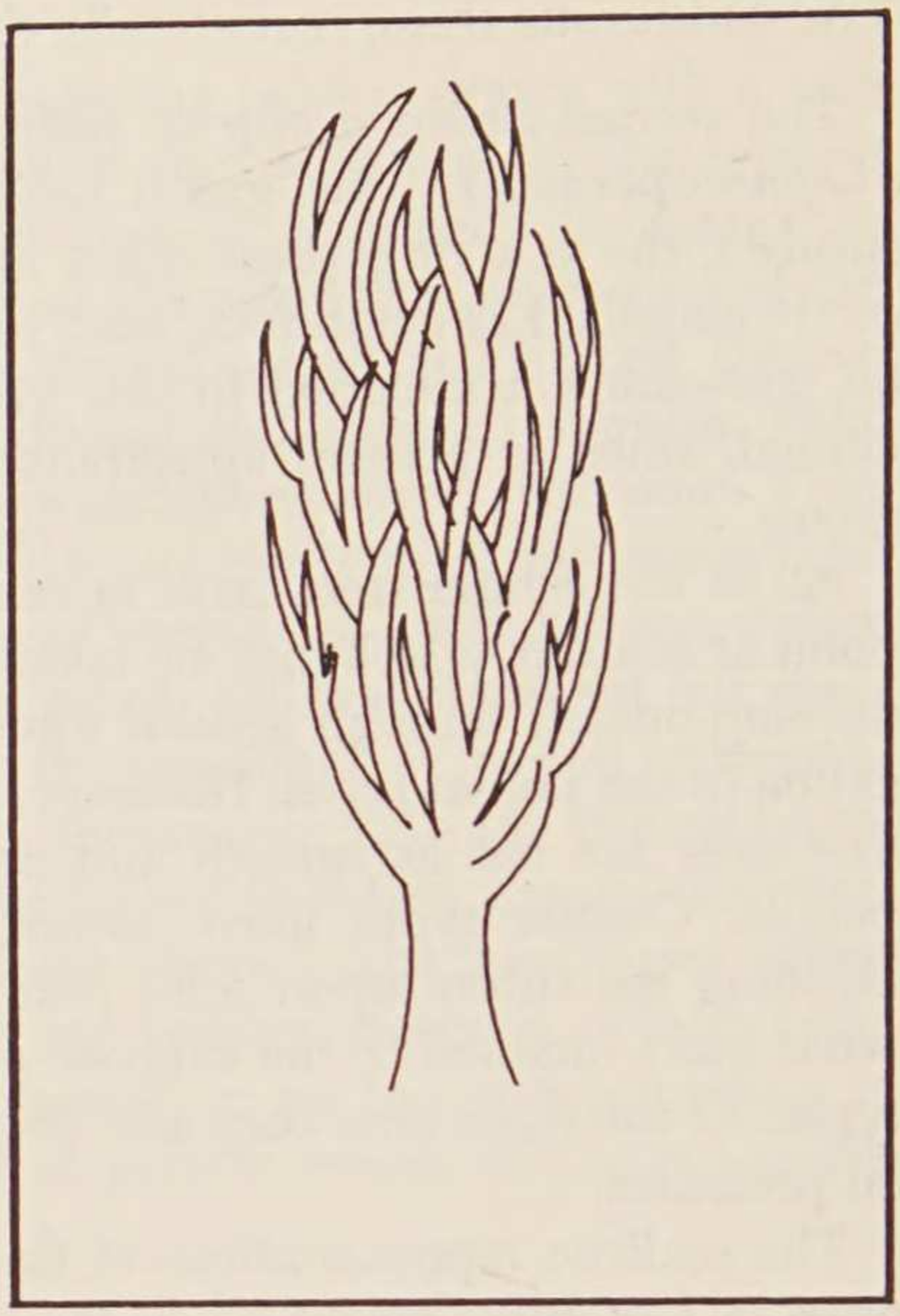


FIGURE 11b

tion between the emotional and mental spheres is reversed. The yew persons can be touched emotionally through mental, religious, or "upper principle" approaches. In this respect they resemble the poplar types, although the latter are most easily influenced by ideas which are acceptable to the trained or logical mind, whereas yew persons are open to irrational thinking as well. One special characteristic of yew types is their love of formal ritual.

While the true pine types are tough and "weather" difficult circumstances with patient, passive endurance, yew people are active in self-expression and are more vulnerable to disappointment than pine persons. One can compare the wedgelike shape of the pine tree to the flamelike shade of the yew. Both types are goal oriented, but while the efforts of the pine people are built up in steady, cumulative, pyramidlike steps, the yew types tend to be enthusiastic and irregular in their efforts and are more inclined to waste energy. When frustrated by obstacles, they are less fixed in the pursuit of their final goals than the pine types. They still strive upward, but they may become involved in tangents, persuading themselves that they are seeking a way around the obstacle. Sometimes this is indeed the case, for their greater flexibility permits them to "bend with the wind" while still maintaining their general direction.

Illustrations 6 and 7 are two actual drawings of the pine and yew types. The pine was drawn by an active, determined, twenty-eight-year-old man.

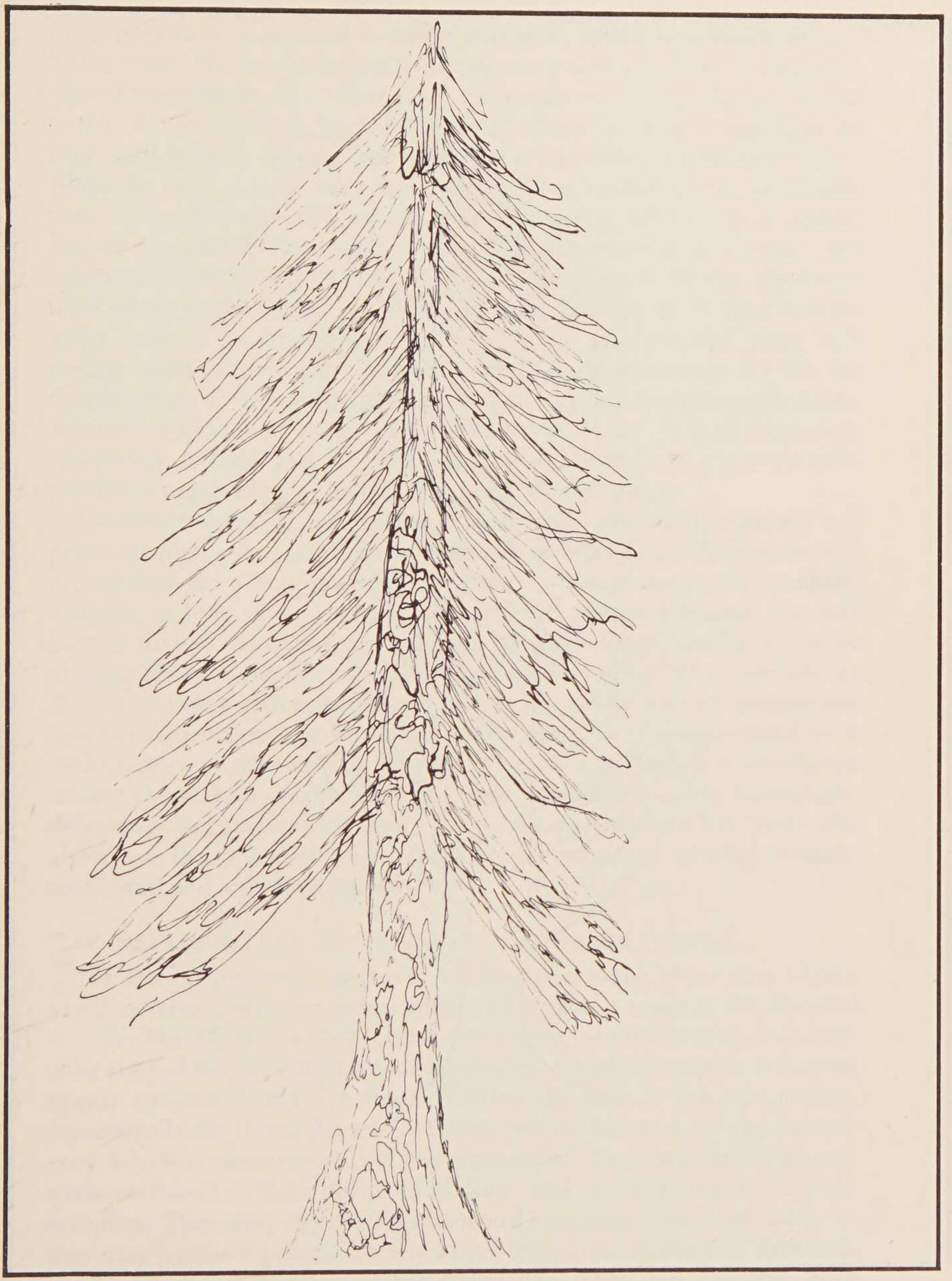


Illustration 6

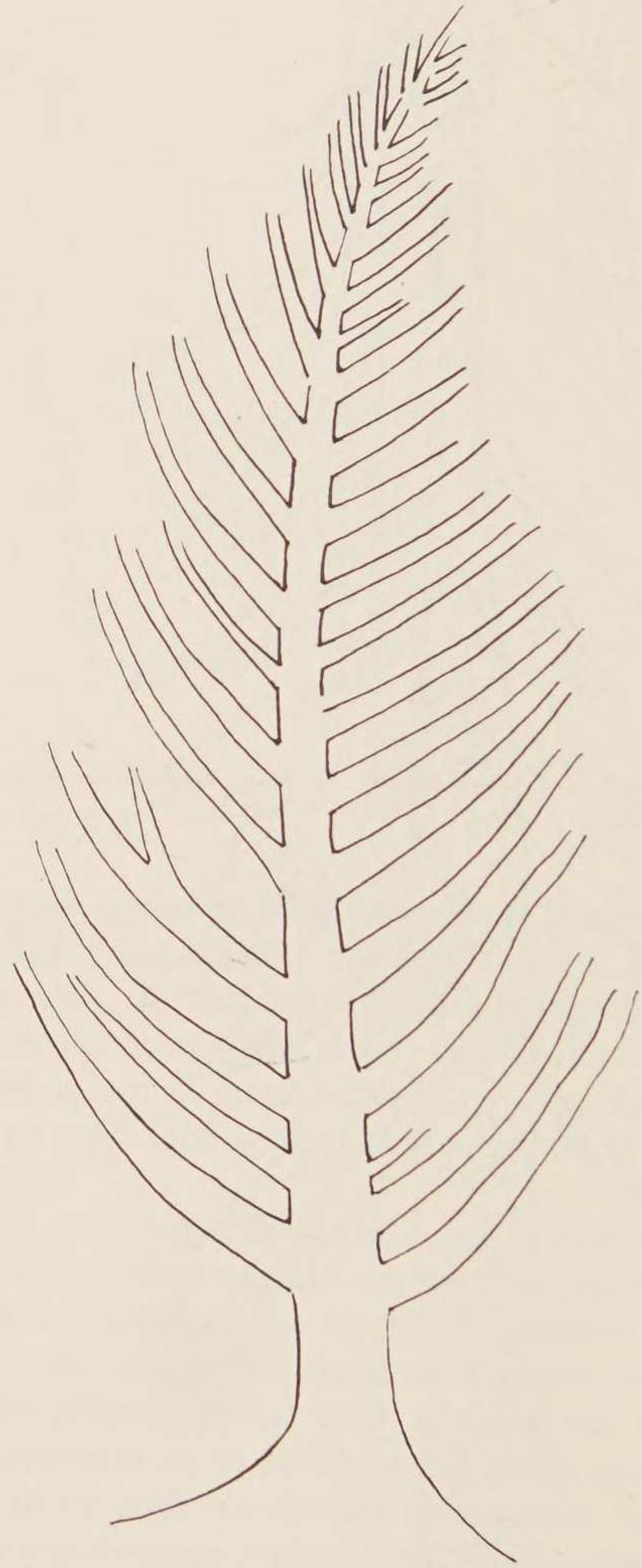


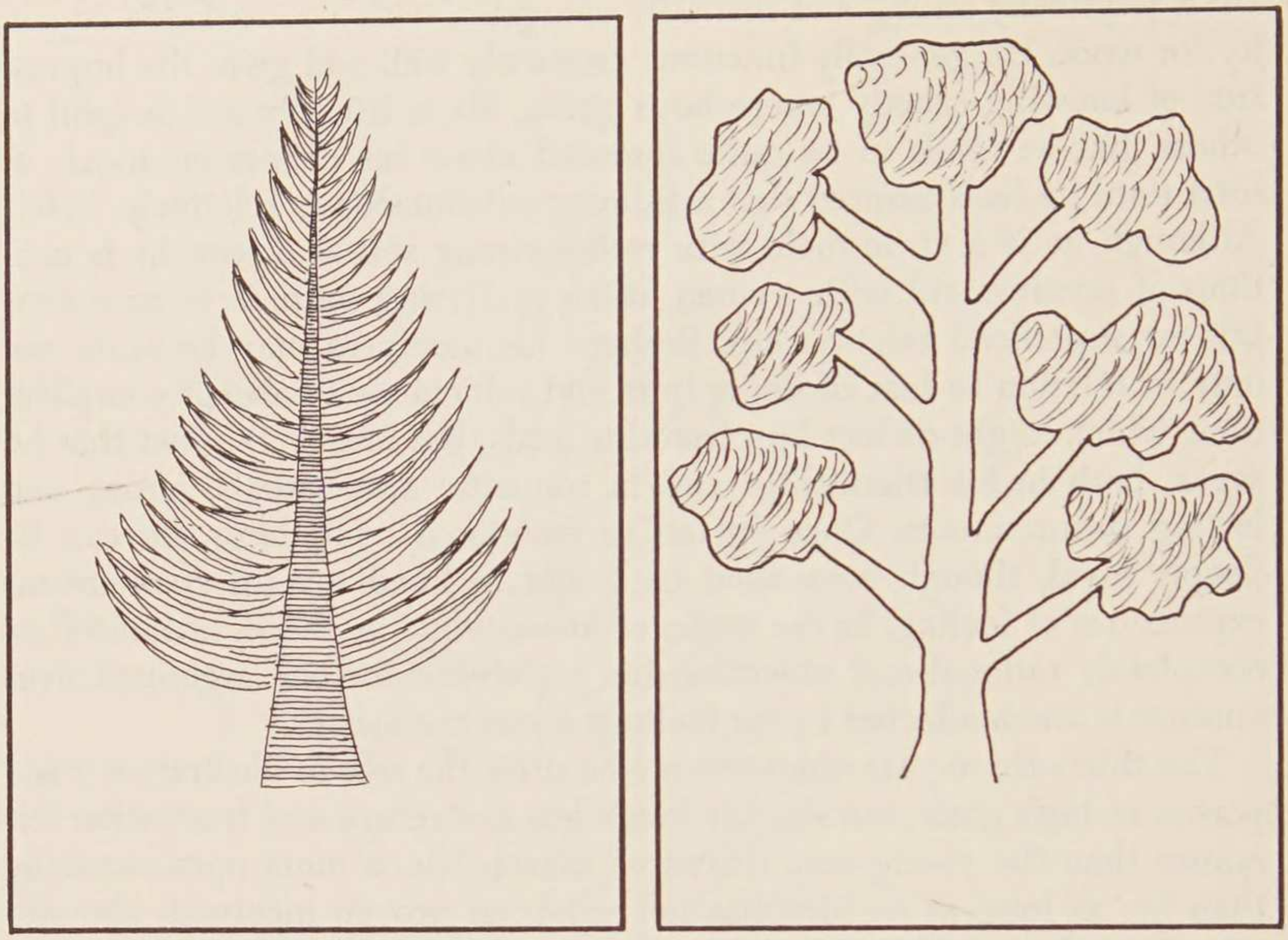
Illustration 7

He is physically strong and mentally energetic, with a remarkable capacity for work. He generally functions extremely well and gives the impression of knowing exactly where he is going. He is friendly and helpful to others, but he tends to be quite reserved about his deeper emotions, at least until he feels assured that a forming relationship is relatively "safe." Although he is a virile male with rather strong sexual drives, he is cautious of involvement with women, often preferring solitude to an uncertain or superficial relationship. Perhaps his aloofness may be seen, not only in relation to fear of being hurt and reluctance to accept complications which might deflect him from his goals, but also to the fact that he seeks, both in his friendships and in romantic attachments, strong and lasting commitments. Once stirred to emotional relatedness, he can be deeply loyal, though even then he is not inclined toward spontaneous expressions of feeling. In the realm of ideas, while he thinks of himself as completely rational and objective, his preference for one argument over another is much affected by his feelings about the matter.

The thirty-three-year-old woman who drew the tree in illustration 7 is a person of high goals, but she has much less endurance and frustration tolerance than the young man discussed above. She is more open mentally than he; as long as an idea has not yet been proven incorrect, she will take it under consideration. She can be stirred emotionally by even abstract ideas, if she finds them unique or stimulating. When she falls in love, it is always with someone who shares her intellectual preoccupations and has similar tastes in music and poetry. Her life is characterized by a multiplicity of interests; nevertheless, there is a pattern of convergence among them. Less steady than the male subject, she feels temporarily defeated when serious obstacles arise on the path toward her goals. She also shows the typical attraction to ritual and has strong interests in myth, mysticism, and ancient religions.

FIGURES 11c and 11d: The cedar tree (Western and Oriental)

The last of the conifer group to be discussed is the cedar tree. Figure 11c illustrates a Western cedar, while 11d depicts a cedar of the Oriental variety. The cedar is a true conifer—evergreen, needle bearing, and basically shaped like an upward-pointing wedge. Usually, however, it is more openly structured than the trees of either the pine or the yew groups, especially in its Oriental variety. Cedar people do not have the consistency which is characteristic of the pine types. They are ambitious and quite confident of their powers, but they tend to be diversified in their activities. They may engage simultaneously in several kinds of work, or they may pursue a project for some time with great fervor and then suddenly abandon it in favor of something else. They are excellent "idea men" and good initiators, but they become easily bored when steady application is required for the fulfillment of their initial concept. In the



FIGURES 11c and 11d

emotional area they are less labile than in mental matters, but here, too, they may maintain several commitments at the same time. As they easily wear different masks in changing situations and are capable of secrecy, they may manage their complex personal involvements without undue complications. They have an amazing resilience, being less easily disappointed than the pine or yew types, particularly since their goals are less definite. When obstacles arise, they are quick to see the possibilities of new approaches or alternative goals.

Illustration 8, a rather stylized Oriental cedar, was drawn by a thirty-six-year-old man. He is a professional architect who has pursued various business sidelines, some closely related to architecture and others quite far afield. He is hospitable and open to the point of gullibility, although he is probably at bottom more introvert than extrovert. In his personal demeanor he is conservative and seems to be quite steady. His professional life has been marked with many disappointments, especially situations in which aesthetic success has been combined with financial disaster. Still, he remains full of youthful optimism and is always ready to begin again, even following rather serious setbacks. He is capable of hard work and long hours of steady application, but he also needs the excitement of new projects and new contacts. The discontinuous lines which characterize this entire drawing are suggestive of the emotional impact of disappointments; but the rather stylized "puffs" which indicate the foliage

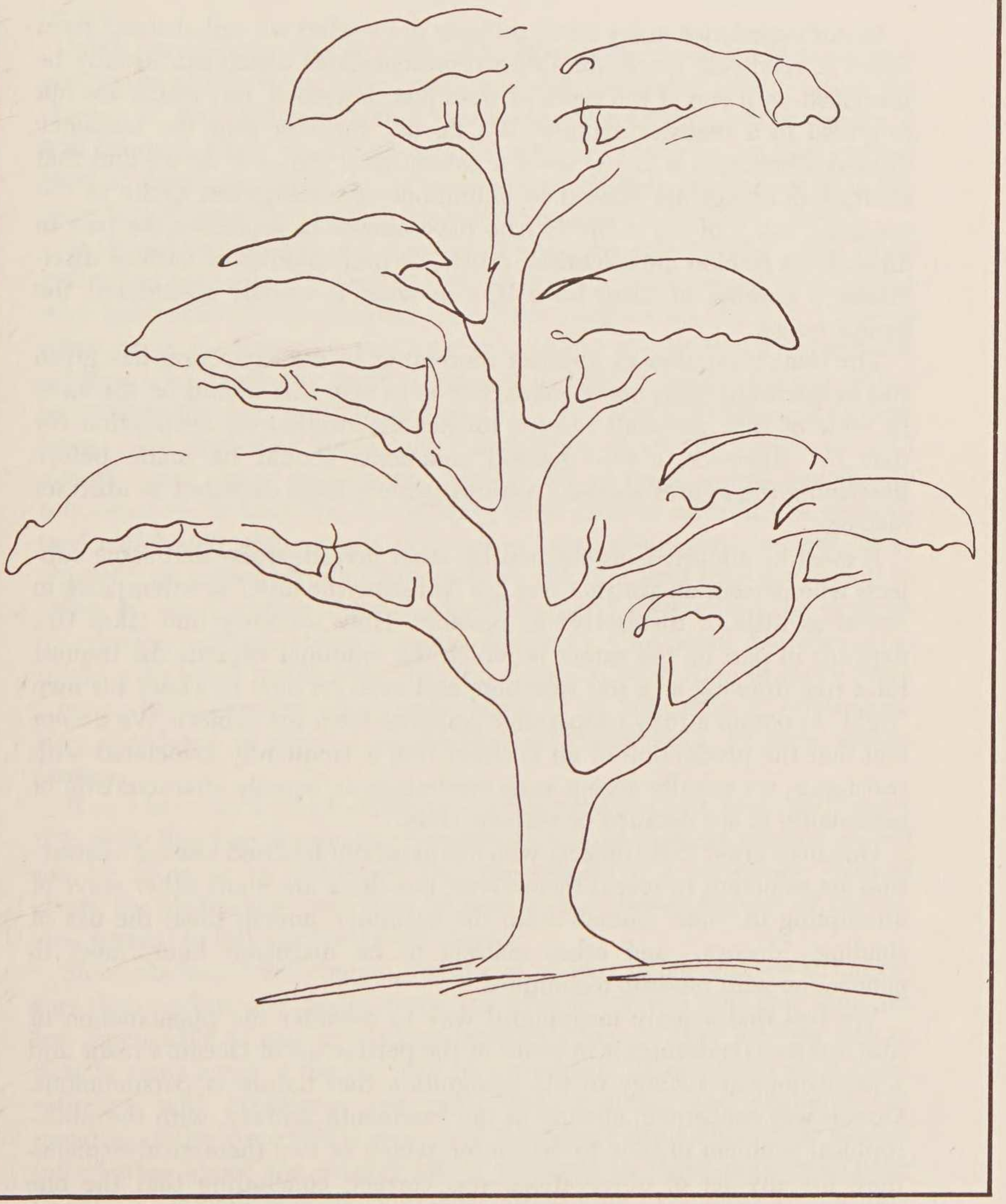


Illustration 8

are dreamy and idealistic. The tree is large and upward tending in its central core.

Abstract trees

In our experience many adult subjects draw what we call abstract trees —that is, relatively spare, simplified representations which can usually be identified with one of the types of trees just described, but which are not rendered in a realistic manner. We do not consider that the tendency toward abstraction is in any sense a pathological sign, nor do we find that abstract drawings are related to limitations of intelligence. Quite to the contrary, many of our subjects who have chosen to represent the tree in an abstract fashion are scientists, artists, or professionals of various disciplines; a number of them have IQ's in what is usually considered the genius range.

The sizable number of abstract renderings in our collection has given rise to questions from many colleagues as to *why* this should be the case. In view of this, we shall reserve further elaboration on abstraction for part IV. However, a few general comments should be made before describing the figures showing various generic trees depicted in abstract fashion.

It must be admitted—as claimed by other investigators—that some subjects who present an abstract tree are "resisting the task," or attempting to reveal as little of themselves as possible. How seriously one takes this depends in part on the extent to which the examiner regards the request for a tree drawing as a test situation, and even on how he views his own "right" to obtain a fully cooperative response from the subject. We do *not* feel that the production of an abstract tree is frequently associated with resistance; we usually accept such renderings as equally characteristic of personality as are detailed or realistic trees.

One may grant that subjects who are naturally inclined toward abstraction are reluctant to reveal themselves; but there are many other ways of attempting to "hide" oneself from the examiner, among them the use of shading, "decoys," and other matters to be discussed later, most in connection with *realistic* techniques.

We feel that a more meaningful way to consider the phenomenon of abstract tree renderings is in terms of the pertinence of Occam's razor and a psychological analogy to the recognition that nature is parsimonious. Occam was concerned, already in the fourteenth century, with the philosophical problem of how to determine which of two theoretical explanations for any set of observations was correct, concluding that the one which is the simpler and still compatible with all known facts is to be preferred. It was not until the eighteenth century that d'Arcet's pronouncement, "Nature is not wasteful," focused attempts to demonstrate in

"applied biology," or "field biology," if you will, the truth of Occam's argument that nature expends energy in the most parsimonious fashion, in order to achieve maximal goals. One might say, then, that persons who render the concept "tree" in the simplest recognizable manner are expressing parsimony in a broad psychological sense. Why should this not be so?

Such persons may also be inclined to *be* parsimonious, in the more general usage of this term: about money; about emotional giving; about the sharing of their ideas. Whether this is the case (and in which sphere it will be most likely manifest) will depend in large part on the general level of development of the individual, and on indicators other than the mere fact of drawing a highly simplified version of the concept "tree."

It should be noted that if a series of trees are collected from the same individual over a long period of time, it sometimes happens that a subject who habitually draws realistic trees will produce an abstract drawing when he is experiencing particularly stressful conditions. Furthermore, subjects who habitually draw abstract trees tend, in states of stress, either to increase the degree of abstraction or to move in the direction of fantasy trees. (We find that those who consistently draw abstract trees will almost never draw realistic representations of trees unless specifically requested to do so.) We would speculate, without intending a generalized conclusion, that people of superior intelligence may be seeking to objectify or gain a certain distance from the problems they are facing in states of stress, either through simplification (abstraction) or through imaginative self-expression (fantasy drawing). One could, however, postulate with equal justification that this common inclination to move away from realistic drawing when under stress is an indication of rationalization, avoidance of direct confrontation with difficulties, or mere escape fantasy.

If one has only a single drawing available for analysis, and particularly if it is the first tree drawn, its representation in an abstract manner should not be taken as an indication that the subject is experiencing marked stress, for abstraction may then be seen as the chosen manner of expression normal to this particular individual.

Since abstract trees contain, for the most part, relatively fewer indicators than realistically drawn trees, the interpreter will find that they are less amendable to easy or obvious interpretation. As they are less rich in details, some areas of the life may be completely hidden from view. Nevertheless, with experience one gains skill in noting and exploring the meaning of the more subtle signs, and these trees can yield a great deal of information about the subject—often precisely in those areas which he might be consciously or unconsciously attempting to conceal by choosing an abstract form.

Most of the abstract renderings can be related to one of the tree types

discussed previously. The generic type meanings attributed to the realistic representations can be applied to these abstract expressions of the various tree types. There are, however, some differences or special meanings which we shall discuss briefly in connection with figures 12a–j and 13a–c.

Abstract deciduous trees

FIGURE 12a: Deciduous tree in extreme abstraction

This figure shows the most extreme representation of an abstract leafy tree. The single line which forms the trunk is indicative of poor development of the emotional function. The completely closed and empty crown represents a closing off of the self from the environment or a passive retreat of the ego into a world of private fantasy. The only actual drawing we have seen which parallels nearly exactly this schematic tree was that of a latent schizophrenic (paranoid type), who later experienced several acute schizophrenic episodes. In general, a tree which is very close in form to that shown in the figure must be evaluated with extreme caution. We have included two illustrations of actual drawings which belong to this general type (abstract leafy deciduous), but which are *not* suggestive of a pathological state, as is the tree shown in the figure. In illustration 9 we have a tree which is extremely simple and clearly abstract. However,

FIGURE 12a

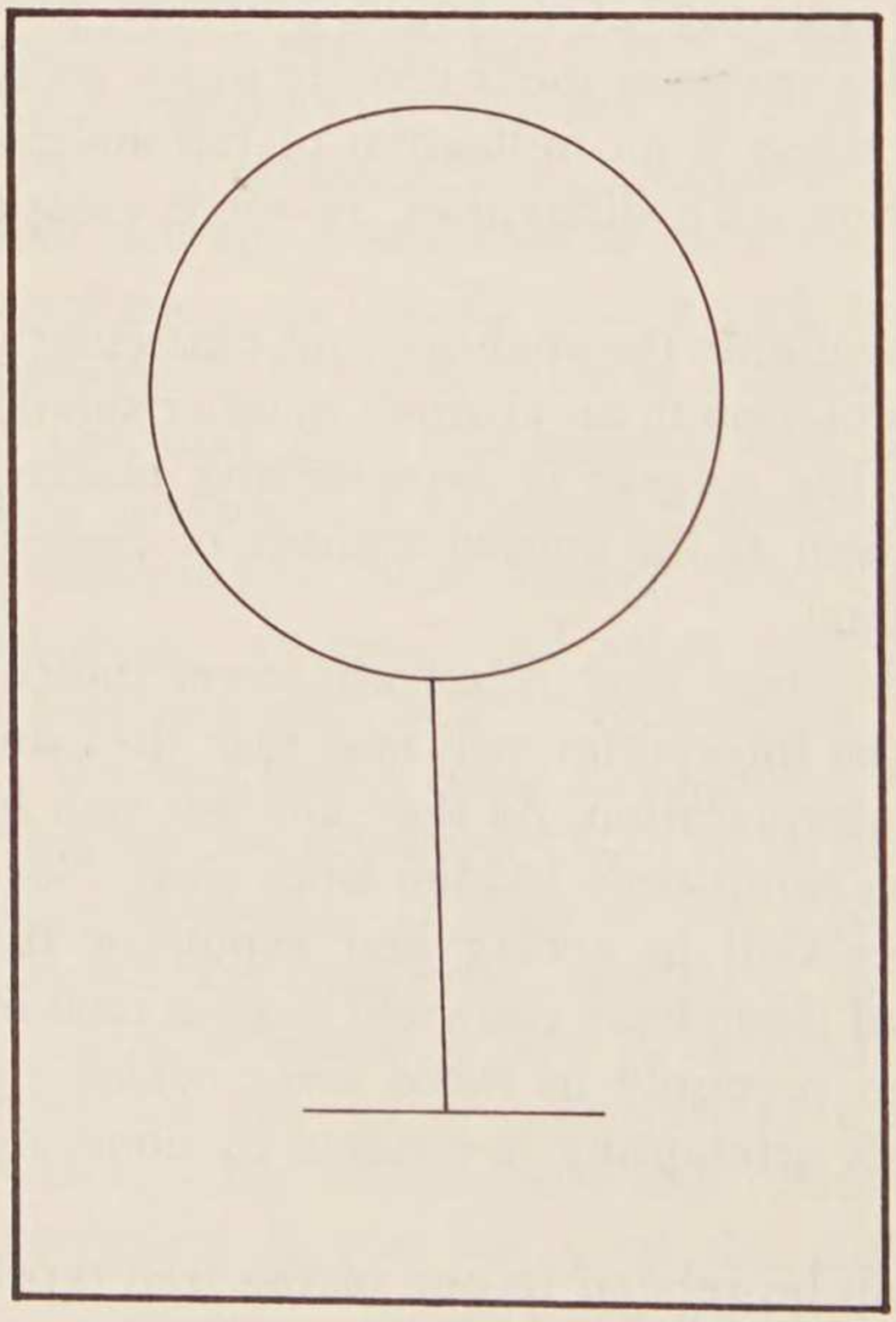
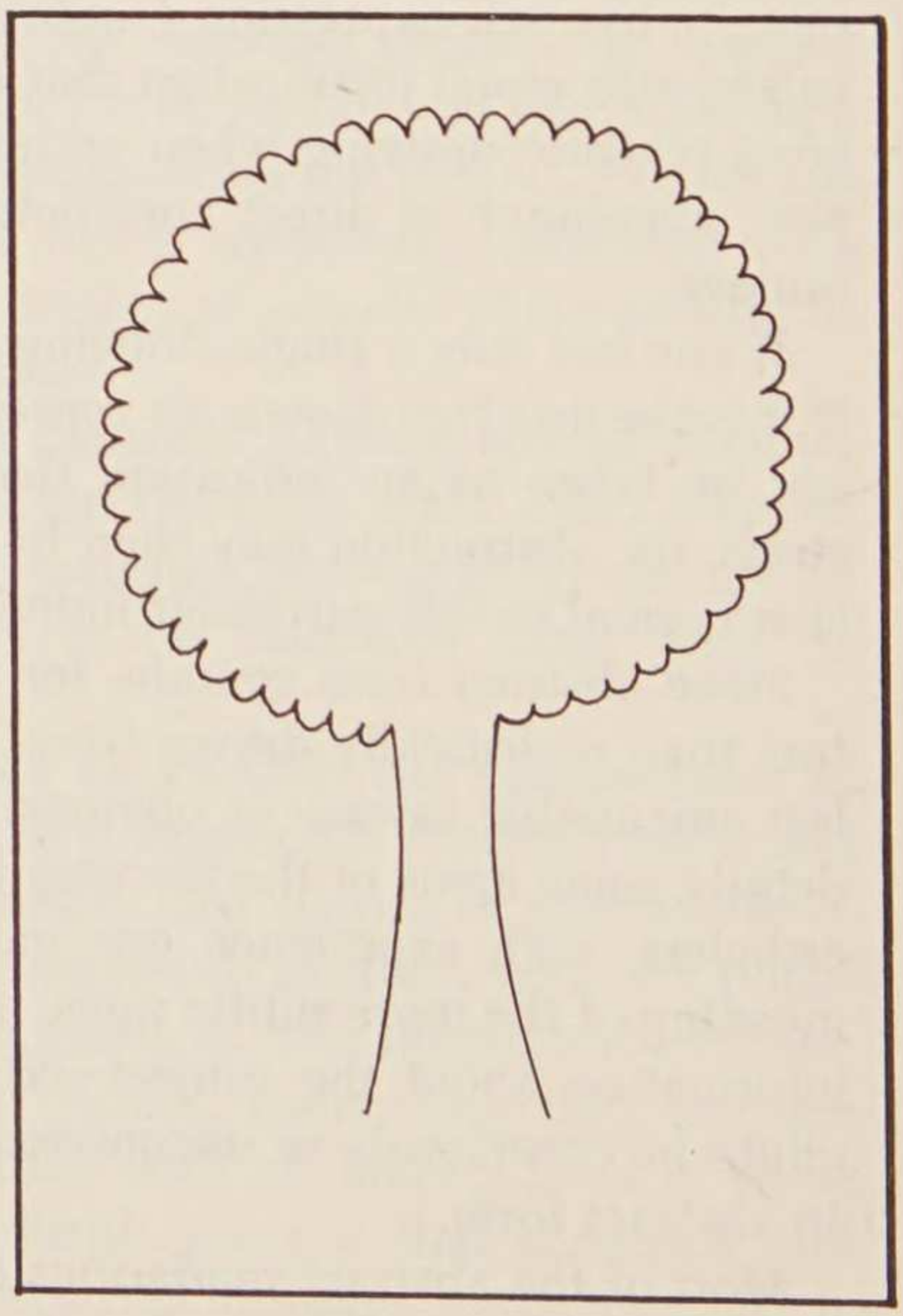


FIGURE 12b



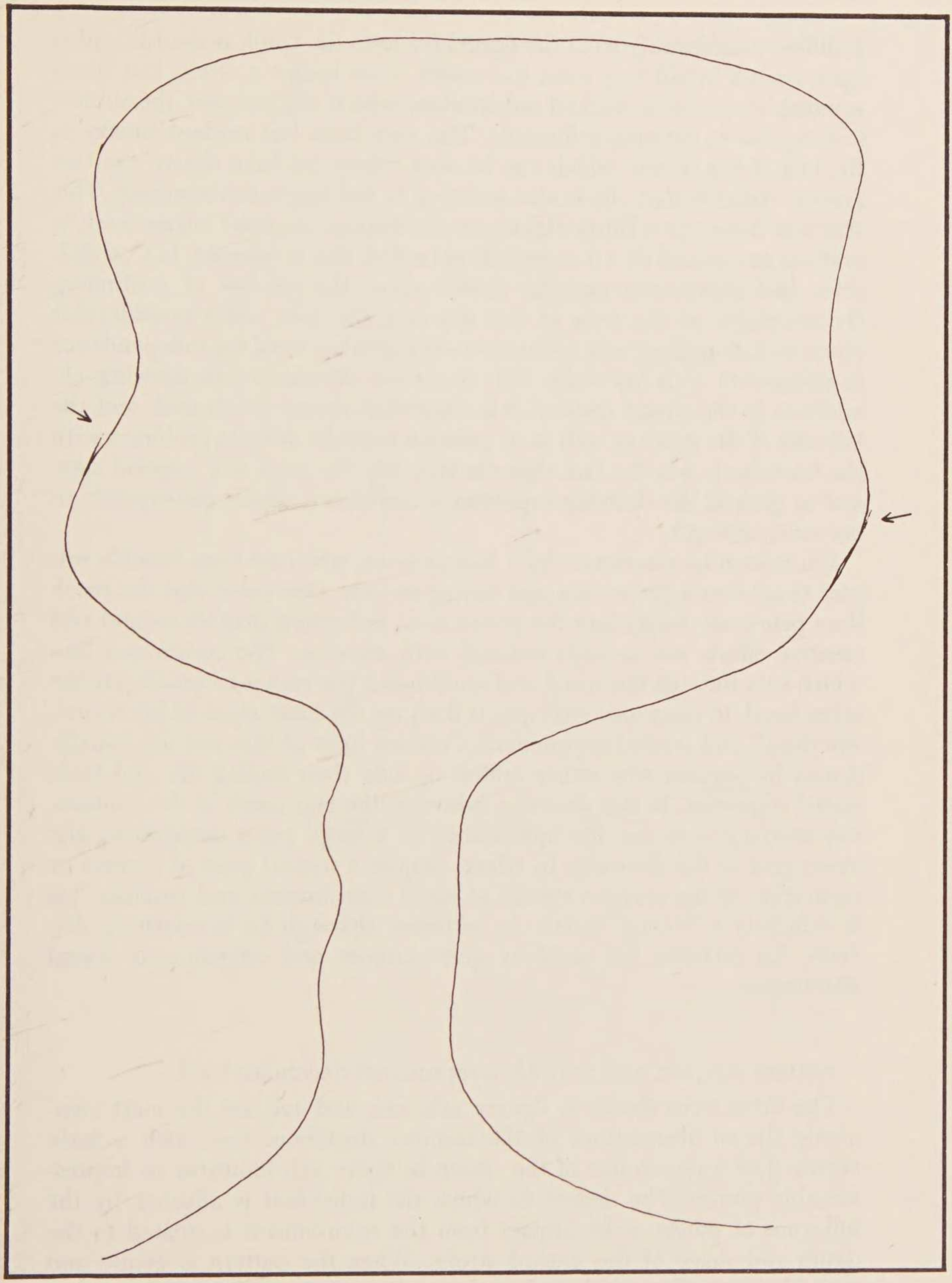


Illustration 9

it differs considerably from the figure, for here the trunk is double and is open from a broad root area; the crown is no longer a circle, but has a squarish shape, with marked indentations which suggest that the subject is receptive to external influences. The very faint but evident breaks in the line of the crown, which can be seen where we have drawn the two arrows, indicate that she is also reacting to the larger environment. This tree was drawn by a thirty-eight-year-old woman, an artist whose work in crafts is so unusual that it cannot be classified. She is married, has no children, and experiences periodic doubts about the wisdom of continuing the marriage. At the time of this drawing she was under considerable stress and struggling with problems relating to her need for independence in connection with her work. This is not her healthiest tree drawing (in addition to the closed quality, it is somewhat crown dominated, and the left side of the trunk as well as its position indicate definite problems with the feminine); but the fact that the tree fills the page is a hopeful sign, and in general the drawing expresses a confidence which corresponds to her inner strength.

Illustration 10 was drawn by a film director, who rose from humble origins to achieve a precocious and lasting success. One notes that the trunk lines penetrate deeply into the crown area, indicating that his mental and creative efforts are strongly colored with emotion. The continuous line which cuts through the trunk and underneath the root area points, on the other hand, to conscious attempts at denying the interaction of his sexual, emotional, and mental experiences. Crossing lines of this sort are usually drawn by persons who either inhibit or hide their feeling life and their sexual responses. In this drawing, however, the end result of the continuous crossing lines has the appearance of a large penis dominating the lower part of the drawing. In effect, despite a mental pose of control or separation of the creative sphere of ideas from instinct and emotion, his is definitely a "robust" talent. In addition, although he is relatively discreet, his intimate life involves quite intense and adventurous sexual encounters.

FIGURES 12b, 12c, and 12d: Abstract summer deciduous trees

The three trees shown in figures 12b, 12c, and 12d are the most commonly drawn abstractions of the summer deciduous tree with a leafy crown. The wavy outline of the crown in figure 12b indicates an impressionable person. The degree to which the individual is affected by the influence of others or by impact from the environment is related to the depth and shape of the inward stroke. When the pattern is gentle and wavelike, as in figure 12b and in the outline of the crown in illustration 11, the subject is resilient and receptive to influences, but not easily overwhelmed by them. Semicircles which point sharply and definitely inward,

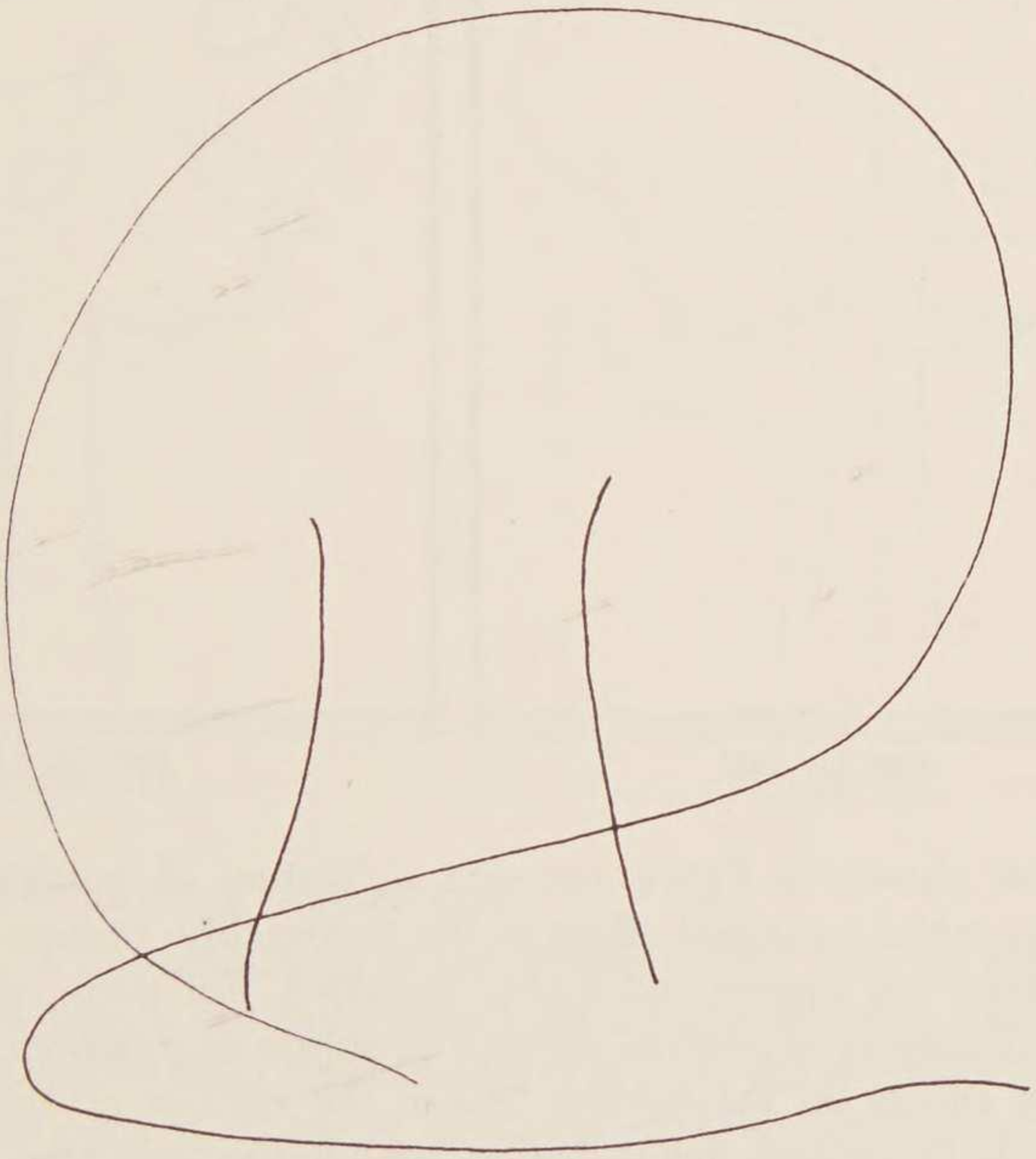


Illustration 10

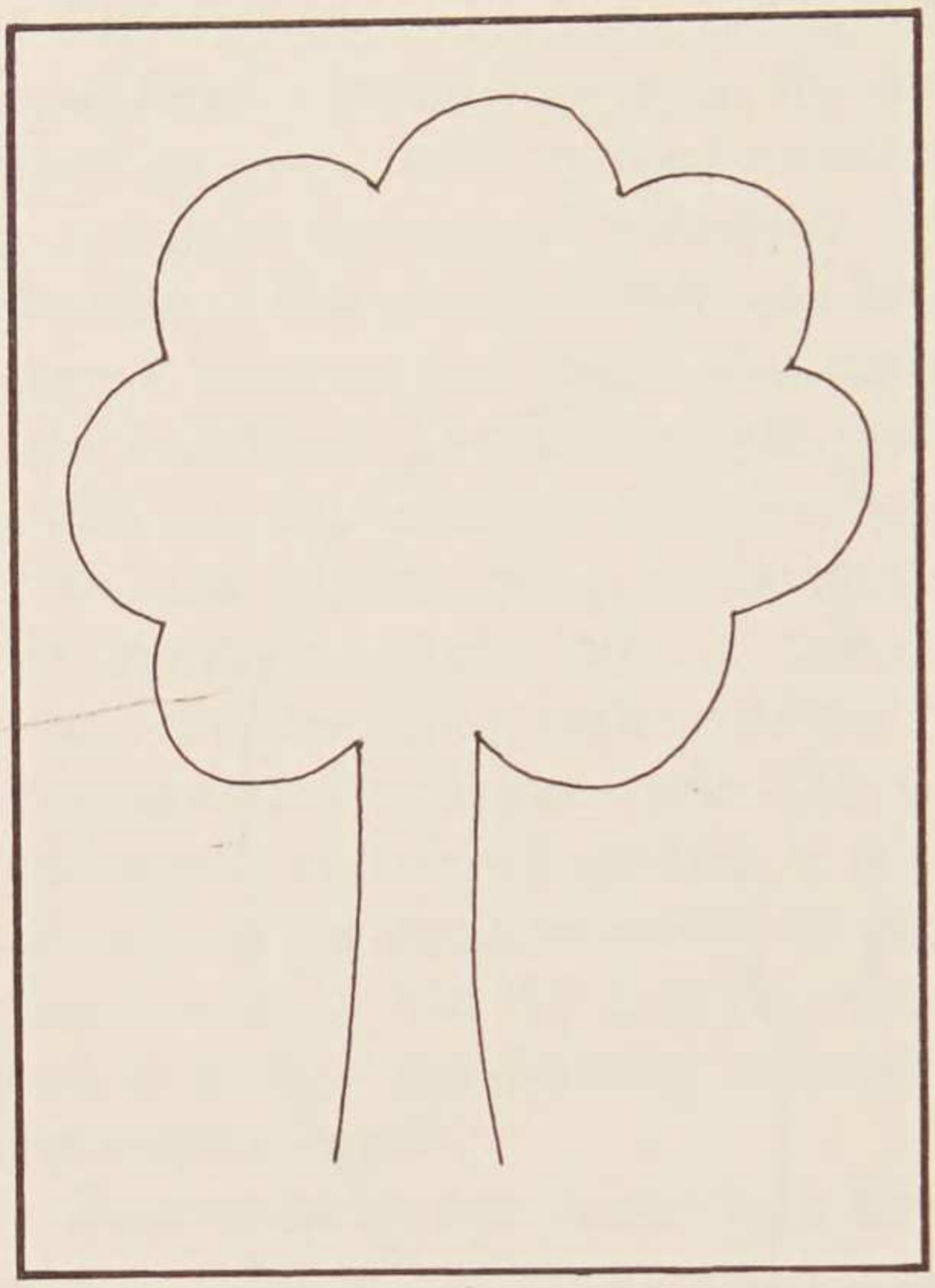


FIGURE 12c

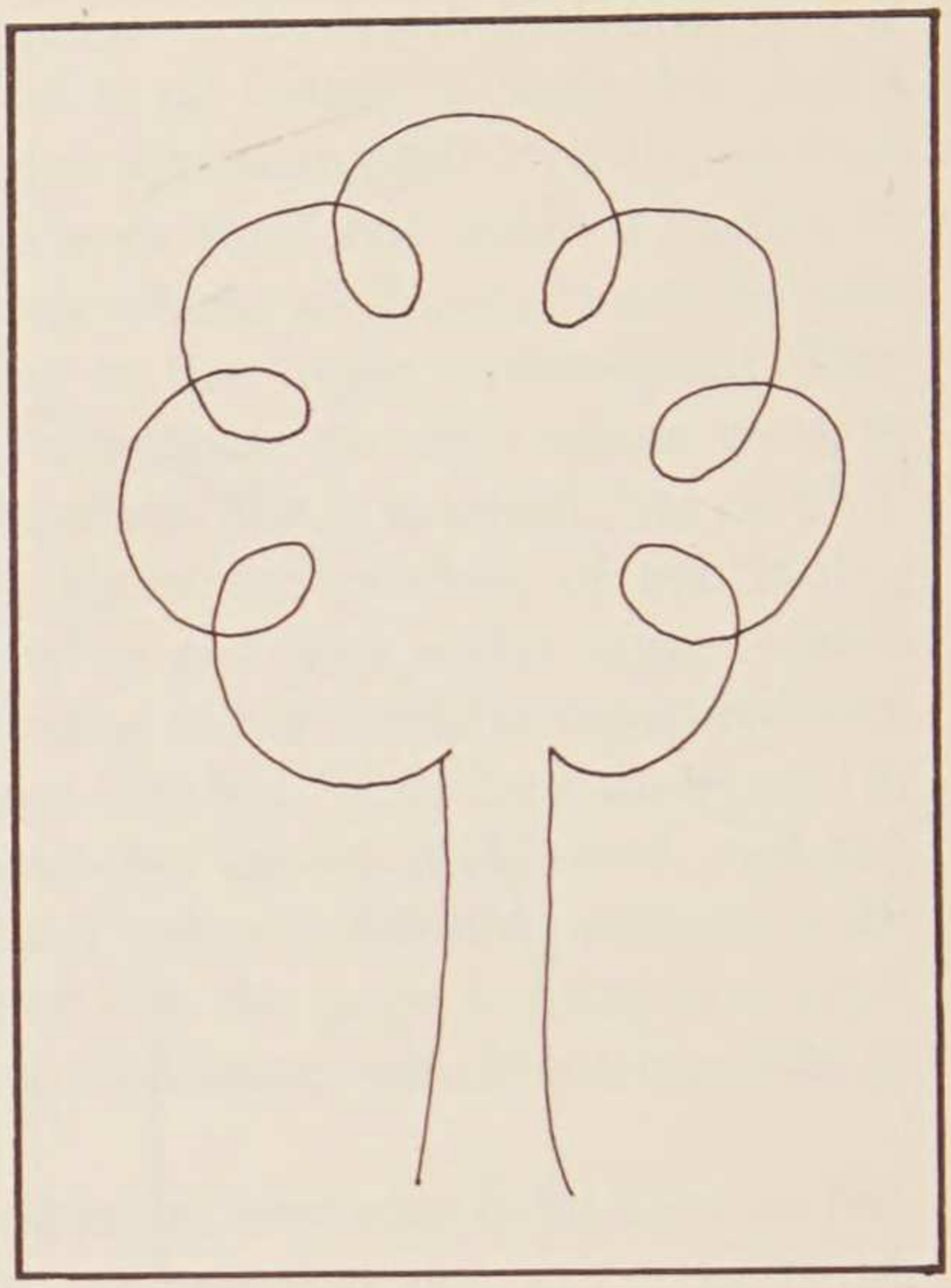


FIGURE 12d

like those shown in figure 12c, are indicators of particular influences which have had a marked effect on the personality. Persons drawing trees of this type are pliable and highly sensitive. For them, what appear to outside observers as relatively minor or subtle experiences may have far-reaching effects on the psyche. When the outline of the crown forms loops, as in figure 12d, one is dealing with individuals who are easily penetrated by influences, but who attempt to isolate and "digest" these before assimilating them. They tend to think of themselves as shrewd, but, in fact, they share with the types who draw the crown outlines shown in figures 12b and 12c a characteristic naiveté.

FIGURE 12e: The abstract fruit tree

A further variation on this theme is the abstract fruit tree depicted in figure 12e, where simple fruits appear in the crown. As we pointed out earlier—in the discussion of figure 10a—the presence of fruits in the tree is related to either maternal inclinations or general creative fulfillment. In the case of the abstract fruit tree the emphasis on the fulfillment factor is even greater, since the fruits stand alone, without the distraction of other details such as branches and leaves. A good example of this type is illustration 11, drawn by a thirty-four-year-old female painter. This woman has enjoyed considerable professional success. Nevertheless, she indicated to us in counseling sessions that she finds more satisfaction in her roles of mother and art teacher of elementary age children than in her worldly achievements.

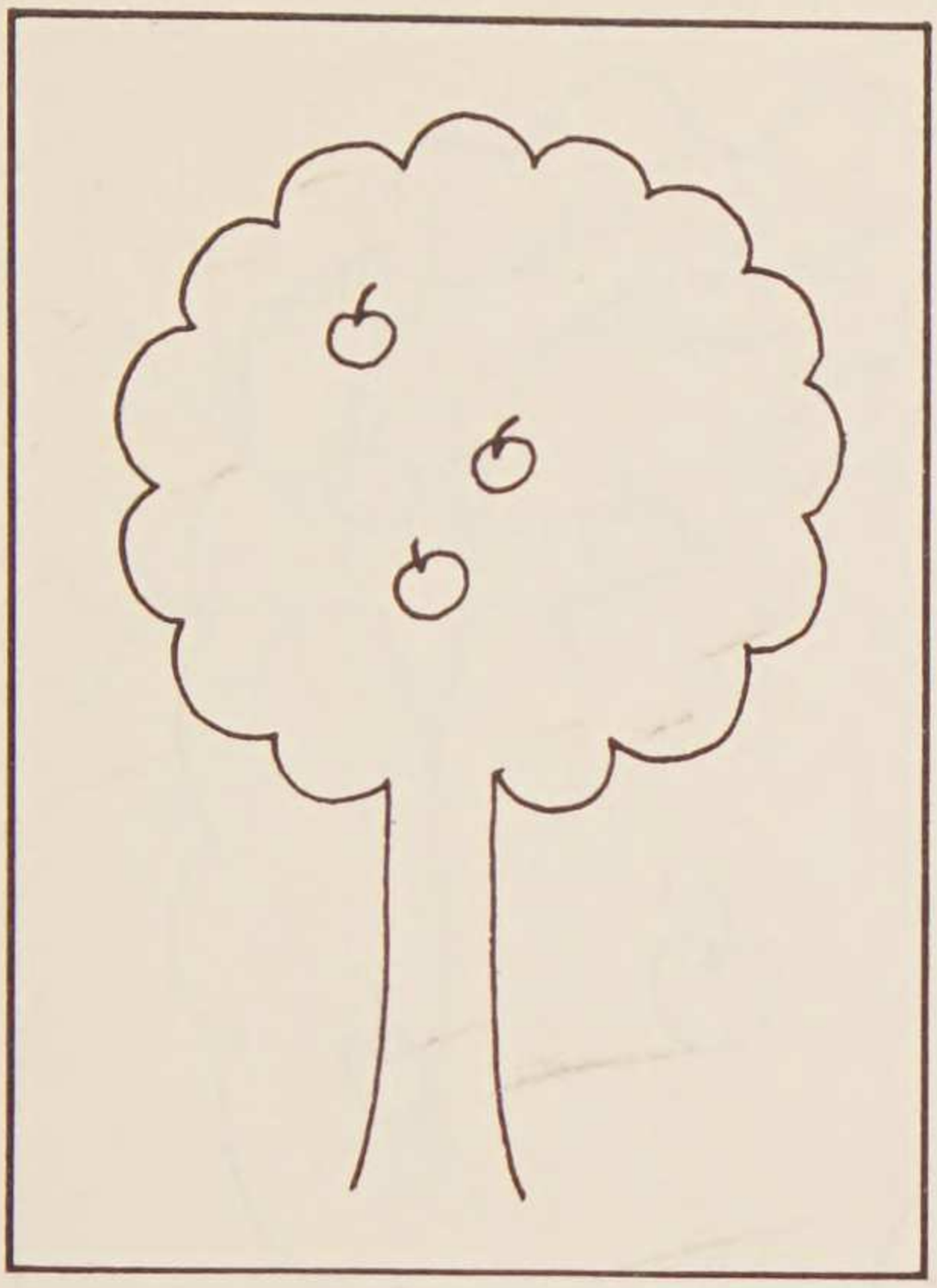


FIGURE 12e

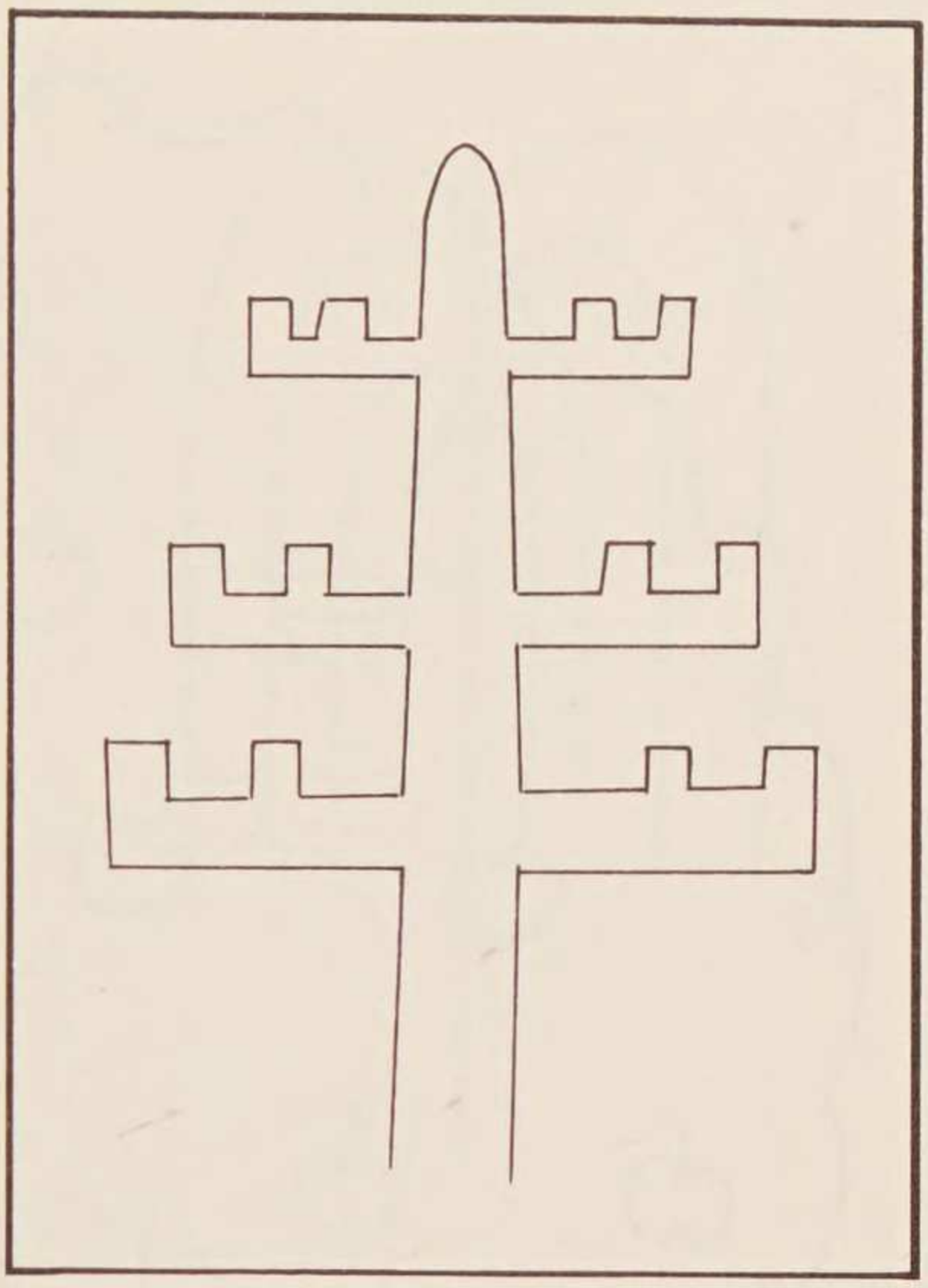


FIGURE 12f

FIGURE 12f: The abstract "trained tree"

This figure is a representation of the "trained tree." Persons who draw such trees (very rare in our experience) are usually attached to a kind of ordering which results from conditioning. They are not necessarily in subjugation to other persons, as might be supposed, but may equally well be expressing self-imposed efforts to create a strict order, both in the thinking and the feeling realms. Their striving to achieve order may represent adaptation to environmental pressures, or this effort may have an aesthetic purpose. In either case, the rather extreme degree of control will lead to an artificial ordering of the personality itself. All types of energy expression are highly channeled, but, unlike the pointed poplar and pine trees, the channeling is "sectioned off" in several directions, as it were, for these are often people of multiple interests or multiple gifts.

FIGURE 12g: The abstract winter tree

This figure is an abstract, single-line version of the winter tree. In this case the line which forms the trunk is *not* to be evaluated negatively, for the entire tree consists of single lines; thus, in relation to the whole, the trunk is normal. Persons who draw these extremely open trees are nearly always motivated by a highly developed sense of social service. They work with large groups of people or in relation to social causes, or they follow professions in which they serve the public. In positive drawings of this type, one finds a willingness to sacrifice purely personal aims in the interests of the common good. When the sense of sacrifice is unduly exag-

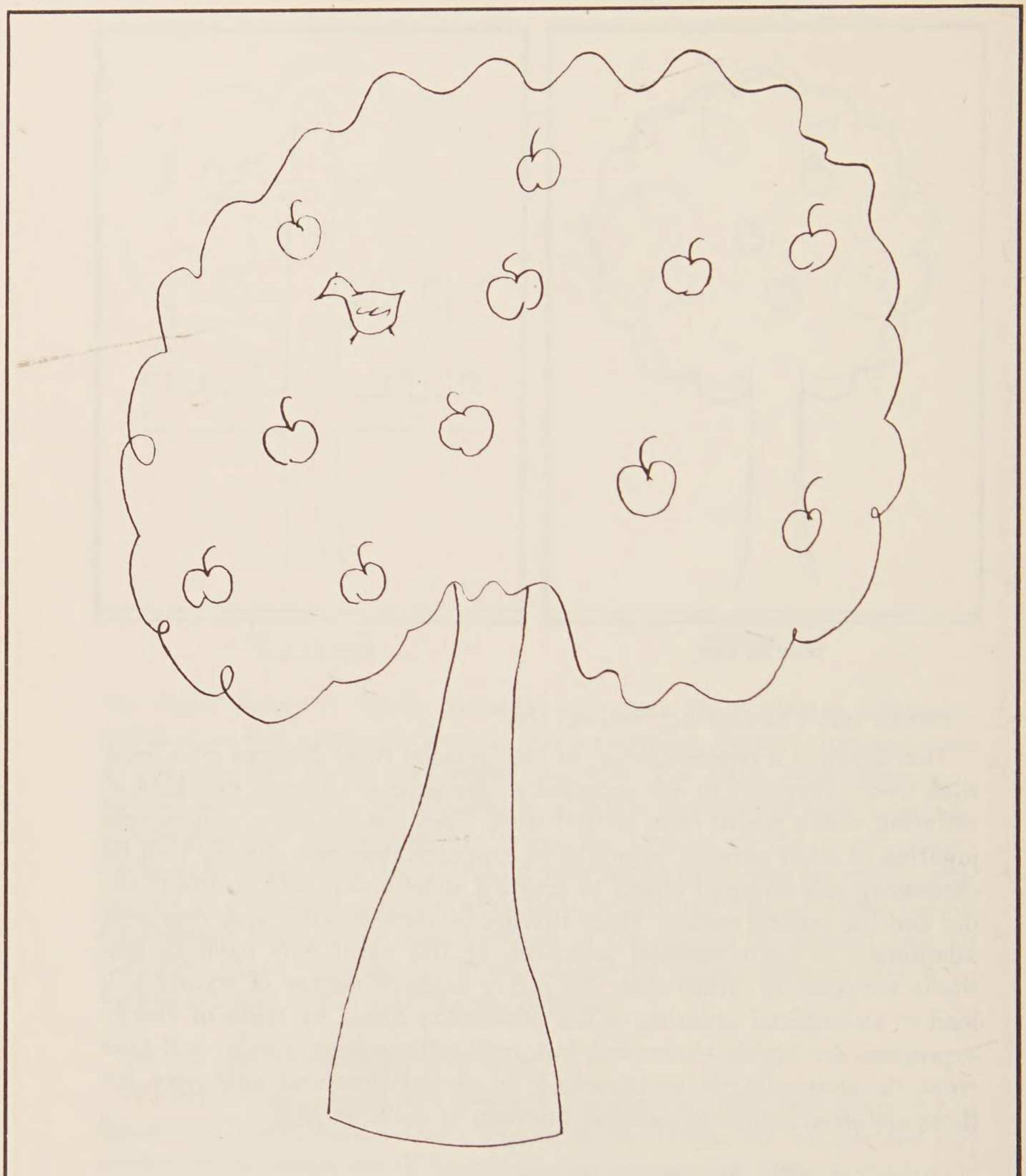


Illustration 11

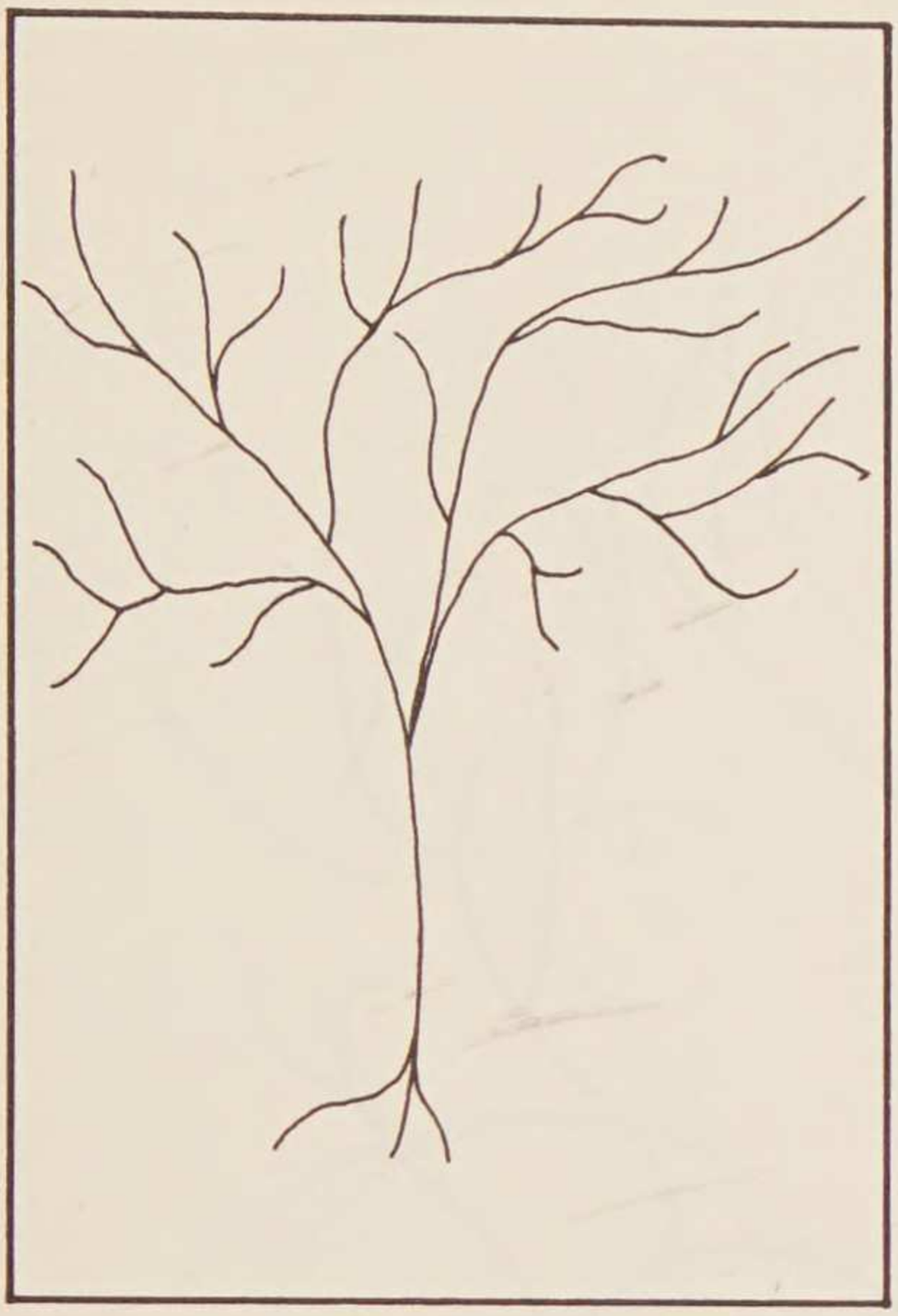


FIGURE 12g

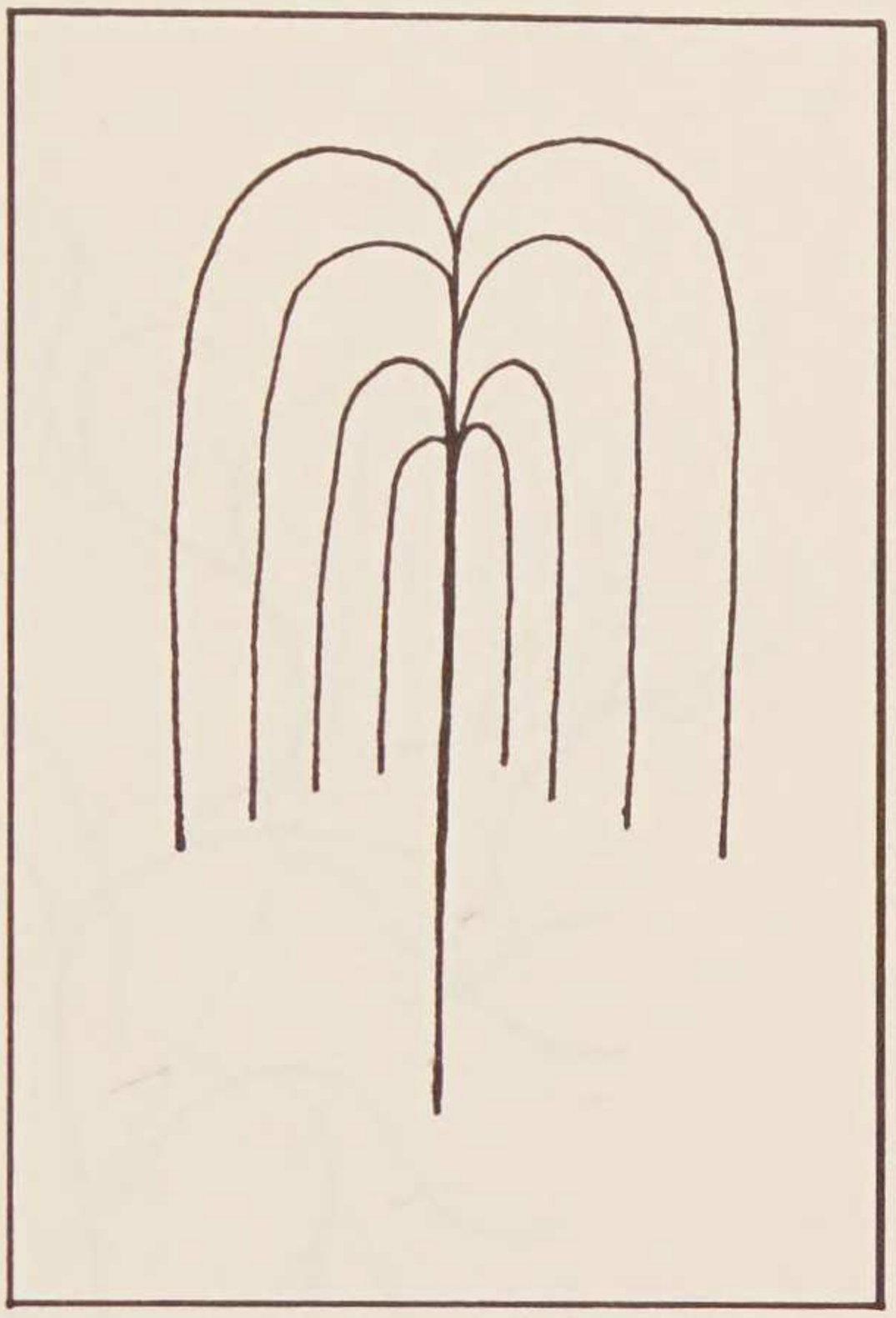


FIGURE 12h

gerated (usually indicated in the drawing by a predominance of inward-turning or downward-turning branches) there may be a defined martyr complex. Two illustrations of this tree type are here included. Illustration 12 is the drawing of a child psychologist (male, age thirty-six) who abandoned a well-paying job as an industrial psychologist in order to establish a center for disturbed children of political refugees. The financial and status rewards of this new work were minimal in comparison with those of his earlier position, but he has apparently found great personal satisfaction in working with the children and is appreciated by them with affection. Illustration 13 was drawn by a beautiful young actress who gave up a promising film career in order to join a wandering troupe of repertory players, whose group purpose is to bring art to the culturally deprived. In contrast to their professional generosity, however, both of these individuals are parsimonious about personal finances.

FIGURE 12h: The abstract willow tree

The abstract willow tree has almost the same type meaning as the realistically depicted willow, except that these subjects are somewhat less open to emotional approach. The downward-falling branches, especially if they are pointed, act as a sort of trident which is used to fend off anything or anyone approaching from below. Further, subjects who draw abstractions of the willow tree are prone to depression and tend to be iso-

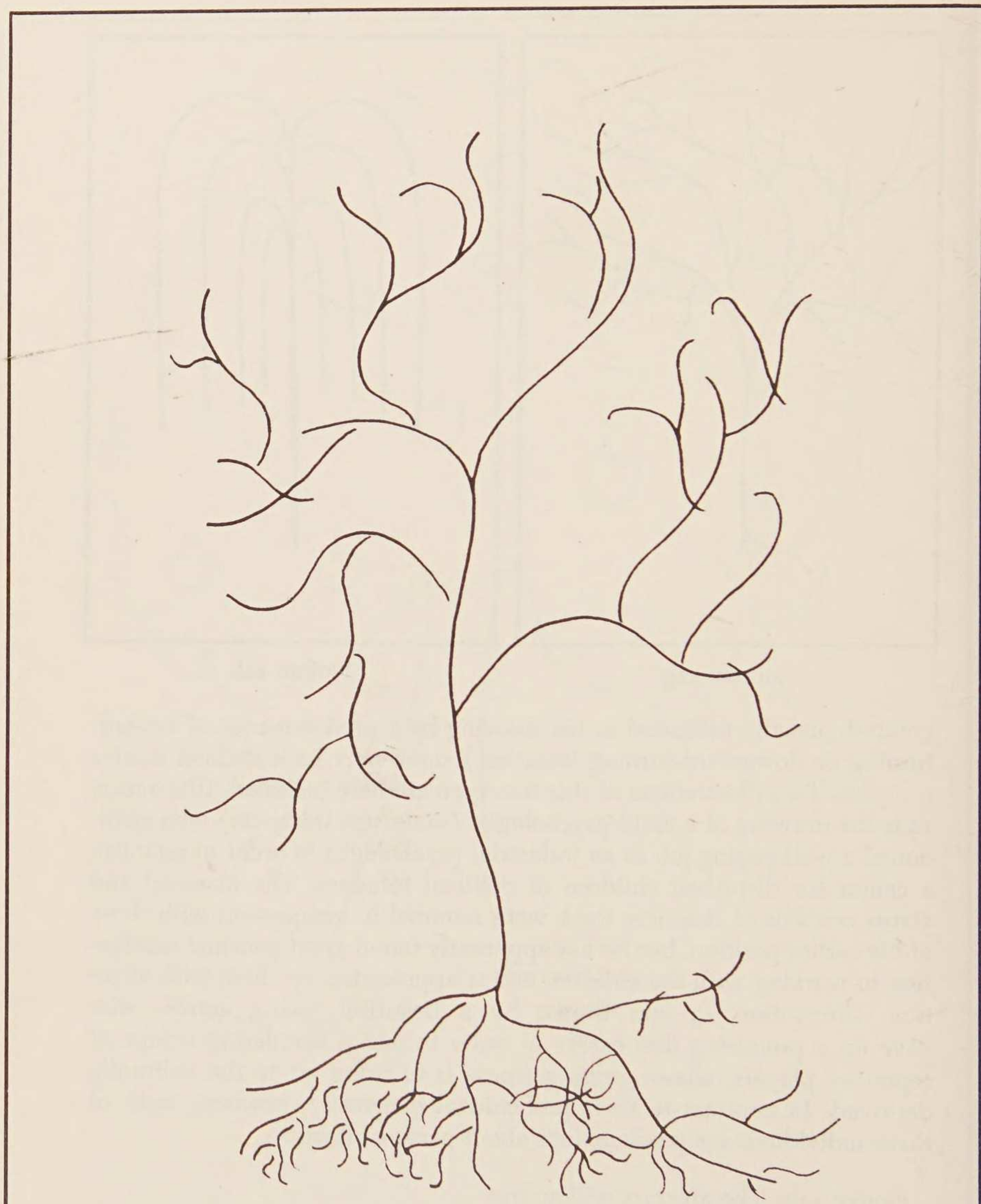


Illustration 12

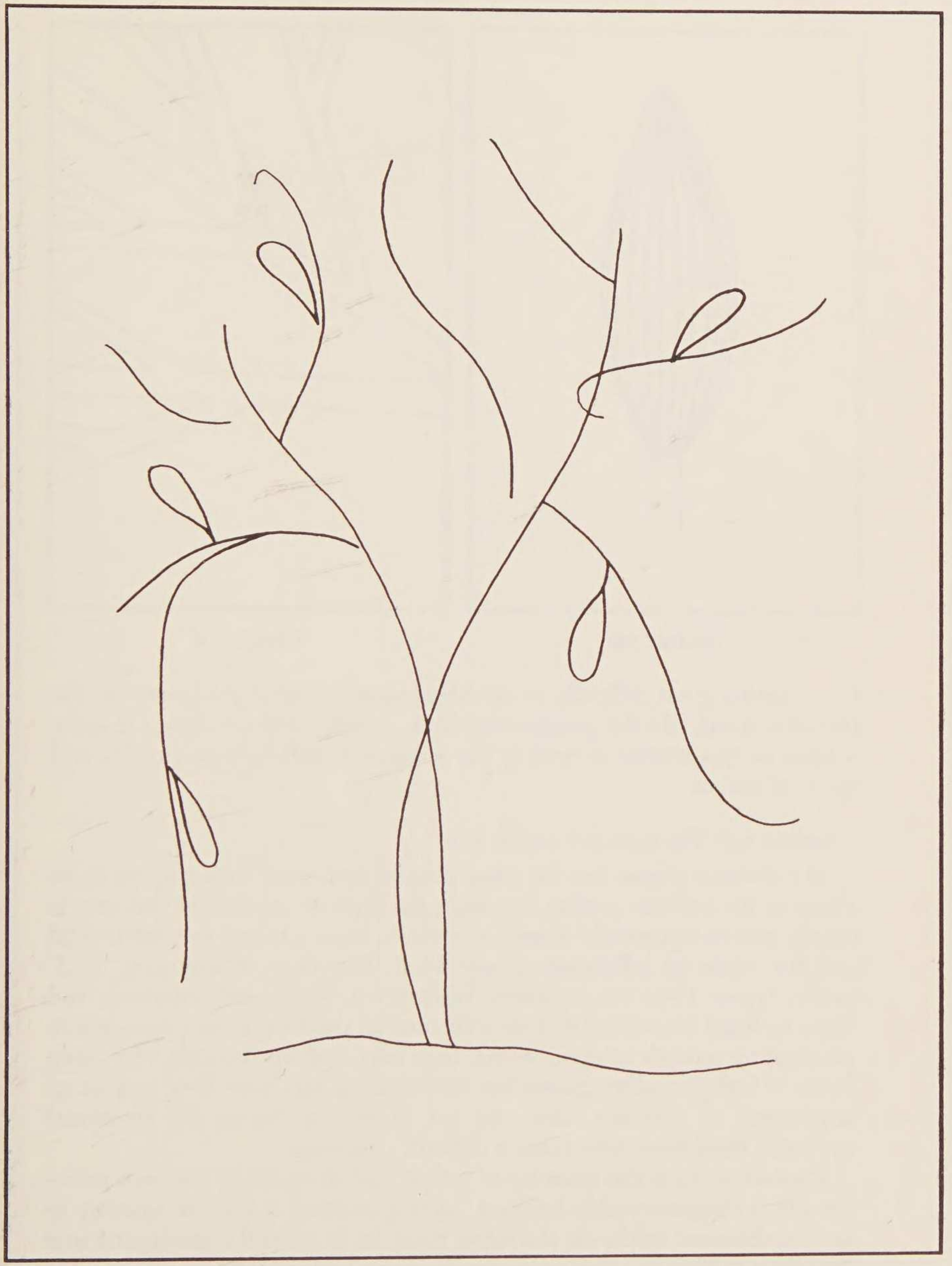


Illustration 13

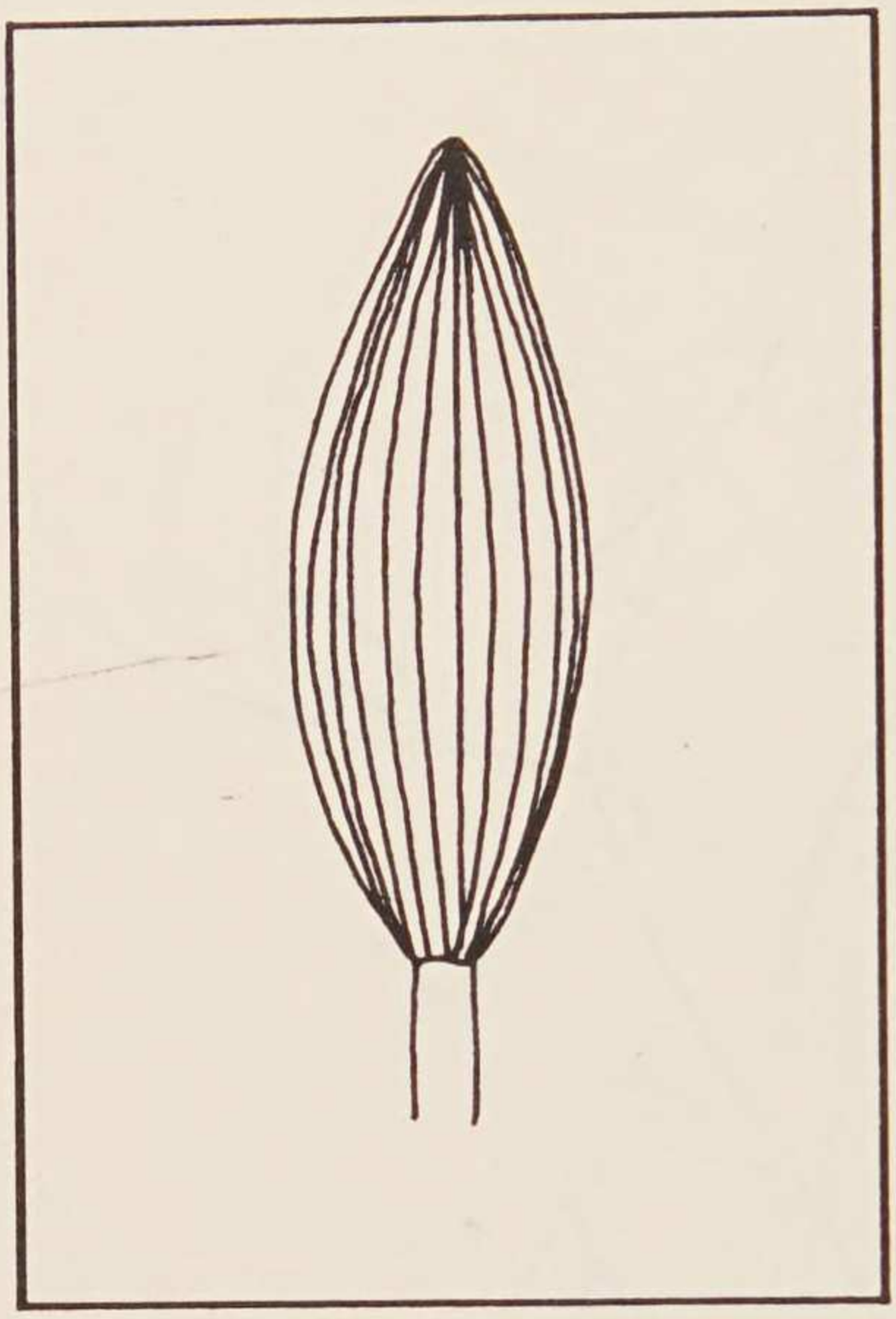


FIGURE 12i

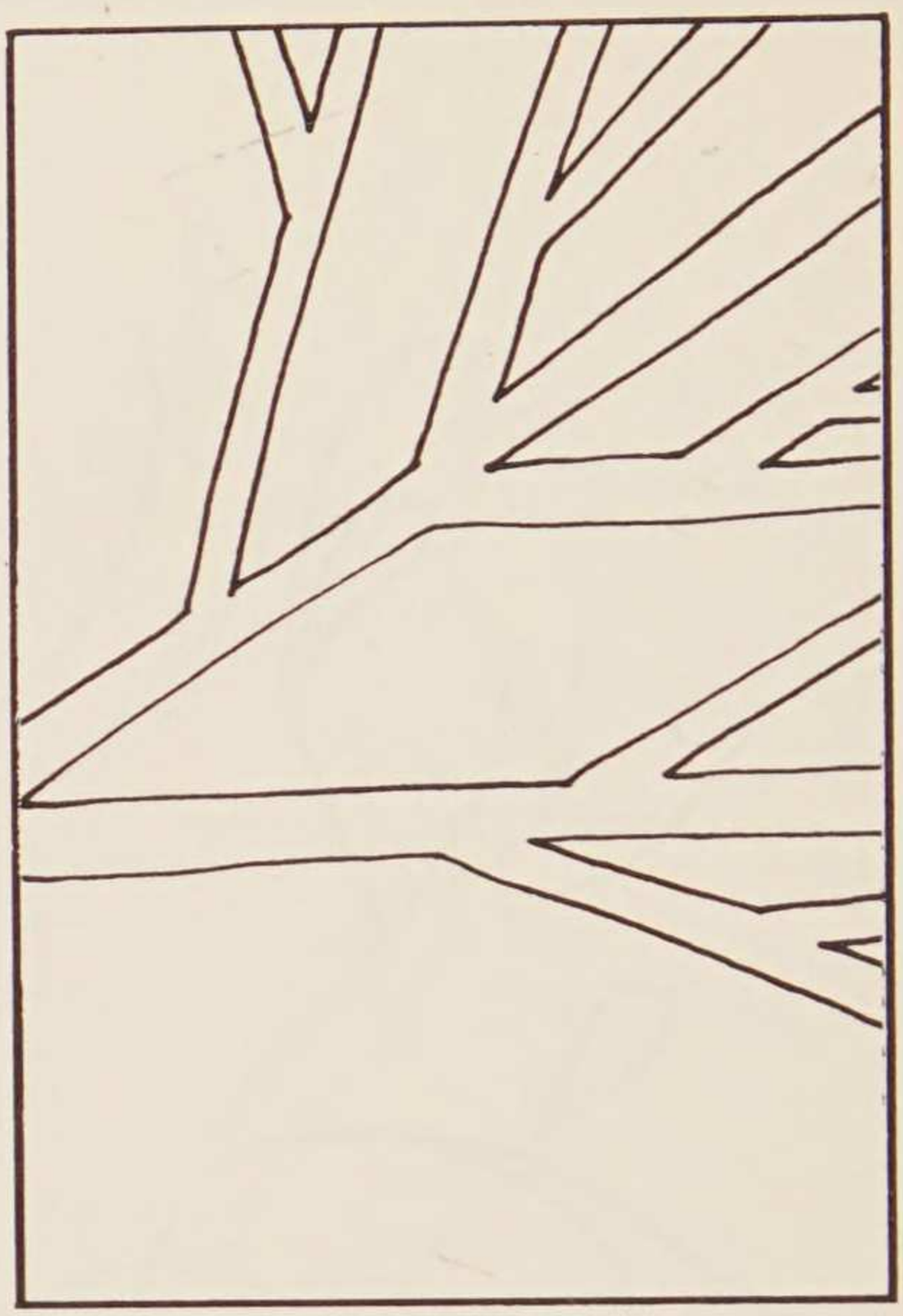


FIGURE 12j

lates, having great difficulty in establishing meaningful relationships. On the other hand, like the people who draw realistic willows, they are quite subject to superstition or open to the influx of materials from psychic and spiritual realms.

FIGURE 12i: The abstract poplar tree

The abstract poplar has the same general meanings with respect to its shape as the realistic poplar, but since the abstract version of this tree is nearly always completely closed in outline, these persons are more rigid and less open to influences of any kind than their counterpart "real" poplar types. They are extremely introverted, rather self-absorbed, and often inclined to overvalue their own mental abilities. If one succeeds in penetrating to their internal world, they may end by showing very deep levels of feeling and a capacity for commitment; but since they project an impression of coldness, they do not attract or invite an emotional approach from those who enjoy a difficult challenge.

Illustration 14 is the drawing of a thirty-seven-year-old research scientist. He is unquestionably brilliant, having attained a level of mastery in several different fields. At the same time, he is patently unadapted and unwilling to change, even when his mental analyses lead him to conclude that his behavioral patterns are self-destructive or senselessly repetitive. He tries very hard to separate emotion from thinking and to control com-

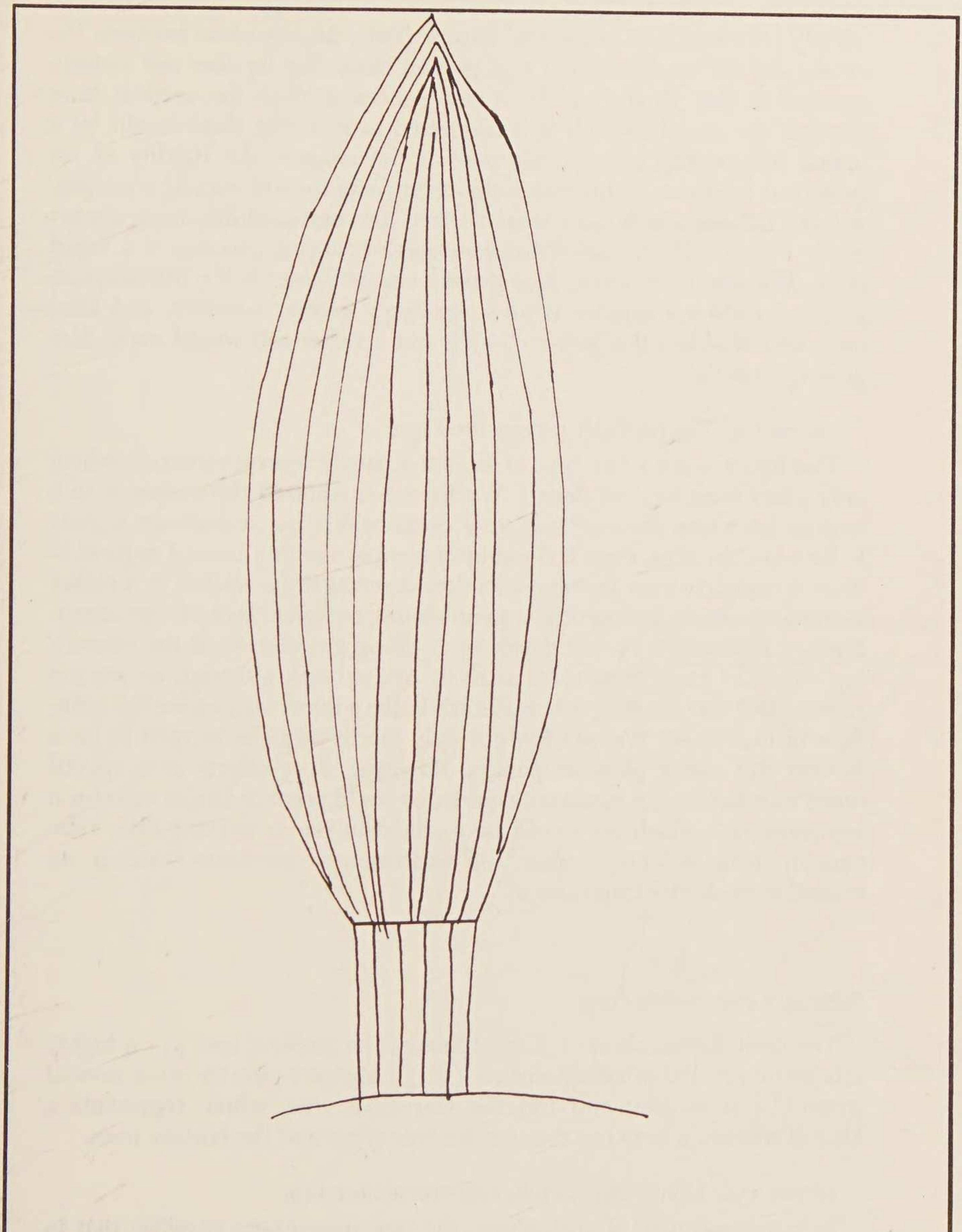


Illustration 14

pletely his sexual and instinctual nature (note the cross-line between the crown and the trunk, and the firm ground line); but he does not entirely succeed in this effort (see the minor penetrations of the vertical lines through the cross-lines). If it is suggested to him that there might be a causal relationship between his pose of detachment, the rigidity of his patterned behavior, or his rather driven striving toward mental triumphs, and the failures which have characterized his emotional life, he is always ready with a brilliant rationalization which brings discussion to a rapid close. Actually, he is a very nice person, and underneath the maladapted, shy, and stubborn exterior is an exceedingly gentle, sensitive, and kind man. One wonders if a better climate and a richer soil would make him grow differently.

FIGURE 12j: The partially represented tree

This figure is not a tree type at all, but a partial representation in which only a few branches are drawn. We have encountered this response to a request for a tree drawing only very occasionally, but it does not appear to be a healthy sign, even if the subject complies with a second request to draw a complete tree. In some instances it seems to be related to a rather exalted ego sense, and in others to an almost complete lack of ego identification. Illustration 15 was drawn by a young girl outside of the consulting room and brought to us for analysis. We suspect, although we are not certain, that the drawing was made while the subject was under the influence of marijuana. We met the girl only briefly and she seemed to be a modest and rather pleasant person. However, drug effects or a special mood induced by the cannabis experience could account in this case for a representation which we would be inclined to see as bearing little relationship with ordinary reality and expressing a euphoric state or an exalted sense of self-importance.

Abstract coniferous trees

The most commonly seen abstractions of the conifers are: (1) a highly schematic upward-pointing wedge; (2) an abstract pine showing several pyramidal structures; and (3) the Christmas tree, which represents a kind of transition between the abstract tree types and the fantasy trees.

FIGURE 13a: Coniferous tree in extreme abstraction

In extreme degree of abstraction, the tree shown here parallels that in figure 12a. If it is drawn exactly as in the figure, with a single-line trunk, one may suspect paranoid tendencies, especially inclinations to delusions of grandeur. As with all conifer types, the drive to success is powerful, but when the ego needs for the achievement of high goals are not sup-

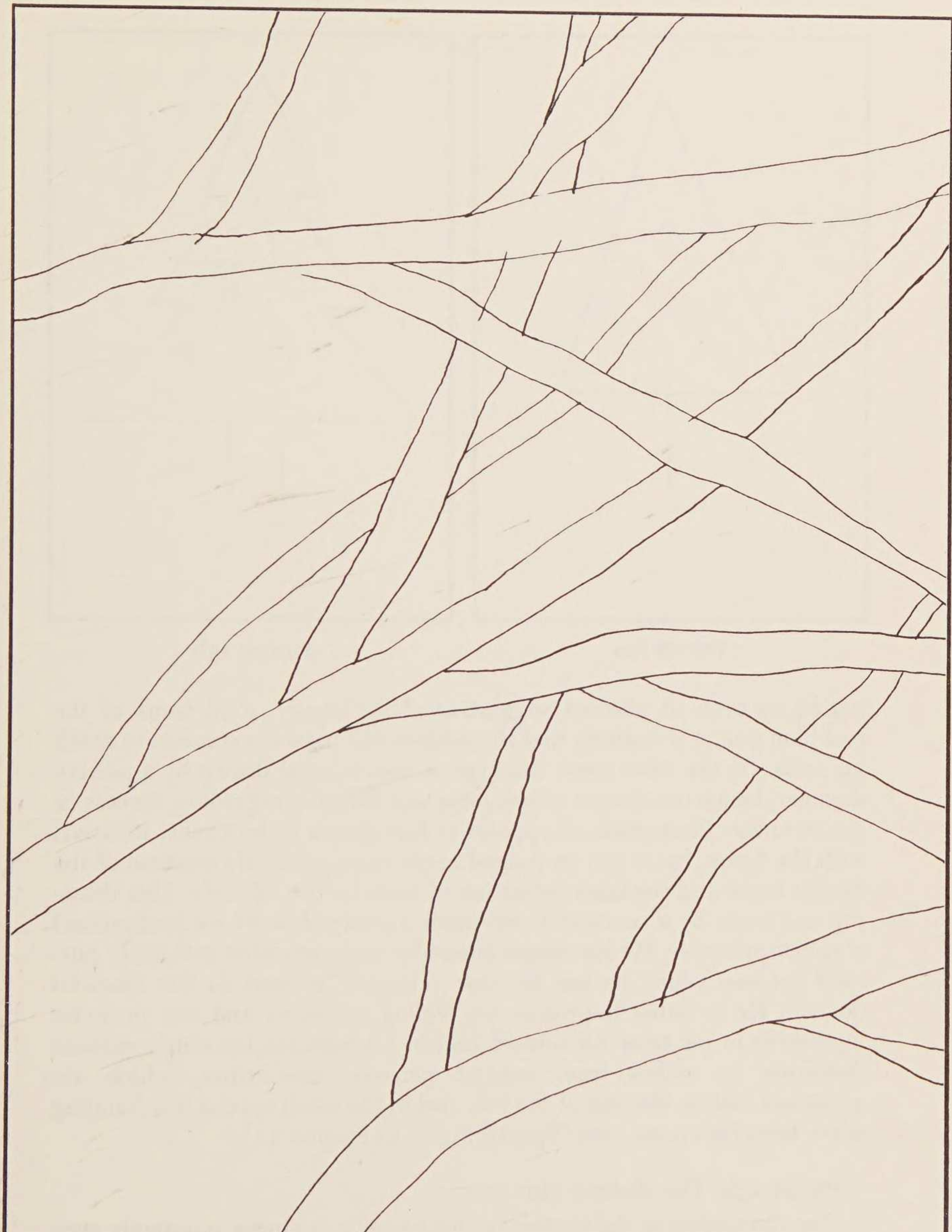


Illustration 15

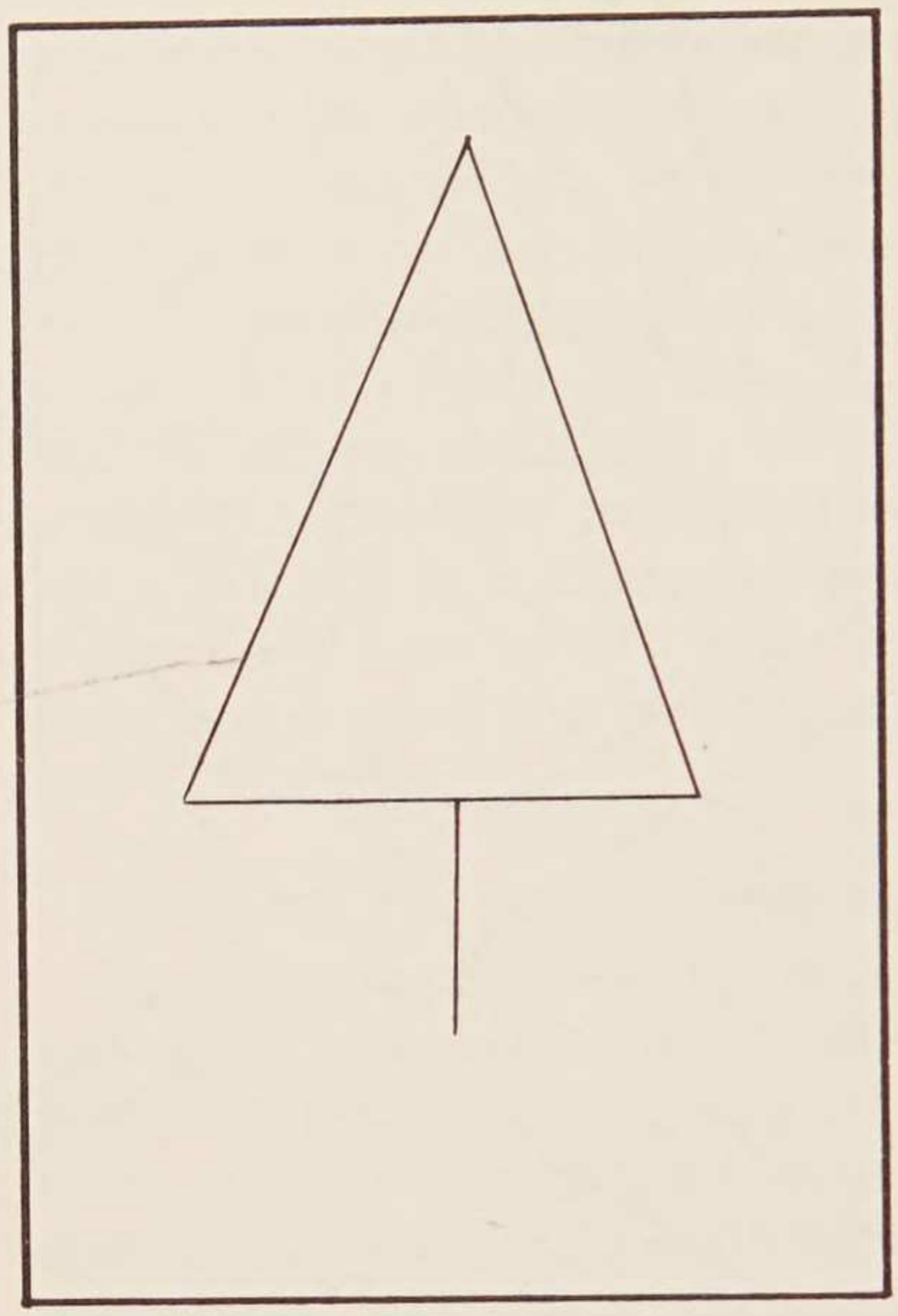


FIGURE 13a

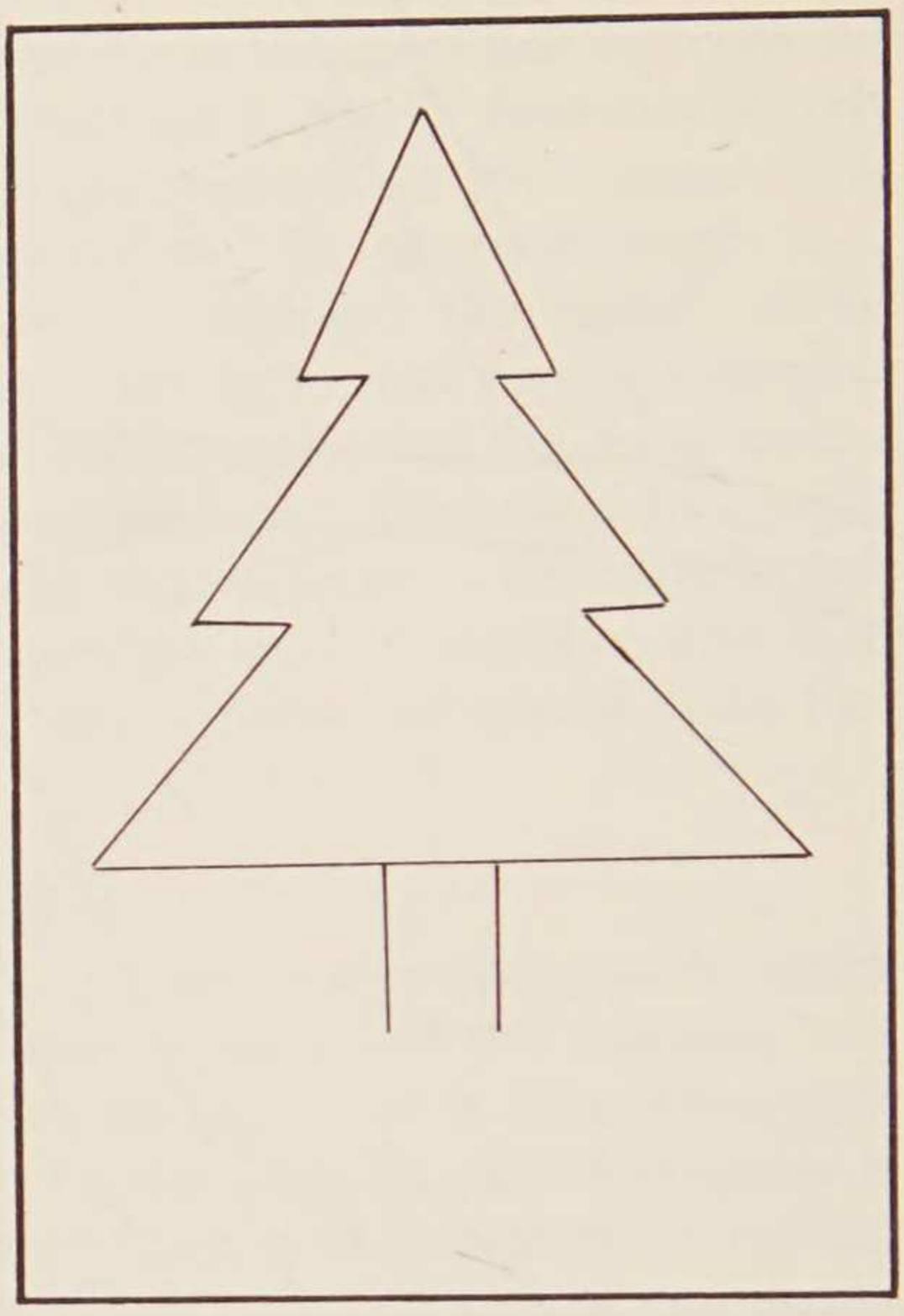


FIGURE 13b

ported by even an abstract suggestion of the sturdy, solid trunk of the real pine tree, it is unlikely that the subject will have the stamina to reach his goals. On the other hand, this type of tree is never drawn by a passive dreamer, hence the danger of complete self-delusion regarding success or achievement. Illustration 16 appears at first glance to be almost identical with the figure, but it can be judged much more positively because of the double trunk and the faint indication of roots on the left side. This drawing was made by a successful, self-made businessman whose background is rather primitive. He has single-mindedly and somewhat ruthlessly pursued success, which he has by now achieved, at least in the financial domain. He is rather limited in his feeling responses and can be quite insensitive in his behavior toward others. Underneath his tough exterior demeanor he suffers from marked personal insecurities, which are expressed both in the size of the tree and in the small special line hanging down from the crown (see "Special Signs" in chapter 11).

FIGURE 13b: The abstract pine tree

The abstraction of the conifer in this figure is far more commonly seen than that shown in figure 13a. These persons have an almost incredible confidence with regard to their worldly endeavors; indeed, perhaps as a consequence of this confidence, they are usually successful. They will have all the basic characteristics of the pine people, with an exaggeration



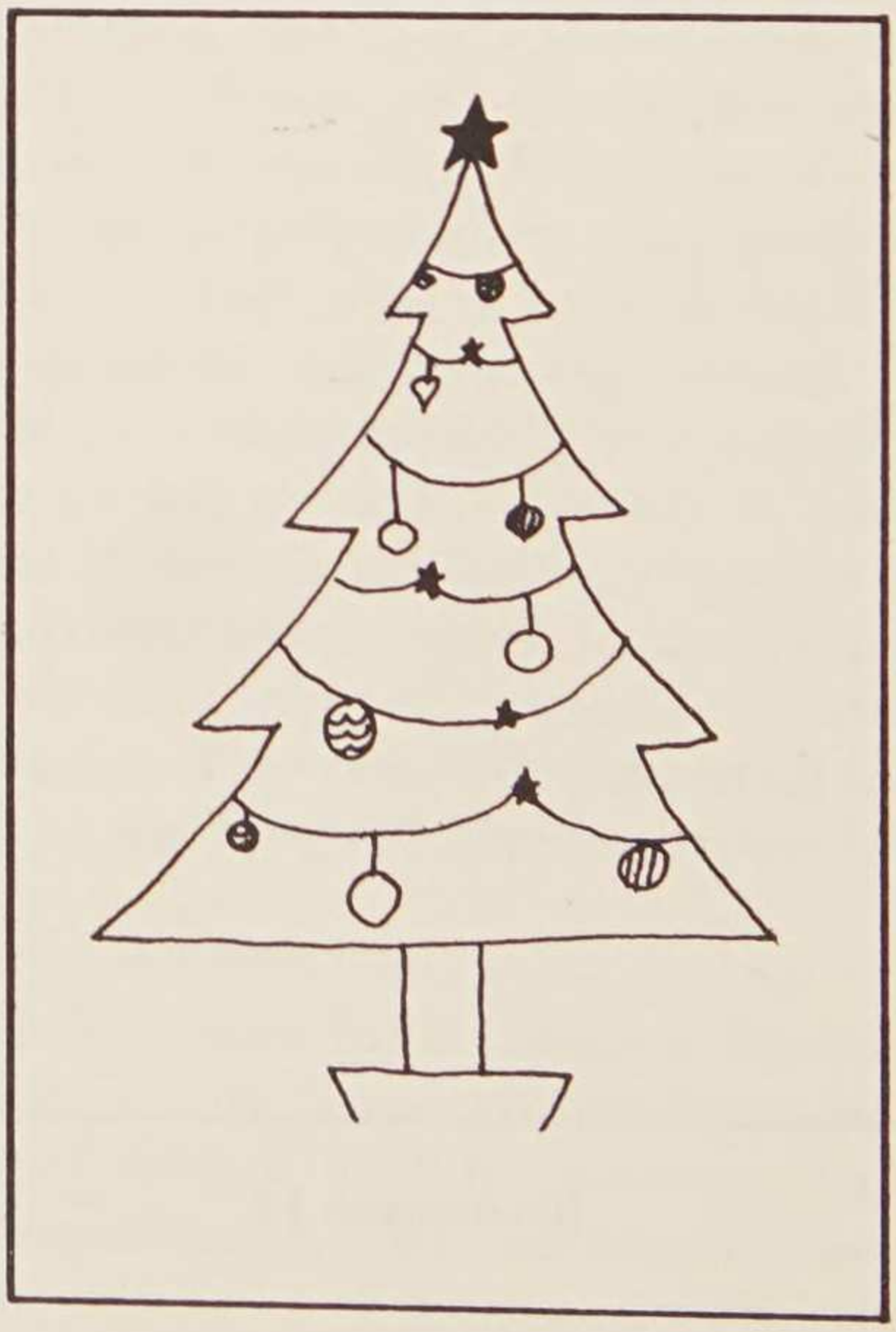
Illustration 16

of the qualities of stubborness and determined, goal-oriented behavior. The concentration of primitive energies, focused into the upward-pointing wedge shape, is expressive of their tireless capacity for work. They are less vulnerable than those who draw representative pine trees to emotional approaches or influences, and they are generally also more completely self-contained, since this is usually a closed-outline tree. Should the tree be slightly open at the top, the drive for success is still very strong, but the subject may not have a defined or specific goal.

FIGURE 13c: The Christmas tree

The Christmas tree is a recognizable tree type, and hence cannot be precisely catagorized as a fantasy tree, but like fantasy trees it expresses a dissatisfaction with ordinary reality. The attitude stance of these subjects is commonly one of expectation, of waiting for special events or festive happenings. A certain amount of romanticism is obviously implied. If a Christmas tree is drawn, it is always a good idea to get another drawing on a different date, because the impulse to draw this particular type of tree may be the expression of a momentary state of expectation with regard to a specific coming event. The decorations on the tree should be read, not as additional "signs" (as with birdhouses and the like), but as an integral part of the tree, since they constitute its type identification.

FIGURE 13c



Fantasy trees

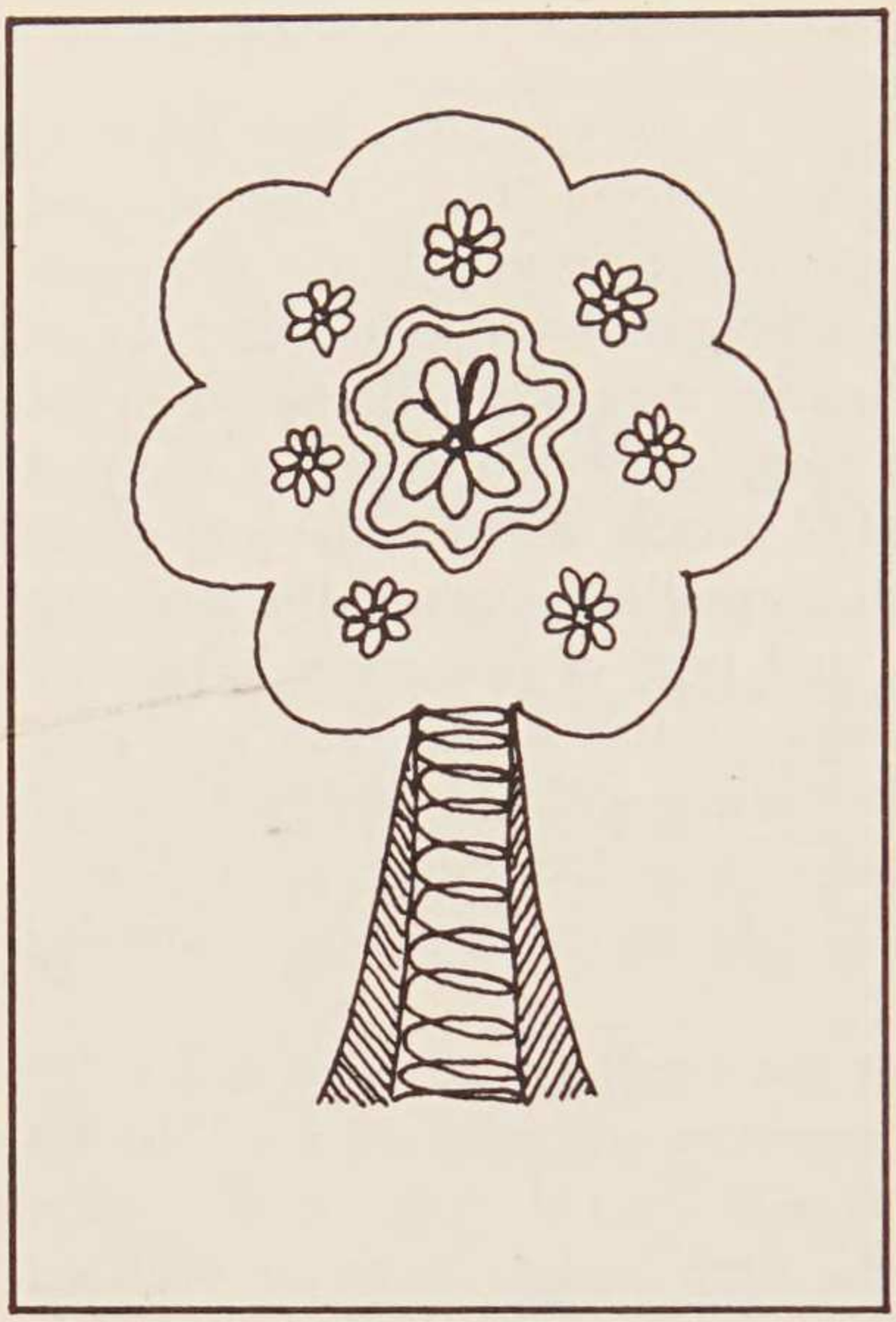
Fantasy trees are very difficult to classify as to type, since each drawing will represent a unique expression of the concept "tree," often without any reference to types of trees. Still, two major groupings can be distinguished: trees which are made up of elaborated single-line techniques and those which show graphically decorative details superimposed on the basic outline or structure. The second group are much easier to interpret because of the presence and placement of details, whereas the first group can only be analyzed in terms of basic formal elements of the drawing, such as position, size, type of stroke, and type of line used. While we cannot possibly elaborate on all the many forms which may be found within fantasy trees, reference to works dealing with the interpretation of spontaneous drawings, including scribbles (e.g., Lundholm, 1921; Waehner, 1936; Meyers, 1953; Mühle, 1967), may be useful when examining the details.

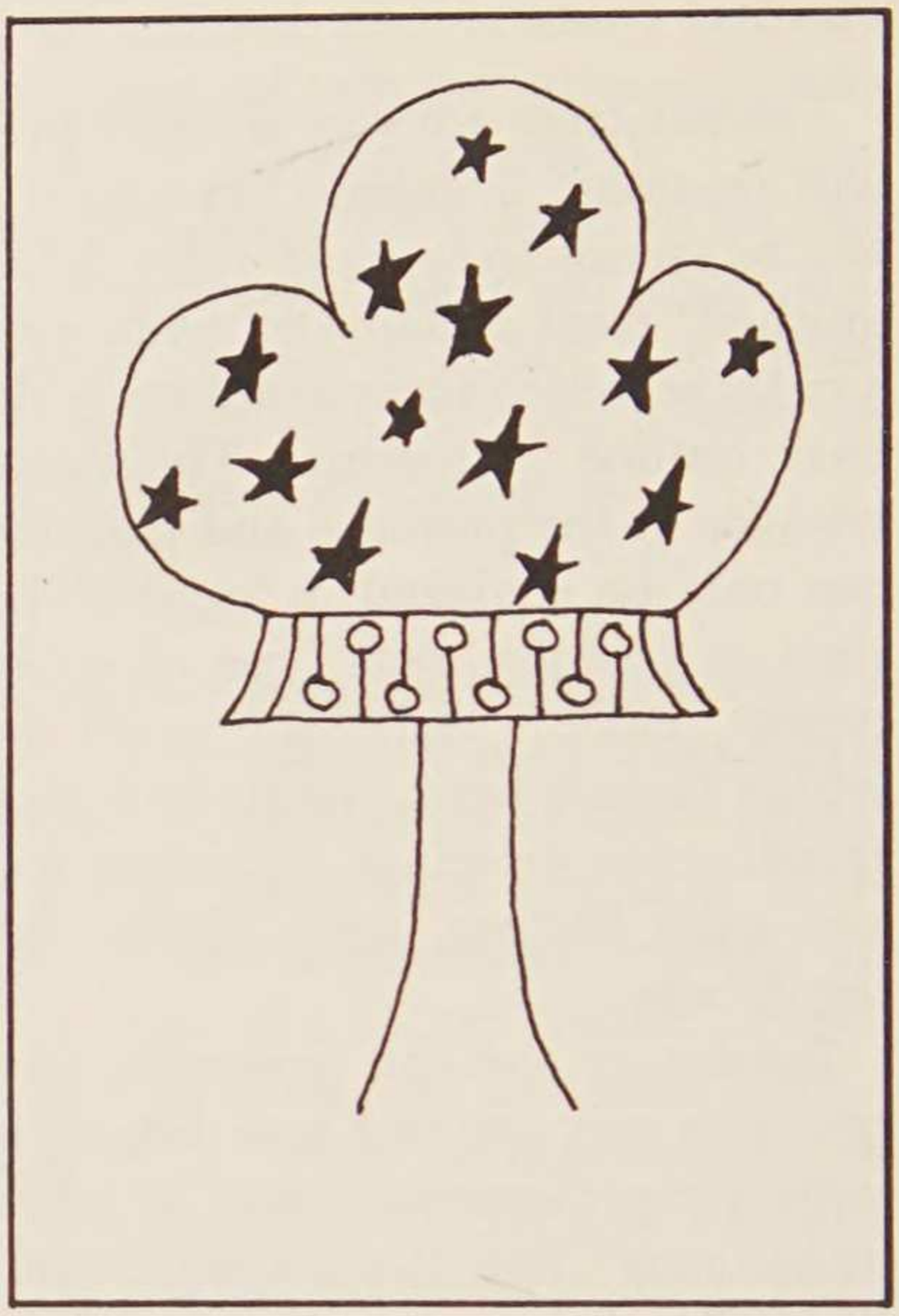
Insofar as one can generalize about the tendency to draw a fantasy tree, one may say that two distinct interpretive attitudes are possible. All fantasy representations may be taken as indicators of escape from reality; or one may allow that some persons who draw fantasy trees are utilizing their gifts of humor or their satirical perspective on life as an acceptable mode of coping with reality.

Since no comprehensive type classifications can be made for fantasy trees, the figures and illustrations which follow should be regarded as merely a few examples of many possible renderings which may be encountered when the subject is not instructed to draw a real tree, or specifically requested to draw a fantasy tree.

FIGURES 14a and 14b: Filled-in fantasy trees

These two figures represent two possible ways in which fantasy trees may be drawn with details filling in the interior of the tree. Figure 14a is obviously somewhat closer in shape to an actual tree than 14b, but both are "unreal" when seen in relation to either representative or abstract tree drawings. The interpretation should take into account the general feeling conveyed by the content of the tree. Figure 14a, which is filled with flower motifs, is both romantic and feminine in tone, whereas the upper part of 14b resembles a fairy-tale crown, and the tone is somewhat more active than that of 14a. Attention to the rendering of details, to the symmetry, and to the placement of each interior motif, as well as to formal matters of position and size, can yield useful information with trees of this group, although the results will be less certain than those obtained from the analysis of real or abstract trees.





FIGURES 14a and 14b

FIGURE 14c: Curved-line fantasy tree

This tree is a fantasy in single-line curves. It has a certain humorous tone in common with the "tinker toy" tree shown in 14e. The curving lines are pleasant to the eye and softer in effect than the straight lines of the two angular trees which follow. The branches seem to hold some promise of unfolding, and, on the whole, this is the least static of all the fantasy trees shown in these five figures. On the other hand, this is probably the least direct of these trees. The lines which curve back upon themselves and tend inward suggest much that is hidden or retained within the self.

FIGURE 14d: Angular fantasy tree

Of these five fantasy representations, this tree is the least agreeable in tone. The lines are straight and angular and the structure conveys a marked feeling of hostility. One of our subjects drew a tree in this form when in an exceedingly angry and vengeful frame of mind, rendering it in sharp strokes drawn several times over, so that the pencil cut through the paper in places.

FIGURE 14e: The Tinkertoy tree

While this tree is also angular in structure, the ball forms at the end of each branch and the dispersion of the line structure soften the tone a good deal. Its resemblance to a tinker toy construction gives it a playful

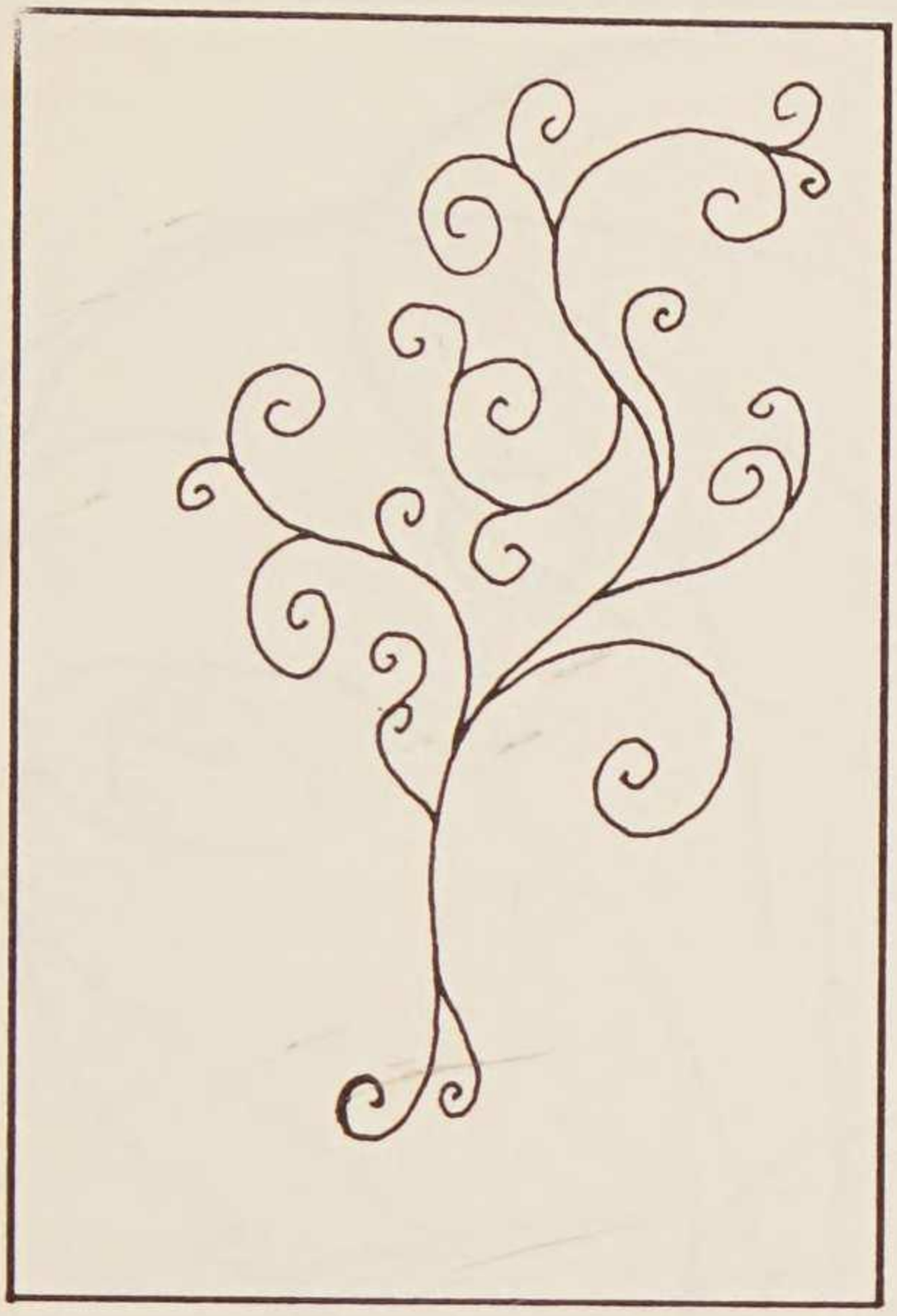


FIGURE 14c

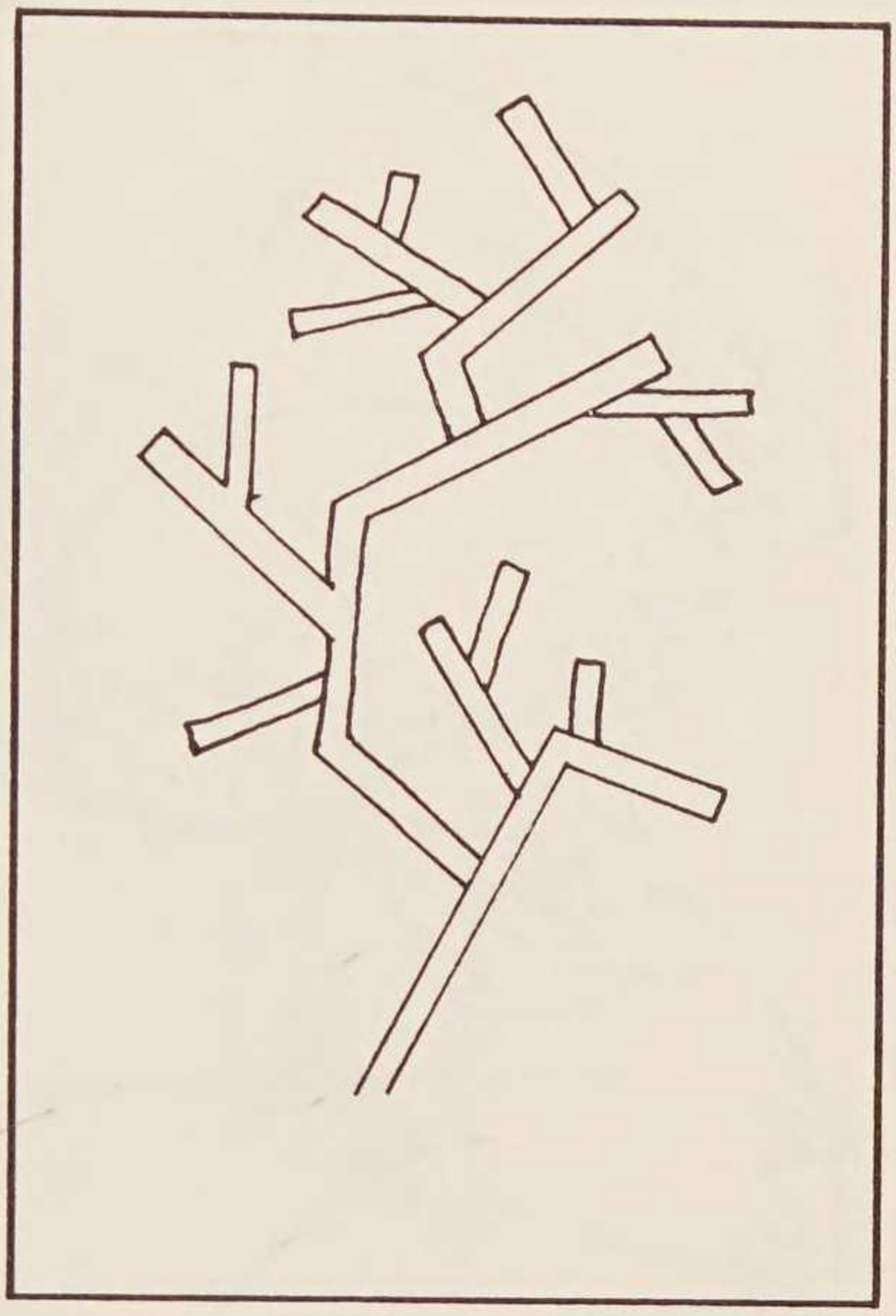


FIGURE 14d

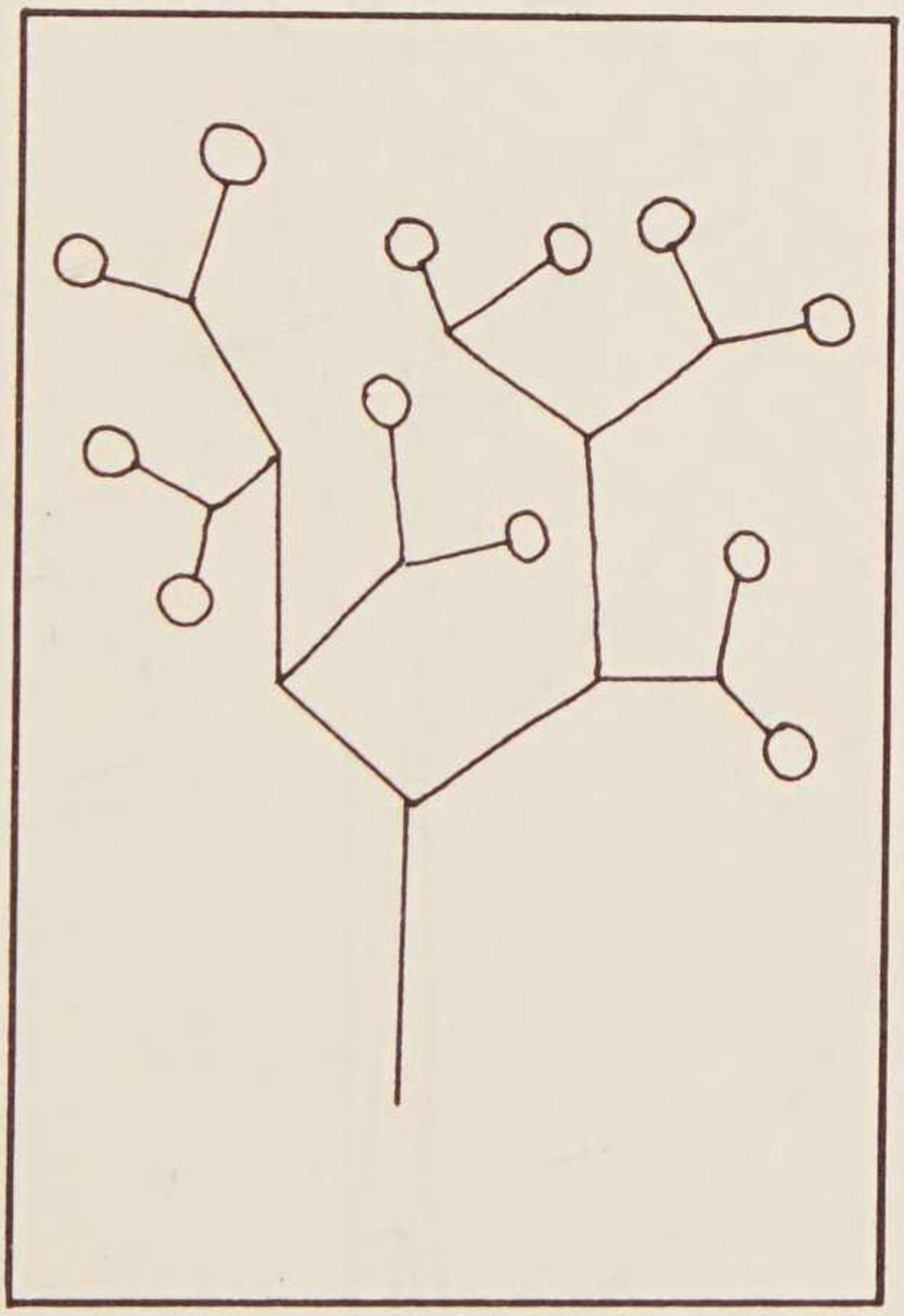


FIGURE 14e

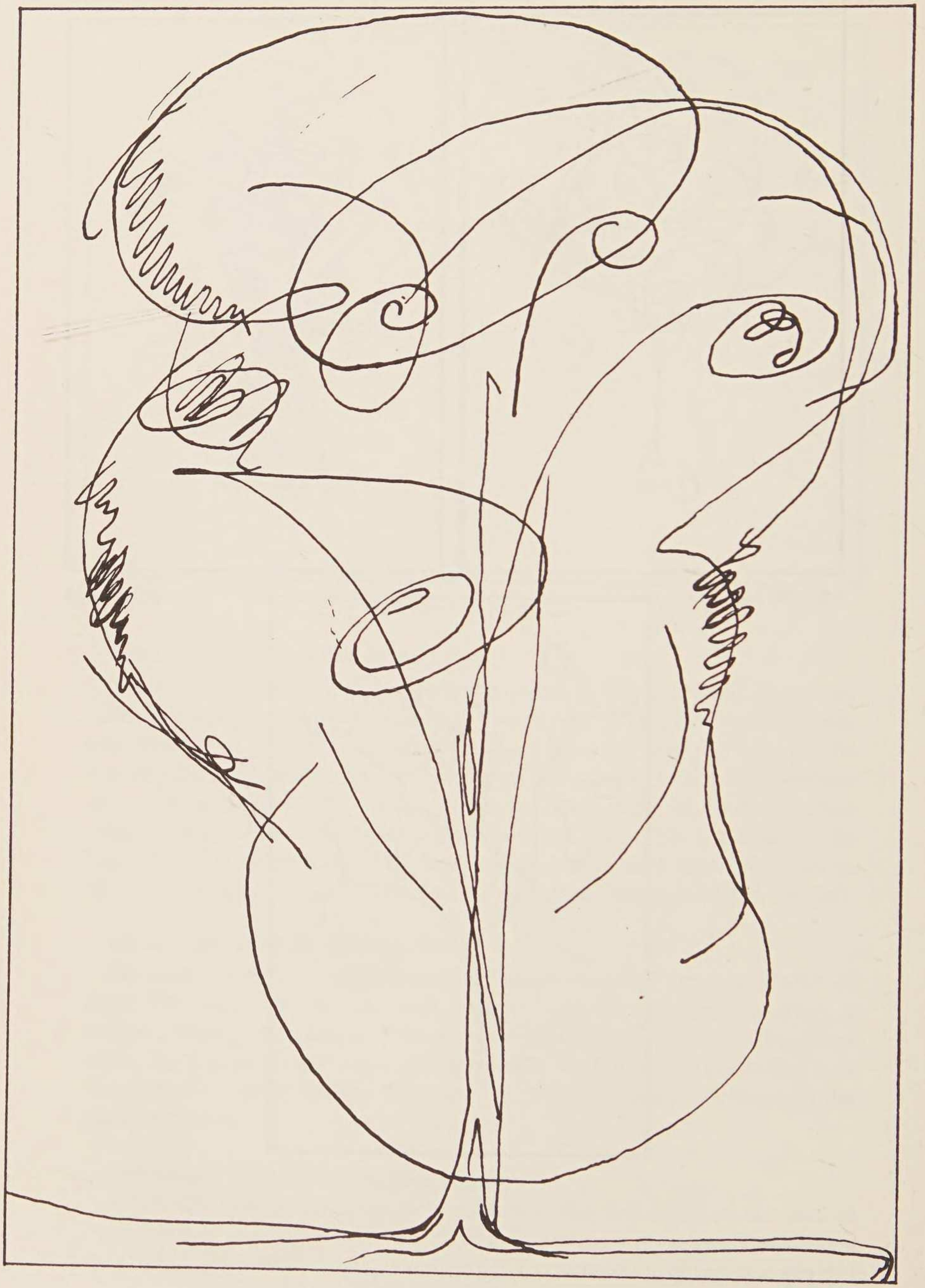


Illustration 17



Illustration 18

quality as well, which brings it closer to figures 14a and 14b as a rather childish but innocent expression.

Four actual drawings of fantasy trees are included here, principally to illustrate the multiplicity of possible variations on this theme. We shall not discuss in detail the meanings we have attributed to these drawings, but will provide some comments about the subjects and their life circumstances at the time when the trees were drawn.

Illustration 17 was drawn by a sculptor from Eastern Europe. Although he had achieved critical renown and international acclaim for his work, his life circumstances could best be described as miserable. He lived and worked in an abandoned church, together with his nine-year-old daughter, who "kept house" for him in the improvised dwelling, half-exposed to the elements. The drawing has an ironic quality. If one examines it closely, the face of an owl can be discerned in the crown, serious and heavy, while the graceful, curving strokes which make up much of the tree seem to suggest an attempt to experience life and express the self with a certain lightness of touch. One might surmise that a detached, slightly sardonic view of his own circumstances is necessary to his sanity.

Illustration 18 was sent to us by a thirty-four-year-old psychiatrist. He has recently been divorced and only a year or so earlier was exiled from his native country. In addition to his work as a research psychiatrist, he has been professionally involved in both music and literature.

This tree is more amenable to standard interpretation than the previous one, since the extreme shading, the open crown, and the position on the page can be evaluated in much the same manner as realistic trees. Although we have been told that the family background was harmonious, because of the position and shading, one must suspect some difficulties with the mother, as well as unresolved problems vis-à-vis women in general. The open crown can be related to his interests in yoga, in psychic phenomena, and in Eastern religions. With the entire tree placed in the upper right zone, these interests are subordinated to his scientific stance. On the other hand, the small secondary tree in the left middle zone suggests that he has less control than he would consciously claim over the impact of impressions from mystical or superconscious realms.

Illustration 19 was drawn by the scientist whose typical tree, an abstract poplar, is shown in illustration 14. This drawing differs mainly in the inclusion of the fine decorative detail. At the time of this drawing the man was deeply depressed in mood and plagued by obsessive thinking patterns in relation to his problems. While the poplar shape (which he draws consistently) is still indicative of his basically disciplined efforts to attain his goals, the filling in of the abstract form with decorative details suggests a temporary mood of distraction and compulsive repetition. This

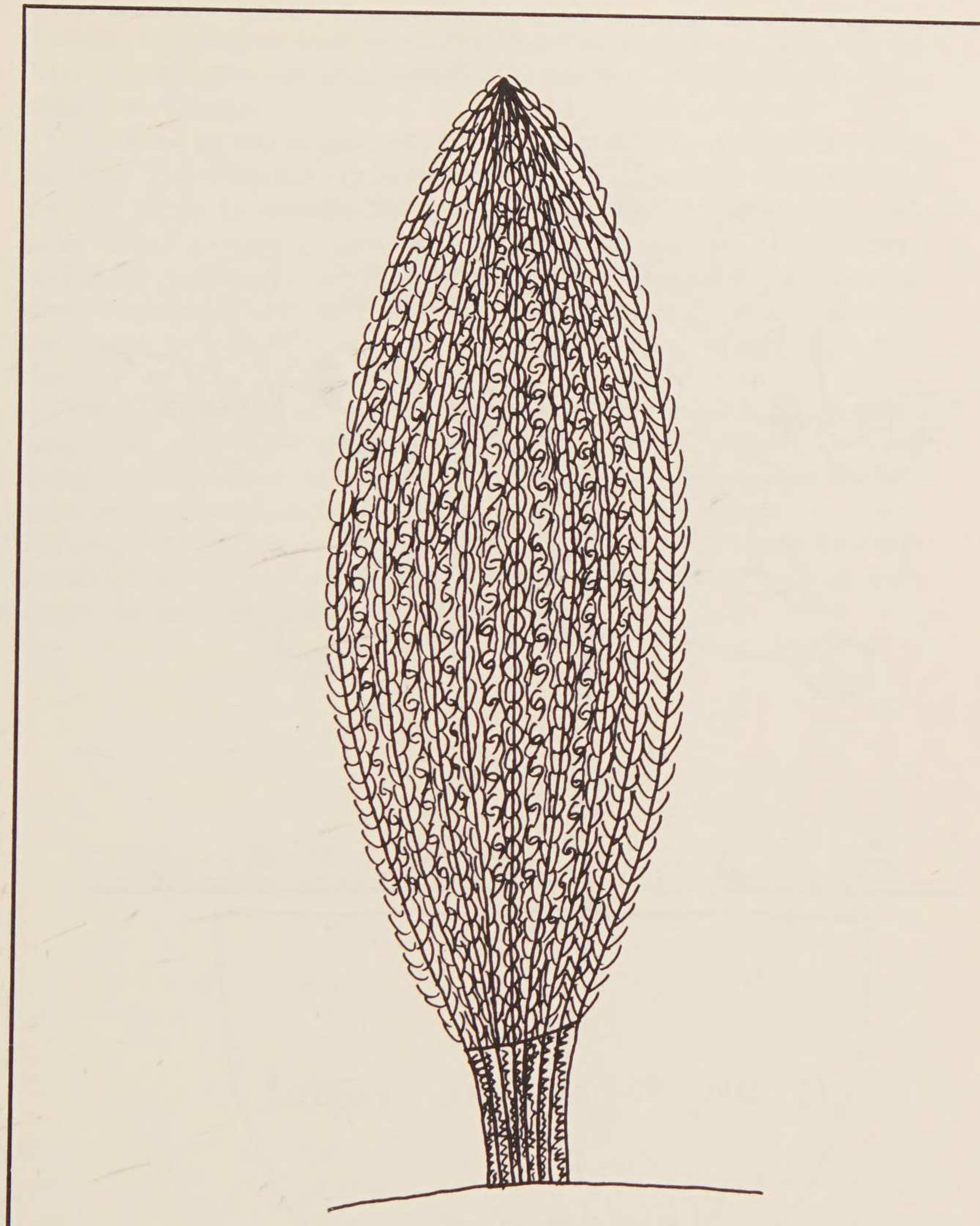


Illustration 19

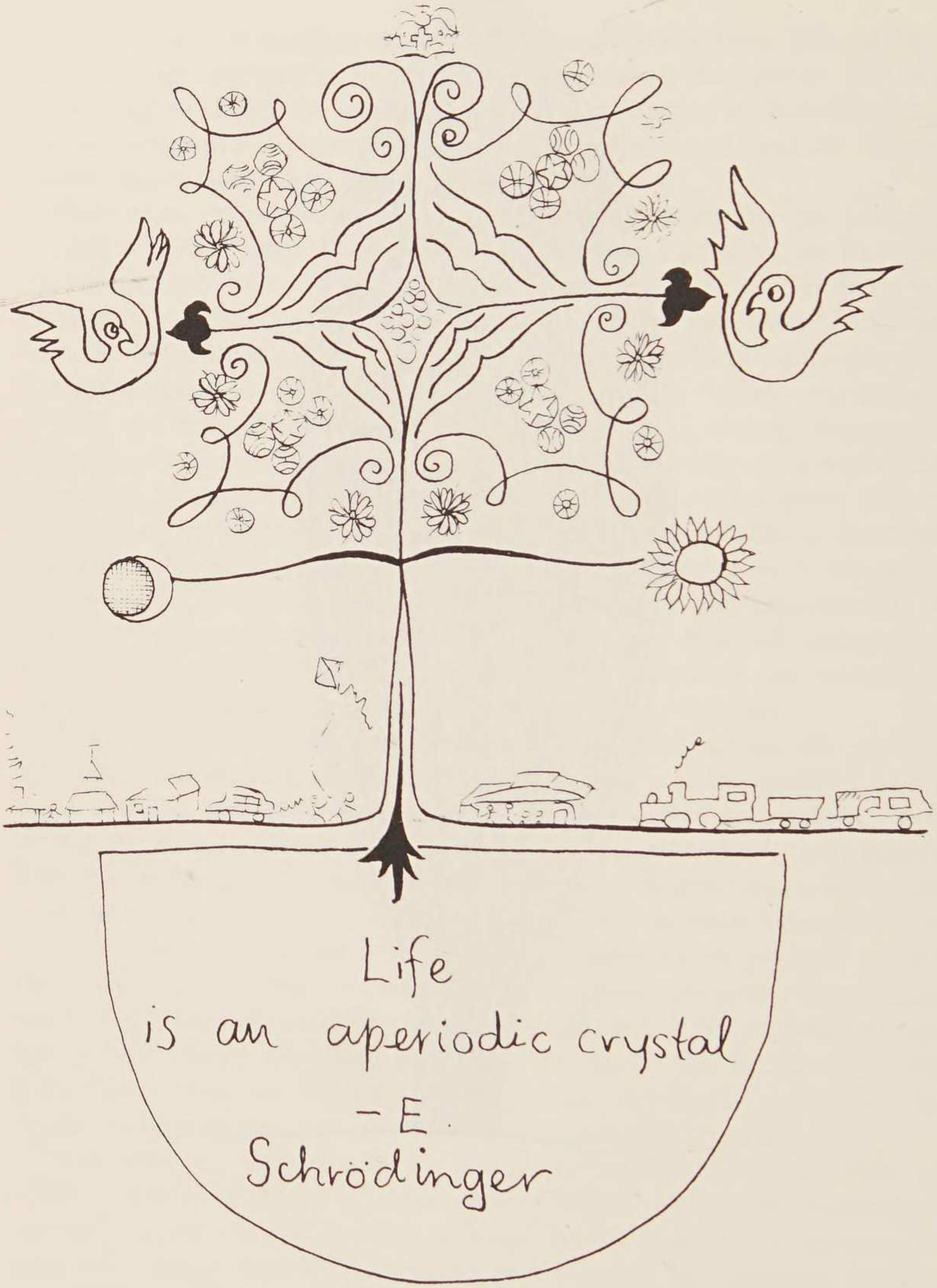


Illustration 20

drawing supports our basic contention that persons inclined ordinarily to draw abstract trees will often move in the direction of fantasy trees when under severe stress.

Illustration 20 was supplied in response to a definite request for a fantasy tree. The subject is a young historian, mathematician, and cosmologist. He might be described as a warm, humorous, sensitive man who hides behind a rather detached and self-contained *persona*. He is unmarried and by profession a teacher, but his energies are mainly concentrated toward independent research of a highly original nature. We leave it to the reader to amuse himself in seeking the hidden meanings of this drawing.

Having considered at some length the general questions of position, proportion, and types of trees, we turn now to a discussion of more detailed observations. In the next three chapters we shall attempt to illustrate many possible detailed forms which may be encountered in tree drawings. In chapter 11 we shall discuss and illustrate elements extraneous to the tree itself which may be added to the drawing, such as landscape, the sun, additional trees, and so on.

8

The Strokes and the Line Quality

Le style est l'homme même.
Comte de Buffon,
Discours sur le style, 1753

THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE—both from qualitative and formal points of view—of examining closely the execution of the strokes which make up the drawing cannot be overemphasized. However, one has to point out from the outset that there is probably no other area in connection with drawing interpretation which would be more difficult to describe and illustrate or more recalcitrant to clear presentation than the evaluation of stroke quality or line form. Only patient study and familiarity with literally hundreds of drawings will aid the practitioner in observing the subtle nuances of meaning which manifest themselves in often seemingly incongruous stroke qualities or line forms within a single drawing by an individual.

We should like to refer to our discussion of Mattmüller-Frick's 1968 paper, where we made brief mention of his basic division of stroke execution according to the primary perception mode and learning type of the individual. The author found excellent correlations between the characteristic use of certain kinds of strokes and what he termed the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic types. The visual type usually draws elaborately, utilizing well-differentiated, soft, precise (often faint) strokes in a harmonious, ornamental fashion. The strokes of the auditory type are hesitant, discontinuous, helpless, or awkward, or even harsh. The kinesthetic type expresses his dynamism in his strokes, which consist of swinging single lines, executed with élan in continuous, usually curving movements.

The notion that lines in themselves express affective tone is as old as the first cave paintings of mankind. Emotional attributes are often ascribed to the lines of the great artists: one speaks, for instance, about melancholy lines in certain drawings of Dürer, the violent lines of the baroque, the quiet lines of the neo-Raphaelists, the disturbing lines of the expressionists, and so on. But do these subjectives, descriptive adjectives from the annals of art history have any concrete basis?

The inherent question as to whether it is the lines themselves which "possess" emotional qualities, or whether the affective tonality attributed to such art works is derived from the theme of the whole drawing, has been systematically investigated by a number of workers. One of the earliest such studies was performed by Lundholm (1921) in a series of simple but elegantly designed experiments. She was able to show that emotions *can* be associated exclusively with certain pure line forms, and she categorized feeling tonality on the basis of the motor expression of affective states represented by certain kinds of lines.

While we must refer the reader to the text of the article for her exact procedures, we feel it is worthwhile to cite some of her concluding remarks:

> There seems to be a feeling tone connected with pure lines, which is perceived by a majority of observers.
>
> This feeling tone is probably dependent upon the suggestion of movement in the lines; that is, the lines appear to imitate in their movement the motor expression of emotional states.
>
> Slow and weak movement is suggested by lines with long and low waves, rapid and intense movement by lines with small waves and acute angles.
>
> Consequently, emotions with little motor expression are suggested by lines of the former type and emotions with strong motor expression by lines of the latter. . . .
>
> When sharp angles predominate in a line of the active type, it seems to acquire an unpleasant feeling tone, as well as an increased intensity in its movements. Thus, a jolly and a furious line differ in the frequency of the acute angles.
>
> Strength is very often expressed by big and high waves; and even by right angles at times.
>
> Broadness of a line indicates strength, while thinness indicates weakness and faintness.
>
> Beauty in a pure line is expressed by unity of direction, continuity, roundness of curves, lack of angles, and periodical repetition of similar elements, or by a certain symmetry; ugliness by the reverse of all these qualities.
>
> (Lundholm, 1921, p. 60)

Keeping in mind both the qualification of difficulty in describing or illustrating strokes and lines, and the excellent work which has been done by other investigators on this subject, we should like to proceed to a simplified discussion of line types and stroke qualities frequently encountered in tree drawings.

FIGURES 15a–p: Examples of strokes

These figures show some of the different types of strokes which may be used in tree drawings, both in terms of quality and of form. The first impression often concerns the quality of strokes—whether they are faint or dark; soft or acute; awkward or precise; dynamic; hesitant; quickly executed; and so on. It is difficult to illustrate these matters of quality, but when examining a group of tree drawings, the nature of the strokes used by different individuals will easily be seen to vary greatly. In some drawings one will encounter a mixture of almost all types of strokes from a qualitative point of view; but if the personality is well developed, one usually finds certain particular combinations.

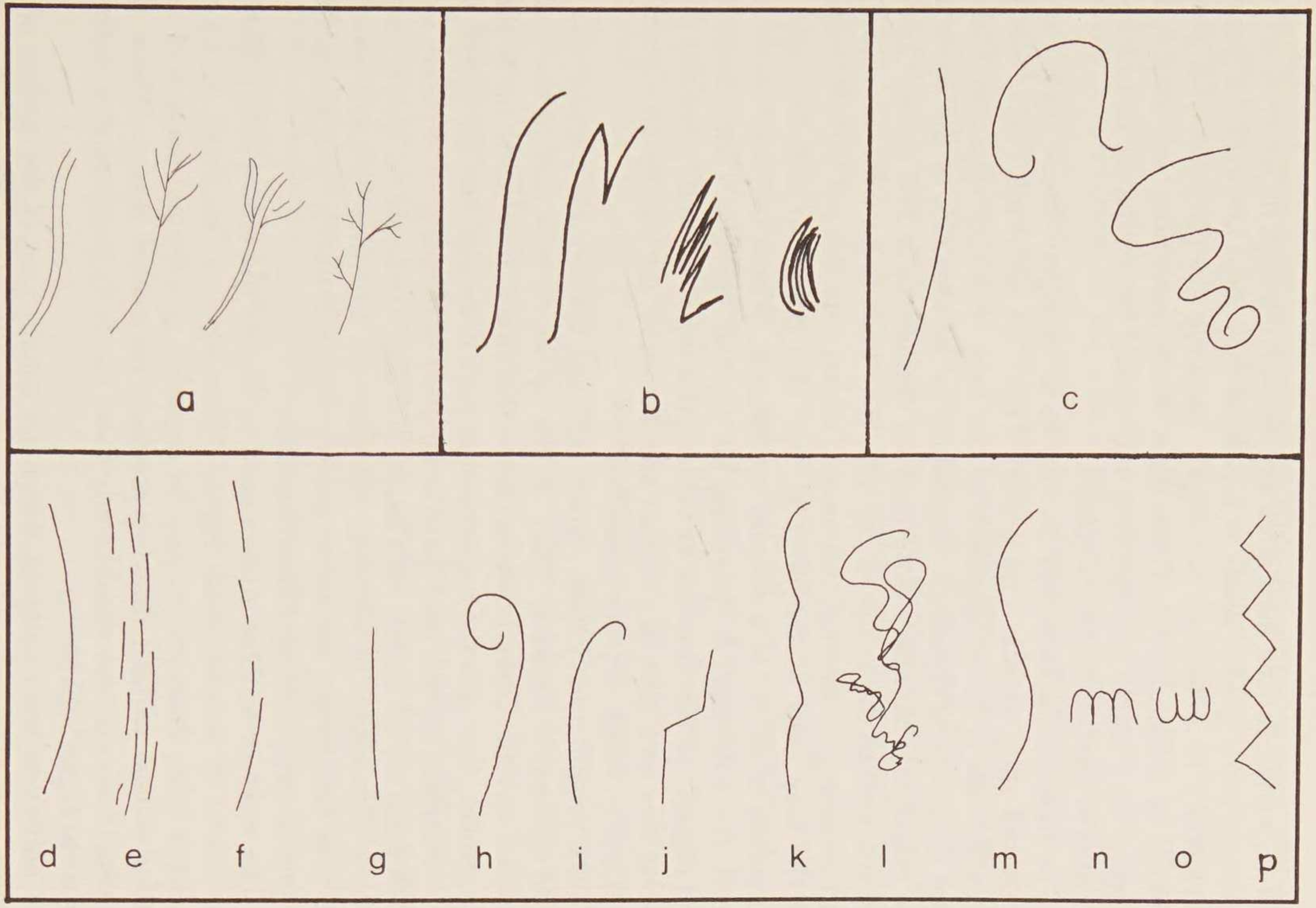
Faint, precisely executed, well-differentiated lines—perhaps combined with some soft strokes—are characteristic of persons who are cautious, somewhat submissive and accepting of authority (at least on the surface), systematic, and tending toward reservation in self-expression. If the lines are faint and precise, but always *acute*, with no soft strokes, one may have a reserved and careful personality behind which are hidden well-controlled aggressive traits. On the other hand, if the strokes are both faint and hesitant, with an exclusively soft quality, the reserve may be accompanied by inferiority feelings.

Heavy or dark strokes may be indicative of a strongly developed ego, but if they are awkward and harsh as well, and especially if the lines are made dark by several repeated strokes in the same place, their obvious assertive quality may be an expression of aggresive ego-defenses, rather than of ego strength.

A third common combination of strokes are the dynamic, quickly executed, imprecise, or undifferentiated lines. Persons who draw in this way are usually active, sometimes impulsive or impatient, and given to a slightly dramatic self-presentation, whatever their basic type. They project self-confidence, which may or may not be genuine.

The strokes shown in figure 15a correspond more or less to the first combination, those in 15b to the second combination, and those in 15c to the third combination. It often happens that a tree drawing will be made up primarily of one of these three groupings of stroke qualities, whereas one or two marks in the tree are rendered in a completely different manner. This may be a hint that the area of the tree containing the incongruous strokes reflects specific life problems, rather than an indication of a basically inconsistent personality, serious neuroticism, or lack of development.

The execution of the lines may be continuous (as in figure 15d), contiguous (as in 15e), or broken (as in 15f). The continuous line may be regarded as the "normal" stroke in most cases. Contiguous lines show uncertainty, lack of confidence, and anxiety, or precision and concern for detail, or, together with other positive indications, creativity and imagina-



FIGURES 15a–p

tive responses. Broken lines often express nervousness, difficulty in self-expression, and a general sense of exposure; they may, however, be positive (receptivity to influence), or largely negative (helplessness and strong feelings of vulnerability). These three stroke executions are often found together in a single tree drawing and should be evaluated according to the area or part of the tree involved.

The form of the lines may be said to be straight (figure 15g), curved (15h and 15i), angular (15j), wavy (15k), or scribbled (15l). Straight lines indicate a direct approach to the area of life in question. Curved lines have several meanings, depending on the direction of the curve and the extent to which they close back on themselves in full circle. Curving inward, toward the center of the tree, they have to do with the reception and recording of external influences (taking into the self). If they curve all the way back to the original line, this points to self-deception or deception of others as a defense mechanism. Where the lines curve outward, the individual is spreading his internal energies (both emotional and mental) in the direction of others (sharing of the self). Angular lines, unless they form part of a regular angular wave, are usually an expression of hostility, either overt or controlled.

Both irregular wavy lines (figure 15k) and the scribble stroke (15l) are most commonly found as "filler" in the crown or as a part of the crown outline. In some cases, however, the entire tree will be made up of scribble strokes. One gets the impression in such drawings that the pencil was in continuous motion, and there is no clear delineation of separate lines. Such trees are all drawn with haste, and the comments on quick, impulsive strokes apply. In addition, one may say that these persons have no sense of boundaries, are rather uncontrolled and unruly, and are inclined to pursue many activities simultaneously.

The wavy or scribble strokes used to fill out the crown are frequently the source of unintentional "signs," "drawings," or "writing." As an element of form, these strokes may be regarded as a normal manner of indicating foliage without drawing precisely delineated leaves. Where they appear, however, one should study them carefully in connection with the "Special Signs," chapter 11.

Continuous wave patterns, which are usually part of the outline of the crown, may take several forms. Figure 15m shows the "S" wave; 15n the "M" wave; 15o the soft "W" wave; and 15p the angular wave. Any of these forms may be either stretched out, as in figure 15m and 15p, or compressed as in 15n and 15o. The "S" wave indicates flexibility and an equal exchange between expression of energies from within and receptivity to impressions from without. When an external impression reaches the person he is receptive to it, but does not overreact. On the other hand, internal impulses and expressions are released without overemphasis; thus, they are unlikely to precipitate adverse responses from others.

The "M" wave as a crown outline stroke is drawn by persons who are much less receptive. Their self-expressions are not aggressive, but since they are often abrupt, impulsive, or fleeting, such persons may easily be misunderstood by others. The soft "W" wave almost never forms the whole of a closed-crown outline, but is sometimes found as part of an irregular crown border. In the area of the crown covered by the soft "W" wave, the person feels threatened by the impact of environmental influences and inhibits his own self-expression.

The angular wave, which in its compressed form schematizes canine teeth, is symbolic either of extreme aggression or extreme fear, or both. It is often found in the trees of males who have castration anxieties. In the drawings of women, if it is a dominant stroke form, it may indicate castrating tendencies.

All of these wave forms may also be found within the crown, especially the "M" wave and the soft "W" wave. The "M" wave consisting of two strokes is common schematic for a flying bird, and within the crown such a sign suggests fleeting ideas, sudden illuminations, or momentary desires which the person wants to externalize or throw out from the self. The two-stroke soft "W" sign is a common schematic for the human posterior, and its appearance suggests a conscious or unconscious preoccupation with the anal region. It may refer to the whole range of anal behavioral fixation—anything from worry about constipation to a recording of overt male homosexual experiences.

All of the line forms discussed above, with the exception of the scribble form, may appear either as singular or as parallel double lines. When parallel strokes are used consistently and are well executed they point to an effort toward balance or harmony. If they are present only occasionally, emphasis or underscoring of the particular area is indicated, one line being reinforced by the other.

9

The Parts of the Tree with the Ground

Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide; The form remains, the function never dies.

William Wordsworth,
The River Duddon, 1793

THE CROWN, THE FOLIAGE, AND THE BRANCHES

WE HAVE MADE a considerable number of references to interpretive meanings involving the three parts of the tree: root, trunk, and crown. We must now consider these three parts in terms of the details of formal expression, and we begin with the crown—its shape, the rendering of foliage, and the important matter of the arrangement and types of the branches. It might seem more sensible to start with the root, since the lower part of the tree represents the beginnings of the life in terms of biographical time, and since the drawing process most often commences with the root and trunk area. However, in the adult subject it is the crown which may give to the interpreter the most significant information about the subject's unique development. In the crown are expressed the person's conscious attitudes toward relationships (familial, intimate, and social) and his attitude stance in relation to the environment in general. Here is pictured his mental and intellectual development, the range of his interests, the nature of his goals and particular sources of satisfaction.

When the subject is given the freedom to draw any type of tree in the manner of his own choosing, the resultant drawing may or may not con-

tain branches. When branches do appear, they provide rich material for interpretation. In general, the branches symbolize the channels through which energy flows and is distributed to the various parts of the crown. They also show the nature and degree of energy exchange between the subject and the "other." The lower branches will express both biographical materials and attitudes involving relationships, while the upper ones may refer to the flow of ideas, patterns of thinking, creative expression, specific talents, goals, inclinations, and the manner of expressing the self. On the negative side, we may also see in the branches inclinations toward escape, indications of frustration or blocking, or signs of hostility and aggression as ways of relating to others.

In studying the material presented on details of expression in the three parts of the tree, it will be useful to refer to schema 3 and schema 4, chapter 6, particularly when the phrase "depending on the area involved" appears. All that has been said about the inclination of the crown, as well as the comments on open, closed, and intermediate tree types, should also be kept in mind.

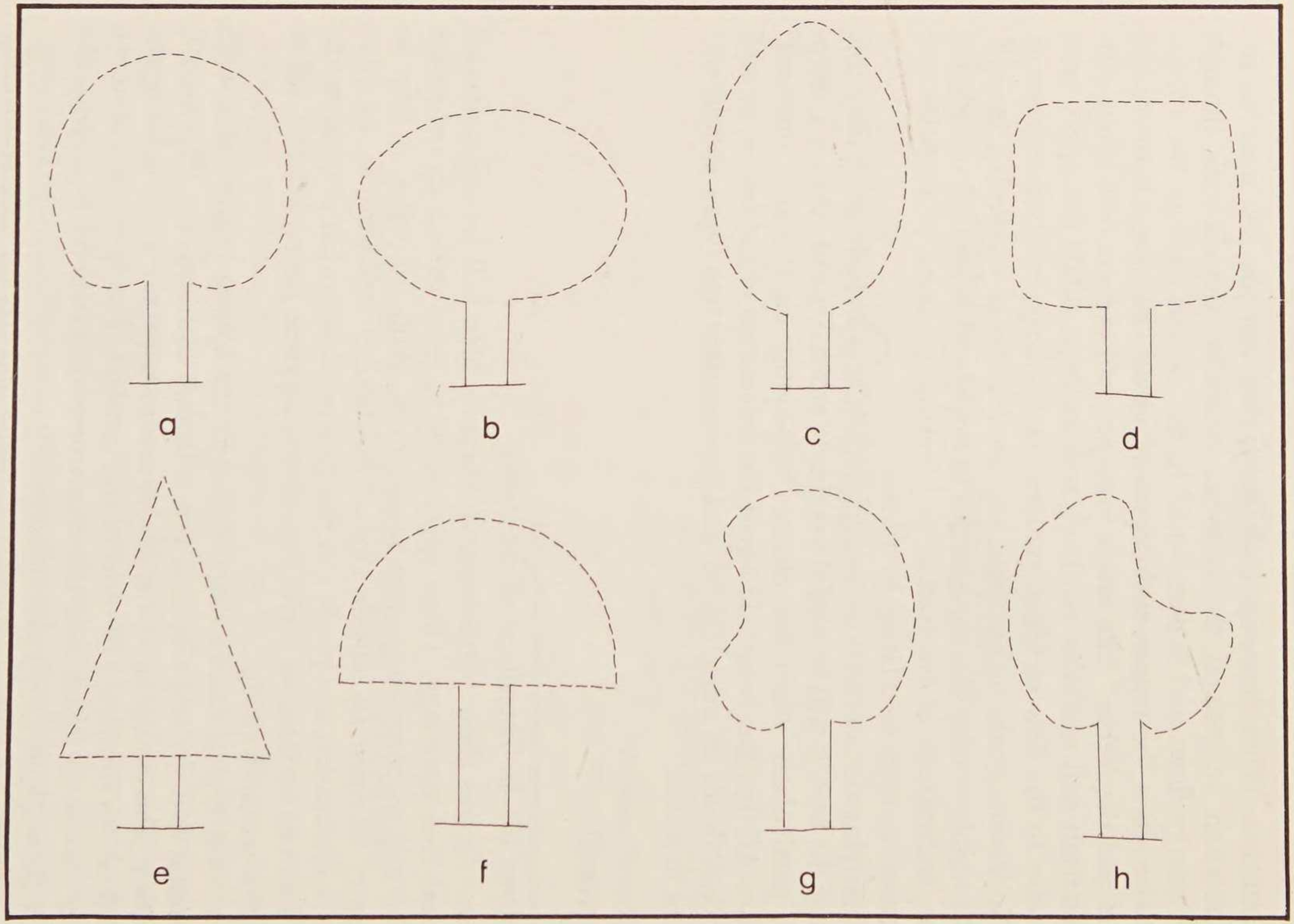
The crown

FIGURES 16a–h: The shape of the crown

These figures show various crown shapes which will be approximated by most tree drawings. These apply both to trees with a closed-crown outline and to completely open winter trees. With the latter, it may be necessary to draw an outline around the branch structure, as we have done in illustration 22 (p. 169), if the general shape is not obvious to the eye. This can be done on a piece of semitransparent paper, in order not to spoil the actual drawing.

The most typical crown shape is that of the sphere (figure 16a), with horizontal and vertical elliptical forms second in frequency (figures 16b and 16c). The triangular shape is also common (figure 16e), it being the typical crown formation of most of the conifers. The rarest of the crown shapes shown is figure 16f, the mushroom or umbrella type with the square form (figure 16d) also infrequently seen.

In a sense, the sphere is a normal shape and has no special meaning. We have already discussed the upward-pointing, triangular form in connection with the type meanings attributed to the real and abstract drawings of conifer trees. The cross-wise ellipse shape shown in figure 16b is nearly always associated with feelings of being under pressure. Either the subject thinks that too much is expected of him or that his life circumstances are limiting, weighing upon him, and preventing him from developing his full potential. At the same time, he tends to be resigned to these feelings. If one of the two sides of the crown is emphasized, he may



FIGURES 16a–h

be reaching out for help. With right domination his hopes lie in a father figure, male peers, or a lover. With left domination, he may seek support and inspiration from religion.

The vertical ellipse shape (figure 16c) is—like the triangle—an ambitious sign, and indicates a high degree of mental confidence. Often the emotional sphere of life suffers at the expense of the mental and spiritual striving which are characteristic. Other signs may indicate that the subject is highly emotional, but his values center on mind, spirit, art, and/or goal-related activities; thus, he may not acknowledge the importance of his feeling life or see any reason why he should work on his emotional problems.

The square-shaped crown (figure 16d) is usually drawn by persons who are, in fact, "square" in the slang usage of the word. Strong elements of conservatism and needs to conform to family or social expectations are typical. On the other hand, in our sample many of our subjects seemed ashamed of their conservatism, and those of the younger generation often were overtly attached to an extremely "hip" life style. (There may be some contamination here from the times, for one could argue that during the late 1960s, when this sample was collected, living and dressing in the hippie style had already become conformist rather than an individual protest against convention.) At deeper levels, however, these same subjects expressed their need to fulfill a strong sense of social responsibility. Most had some attachments to traditional values, and all were anxious to win the approval of their elders as well as their peers, even though they did not admit this readily. Those who seemed to be genuine "dropouts" were nevertheless searching for a responsible role in the counterculture, and freely admitted that a passive or idle existence would frustrate and bore them. Among the older subjects, a strong attachment to family and a need to fulfill the expectations of their parents was typical.

The mushroom-shaped crown shown in figure 16f may result from two very different kinds of trees, depending on whether the crown is made up mainly of downturning or of outreaching branches. In both cases there will be considerable reserve, for this shape indicates that the subject feels he must shield himself against the world. There is usually a strong sense of shame and, even when the subject is gifted and accomplished, his self-view tends to be focused on his defects. These persons are therefore much in need of support and praise, and they welcome opportunities to unburden themselves of their exaggerated guilt feelings. Two illustrations are here included to point up the difference in the two types of trees which may result in this crown shape.

Illustration 21, the drawing of a young woman, expresses a great deal of shyness and painful feelings of inadequacy. She needs repeated "confessional" experiences, which give her temporary feelings of relief. On the other hand, she has a tendency to remain caught in the conviction of her

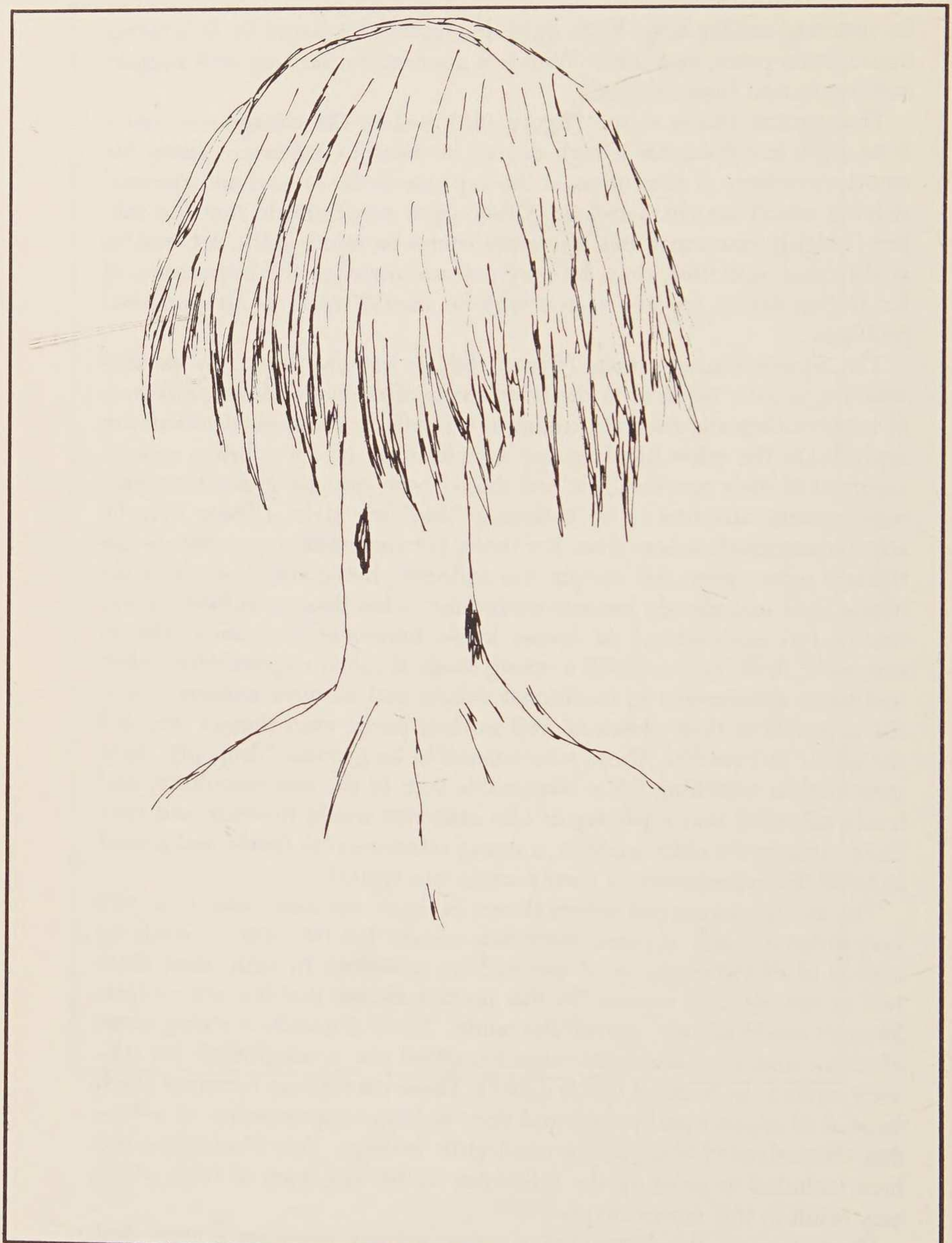


Illustration 21

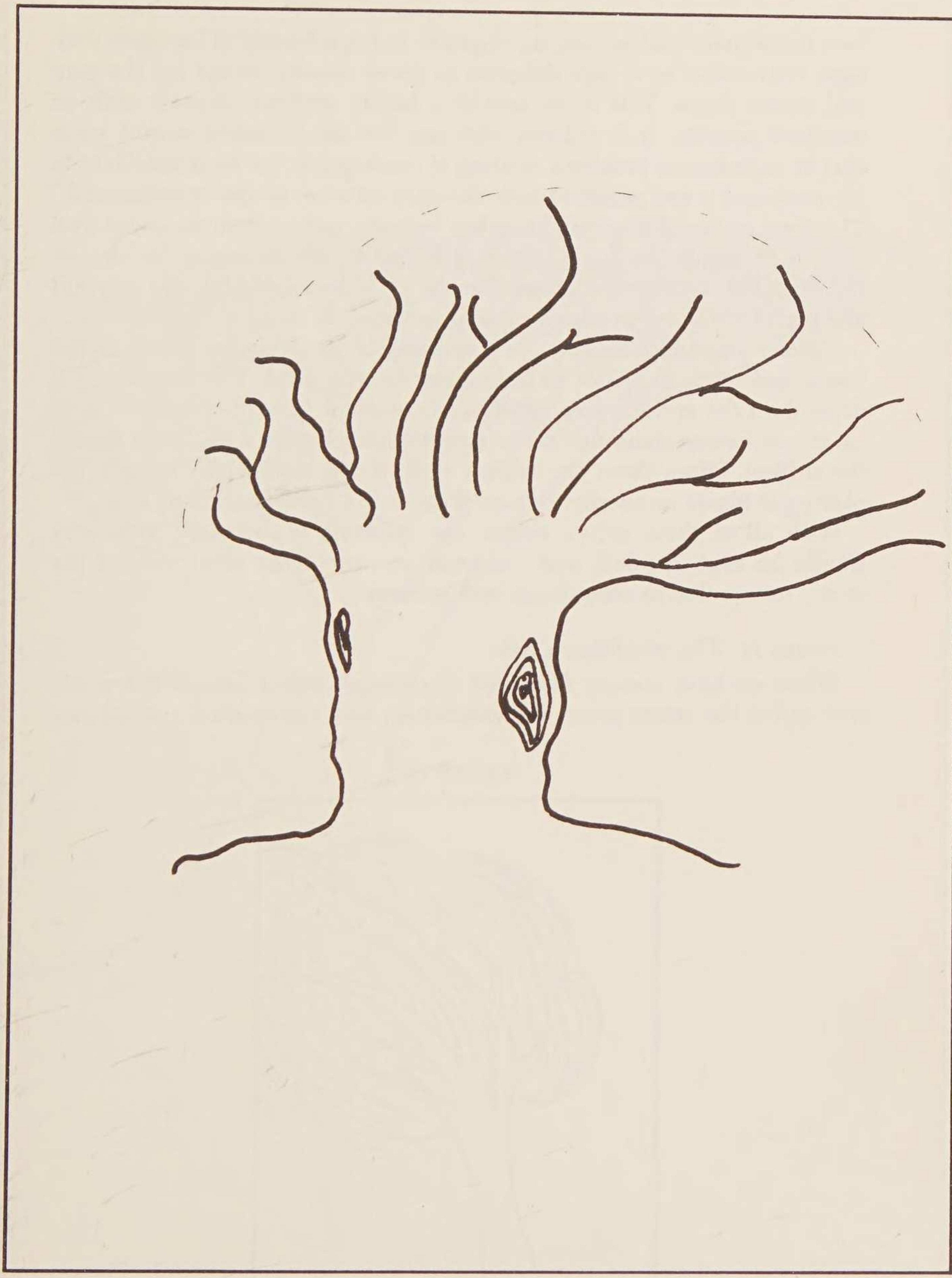


Illustration 22

own inadequacy and sometimes seems to indulge herself in her guilt feelings. Illustration 22 is very different in every respect except for the general crown shape. This is the tree of a highly intellectual male with an extrovert *persona*. It is unlikely that any but his intimates would guess that he experiences problems relating to inadequacy, for he is confident in his work and is too proud to seek the easy solution of the "confessional." The open, outward-reaching branches indicate active attempts on his own part to overcome the background problems at the source of his shame. Nevertheless, behind the proud facade he hides needs for ego support and praise which are probably equally as strong as those of the girl.

Figures 16g and 16h show two versions of an irregular crown shape where one section appears to be missing or truncated. The meaning will depend on the specific area involved. In general, this phenomenon indicates a conscious claim that some aspect of development has been denied the subject. Often there are related signs in the tree which express the placing of blame on another person or point to a trauma or tragic loss.

With all of these crown shapes the question of left-right symmetry should be kept in mind, and emphasis on one or the other side of the crown interpreted in accordance with schema 3.

FIGURE 17: The windblown tree

While we have already discussed directional inclinations of the whole tree and of the crown alone, the windblown tree represents a special case

FIGURE 17

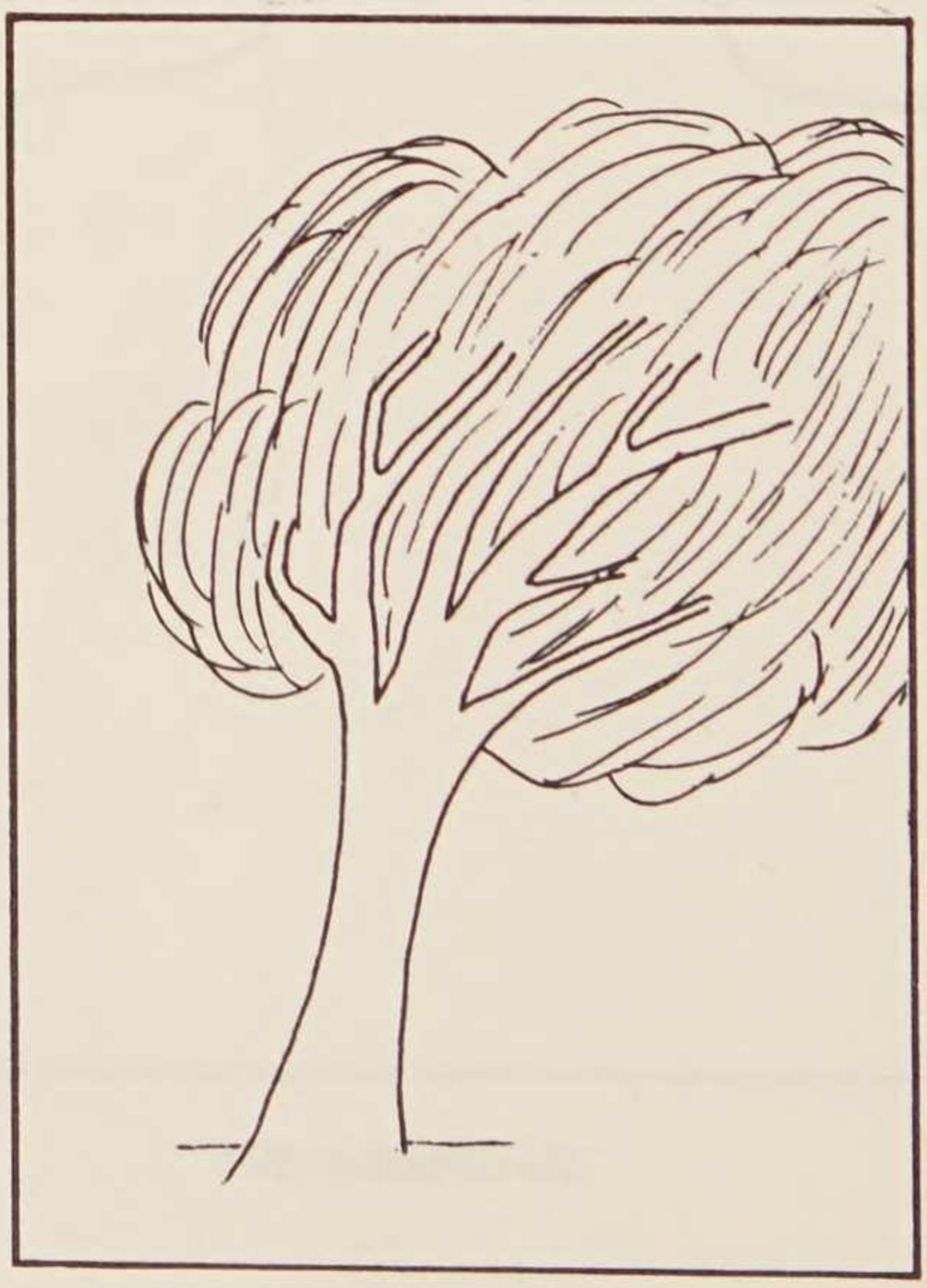




Illustration 23



Illustration 24

with respect to both shape and direction of the crown. In general, wind suggests feelings of continual pressure from the direction of its motion. In our practice we have never seen a tree blown from the right to the left, but since windblown trees are rare, this may be a reflection of the size of the sample, rather than definite evidence that severe pressure is more often experienced as coming from the maternal, feminine elements symbolized by the left side of the page. We are including here two illustrations of windblown trees, both drawn by male subjects. Illustration 23 shows a tree in which the basic form of the crown gives the impression of having been shaped under the pressure of a constant wind, like those trees one sees growing on ocean cliffs. The drawing was made by a graduate student in biology. Here we have an example of conscious and deliberate attempts to make positive use of the powerful maternal influence under which the life has been shaped by directing mental energies toward scientific and rational studies. At the same time, behind this conscious effort there remain strong feelings of both emotional and mental pressure. Illustration 24 is of a very different type, for here we have an immediate blowing wind which results in a diffuse crown, with both the shape of the tree as a whole and the foliage moving clearly to the right under the force of the wind. The broken branches and the falling leaves suggest that the tree has resisted the pressure of the wind, rather than allowed itself to be formed by bending to it. Whereas the first subject is able to sublimate difficult emotions regarding maternal dominance into a somewhat distorted but concentrated effort, this second subject experiences himself in part as a helpless victim of family and environmental pressures. The subject was at one time a frank alcoholic. At the time when this drawing was made, he had completely given up drinking, was holding a good professional position, and had arrived at a relatively satisfactory social adaptation. Nevertheless, the motion of the blowing foliage and the falling leaves, as well as the recording of an extreme trauma in the important broken branch, suggest that internal discomfort and dissatisfaction with his situation are still severe problems.

The foliage

Both the open tree and the closed-crown tree may be drawn completely without foliage. When foliage is included, however, it can take many forms. In some cases it is merely suggested by shading or scribbling strokes. In others it is vaguely indicated, usually with a few curving lines, either within the crown of the closed tree, or just beyond the end point of the branches in a basically open tree. Some drawings will include a limited number of clearly delineated leaves; still others will show individually drawn leaves filling out the entire crown. Examination of all of the illustrations included in the text will give the reader a clearer idea of the

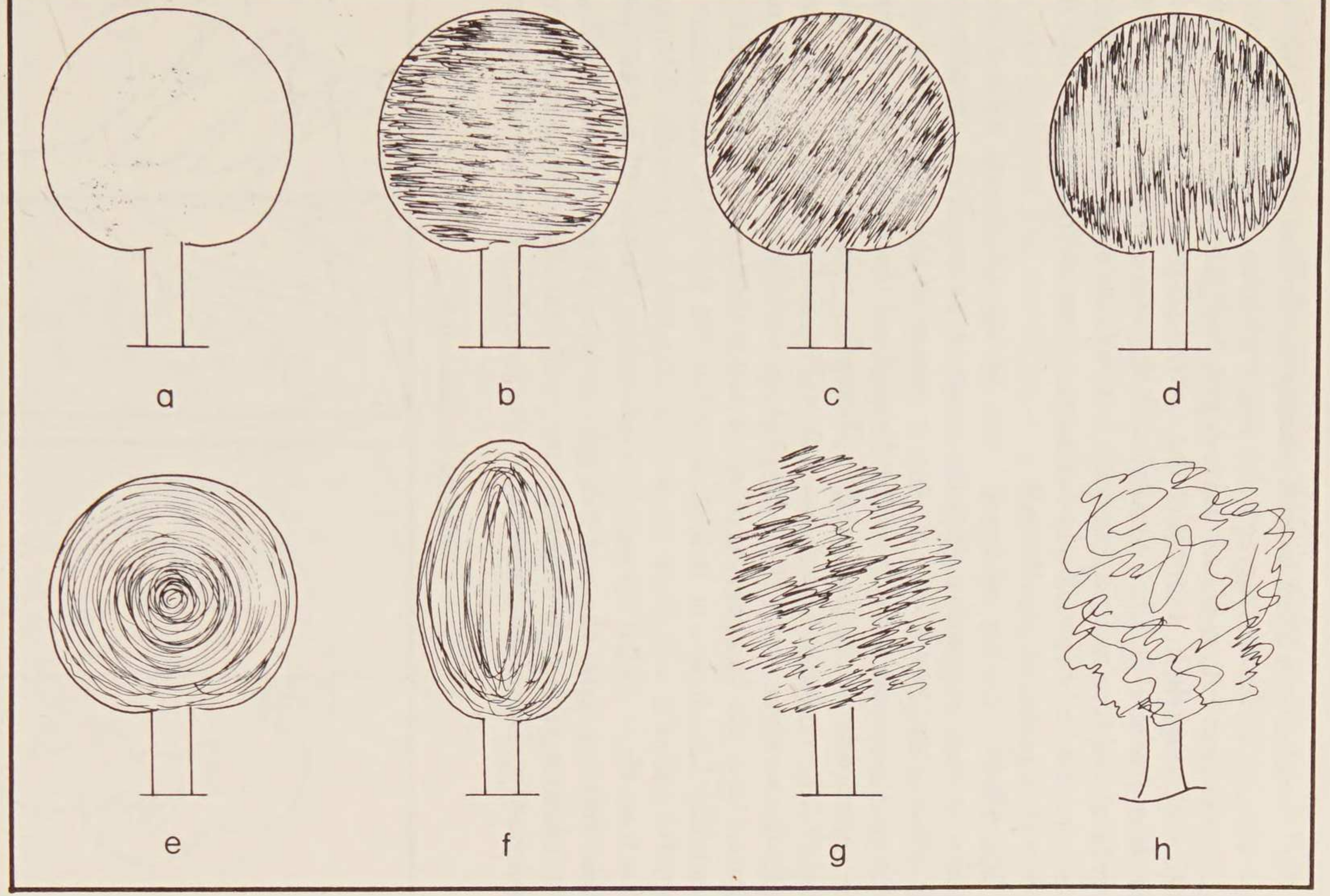
many possible variations on the rendering of foliage than can be shown in the figures which follow.

FIGURES 18a–h: Foliage suggested by shading and scribbling

These figures represent a number of ways in which foliage may be suggested by shading or scribbling with soft side strokes of the pencil, with or without an outlined crown. The shading may be almost a complete darkening of the whole crown area, as in the first five examples, or it may be somewhat less solid, with white spaces appearing here and there. The scribble technique shown in figure 18g may also appear in the interior of a closed-outline tree, or it may be used to cover over a structure which begins as an open-branched tree.

When the crown is solidly filled in with shading inside of a closed outline, as in figure 18a, one is dealing with subjects who are attempting to keep almost all aspects of their psychic life to themselves. This is basically a negative sign, and if the shading is very heavy, the subject may feel himself to be mentally or spiritually "dead," and thus unable to confront challenges. Such filled-in crowns are often seen in the lower left position of the page, in which cases one has a strong mother dependence combined with secretiveness and self-indulgence. Another possibility is that solid shading of the crown may be an expression of resistance to the testing situation. If the subject seems in other respects relatively normal or if other tests contradict the interpretation of a state of mental atrophy, the examiner should try to ascertain by careful questioning whether the subject is merely trying to distort the test and conceal himself behind the shading in order to thwart the tester.

When the shading fills the crown in such a way that consistent directional lines can be discerned, the direction of the lines must be assessed, as well as the manner in which they terminate at the border of the crown. Lines perpendicular to the trunk (figure 18b) suggest a subject who is in hiding and may feel somewhat "entombed," but who is searching for a way out of his situation or a point for energy release by swinging back and forth between left and right side influences or aids. If the end point or the turning point of any of the lines goes beyond the border of the crown outline, this is a strong indication that the subject recognizes a need to find a way out of his self-enclosed world. When the lines are diagonal (figure 18c), their angle is assessed in the same manner as directional inclinations, and their general meaning is a less ambivalent struggle to find a path which will permit both self-expression and a more open exchange with the environment. Lines which are parallel to the trunk (figure 18d) are a less depressive indication than the previous three. This type of shaded foliage is generally drawn by persons who feel quite confident in themselves, but who are consciously and deliberately secretive, unwilling to reveal their inner strivings.

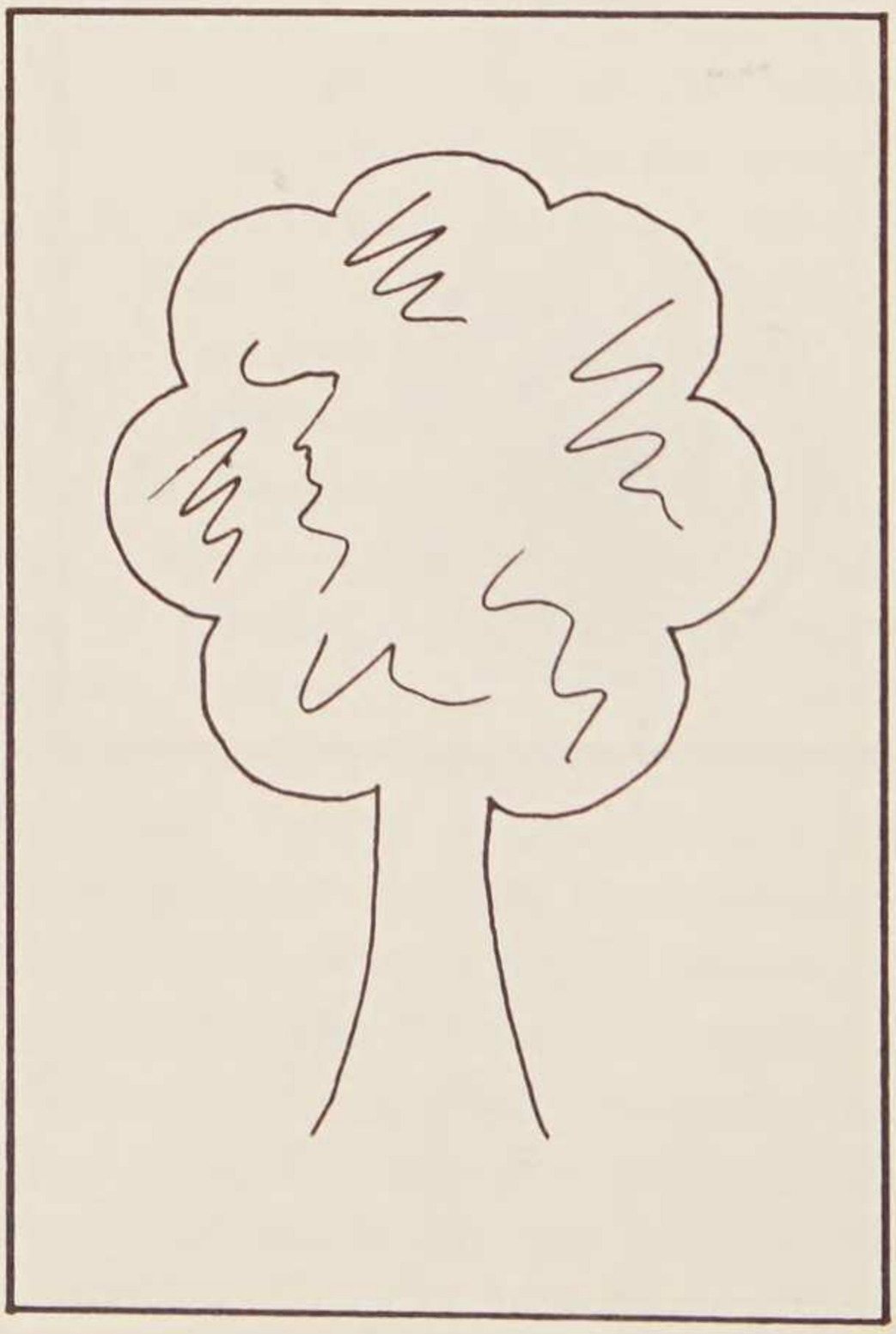


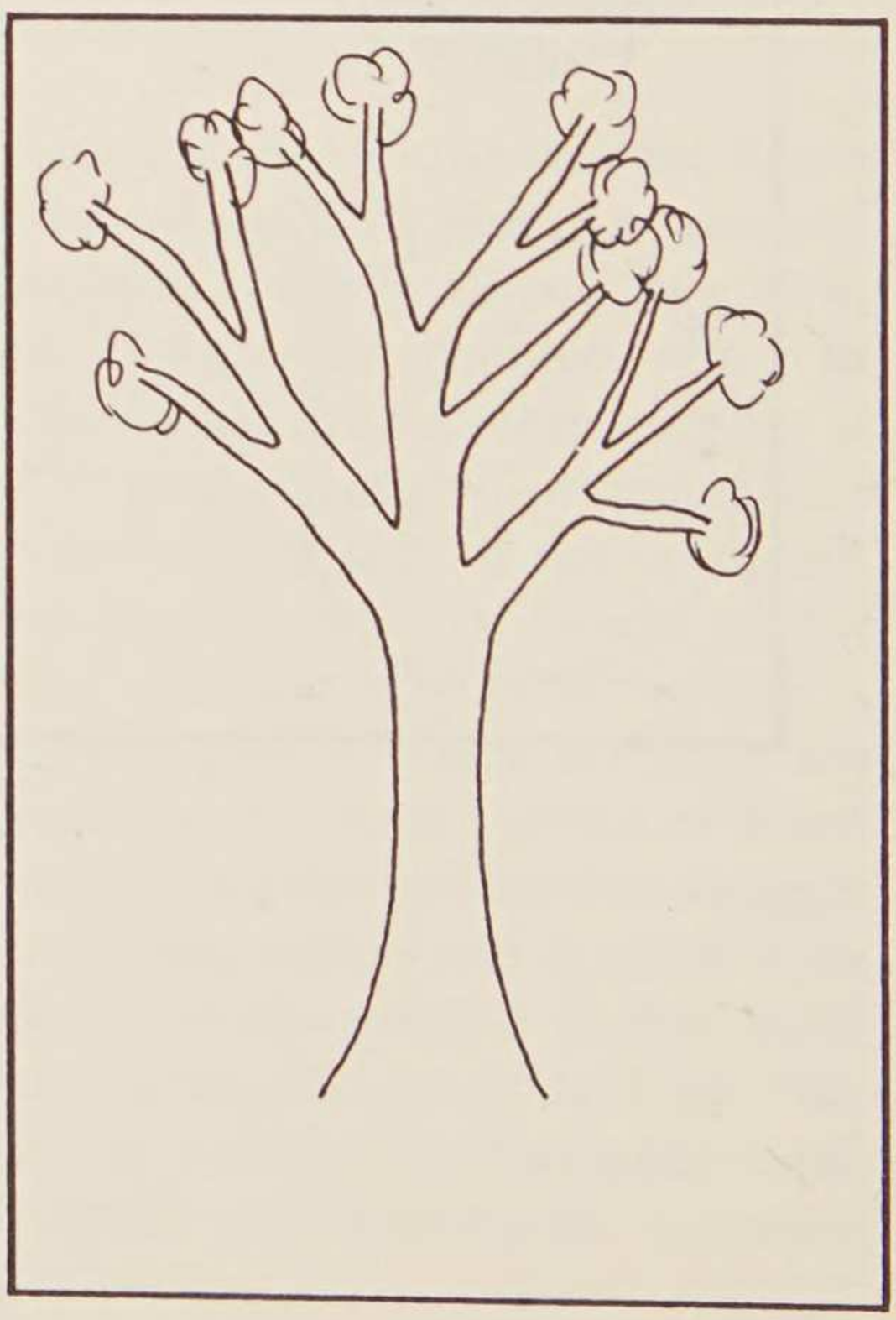
FIGURES 18a–h

The round crown filled in with concentric shading shown in figure 18e is a sign of self-sufficient egotism and indicates either withdrawal or extreme concentration of internal energies. In figure 18f patterned parallel lines of shading fill in a crown of the vertical ellipse shape. The self-confidence represented by lines parallel with the trunk in figure 18d is characteristic of this type as well, but he is less self-centered, and the concentration expressed in these closely converging lines is transmuted into drive, rather than gathered into the self.

The filled-in crowns of figures 18a–18f are all shown with a closed-crown outline, suggestive of self-contained personalities, usually somewhat inflexible. Figure 18g depicts a variant of the fully shaded crown, without a delineating outline. The direction of the strokes may take all of the variations already discussed, with similar meanings, but the absence of the outline indicates much more flexibility and a more open interaction with the environment. The scribbled crown without outline shown in figure 18h is the least stable of all of these trees, and may be a sign of generalized confusion or lack of direction. On the other hand, some very creative subjects will draw crowns in this fashion (usually distinguishable from those which are merely confused by the overall impression). In these creative types there is a highly developed imagination and a rich flow of ideas, although they will often still have difficulty with discipline and clarity of direction, especially where continuity of effort is required.

FIGURES 19a and 19b





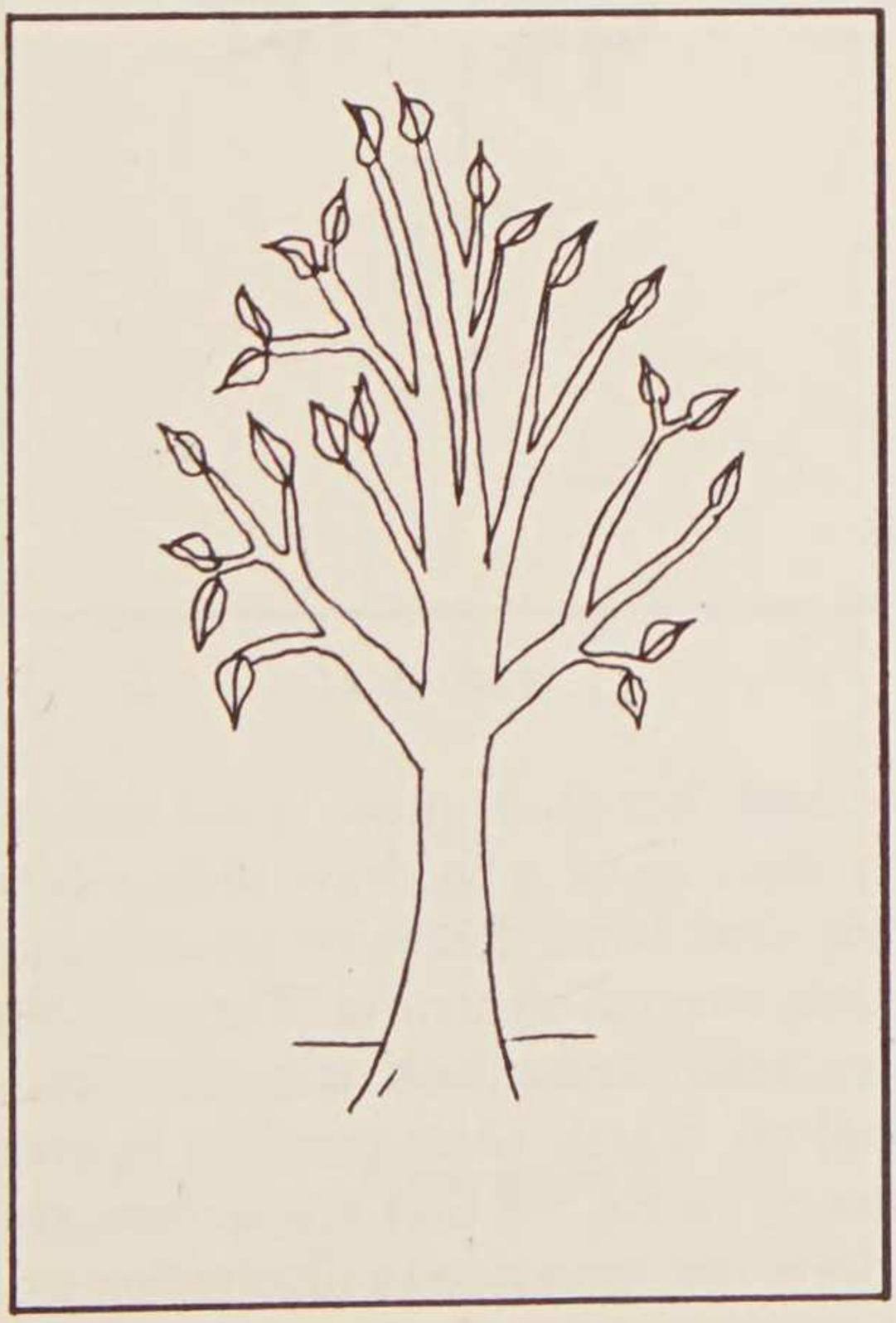
FIGURES 19a and 19b: Foliage vaguely indicated

In these two figures there is just a faint suggestion of foliage, without precisely drawn leaves. In the closed crown version shown in figure 19a, the suggested foliage indicates a rich and more complex mental life than when the crown is completely empty. If the strokes which make up the vague indications of foliage form special signs, both positive and negative aspects of this greater complexity may be revealed. In the more open tree of figure 19b, the foliage has to be evaluated according to the areas in which it appears and the particular way in which it is formed. In some cases it may represent a way of covering negative personality traits (if, for example, a curved stroke is placed just beyond a branch, the ending of which is drawn in a threatening or aggressive manner). In most cases, however, the foliage represents an expansion of the crown, an increased area for expression and contact with others. If such foliage is shown consistently around the whole crown, it will create an intermediate open-closed tree and will function as a buffer between the self and the environment.

FIGURE 20: A few clearly drawn leaves.

In this figure we see a tree with a limited number of clearly delineated leaves. Here we have definitely an intermediate type of tree, where the leaves serve a filtering function in the process of energy exchange

FIGURE 20



between self and other. In addition, the leaves stand for an increase in the surface areas, and are often related to an attitude of eager curiosity and rather strong desires for sensory exploration. This type of foliage is usually found in trees in which the position and direction of the crown point to an optimistic type. A certain youthful naiveté may also be characteristic of these subjects. Excellent examples of this manner of adding leaves are provided by four of the five drawings illustrating case history 2 in part III.

FIGURE 21: Fine leaves throughout the crown

Here the carefully delineated leaves are so numerous that they give a more closed character to the tree, even though there is usually no enclosing outline. The element of curiosity represented by the drawing of actual

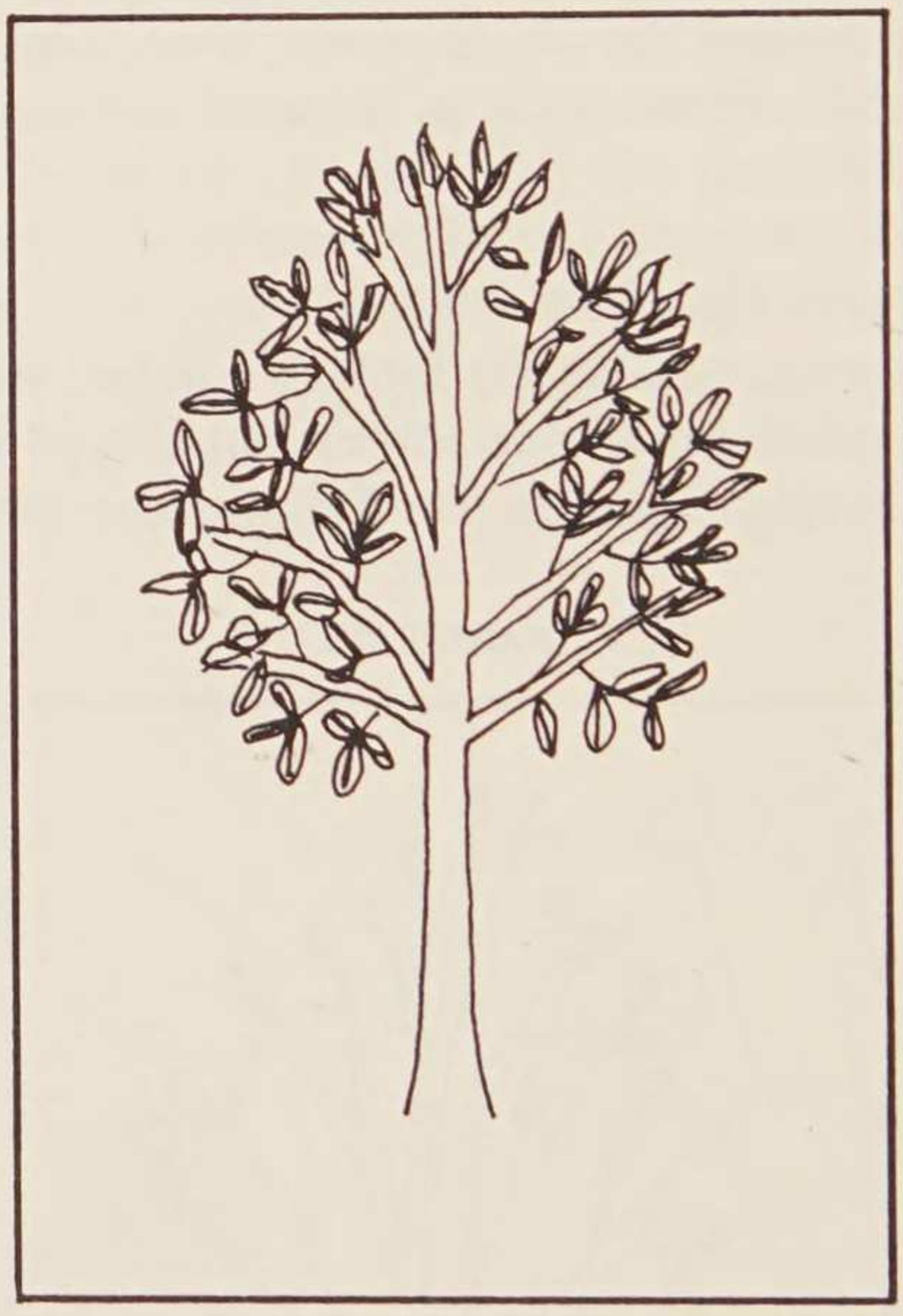


FIGURE 21

leaves is also present here, but these subjects are less naive and less easily influenced by others than those who draw only a few scattered leaves. They take in a great deal from the environment and try to assimilate everything to their own internal structures. They are also more easily able to filter out influences which strike them as unpleasant.

Illustrations 25 and 26, which correspond to figures 20 and 21, were both drawn by adolescent girls, the first age sixteen, the second age fourteen. The girl who drew the open tree in illustration 25 is a distinct extro-

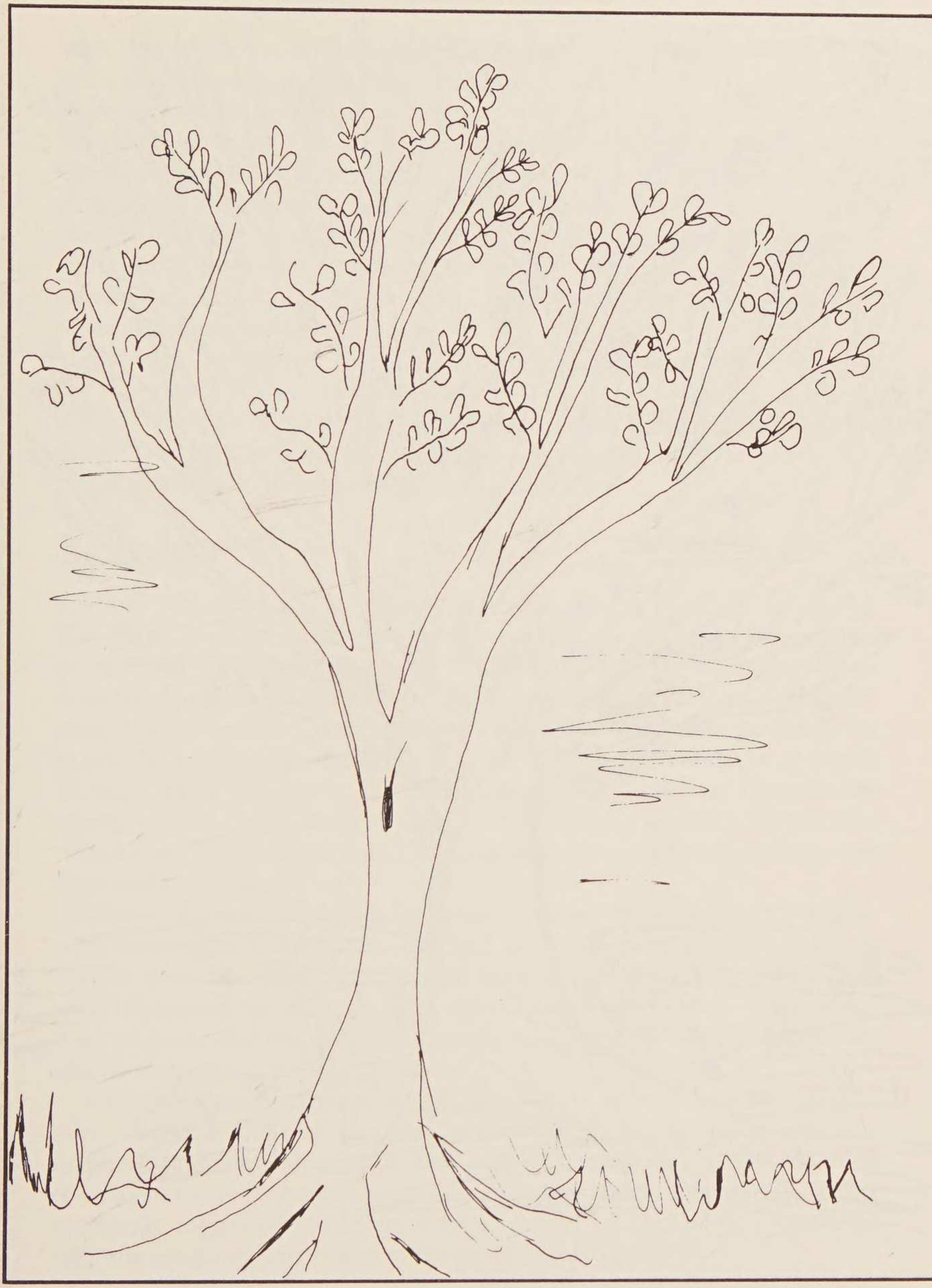


Illustration 25



Illustration 26

vert. She is filled with enthusiasm and has a multiplicity of gifts and interests, with a particular talent for language studies. Her most serious problem seems to be making decisions about where to direct her energies, but this may be regarded as partly natural to her age. The girl who drew illustration 26 is equally talented and very eager in the exploration of mental and artistic areas, but she is more introverted in personality than the first girl, more cautious, and perhaps more inclined toward moodiness and a certain amount of emotional confusion. At the same time she has an excellent capacity for the integration of her many interests and shows a remarkable intellectual maturity.

Although leaves may appear in the drawings of persons of all ages, in our experience they are most commonly found in the renderings of young adults. We regard them on the whole as a positive sign, unless they are drawn in a very painstaking and time-consuming manner, in which case they may reveal obsessive-compulsive tendencies.

The branches

Many subjects draw trees in which no branches as such are delineated. The omission of branches is to be taken as a neutral fact as far as interpretation is concerned, for in our experience, unbranched trees may be drawn by persons who are quite sound emotionally, creative, and intelligent. Where branches do appear, however, they make interpretation far easier. In general, the branches may be said to represent the channels through which energy is distributed from the trunk out through the crown, as well as the channels of inflowing energies received by the individual from his environment. They also refer to patterns of thinking and of creative self-expression.

Keys to the subject's attitudes toward others, to his intimate relations with members of the opposite sex, and to his interactions with his family may be found in the nature, precise manner of delineation, distribution, and structure of the branches. His specific talents, the nature of his ambitions or goals, and the directions in which he can find self-fulfillment may also be depicted in the branches.

When analyzing branches, it will be useful to refer to schema 3 and to take careful account of the area of the tree in which any unusual or emphatic manner of drawing is used for branch delineation. Several kinds of branches may be found in one tree drawing, and in this case the interpretations suggested for different types should be applied in accordance with the meanings attributed to the parts of the tree.

When different types of branches appear in a single drawing, the general impression of the whole should be assessed. If the effect is one of incongruity and/or confusion, one must take the mixture of types to be a negative sign. On the other hand, it is fairly common to find a mixture of

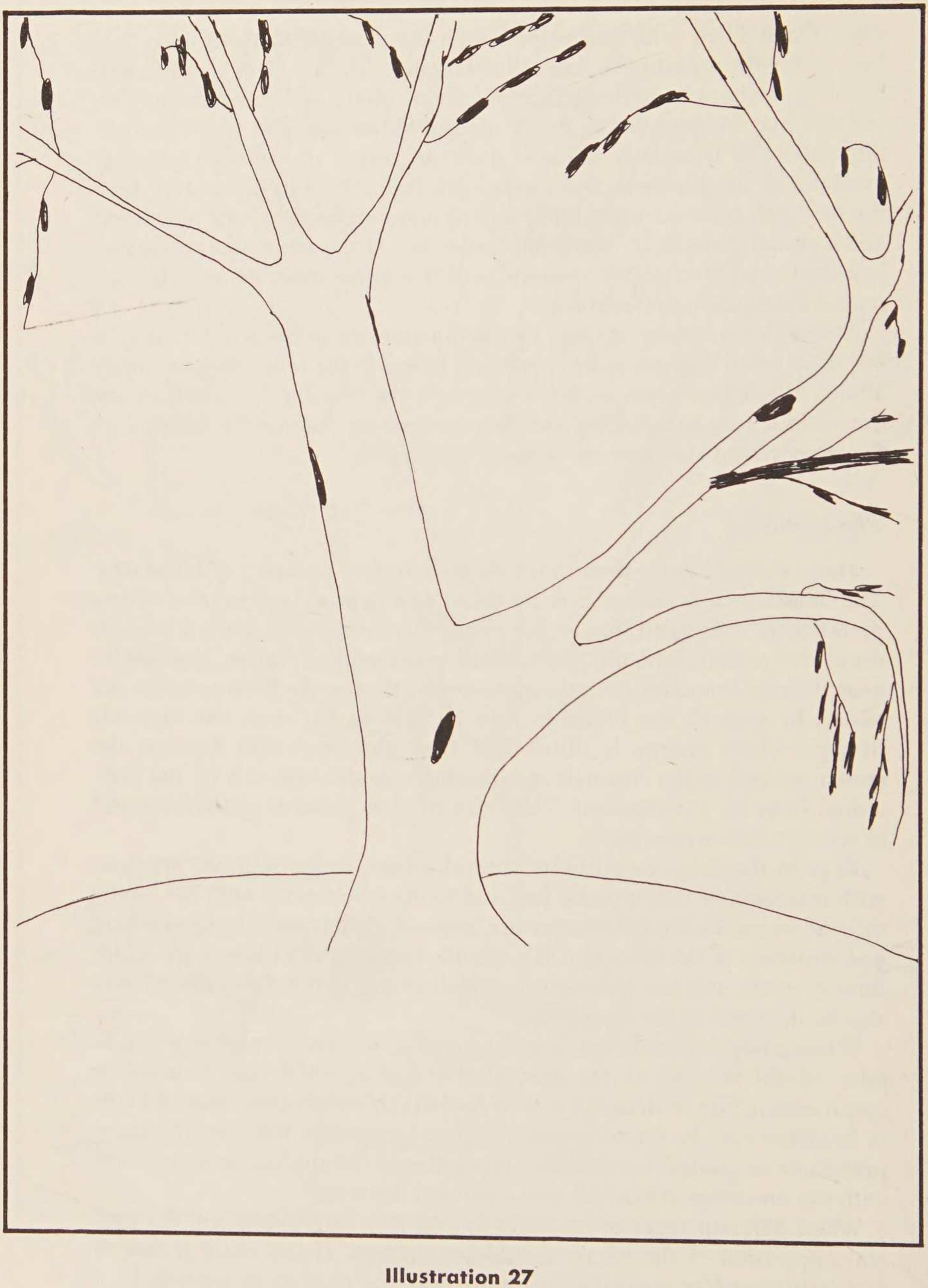


Illustration 27

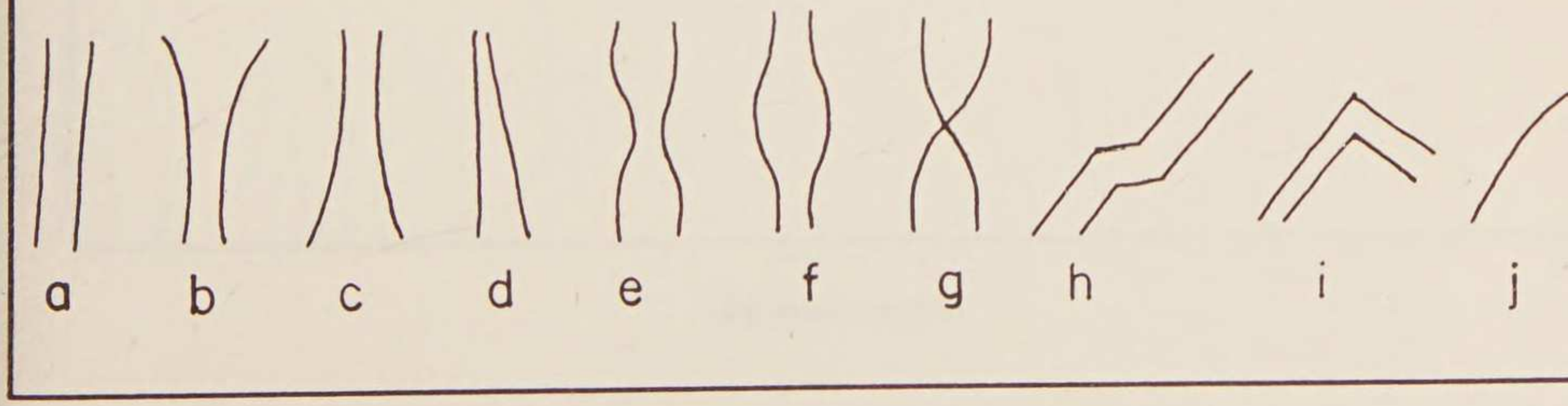
parallel and inverse funnel branches, for example, in a single tree, with some branches open at the end point and others closed or partially closed. In most cases, inconsistencies which are to be taken as a serious incongruity will be obvious to the eye. This is also true of unusual emphasis on one particular branch. A good example of the latter phenomenon is seen in illustration 27, where five of the six secondary branches are drawn without any indication of bark, while one is completely darkened by shading.

FIGURES 22a–j: Common branch types

Here are shown some common branches, which may appear as primary, secondary, or tertiary forms. The parallel branch of figure 22a is an expression of a smooth and open flow of energy, in both outward and inward directions. Figure 22b, the funnel-shaped branch, indicates an expansive relationship with the environment. Energy may be abundant and seem to pour out of the person. He is also highly receptive to influences. If such branches characterize the whole tree, the subject is probably an enthusiastic type. If there are only one or two such branches, they may point to an area of indiscretion and/or vulnerability. In figure 22c the inverse funnel branch is depicted. Here the energy outflow is steady and continuous, but inflow is somewhat restricted. The individual may feel himself to be generally open to other persons, but his own communication patterns tend to be set, and he is not easily influenced to any real changes in his habits. A clear example of this kind of branch may be seen in illustration 28. Figure 22d also shows a narrowing branch, but here one side forms a straight line from its point of origin, with an asymmetrical narrowing. Such a branch indicates even more rigidity in the thinking patterns than that in figure 22c.

Figures 22e and 22f both suggest some kind of indecision point or rumination. In figure 22e the energy is constricted at the narrowing point, with stagnation expressed either below or above the narrow section, depending on the direction of energy flow. The bloated section of figure 22f also indicates a slowing down of the energy flow, but there is less interference

FIGURES 22a–j



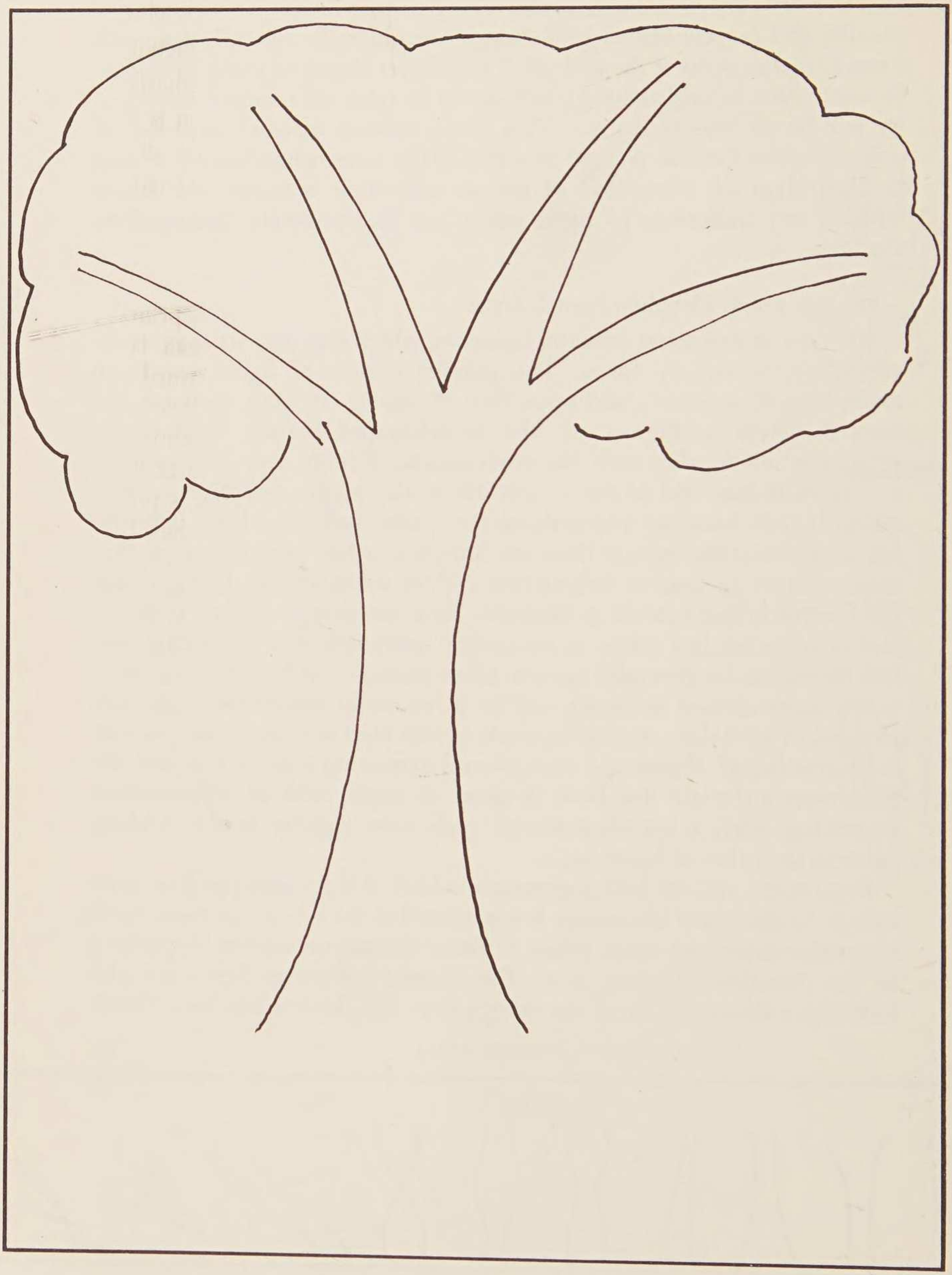


Illustration 28

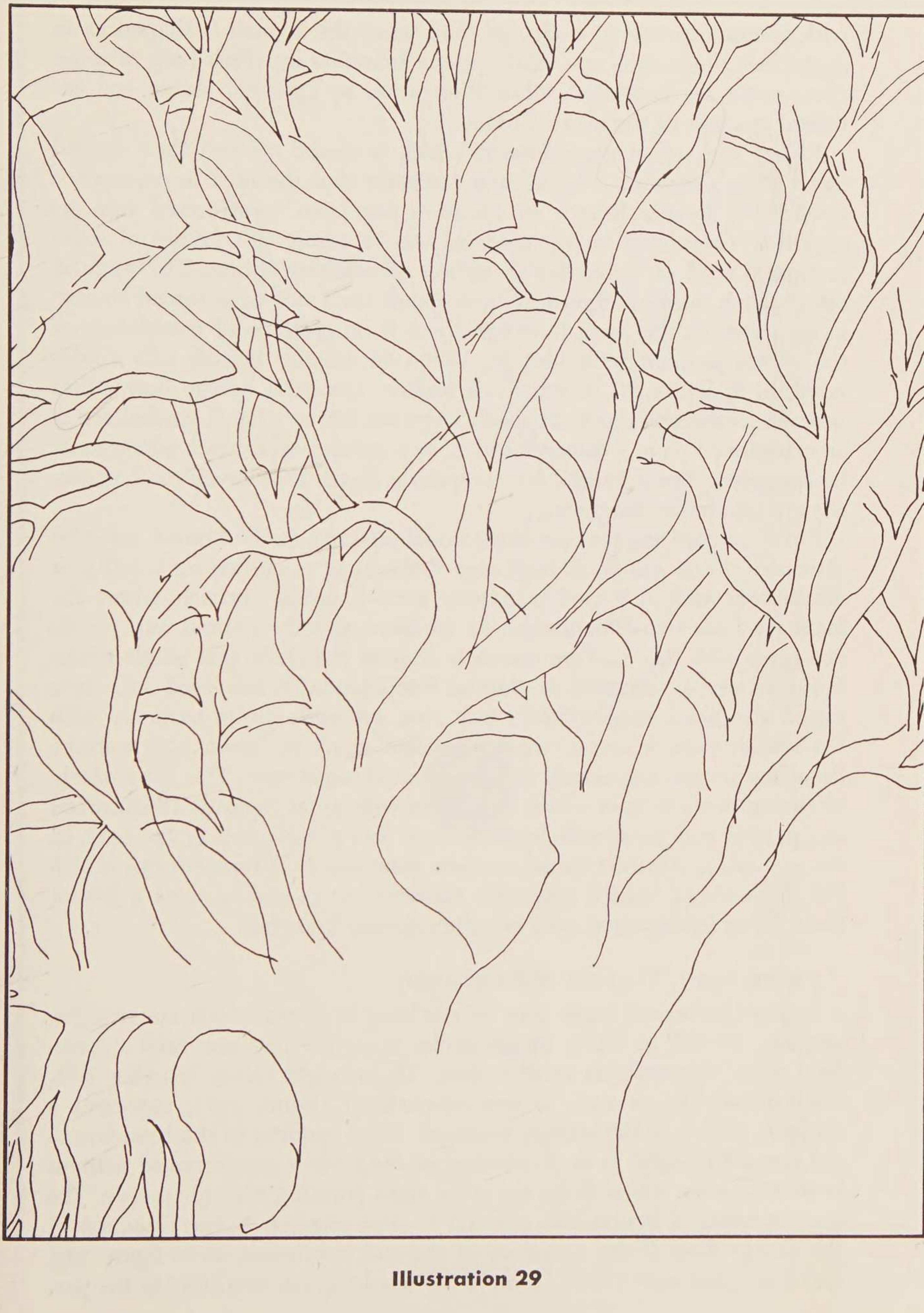


Illustration 29

with continuous energy exchange than when the branch is shaped as in figure 22e. Illustration 29 contains many branches in which both of these phenomena are expressed, while illustration 24 (p. 172) shows one excellent example of the bloated branch.

Figure 22g represents a branch which is closed off and then started anew at its midpoint. This usually indicates that the idea or experience symbolized by the branch in question has been transformed into its opposite. There may be an unwillingness to admit to a failure of some sort, or a kind of unfruitful distortion of communication. The angular tube branch shown in figure 22h also stands for a violent or forced change in direction. In this case, however, there is no pretense of completion of the efforts preceding the change. When an angular branch falls downward, as in figure 22i, it usually is broken. Here the energy flow either reverses its direction or is stopped altogether. Often what is symbolized is an abandoned plan, a discarded idea, or a painful experience which must be forgotten. The potential for receptivity in the area involved is generally cut off almost completely.

Finally, figure 22j, the one-dimensional or single-stroke branch, must be discussed. Koch and Buck both regard this type as normal for intelligent adults *only* when it is used to indicate a small, tertiary branch, where the main ones are two-dimensional. As we have already pointed out, we do not agree with this, and we certainly dispute the claim that single-stroke branches are a reflection of limited intelligence. When used in a tree which also has a single-stroke trunk, they are perfectly in harmony with the whole; even where a two-dimensional trunk is drawn, single-stroke branches are not necessarily to be evaluated negatively. This type nearly always appears in trees which are drawn with great rapidity. Illustrations 22 (p. 169) and 30, as well as illustrations 12 (p. 140) and 13 (p. 141), in the section on Abstract Trees, contain examples of different forms which the single-stroke branch may take. Illustrations 31 and 32 show a few of these forms interspersed with two-dimensional branches.

FIGURES 23a–j: The form of the branches

Any of the branch types may be rendered in forms which are straight, angular, curved, or wavy. Single-stroke branches may also take a scribbled form, especially in conifer trees. The straight forms, whether two-dimensional (figure 23a) or one-dimensional (figure 23e), represent a direct approach to the activity involved. If the majority of the branches in the tree are straight, as in illustration 32, the subject goes forward without hesitation, even where there are other signs pointing toward reserve. The curved forms of figures 23b and 23f suggest changes in the direction of the energy flow. If the curvature of the end is extreme, as in figure 23g, and is coupled with a wavy form of the whole, great instability in the par-

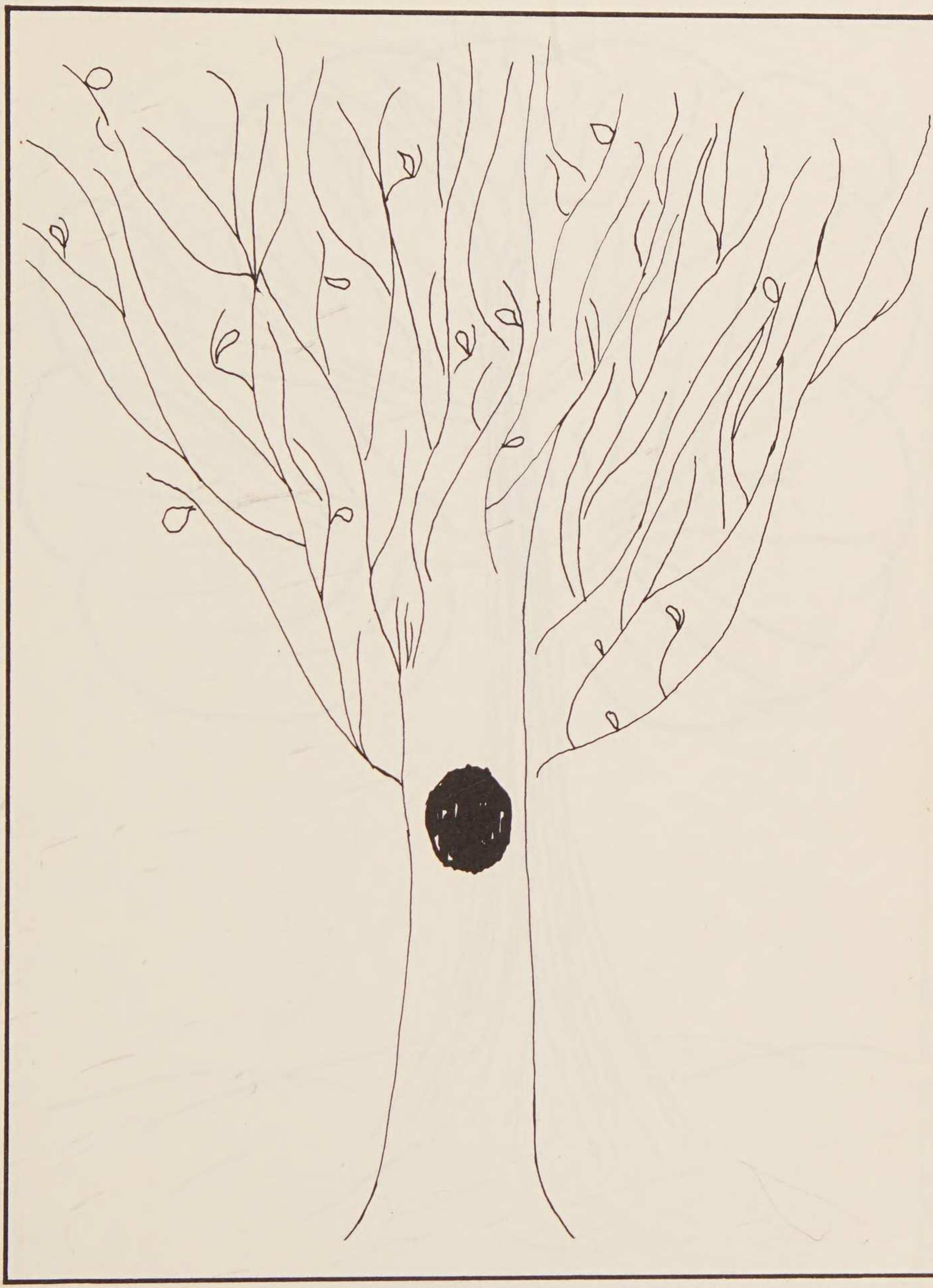


Illustration 30

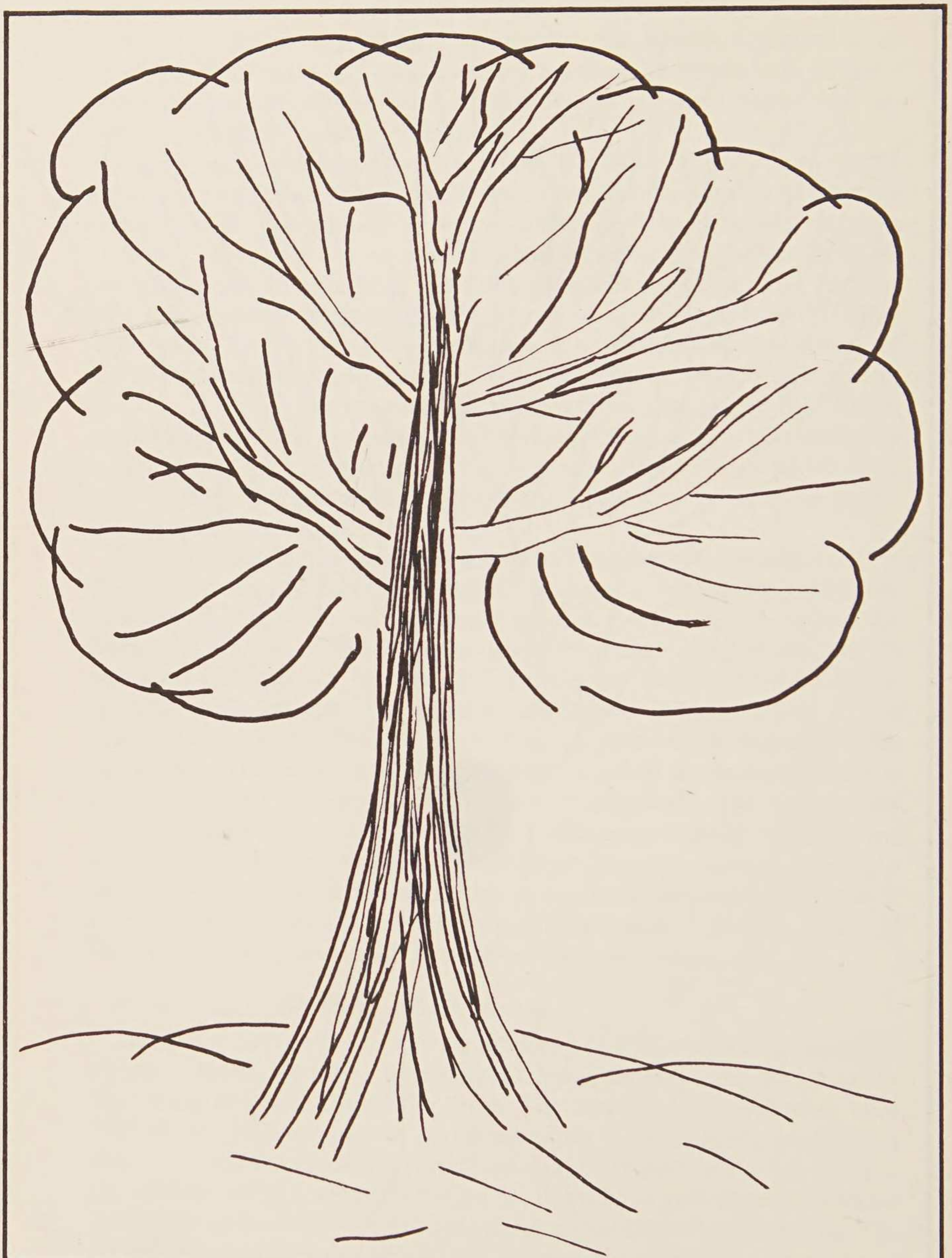


Illustration 31

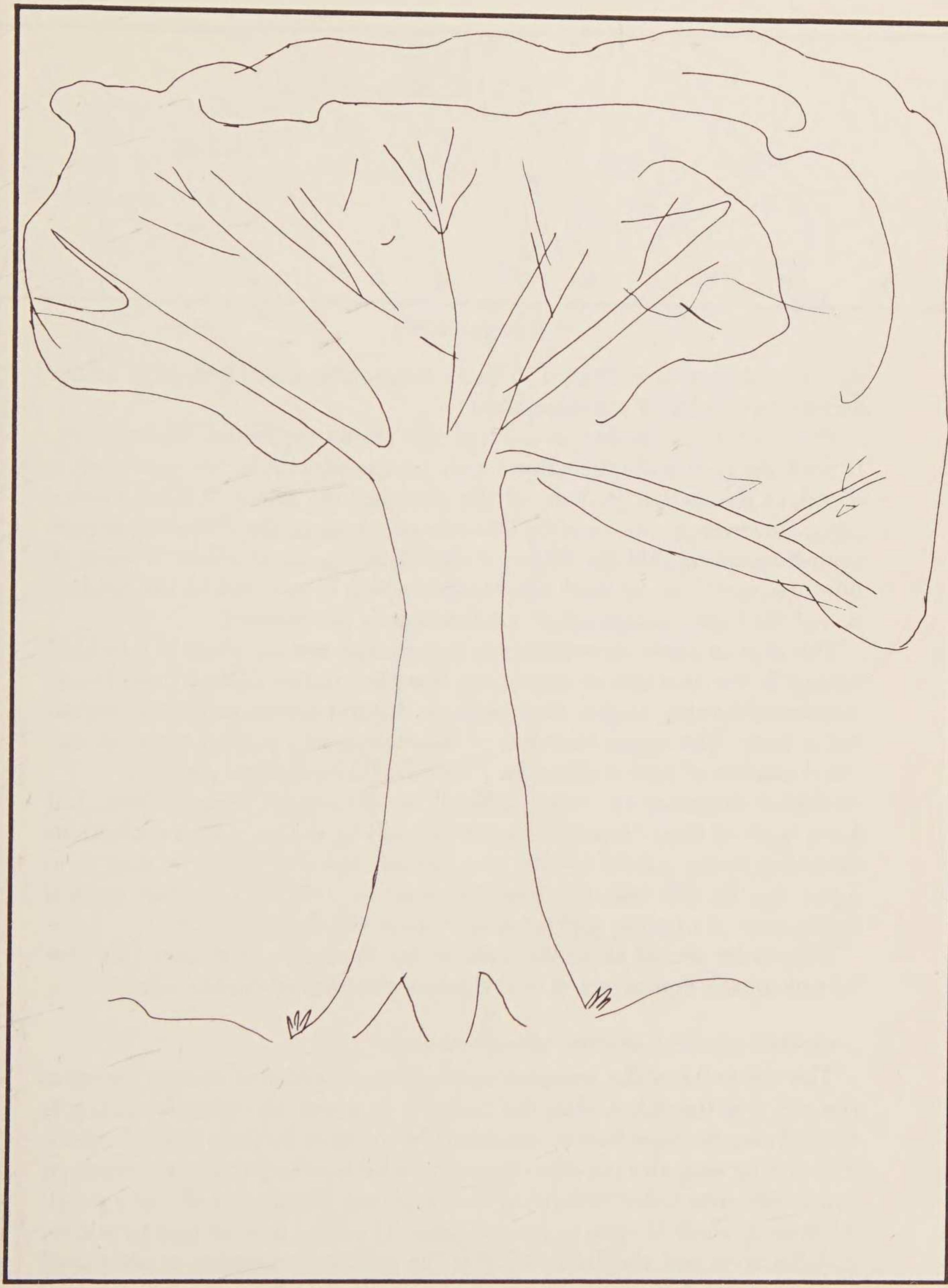
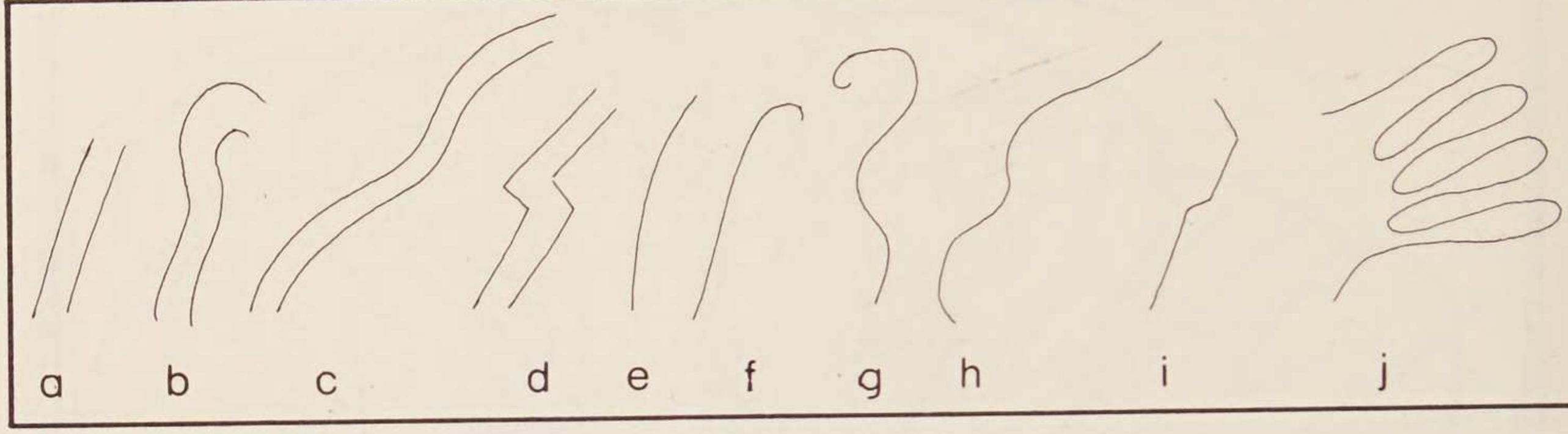


Illustration 32



FIGURES 23a–j

ticular endeavor is indicated. This is frequently associated with either deceitful attitudes or self-deception.

The wavy forms of figures 23c and 23h are an expression of flexibility. If the form is extreme the subject may be too adaptable, too esaily influenced. In illustration 33 many of the branches are drawn in a mild wavy form. However, in this case the absolute precision of the rendering argues against assuming that the subject is flexible in the usual sense. What is in question here is an internal adaptability which is essential to the unification of the highly complicated ramifications of the crown.

The angular forms represented in figures 23d and 23i point to a sudden change in the direction of the energy flow, but unlike broken branches or downward-turning angles, they indicate dogged determination to pursue the activity. The upper branches of illustration 72 (p. 374) show an unusual number of such renderings. (See part III for further details.)

Scribbled branches are often difficult to distinguish from foilage, but some types of trees (especially conifers) will be drawn with a continuous scribbled stroke which results in a branch form of sorts, as shown in figure 23j. In this case the branches may be seen to have the general appearance of a spring, and the indication is of great resiliency.

The reader should also refer back to the discussion of strokes (chapter 8) and consult figures 15a–p in evaluating the form of the branches.

FIGURES 24a–m: Common branch endings

The end point of the branches symbolizes the point of contact between the self and the other, thus the manner in which the branch ending is formed may be important in assessing the subject's attitude toward others. The ending may also provide clues as to whether the particular project or experience denoted is unfinished or completed. Figure 24a shows a parallel branch which is open at its end point. Here the flow of energy is free, and the open end also indicates that the matter in question is unfinished or is a current area of energy concentration. When the open-ended branch is drawn with a slight hook on either side, as in figure 24b, there is a partial channeling or concentration of the freely moving energy on the

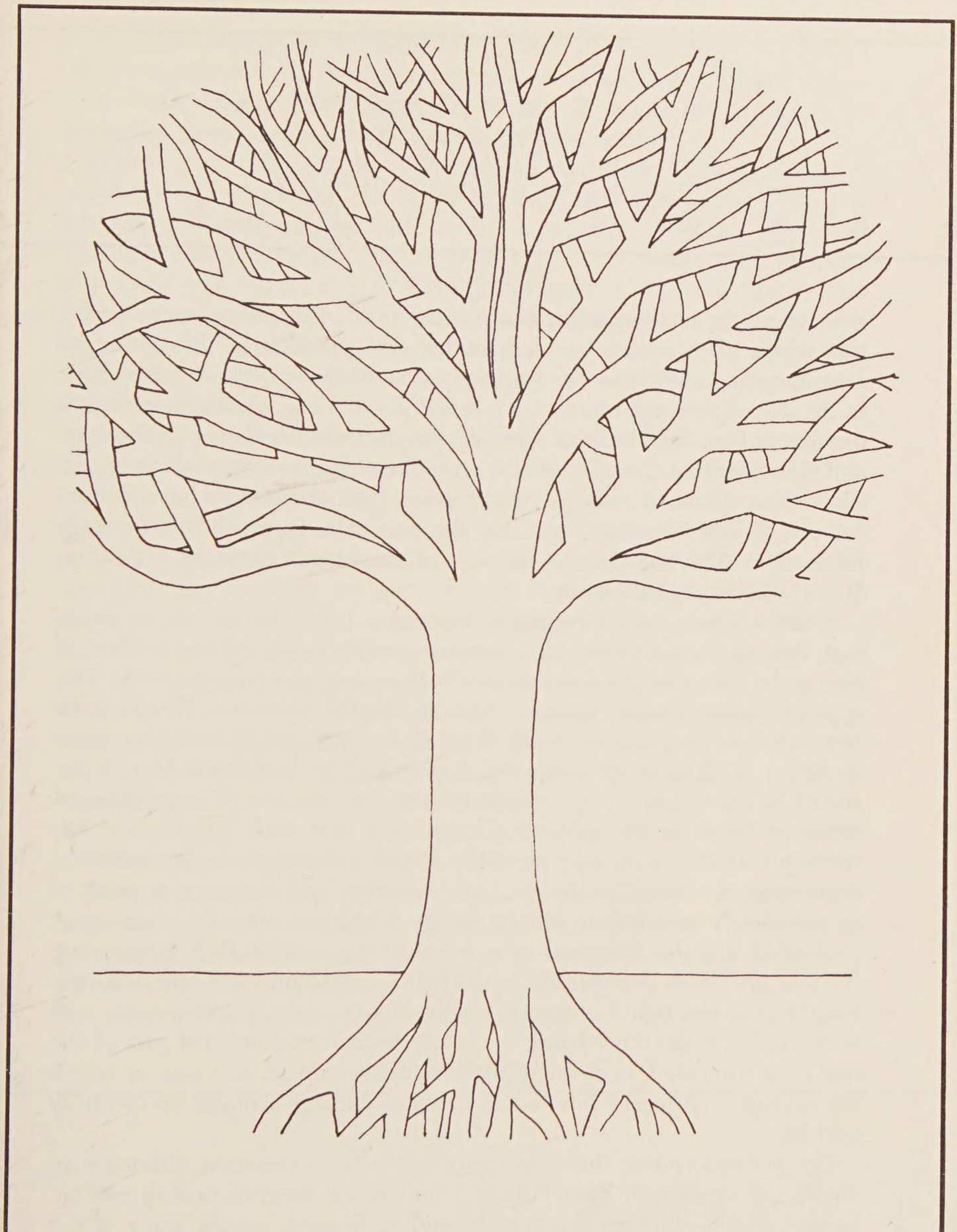
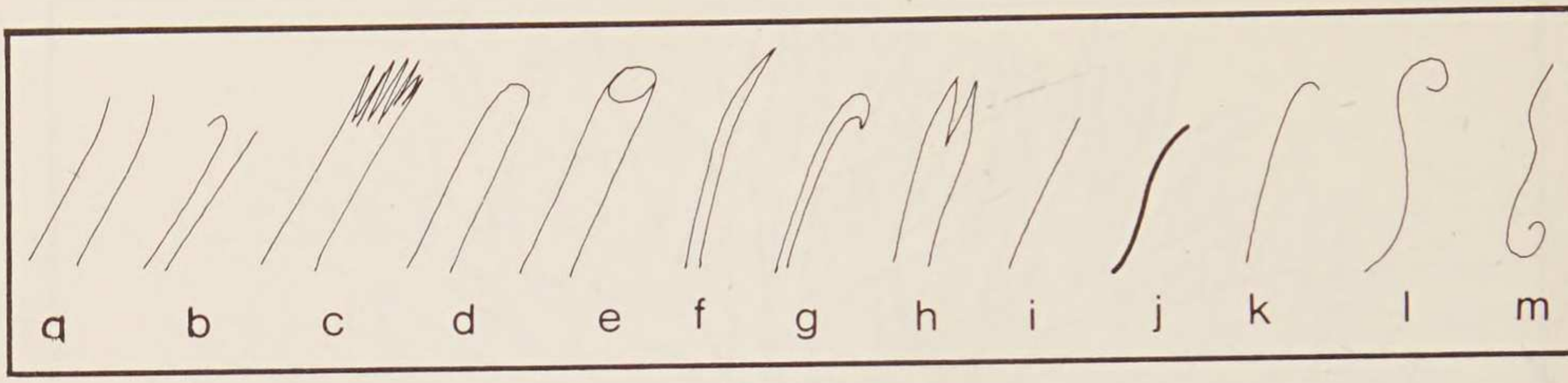


Illustration 33



FIGURES 24a–m

side where the hook appears. Illustration 37 is an excellent example of a tree where all branches are open-ended and parallel. In illustration 32 several open-ended branches are shown, one of them with a marked hook to the left. Figure 24c represents a broad parallel branch which ends in a number of fine, hairlike lines. Here we have a transition between the open and closed ending. Usually what is symbolized is a conscious effort to regulate the outflow of energy. At the same time there may be a certain amount of indecisiveness regarding the particular expenditure of energy referred to. The fine lines at the end of the branch serve as a sieve or filter for inflowing influences.

When a blunt, closed ending is seen on a broad branch, as in figure 24d, this may stand either for a conscious effort to cut off the outflow of energy in that area, or a resistance to incoming energies, or both. This type of ending usually appears only on isolated branches. Should it be characteristic of all the branches, it points to a potentially explosive accumulation of blocked up energy. The sawed-off or broken-off branch depicted in figure 24e always stands for the interference of some external agent or force, or the subjective impression that such interference has taken place. The result may be either of two quite opposite processes. In some cases the energy exchange, both incoming and outgoing, appears to be completely cessated. In others, energy which has been dammed up or controlled may be liberated in a tremendous uncontrolled outpouring. Neither process is particularly healthy, but one should not take too seriously one or two minor broken branches in a tree which is otherwise well developed. On the other hand, if a major branch or dominant part of the tree is so truncated, or if many such branches appear, the way in which the subject experiences this "environmental damage" should be carefully probed.

The pointed ending shown in figure 24g is fairly common, although we would not agree with Koch that it is the normal form of branch ending. In tree drawings where this type of ending is used, usually some of the branches will come to a complete point, while others will be slightly open at the end. The pointed ending represents a concentration of energy at the place of contact. The focused energy may be released in a sparklike fashion, or it may be steady but still rather fiery, like a fine continuous

glow. If the endings of the branches are very pointed, suggesting spears, they may represent defense mechanisms and a tendency to release energy in a hostile manner. Such an interpretation will usually be supported by the character and feeling quality of the tree as a whole.

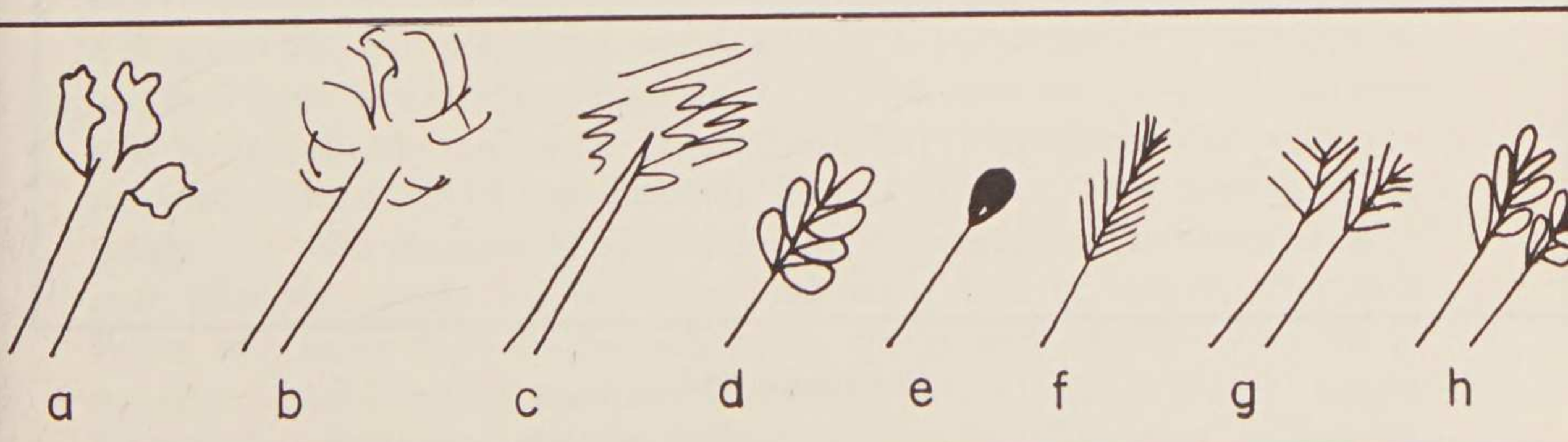
Figures 24g and 24h, the fishhook and the claw endings, are clear expressions of aggression. With the fishhook ending the attack involves subterfuge, for the subject tends to draw in an unsuspecting opponent. The claw ending involves a rather nasty type of aggression, characteristic of persons who are capable of making a destructive "cutting attack" once they have an opponent within range. Not many examples of these forms appear in the illustrations, since few of our subjects are given to destructive aggressive patterns, but a few isolated claw forms can be seen in illustrations 32 and 34.

The single-stroke branches depicted in figures 24i–24m correspond more or less to the two-dimensional branches just described, with the exception of 24l and 24m. Figure 24j is distinguished from 24i by the fact that the thicker stroke used to form the branch is still blunt at the end point. The fine hook at the ending of figure 24k is much more common in tree drawings than the fishhook ending of the two-dimensional branch shown in 24g, and carries less weight as a sign of hidden aggression than the two-dimensional form. Figures 24l and 24m represent rarely seen endings in two-dimensional branches. Usually these looped endings point to deception of some sort. When the stroke is from below, ending in a loop at the top, what is revealed is self-deception or pretense. A looped ending to a branch made with a downward stroke, on the other hand, indicates deceitfulness.

FIGURES 25a–h: Covered branch endings

Even in trees with a basically open structure, some or all of the branches may end in foliage, buds, or fine dispersed lines which alter or completely cover the branch ending. In these figures are shown some of the ways in which the addition of foliage may change the appearance of the end point of an individual branch. Figures 25a and 25b depict open,

FIGURES 25a–h



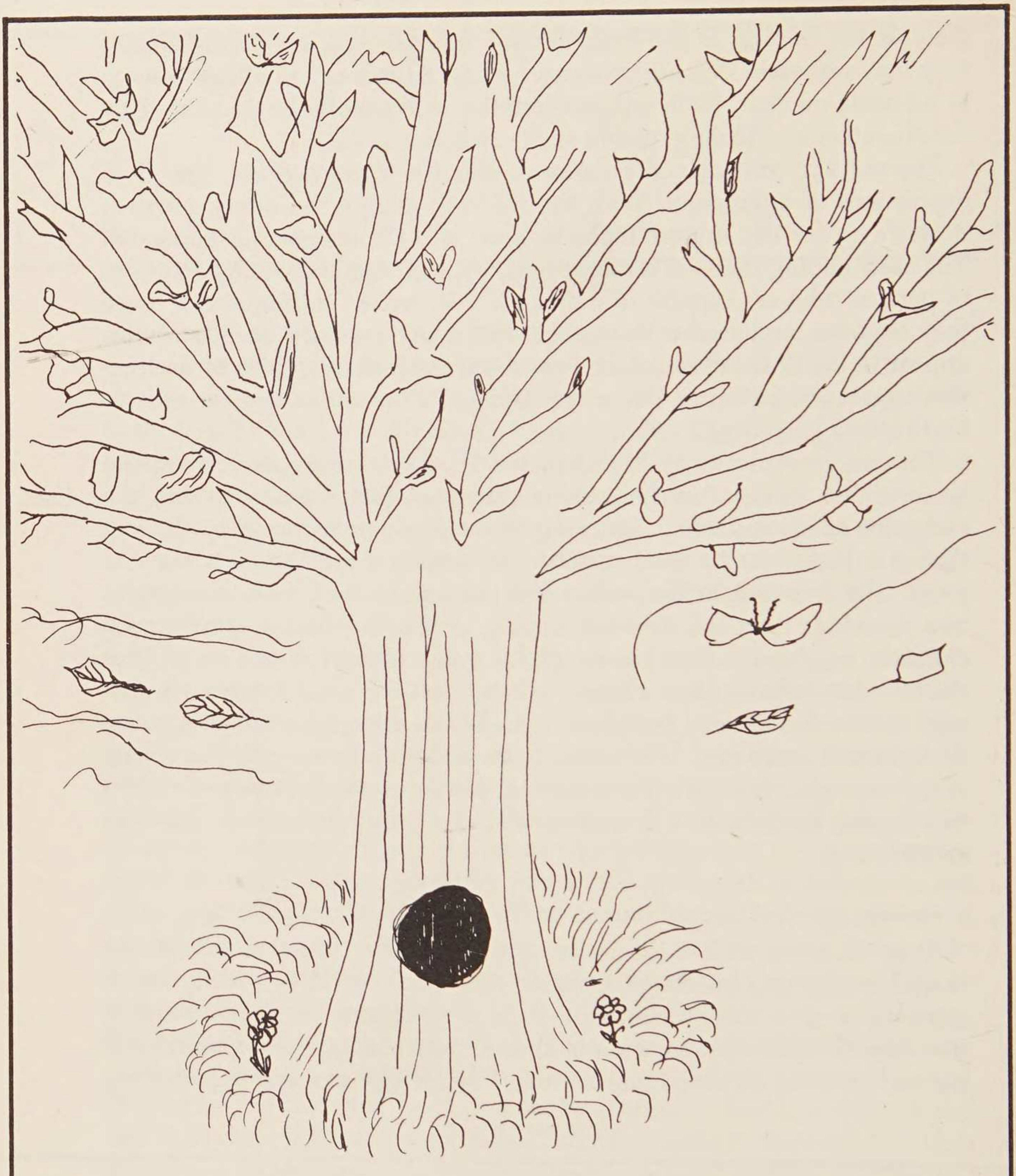


Illustration 34

two-dimensional branches which end in a few delineated leaves and indicated foliage, respectively. With such forms the flow of energy is still quite free, but the foliage buffers the inflowing influences somewhat and broadens the area of contact. When slight indication of foliage appears at the end of a pointed branch, as in figure 26c, the potential for expression of fiery or aggressive energies is tempered. The same is more or less true of figure 25d, although if many leaves are added to the end of a single-stroke branch, as in the figure, a naive attitude may be inferred.

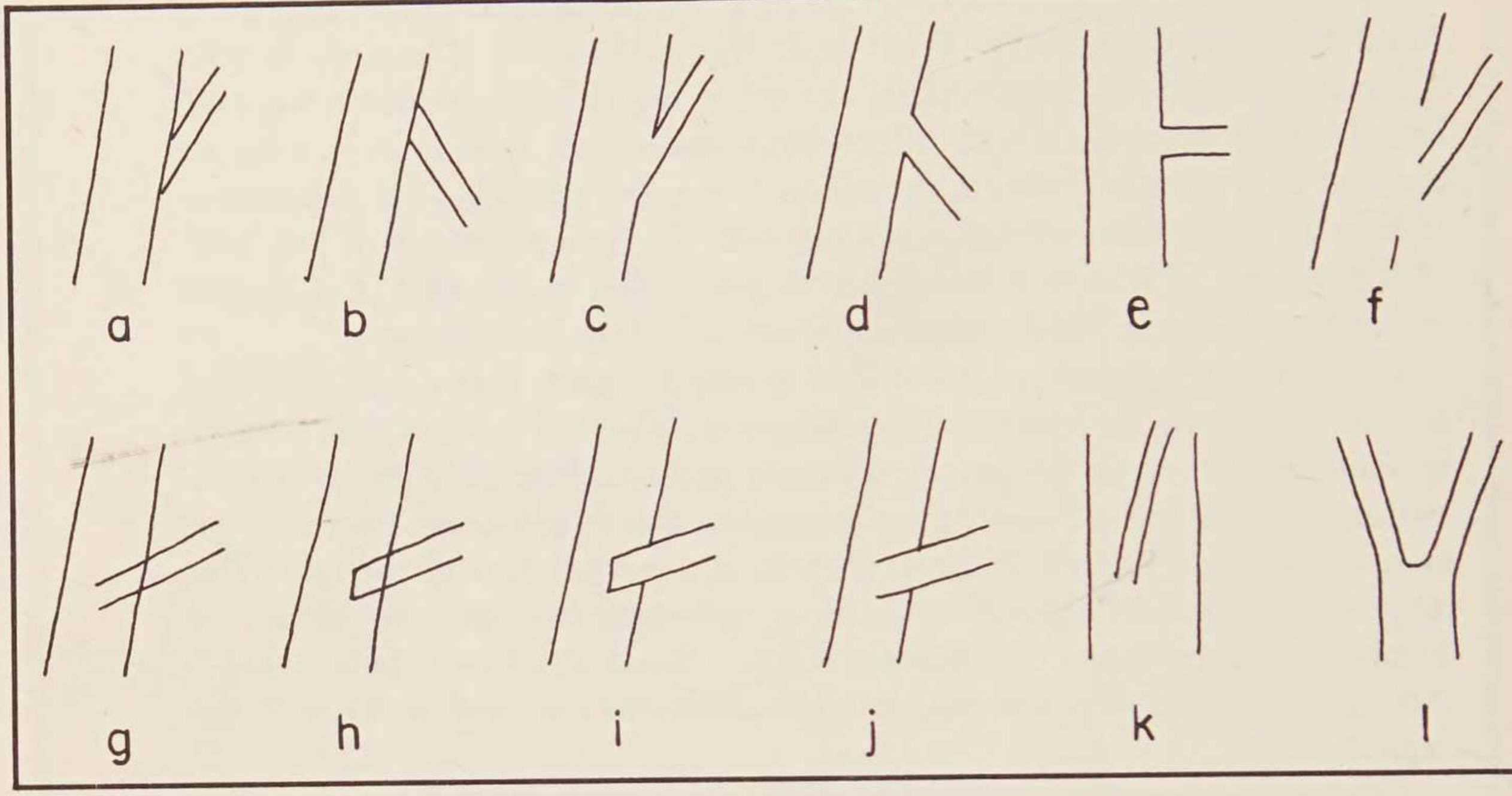
When a bud appears at the end of a branch, as in figure 25e, the subject is expressing an attitude of expectation. There is a sense that energy is being contained in the area in question and will flourish in the future. A certain amount of self-control or control of the imagination may also be symbolized, particularly if the branch is in a mental area of the tree. The single-stroke branch which ends in a series of fine strokes, shown in figure 25f, represents a continuous, subtle release or dispersion of energy. The flow is relatively free and heightened awareness and sensitivity are signaled.

Figure 25g represents a double-stroke or open tubular branch, which has small secondary strokes on either side of its end point. Here there is a conscientious effort to channel the outflowing energy, and the person attempts to guard himself against the influx of impressions, but without much success. The form represented in figure 25h, where a two-dimensional branch seems to split into two single-stroke branches ending in leaves, is usually found in the drawings of persons who appear to be both open and joyous. However, the form is unnatural and the attitude of enthusiasm is often found to be more a pose than a genuine stance. Illustration 25 (p. 179) provides an excellent example of this type of branch ending.

d) FIGURES 26a–l: Point of origin of the branches

In this figure are depicted a number of ways in which a single branch can be connected at its point of origin with a larger branch, or a main branch may be connected with the trunk. The comments will be made with the branch to branch reference, but they may also be applied in most cases to the connection of primary branches to the trunk.

Figures 26a and 26b show branches which are closed at their point of origin. Figure 26a tends upward, in the normal direction, but the line separating it from the main branch indicates that the particular pursuit represented is separated from the main flow of activity. This pursuit is not integrated with its source. The appearance of many such branches suggests that the psyche of the individual has a kind of mosaic structure. When the same type of branch tends downward (figure 26b), it is equally cut off from the main flow, but it further indicates internal inconsistency, conflict, or a specific feeling of loss. In illustration 35 and 32



FIGURES 26a–l

(p. 189) one can see one or two branches which are closed at the point of origin, while the majority are open, indicating that these closed connections are not explainable in terms of limited ability to draw, or of the general technique used in the tree drawing as a whole.

The upward-tending secondary branch with an open point of origin, illustrated in figure 26c, is the most positive manner of expression of all those shown here. The effort or idea is organically related to the whole. When an open junction leads to a downward-tending branch, however, as in figure 26d, there is a feeling of loss or conflict which is still active. It may be a more or less continuous disquieting factor. A small branch perpendicular to the larger one and open at its point of origin (figure 26e) points to an unnatural expansiveness. In a person with a trained mind, however, it may stand for a defined outward thrust in a special area of concentration.

The discontinuous secondary branch of figure 26f symbolizes a pursuit which has not yet been integrated into the main energy flow, thus it "hangs in the air." Inflowing energies may enter at the open spaces where the branches should be joined, and a possible area of vulnerability is also suggested. Looking from within, such an unjoined connection may represent an unhealed break, a point where energy cannot yet be rechanneled and thus is liable to "leak out." A tree in which a number of such discontinuous branches may be seen is found in illustration 34. In this drawing, indeed, several branches are actually hanging in the air below the crown, with no apparent connection to the rest of the tree.

Figures 26g, 26h, 26i, and 26j represent various ways in which three-

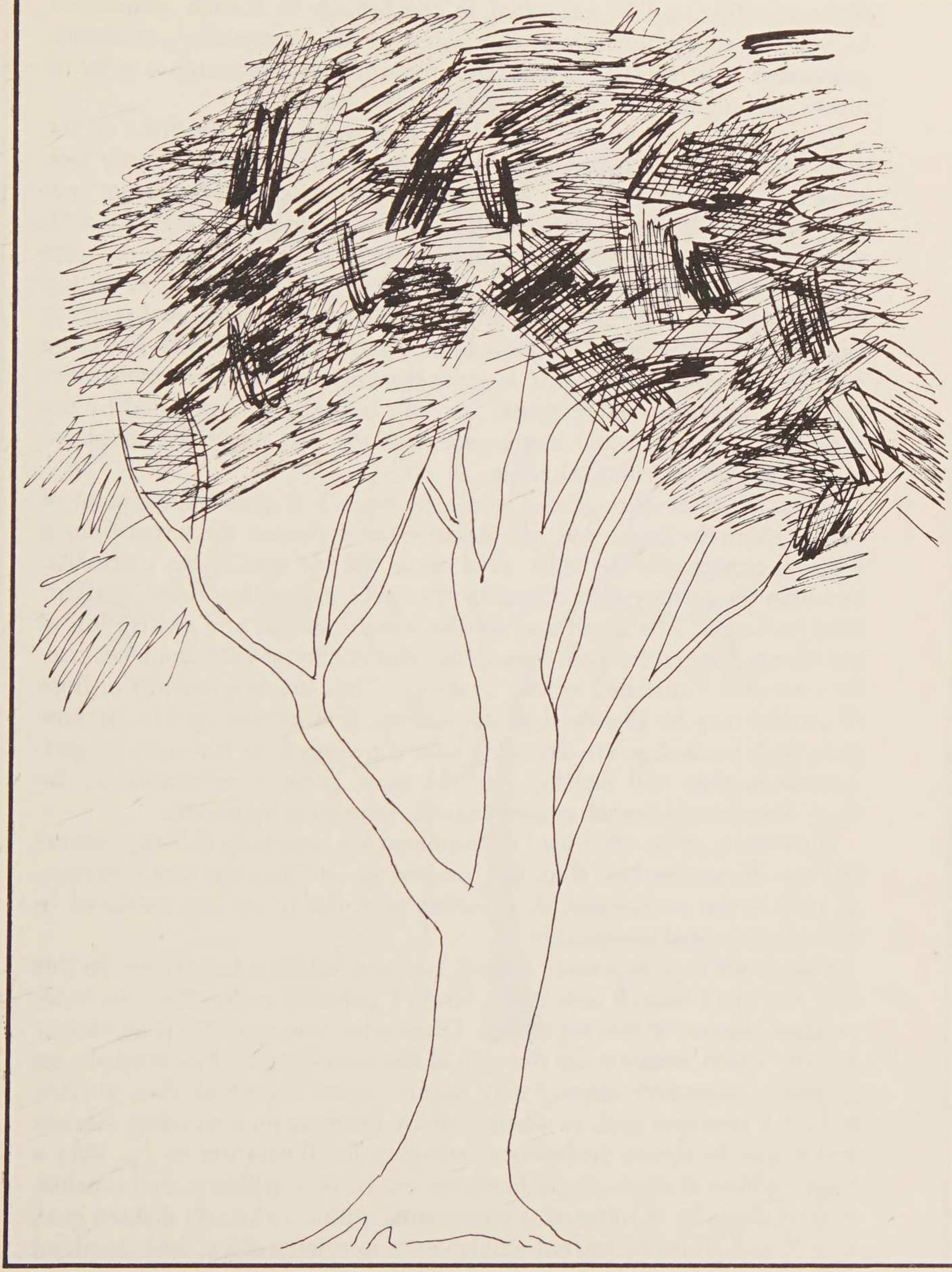


Illustration 35

dimensionality may be expressed in the branch to branch connection. In general, three-dimensional expression points to precision, creativity, refinement of perception, and a desire for wholeness, although it is by no means the only expressive form related to these qualities.

Figure 26g shows an open side branch growing from the front of the main branch. Here, however, the three-dimensional quality is partly lost, since the outline of the larger branch can be seen beneath the minor one. This usually indicates that the small branch is organically integrated with the larger, but the activity symbolized by the latter dominates, in spite of the fact that the intention is to represent the smaller branch as on top of the larger one. Where the point of origin within the main branch is closed, as in figure 26h, the small branch is unintegrated with the large one. In this case the attempt at three-dimensional representation often calls for a negative interpretation, for both branches are regarded by the subject as being of equal importance, but the two pursuits symbolized may be in conflict with each other.

When the three-dimensional secondary branch is closed at its point of origin within the larger one, but obscures the outline of the larger branch where it crosses over the latter, as in figure 26i, one usually has a situation in which the activity symbolized by the small branch has been "grafted" onto the larger. The result may be the transformation and redirection of the energy flow in the main branch, but the vitality of both branches may be somewhat threatened by the "grafting." Thus the two pursuits or lines of activity may be slightly delicate matters. It is interesting to note how often such renderings are altered in later drawings from the same subject. Sometimes they will develop into the most positive expression of the three-dimensional branch connection—that shown in figure 26j.

Illustration 26 (p. 180) may be examined for especially rich expressions of three-dimensionality. Here the complex ground and the root structure, as well as the connections of branches with the trunk, are rendered in three-dimensional perspective.

Figure 26k depicts a small branch confined within a larger one. In this case the small branch acts like a kind of parasite, rather than an independent channel of flowing energy. Often what is in question is an idea or activity which weakens the strength of the main branch. For example, an originally secondary activity may become more important than striving toward a principal goal, as when a hobby becomes an overriding interest and begins to absorb professional energies. In illustration 31 (p. 188) a large number of single-stroke branches can be seen within main branches. A great diversity of interests is represented without a clearly defined goal, as well as a tendency toward ambivalence in relationships, with resultant difficulty about commitment.

The dichotomous division of a main branch into two smaller ones, as shown in figure 26l, is a fairly common rendering in tree drawings. It may



Illustration 36

be seen in illustration 36 extending to the treatment of tertiary as well as secondary branches. Such a splitting of the energy channel into two more or less equal smaller channels may be evaluated either very positively or negatively. On the positive side it may be said to stand for a desire for harmony and balance, and indicates gifts of meditation. In the negative sense it symbolizes duality and a problem of indecisiveness. When dichotomous branches characterize the entire tree, as in the illustration cited, there is a danger that important life problems will always be met with compromise solutions, and that the desire for "peace at any cost" may undermine the development of true individuality.

FIGURES 27a–h: The point of origin of single-stroke branches

Figures 27a and 27b both show single-stroke branches attached to a two-dimensional branch. In evaluating the meaning of these forms, one must take account of the proportions of the two branches. If the single-stroke branch is very short and is attached to a main branch or to the trunk, then there is clearly an inequality between the two forms. A few central ideas and pursuits may be given too much importance, while other

FIGURES 27a–h

ideas are thrown out with no particular concentration. When the small branch is rendered as in figure 27b, penetrating the main one, minor ideas may elaborate the principle concept, but again, if the small branch is completely out of proportion with the larger one, the elaboration may be mainly pretense or false erudition. On the other hand, if the tree as a whole is positive and the mental sphere is well developed, minor one-dimensional branches of both types shown in figures 27a and 27b may represent a fascination with detail and the ability to gather facts in meaningful support of a central concept.

Figure 27c is the normal form of branch to branch connection when the crown is made up of one-dimensional branches. If the secondary branch turns downward from the main branch, a sense of loss, or at least of partial failure, is expressed. When a single-stroke branch has many small, fine branches attached to it, as in figure 27d, a defensive stance is suggested. This form is most often seen in pines and willows, in which case it may

be drawn on all the branches of the tree. When it appears on one or two branches in a deciduous tree, it points clearly to defensiveness in regard to a particular area of experience.

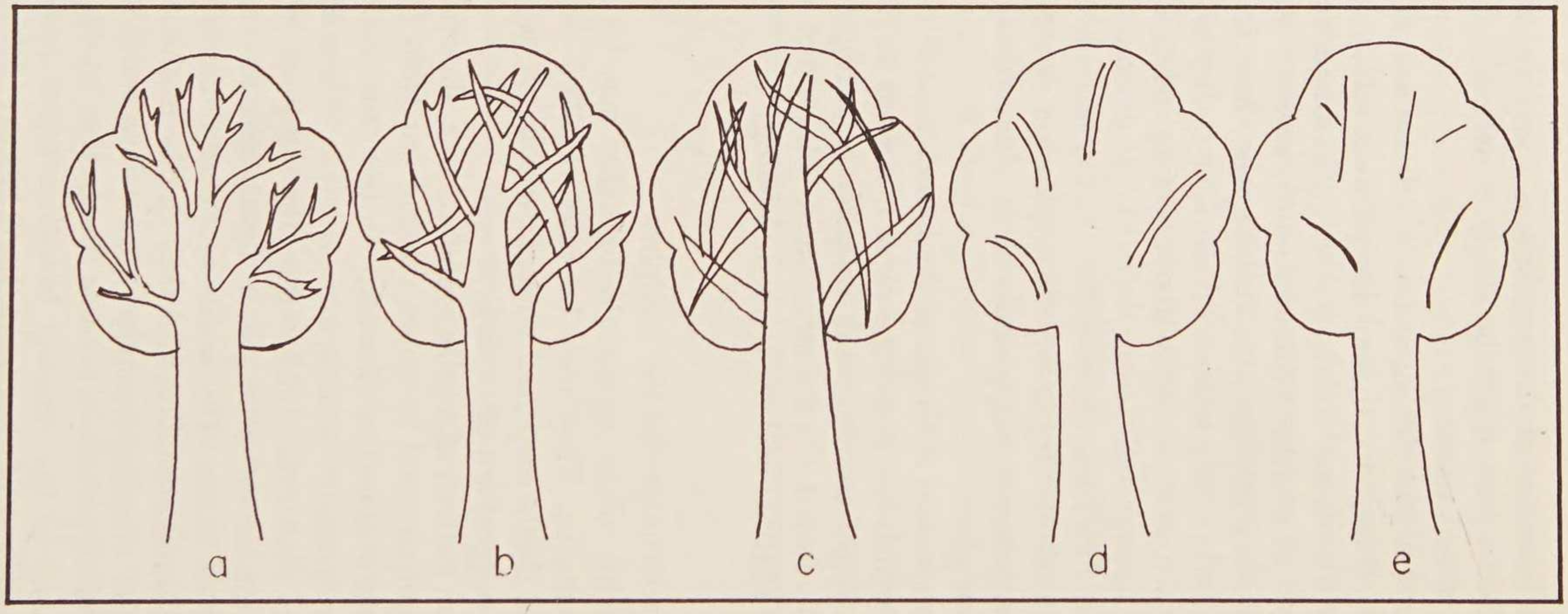
Figures 27e and 27f depict side branches which are not attached to the main branch. While these forms stand for pursuits which are not completely integrated with the main flow of energy, like figure 26f, they are more commonly seen in one-dimensional branches where the strokes are likely to be made with great rapidity. Persons who draw in this manner are usually flexible and readily influenced. However, they will try to conceal their vulnerability, in figure 27f without success, while the subject in 27e will sometimes appear sufficiently defensive to discourage approach. When the small branches form crossing lines in the manner of figure 27g, on the other hand, a convincing and quite unpleasant defensive stance is expressed. These persons are unapproachable in about the same way as a porcupine or a cactus plant.

The artificial arrangement of single-stroke branches seen in figure 27h is an unnatural form which has much the same meanings as those given to the "trained" tree. Rigid training and inflexible or arrogant mental responses are generally found. On the other hand, this kind of drawing may point to a talent for abstract and disciplined thinking.

FIGURES 28a–e: Patterns among the branches

When looking at the whole crown, the branches may be seen to form various kinds of patterns. They may be fully ramified throughout the crown; they may be thinly dispersed among the foliage; or a few strokes may serve as mere suggestions of branches.

The most common pattern of a fully branched tree, shown in figure 28a, has at least two equipotential branches coming out from the trunk, the secondary and tertiary branches of which do not cross each other. One might call this the "normal" branch arrangement. When the secondary branches cross over each other, either the crossing point will show one branch clearly on top of the other, as in figure 28b, or they may cross through each other, as in 28c. The under and over crossing points represent a sort of three-dimensionality, and thus can be evaluated positively, if only a few of the crossing branches point downward. An excellent example of this kind of pattern is seen in illustration 33 (p. 191). If, on the other hand, many of the crossing branches point downward, as in figure 28c or if too many of the minor branches are going in opposite directions, internal confusion, tension, and unsteadiness in the patterns of thinking may be inferred. The criss-crossing branches depicted in figure 28c almost invariably point to areas of specific tension and confusion. The free flow of energy is hampered, and often there is difficulty in separating present activities from the remembered past or anticipated future. If the



FIGURES 28a–e

total effect is highly incongruous, the subject may be inclined to explosive or arrogant mental display. For an example of a tree in which there is a combination of freely crossing and criss-crossing branches, see the highly complicated crown in illustration 29 (p. 185).

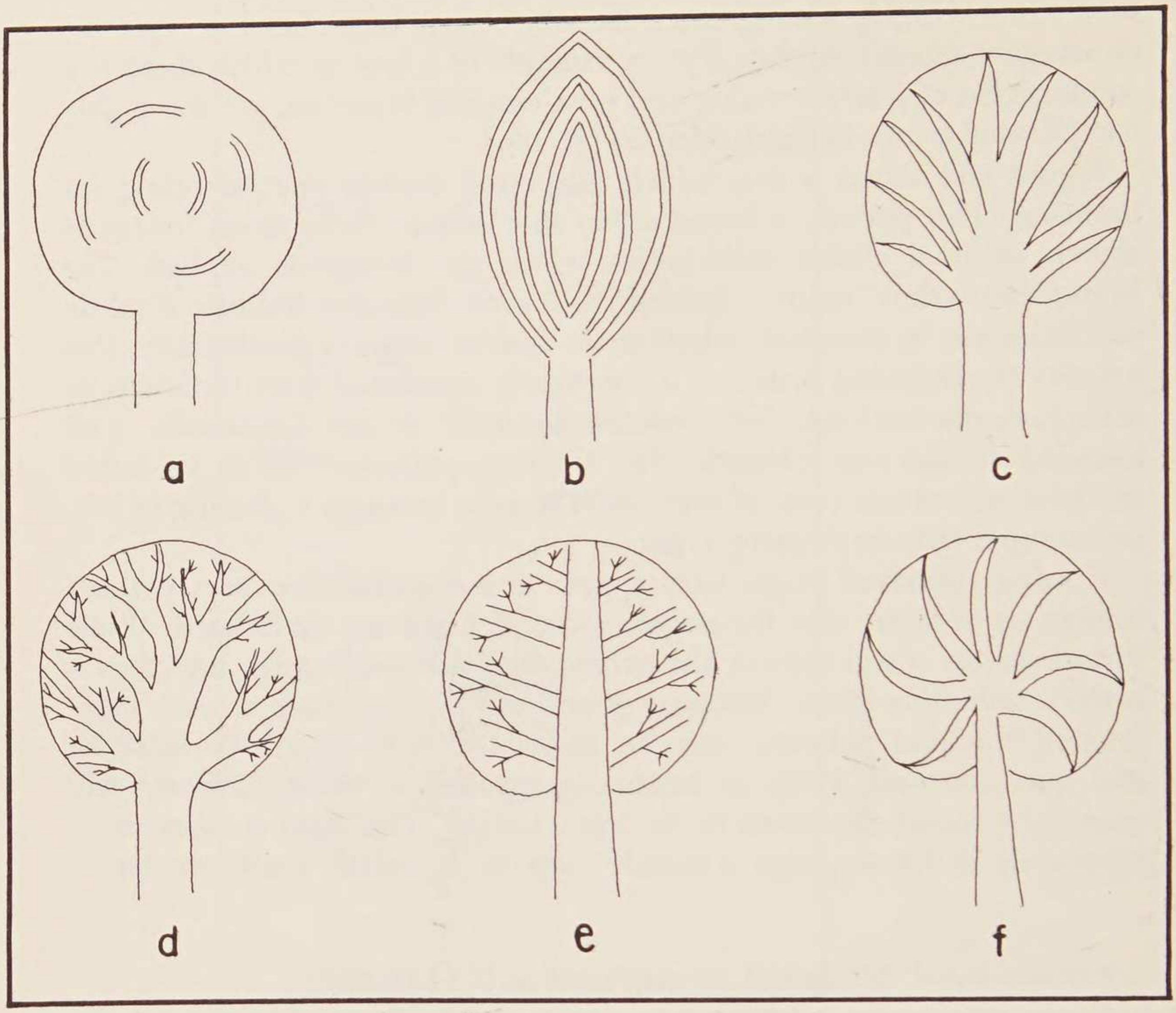
Figure 28d shows a few widely dispersed double lines standing for branches. This pattern is found either in a crown where much foliage is shown, or in a closed outline tree where the foliage is implied. The branches are thus "hidden" behind the leaves. This may indicate a subtle exhibitionism in personal behavior; in female subjects particularly, this manner of rendering branches is frequently associated with flirtatious or seductive mannerisms. Self-confidence—which is not necessarily well founded—is also characteristic. The thinking patterns tend to be rather incoherent, and this form of expression is more common to feeling or sensation types than to thinking types.

If a few dispersed single lines appear in a closed-outline tree, without foliage, as in figure 28e, the negative traits of 28d are underlined. While flirtatiousness is still typical, the person does not yield easily, and thus is often a seductive tease. Aimlessness and self-contradictory or very opinionated thinking patterns may be associated with impulsive behavior and querulousness. Hints as to the background of these problems will usually be found elsewhere in the tree drawing. This form is found most commonly in the drawings of female subjects, especially young women.

FIGURES 29a–f: Structural arrangement of the branches

Distinctions among different types of structural arrangements of the branches are necessarily artificial simplifications, and in practice a particular tree drawing may not conform with any of the six schematic arrangements shown in the figures. Furthermore, as soon as one begins to consider the crown as a whole, it is important to note whether or not it is symmetrically balanced between the two sides and to take account of any inclination or other manner of weighting, if present. The comments on these figures do not make allowance for differences between the two sides, but the reader should review the schemata and the section headed "Directional Inclinations" in chapter 6.

The concentric or centripetal arrangement of tubular branches depicted in figure 29a is a rarely encountered form, although an excellent example can be seen in illustration 37. This arrangement of branches has much in common with the technique of concentric shading strokes we discussed in regard to foilage. When actual branches are arranged centripetally, there is even more emphasis on "centering-in." If the branches are discontinuous, as in figure 29a and illustration 37, the subject is not completely closed off from environmental contact or influences, although the exchange between self and other is forced to follow a quasi-labyrinthian



FIGURES 29a–f

path. The reasoning faculties and the powers of concentration are high, but the subject must make tremendous efforts if he wishes to actualize or externalize his ideas. The great concentration on the center may be expressed either as egocentricity or as a kind of dignified aloofness. The subject who rendered the drawing is an intelligent housewife who is a diligent practitioner of Zen Buddhism, and in this case the latter interpretation seems more apt.

The parallel branch arrangement shown in figure 29b may take two principal forms. Where the crown has a basic flame shape, as in most poplars, for example, the parallel branches may curve in meridian forms. Such arrangements are expressed in quite different manner, however, in the typical trained tree, where they may rise vertically from a broad, horizontal, base branch. The meridian arrangement always suggests three-dimensionality, even in an abstract drawing. There is here discipline and self-control, together with concentration of energy which is directed toward defined goals, rather than focused within, as in the centripetal pattern. With the trained tree energy is regimented and rigid discipline



Illustration 37

can be maintained, but a personal vision is lacking. Both types of structure point to an excellent capacity for work, but while the meridian arrangement might be drawn by a design engineer, the trained tree would be more typical for the draftsman. Both types tend to be conservative in behavior, but the first is not necessarily conventional, whereas the subject who draws the trained tree nearly always seeks to shape his life according to traditional patterns.

In figure 29c we see the branches radiating outward from the trunk in a structure resembling that of a shell. The main branches are all equipotential. Secondary branches may or may not be present. This structure symbolizes an active interchange with the environment at several levels. In a sense, everything seems of equal importance to the person. He is an exploring type, ready to spend and distribute his own energies, as well as to accept influences from all directions. When this arrangement is seen in an open tree, the subject is definitely outgoing and usually power seeking. When a closed outline is shown around this branch structuring, the subject may be somewhat more reserved and cautious, but he still divides his energies in several primary directions. Approximations of the shell structure may be seen in illustrations 28, 34, 30, and 22 (pp. 184, 194, 187, and 188).

Figure 29d may be called the hierarchical structure, where a few main branches give rise to secondary branches and these in turn to tertiary branches. This is the most common form for the open, branched deciduous tree and in itself does not carry any special meaning. However, where this structure is employed there are nearly always differences of emphasis and direction between the two sides of the tree, and these should be carefully assessed.

Figure 29e depicts a bilateral branch structure. This is, of course, the typical structure for the conifer trees as a group, as well as for some willows and palms. It is also, however, seen fairly frequently in the rendering of ordinary deciduous trees. Koch refers to these cases as "the T-trunk, or pine trunk in the fruit tree," and he does not hold out much hope that a subject who draws this form might succeed in intellectual pursuits. Some of the comments from his table for this form are: "primitive nature, tendency to regression; undifferentiated; often limited maturity; little intellectual differentiation, sometimes lack of intelligence; practical rather than theorist; manual and practical endowment; more strength than abstractive ability; failure to advance from the primitive stage" (Koch, 1952, p. 50). Without going into the rather illogical arguments Koch presents in favor of this interpretation, we refer the reader to illustration 31 (p. 188), drawn by a physician. Had this subject consulted Koch in his capacity as a vocational counselor, he would very likely have been advised to study garage mechanics rather than surgery. In our view, the central trunk structure with bilateral branches is indeed drawn by

subjects with an abundance of energy and often physical strength, but the presence of these qualities need not imply any limitations of intellect or maturity. A great deal of emotional energy is directly available for the pursuit of the life goals. If the tree is a conifer type, especially a pine, the goals may be fairly narrow. When this type of central trunk appears in a summer deciduous tree, the subject has broader interests and a more inclusive life view than the pine type, and his activities may be highly diversified.

The centrifugal ordering seen in figure 29f is formed by equipotential branches radiating out from the top of the trunk, or a central area above the trunk-crown transition point. This structure is similar to the shell arrangement, except that it seems to be more stylized or artificial. Interpretation will depend largely on the manner in which the branches are connected with the trunk, and on whether those which radiate downward are broken or otherwise damaged. If the branches are awkwardly rendered or are "welded on" to a closed trunk, there may be a kind of cold control of the various functions, combined with ruthless behavior. On the other hand, if the branch structure is rendered gracefully (as in illustration 64; p. 345), it may be seen as an expression of compassionate interest in all forms of life and willingness to give of the self. Although pure examples of this structure are relatively rare in our collection, the palm drawing of illustration 38 partakes of some aspects of the form, and illustration 32 (p. 189), while closer to the shell structure, has a certain centrifugal quality.

Connection of the crown with the trunk

The importance of that area of the tree where the trunk expands into the crown, or is connected to it, should be evident, for it reveals a great deal about the internal interplay between the subject's emotional responses and his mental life. An understanding of this interrelation of functions is clearly of great importance in defining the personality dynamics. In the manner of rendering the point of transition, we can distinguish three principal modes of expression, irrespective of the type of tree involved: (1) the trunk opens up freely into the crown area; (2) at the point of transition the trunk is partially closed off from the crown; and (3) the point at which the trunk meets the crown is closed by a separating line.

In general, the first of these modes of expression allows for the freest and most extensive exchange between the emotional and mental functions of being—or between the realm of feeling and the realm of spirit. The second mode symbolizes either a conscious attempt to curtail this exchange or an unconscious compulsion to do so. The third mode represents a distinct effort to separate the two functions, which is nearly



Illustration 38

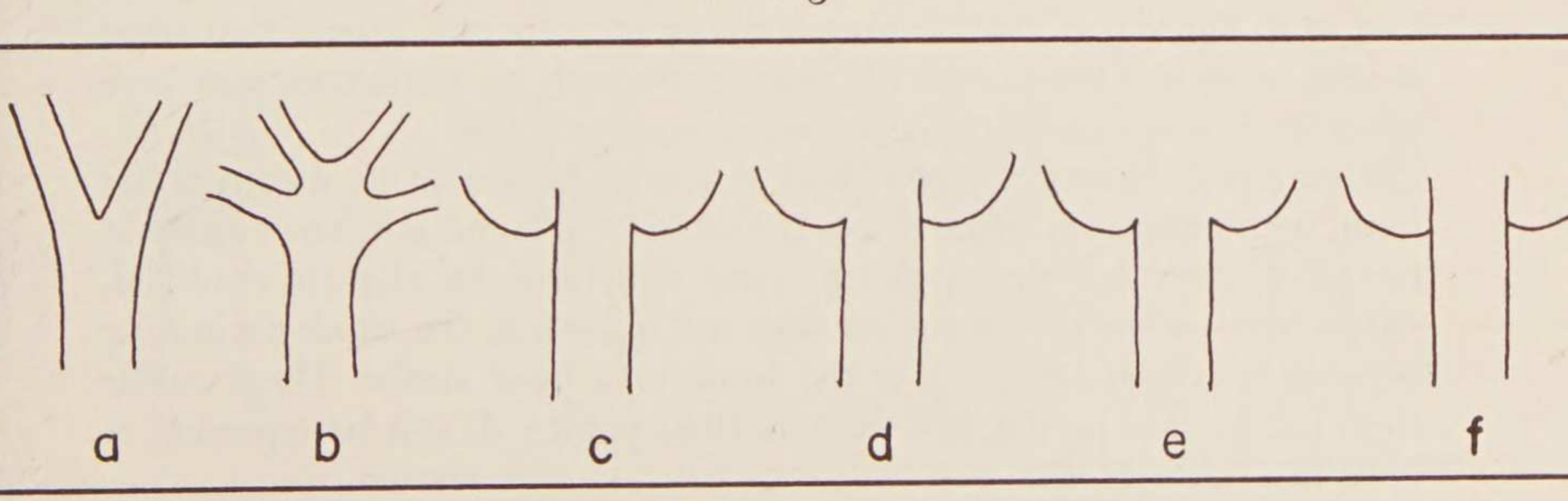
always allied to some kind of fear or a powerful need for control.

FIGURES 30a–f: Open transition from trunk to crown

In these figures are shown a number of ways in which an open trunk-crown transition may be drawn, in both open-structured trees and those with an outlined or closed crown. Open transitions indicate that the feeling function and the emotional responses of the subject enrich the mental and spiritual domain. At the same time, thinking processes can be brought to bear on the feeling life. This interchange of emotional and mental energies is not always completely positive, however, for it may happen that too much exchange takes place, if, for example, the subject "thinks with his feelings." As in every aspect of detail evaluation, the whole must be kept in mind.

The most common rendering of the open transition in the deciduous tree is one in which the trunk continues upward, usually splitting in the upper part of the tree, but giving off large branches from both sides as the crown area begins. This may be regarded as a normal form, and is not depicted in the figures. The first form shown, Figure 30a, represents a division of the trunk into two large branches where the crown begins. This has a significance very much like that attributed to dichotomous branches. It may be an indicator either of balance or of duality, of mediating gifts or of indecisiveness. Since it involves primary branches, however, it is more central to the personality as a whole. One may very well be dealing with a person whose life has two distinct mainstreams of activity. In the tree of a female subject the indication may be of a woman who actively pursues a career of some sort, but divides her energies so that an equal emphasis is given to her full development as a woman. In the tree of a male subject one may have two equally strong mental pursuits, one of which is commonly expressed on the left side of the tree (painting, music and so on), while the other belongs to the symbolism of the right side. What is important in considering such a dichotomy at the

FIGURES 30a–f



transition point, however, is that it indicates an equal amount of emotional energy invested in both lines of development.

When several main branches fan out from the trunk at the transition point, as in figure 30b, a rather special situation arises, because this nearly always is combined with a widening of the trunk at this point. Koch describes such a broadening of the trunk as a form of congestion and evaluates it negatively. Although we would agree that a certain slowing down of the energy flow is involved, it is not of the same nature as that symbolized by a bulge in the trunk itself. The widening of the trunk before division into branches suggests an area of pause, of reflection. Here is a "space" where emotional and mental currents can be brought into balance. There is nearly always some caution in the feeling reponses of the subject, but this is not to be equated with congestion or blocking.

Figures 30c, 30d, 30e, and 30f all represent closed-crown trees with slight variations on the open transition from trunk to crown. In figures 30c and 30d one side of the trunk line extends slightly up into the crown area. Here the basic exchange of mental and emotional energies is still free, but the subject blocks the direct flow of feeling responses, and checks the impact of influences on his feelings, toward the right or the left side. If the emotional block is established to the left, as in figure 30c, he may feel threatened by the mother or some strong feminine influence or experience. The barrier does not serve so much as an active defense mechanism (like heavy shading or aggressive attack strokes), but rather functions as a sort of dam which contains and holds aside the psychic materials expressed in the lower left sector of the crown. This view is supported by the fact that in a closed-crown tree with such a line extending from the trunk into the crown, there is almost always a bulge in the outline at that point. See, for example, illustration 37 (p. 205), where the bulge is present on the left, although it is not marked. In the same tree drawing there is on the right side a common phenomenon not schematized for formal discussion—that is, an opening between the outline of the crown and the outline of the right side of the trunk. Such open points symbolize an area where the subject is either vulnerable or receptive to influence.

When the trunk line extends up into the crown on the right side of the tree, as in figure 30d, the meaning is the same as for 30c, except that what is held back is often material having to do with an important past love affair, or, in some cases, the influence of male relatives.

Figure 30e depicts an open trunk-crown transition in its most normal form, with no special significance. It should be pointed out, however, that in rapidly executed drawings this form will often be slightly modified, either because the crown outline does not quite join the trunk outline, or because it crosses faintly over the trunk in a brief stroke. These subtle signs can be interpreted, but the transition point will still be regarded as open in a normal fashion.

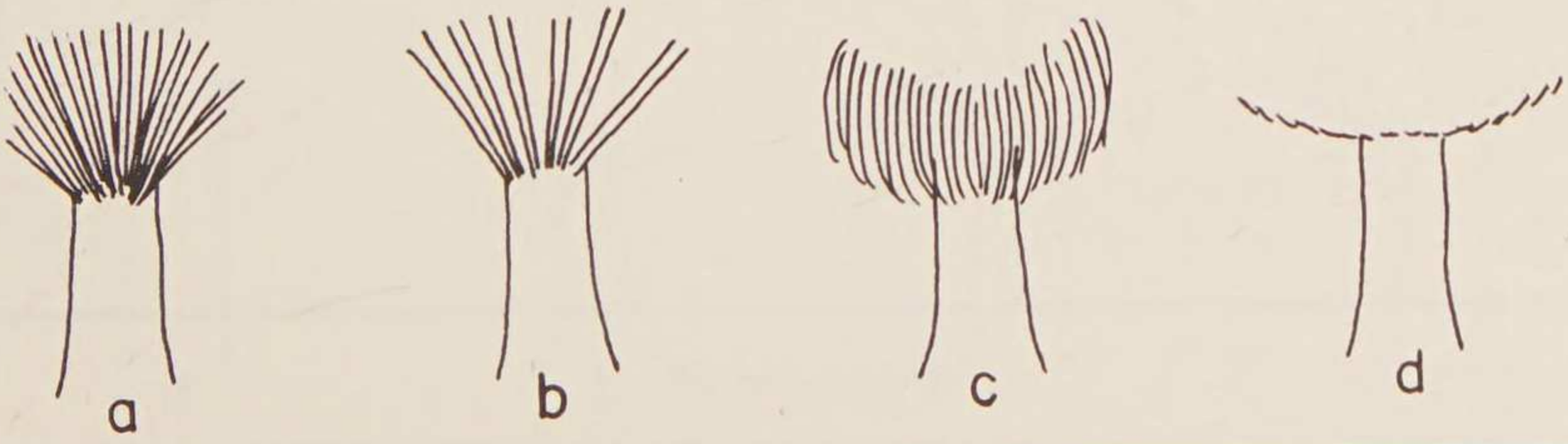
When both sides of the trunk outline continue up into the crown area, as in figure 30f, interpretation will depend largely on the point where the trunk ends. If the trunk ends in the emotional sphere, an excess of emotion may be indicated. If at the same time the crown is large and fully developed, one may have an individual who is involved in mental activities, but whose thinking processes are heavily toned with feeling. When the trunk extends well up into the mental sphere, the indication is of one who harnesses his emotional energies in the service of his ambitions or the development of his ideas. In illustration 39, which is a clear example of the trunk extending well into a closed crown, we have the drawing of a female subject for whom both interpretations are partially applicable. She is a graduate student in science with an excellent mind. When focused on a particular goal, she is able to concentrate the energies of all functions (including probably sexual energies, which are shown as rather powerful) toward achieving success. She has considerable ambition as a young scientist, and is capable of detached analytical thinking when this is called for. On the other hand, in the broader areas of thinking such as philosophy or theoretical politics, she is inclined to rather passionate opinions. In addition, she needs strong emotional attachments to her colleagues or professors in order to sustain her ambition and capacity for work.

FIGURES 31a–d: Semiclosed transition from trunk to crown

These figures show several ways in which the transition point between the trunk and the crown may be rendered as partially closed. These expressions represent attempts to gain a measure of mental control over emotions.

In figure 31a many fine single-stroke branches converge at the point of transition with the trunk. Here is represented an effort to distribute emotions evenly—to "spread them thin," so to speak—and in this way to conceal their intensity. We have seen this form in the trees of several writers of fiction, who are able to sublimate powerful emotions in varied kinds of imaginative works which usually have some autobiographical content.

FIGURES 31a–d



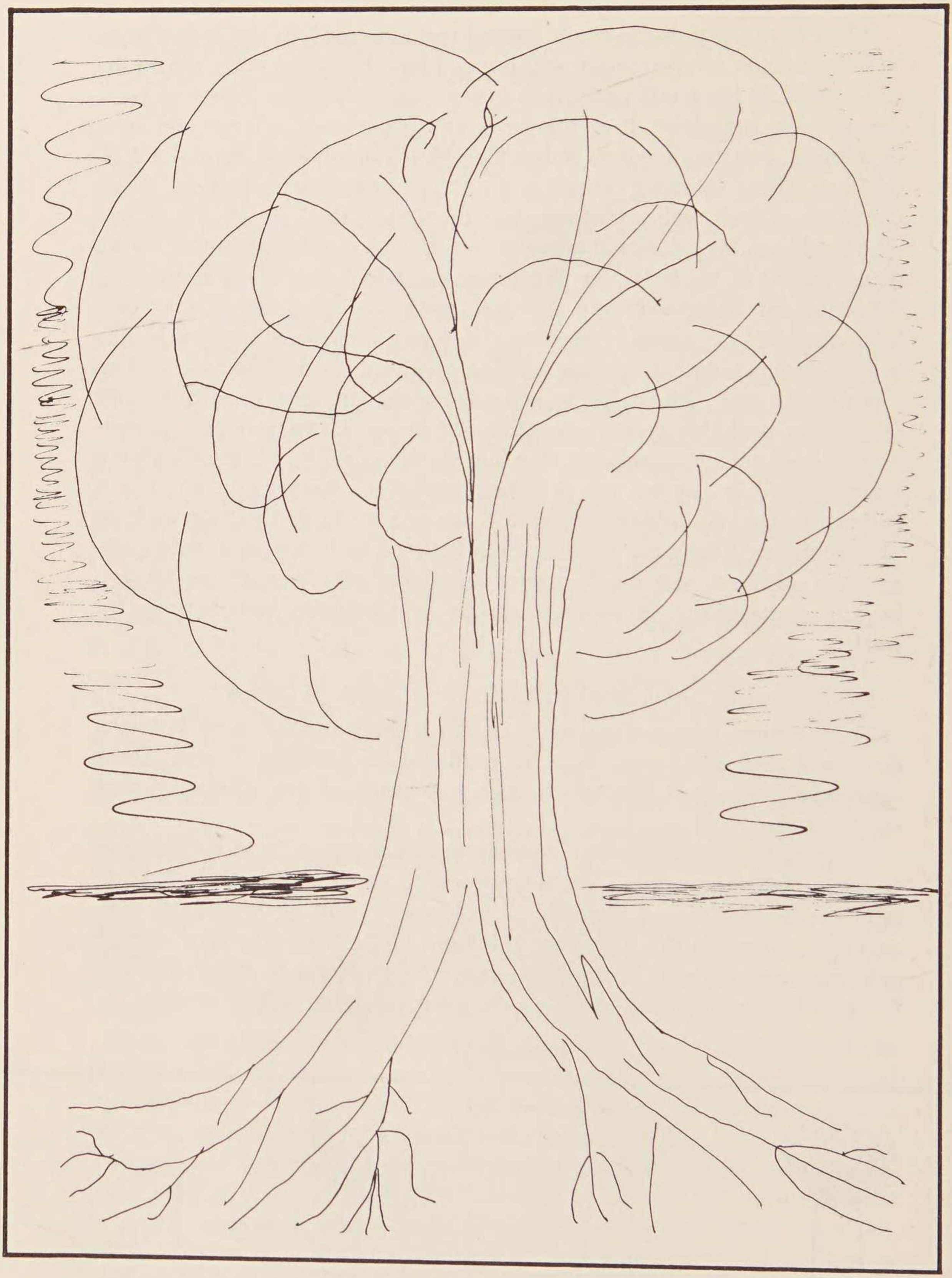


Illustration 39

The transition depicted in figure 31b often results when the branches are arranged in a shell structure. Both positive and negative emotions may be channeled into the multifaceted activities signaled by the numerous equipotential branches. In illustration 34 (p. 194), which is drawn with this kind of semiclosed transition, the separating of the emotions into several flow channels is reinforced by the parallel lines on the bark of the trunk.

When the trunk-crown transition is covered by foliage falling from above, as in figure 31c, the subject is ashamed of his emotional responses and attempts to conceal them. (See the discussion on the umbrella-shaped crown, p. 167, earlier in this chapter.)

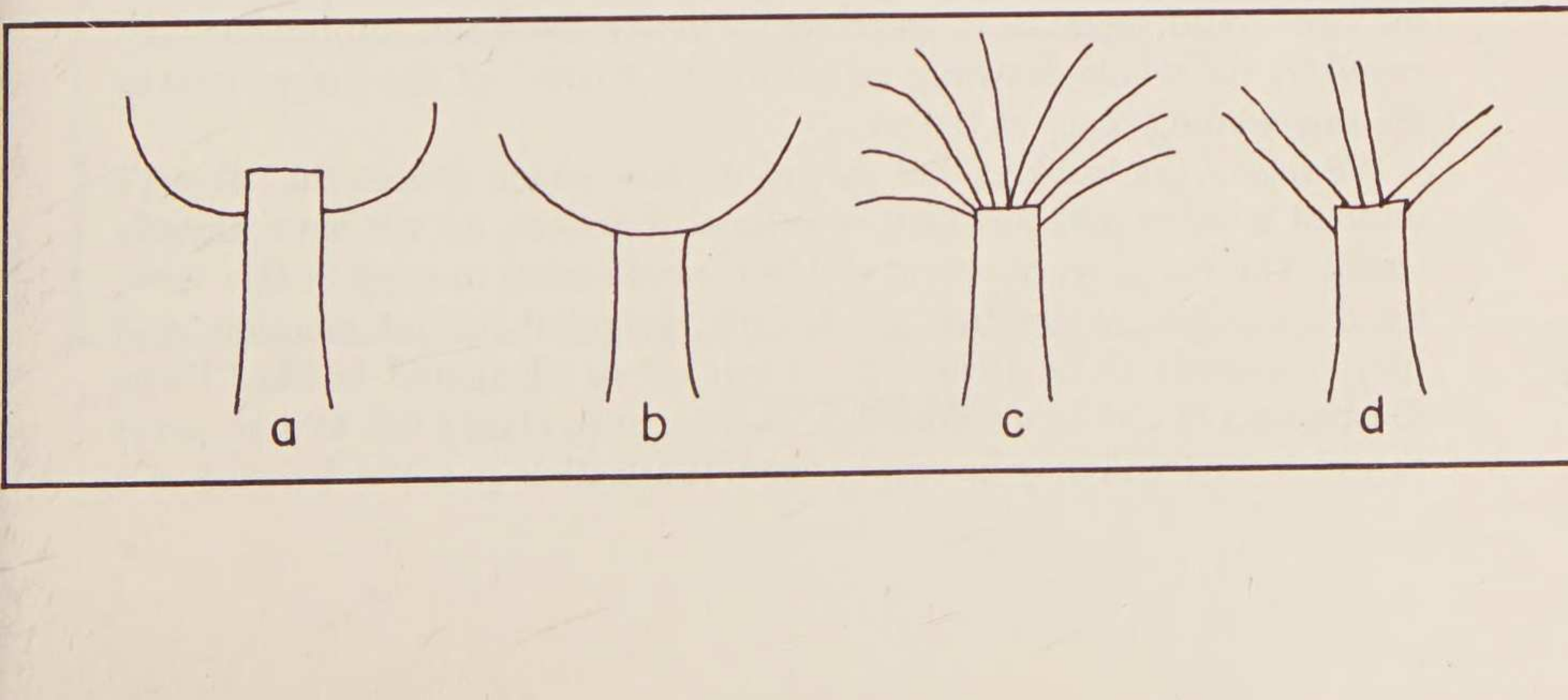
Much more common is the partial closing off of trunk from crown by a broken line or contiguous lines which represent the foliage, illustrated in figure 31d. This is frequently seen in the drawings of subjects who feel that they ought to obtain more control over their emotions, but who make only feeble or unsuccessful attempts to do so.

FIGURES 32a–d: Closed transition from trunk to crown

Here are shown two trees of the closed-crown type and two open-structured trees, all with a definite separating line between trunk and crown. In general, the closed transition symbolizes distinct separation of emotional functions from the mental and spiritual life. The person may be frightened by his own emotions, or simply unable to acknowledge and accept them. He often believes that he has succeeded in establishing control over himself and is usually unaware that he may be repressing feelings which are potentially explosive. In some cases the emphasis on control will be related to upbringing. In others, the subject may be keeping the lid on extremely chaotic responses which threaten to overwhelm his conscious stance. Figures 32c and 32d are more likely to represent pathological repression than are 32a and 32b.

Figure 32a shows the trunk extending into the crown, but closed across its end point, while in 32b the trunk may be open, but it is cut through by

FIGURES 32a–d



a solid foliage line. Both of these forms may be drawn by persons who are "control types," and thus they more often express a *conscious* decision to keep feelings submerged than do persons rendering the semiclosed openings discussed in relation to figures 31a–d. On the other hand, these two forms may also be said to be the expression of secondary rather than primary traits of personality. Figure 32a, especially, is often seen in the drawing of a subject who explains his deliberate curtailment of spontaneous feeling responses as being necessary because of painful emotional experiences in the remembered past. Figure 32b is the least "drastic" of the four forms depicted here, for even though the line of foliage cuts through the trunk, an opening may still be inferred, with some free dispersion of emotional contents into the crown.

The repressive tendencies expressed in the closing off of the upper part of the trunk are generally primary personality traits when the transition is rendered as in figures 32c or 32d. The highly unnatural attachment of the branches to what is essentially a stump suggests that there is very little substance to the mental life. Should the repression break down, there may be danger of a psychosis, for the crown is not sufficiently developed to assimilate the release of the dammed-up emotions. While the person drawing figure 32d is better able to function so long as control is maintained, should a breakdown occur, the probability of violent and chaotic release of repressed energies is to be considered.

THE TRUNK

With respect to the general symbolism of the trunk, we differ from both Buck and Koch, who attribute to it the expression of ego strength. In our opinion there is no obvious reason why the trunk area should be singled out as the most likely place for the expression of ego strength, for the trunk is only a part of the tree. Assessment of the strength or weakness of the ego would seem more correctly to derive from the impression conveyed by the whole drawing, including the relation of the drawn tree to the surrounding space of the page.

We regard the trunk as that part of the tree which defines the subject's internal relation with his own emotional functions, as we have already stated. The drawings of young children would seem to support this view, for the energies of children are heavily weighted toward emotion, and they commonly draw trees with dominant or elongated trunks. Three illustrations of children's drawings may serve to clarify the various ways in which the trunk may be emphasized. Illustration 40 is the drawing of a

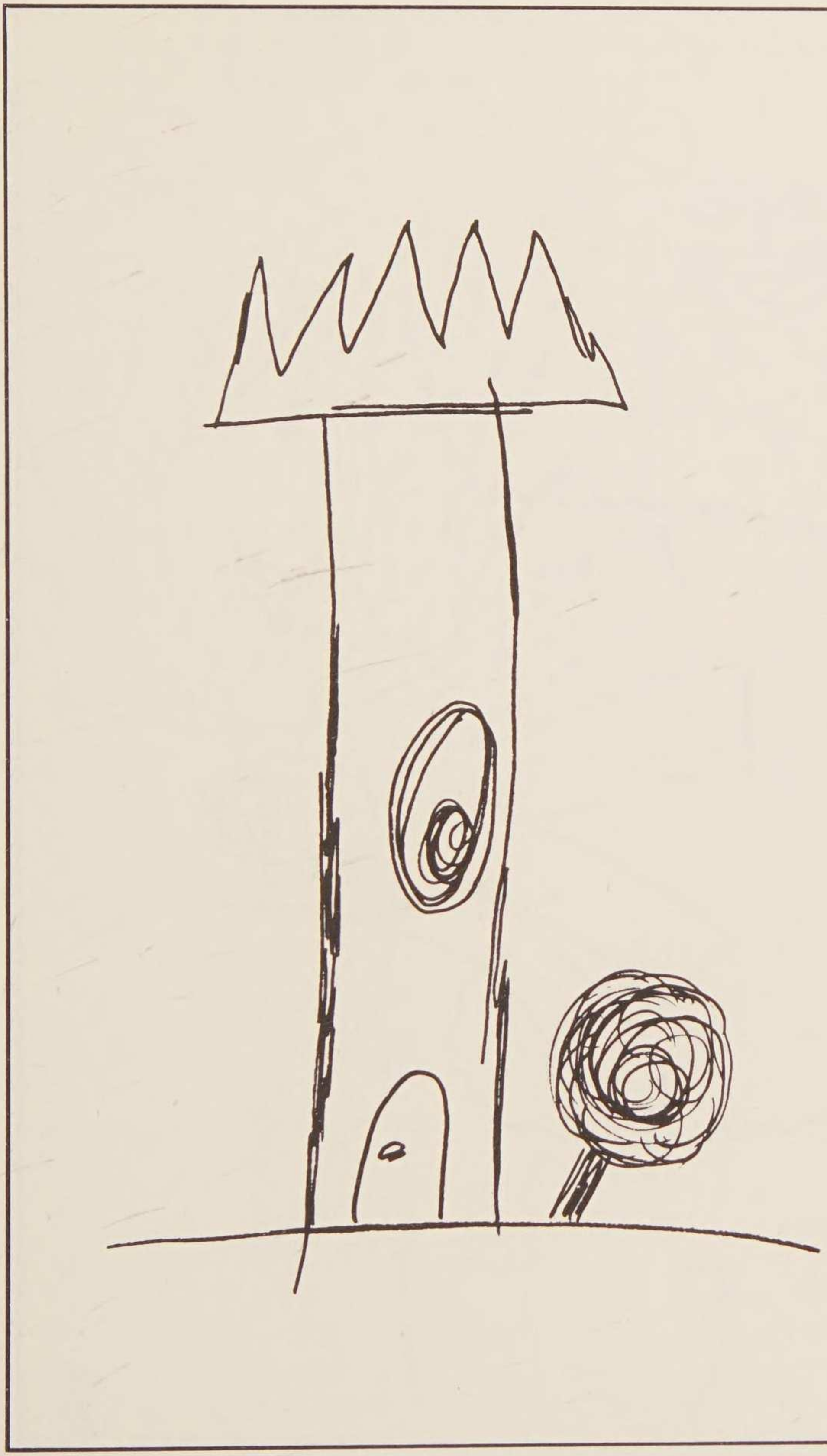


Illustration 40

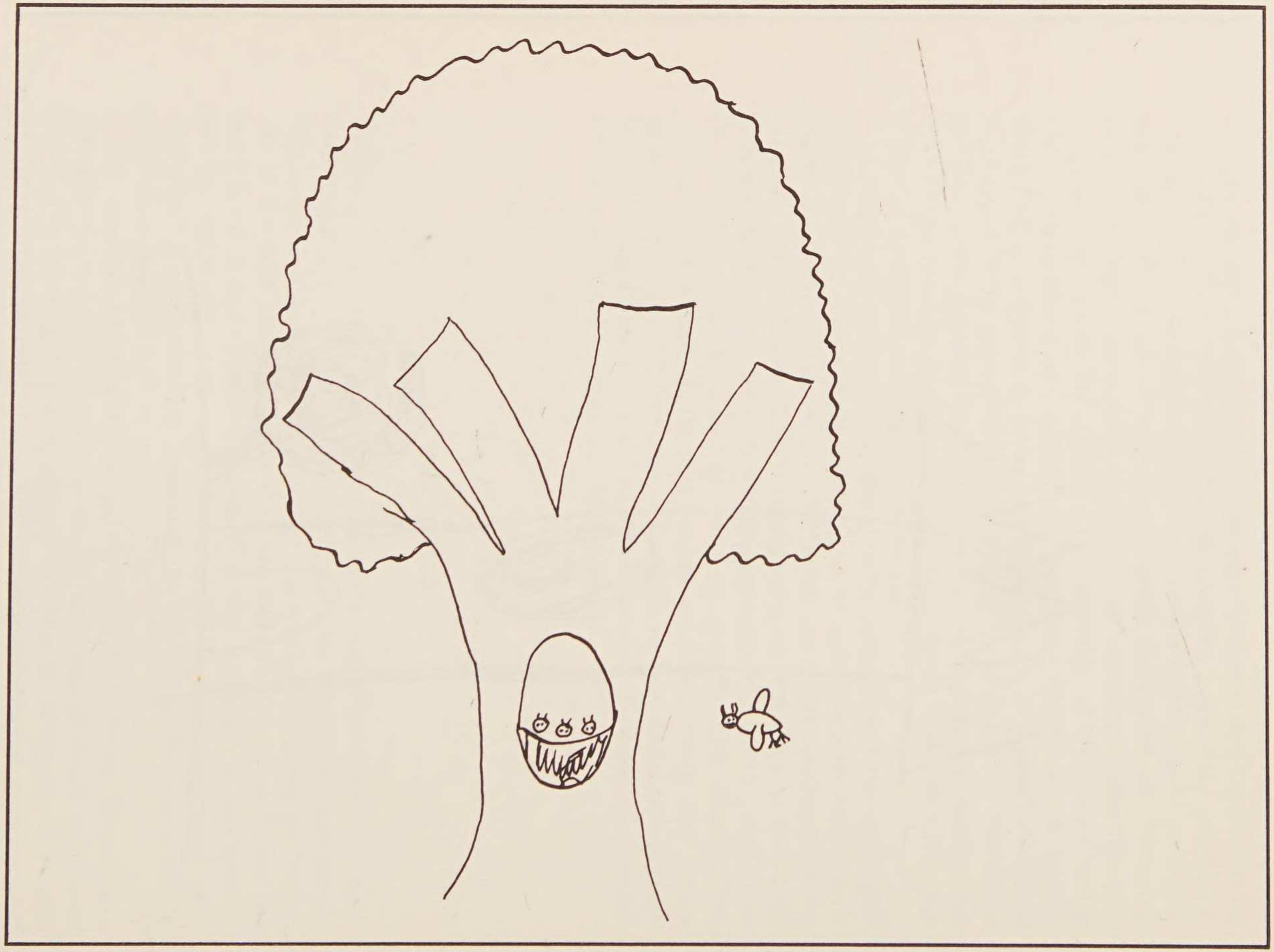


Illustration 41

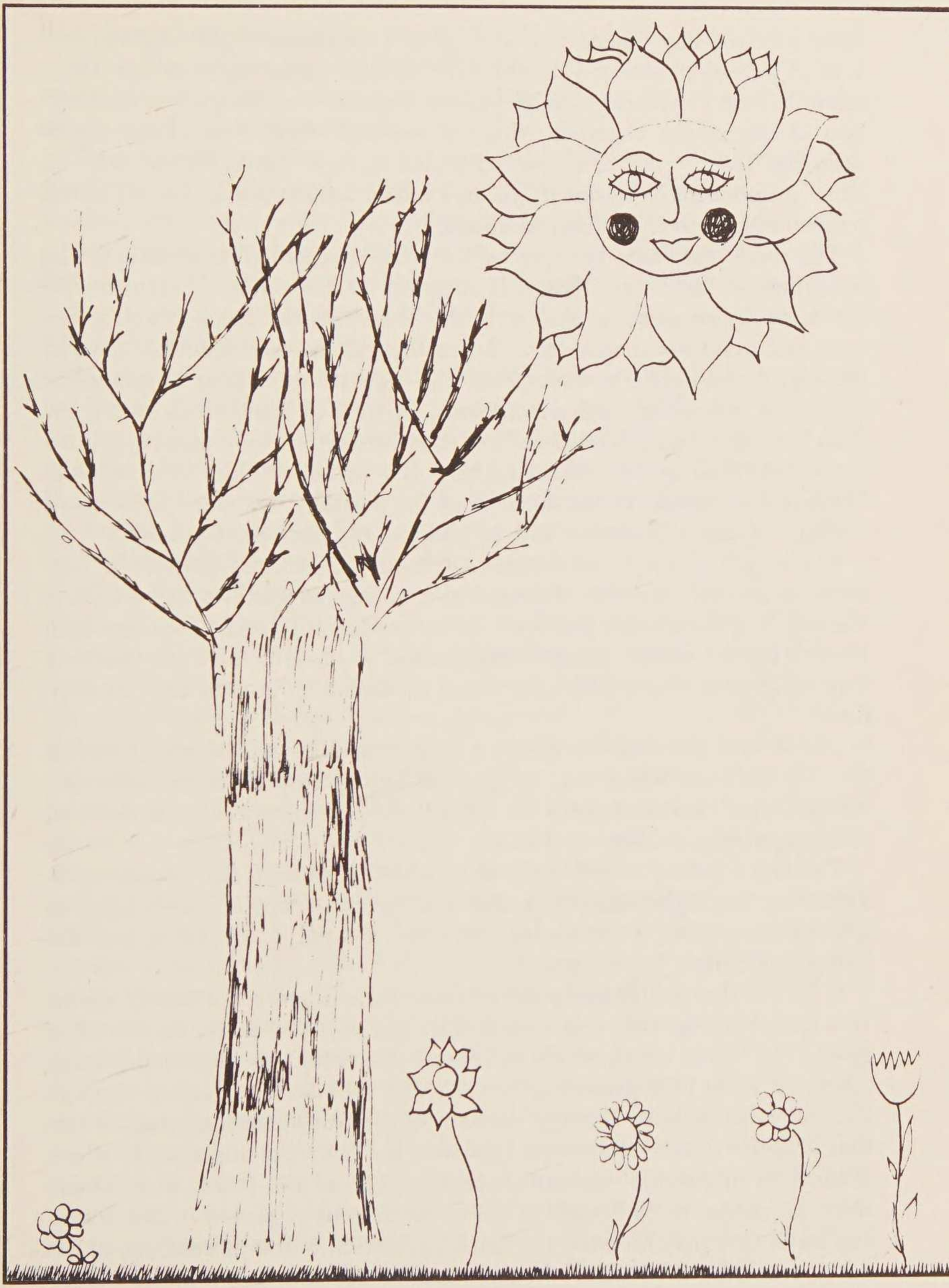


Illustration 42

three-year-old boy; illustration 41 that of a six-year-old girl; and illustration 42 that of an eleven-year-old girl. With the progression in age, there seems to occur a developmental process expressed in the greater elaboration of the crown, together with less marked trunk dominance. These drawings are, of course, all very different in type. Nevertheless, they all show proportions between trunk and crown which would be evaluated somewhat negatively in adult drawings.

The trunk may also be seen as the main channel through which the fundamental life energy flows. It supports and sustains the crown and serves as the connecting link, or bridge, between the roots, which penetrate and draw sustenance from the earth, and the crown, which absorbs the energies of light. Psychologically the roots would appear to symbolize all that is instinctual and unconscious, as well as that which can draw from the well of undifferentiated collective energies; the crown represents conscious thinking, purposeful activity, that which is able to absorb the "light of awareness." In between stand the partially conscious domains of feeling responses, emotions, and the shaping experiences of growth.

The length of the trunk can be subdivided into three parts. The bottommost section—the area of transition from root to trunk—may be seen as the seat of the chthonic emotions: primitive and/or racial identifications, longing for the womb, oceanic feelings, and so on. Here also are recorded very early experiences which have had an impact on growth and development.

The second sector of the trunk, if emphasized by special marks, has to do with emotions which may or may not be experienced consciously, but are generally acknowledged to be socially unacceptable: anger, lust, revenge, sibling jealousy, and so on.

The third sector, which may already be a part of the crown itself, expresses the higher emotions and feeling responses acknowledged as socially acceptable, if not always "positive": sympathy, joy, liking and disliking, frustration, hope, love.

It is rare that a differentiation of these three sectors is actually shown in a tree drawing, although occasionally one will find a partial cross-line low in the trunk, which seems to represent an effort to control the lower emotions while still permitting a relatively free flow of feeling through the trunk channel. An artificial division of the trunk into longitudinal sectors is useful to the interpreter, however, for the following reason. When distortions or notable emphatic marks appear on the trunk, their placement according to the length of the trunk may be regarded in two different ways. One may measure the trunk in relation to the present age of the subject in order to establish the approximate age at which a difficult experience has occurred. (This matter of trauma marks and age determination will be treated in chapter 12, "Time Determination.") One may also, however, assess special signs and distortions of the trunk in terms of the

degree to which the emotions for which they stand are consciously recognized by the subject. Imprinting, and the establishing of typical responses in the process of psychological growth, may also be described on a relative scale of unconscious to conscious.

Thus a break or a bulge very low on the left side of the trunk may stand for an unconscious desire for a childlike identification with the mother, whereas a similar form high in the trunk may represent a conscious attachment to the mother, or an awareness of the strength of her influence. Both signs may refer to current psychic needs and responses, but one is an unconscious yearning, while the other is a consciously acknowledged emotion or attitude.

It must be remembered that signs in the tree drawing can stand both for events and for psychic states or attitudes. Sometimes only the latter can be read from the drawing, but since defined feeling responses and emotional imprinting are often at least indirectly related to events which the subject has experienced as particularly significant, it should not be too surprising that a skilled interpreter can often pinpoint both the nature and the timing of external happenings as well.

When the event in question has been experienced by the subject as a shock or trauma, as with rape, accident, or the sudden onset of illness, for example, it will often be recorded in the form of a scar, a central knothole, or a broken branch. In these cases one can use the time determination measurement of the length of the tree to establish an approximate date for the event. If, on the other hand, the subject has undergone an experience which has had a profound effect on his feeling responses, but which has not been subjectively felt as a sudden impact, the longitudinal placement of the signs referring to the experience, and its correlative response set, may express the degree of consciousness of related affects, rather than the subject's age at the time of the experience. Let us take another example. A twenty-three-year-old person draws a tree with marked breaks on the right side of the middle sector of the trunk, well below the crown. We suspect that this has to do with his first serious love affair, which, on questioning, he tells us occurred when he was nineteen. According to the time measurement of the trunk, these marks would refer to a much earlier age, but they are recorded on the right side of the trunk rather than, for instance, in the lower right branch, because the impact of the total experience has been largely unconscious. The subject remembers the affair in detail, but he is not aware of the degree to which the quality of the experience has affected his deep feeling responses. Unusual signs on the right side of the trunk might equally well refer to the father, or brother, or male peers. However, since the first strong love experience (real or fantasized, innocent or intimate) does appear to imprint the psyche deeply in one way or another, regardless of the age of the subject, we usually investigate unusual markings on the right side of the trunk in

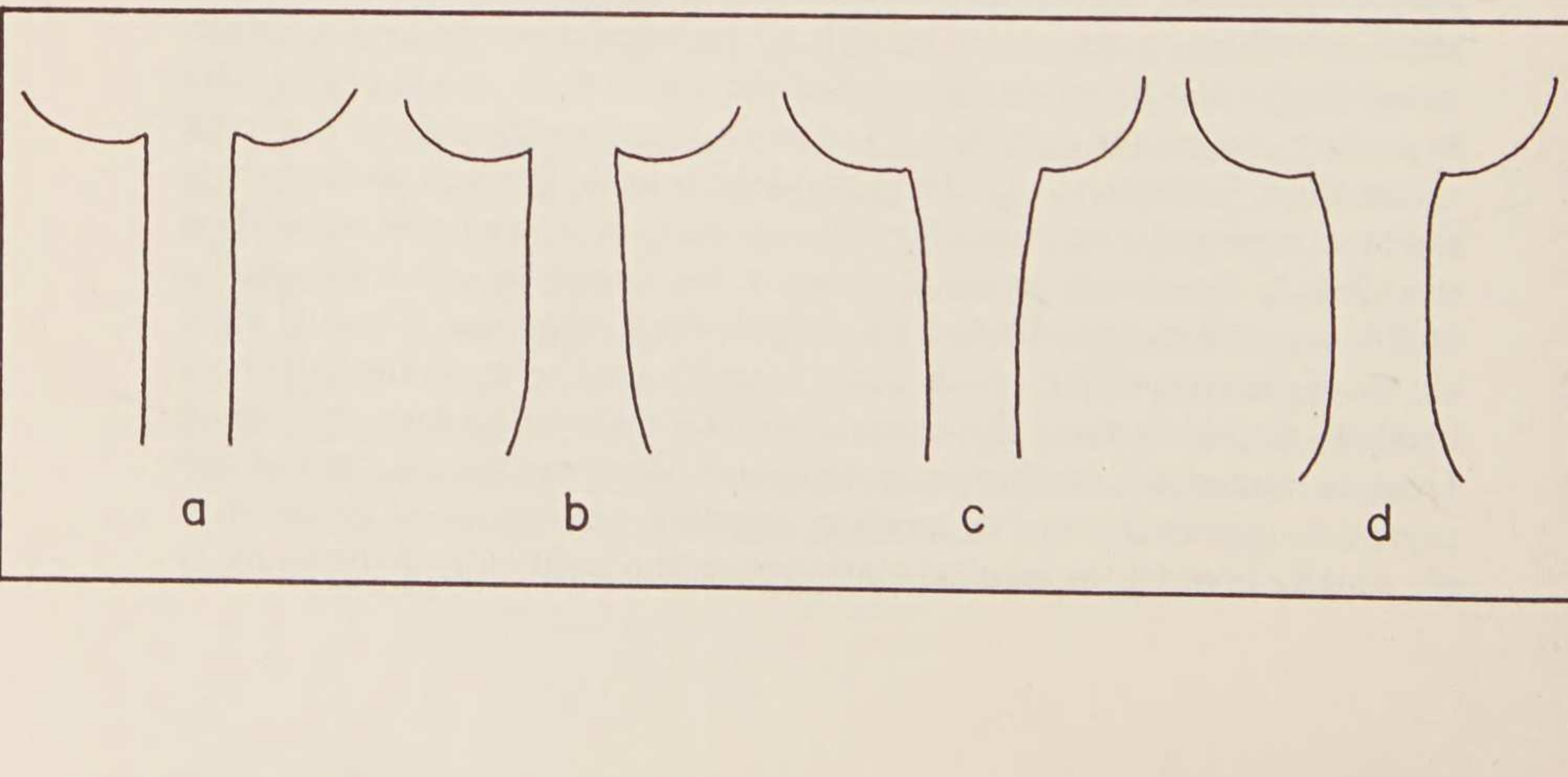
connection with heterosexual attractions. If the responses of the subject are not pertinent, one may find that interpreting such marks in terms of relations with male peers is more meaningful.

On the whole, the trunk is perhaps of greater interest to marriage counselors and therapists working in depth with patients than to vocational or educational counselors, for the latter may find that evaluation of the position, direction, and type of tree, together with analysis of the main branches, will provide them with insights about the subject sufficient to their more limited assessment goals. As with so many of the details of form and expression, skill in interpreting the trunk comes mainly from experience, and it has proved difficult to categorize the many variations of expression which may be found in its treatment. We shall discuss figures schematizing the rendering of: (1) the shape of the trunk; (2) the trunk outline; (3) the proportions of the trunk; and (4) the base of the trunk.

FIGURES 33a–d: Parallel, straight trunks

The four shapes depicted here are all basically straight and the two sides are parallel in the central portion of the trunk. All suggest the potential for a strong, open flow of energy from root to crown, provided that there are no other counterindications. When sexual and instinctual energies flow without obstruction or diversion through the emotional centers and on up into the crown, one may suppose that the subject is capable both of healthy recognition of instincts and of a harmonious sublimation of instinctual energies when appropriate. Sexual experience may lead to mental joy and the expression of warm emotions, while spiritual contact and mental stimulation may be the origin of a sexual relationship. At the intrapersonal level, energies may easily be transferred from one sphere to another. Impersonal, unconscious materials are openly accessible to the creative, reflective mind. Emotions may flow both upward and

FIGURES 33a–d



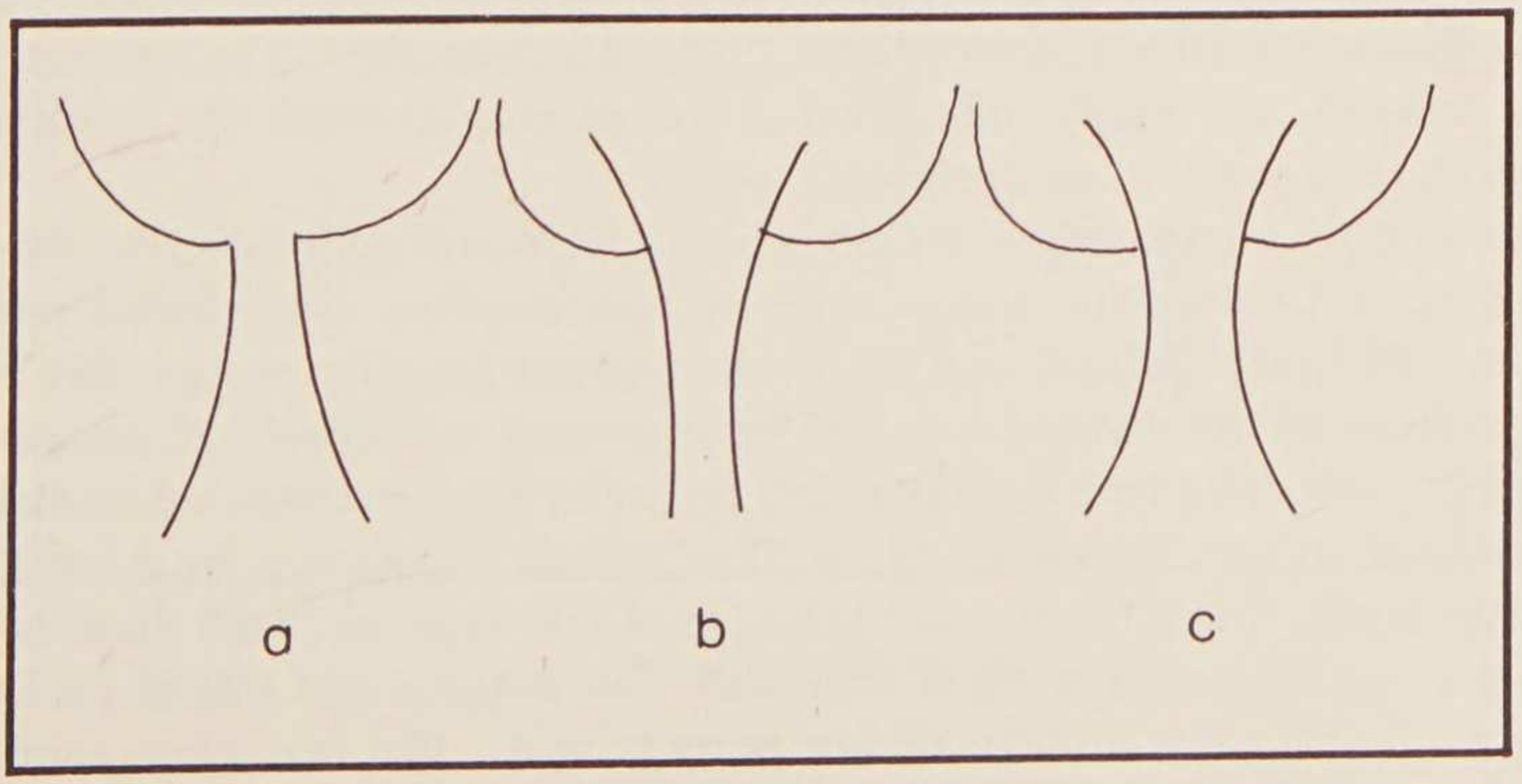
downward, with joy experienced in work, or tenderness and subtle understanding expressed through sexual play.

The very straight and completely parallel trunk shown in figure 33a is usually found in abstract trees, where it may be regarded as natural, and given the positive interpretation described above. Should it be found combined with a realistically drawn crown, the positive flow will still be present, but there may be a certain stiffness in the expression of feelings, or a tendency to contain emotions in rather formal manners. When the same form opens into a slight funnel at the base, as in figure 33b, or widens gradually in parallel lines, there is a healthy, open acceptance of sexuality and rich contact with unconscious materials. The reverse funnel of figure 33c, where the base of the trunk is completely parallel but a widening is seen at the transition to the crown, stands in particular for a valuable exchange between the feeling responses and the mental or spiritual domain. Figure 33d is the most positive of these four forms. Subjects drawing the trunk in this manner recognize and experience their feeling responses as harmonious connecting links between the instincts and the conscious mental life.

FIGURES 34a–c: The trunk as an exaggerated funnel

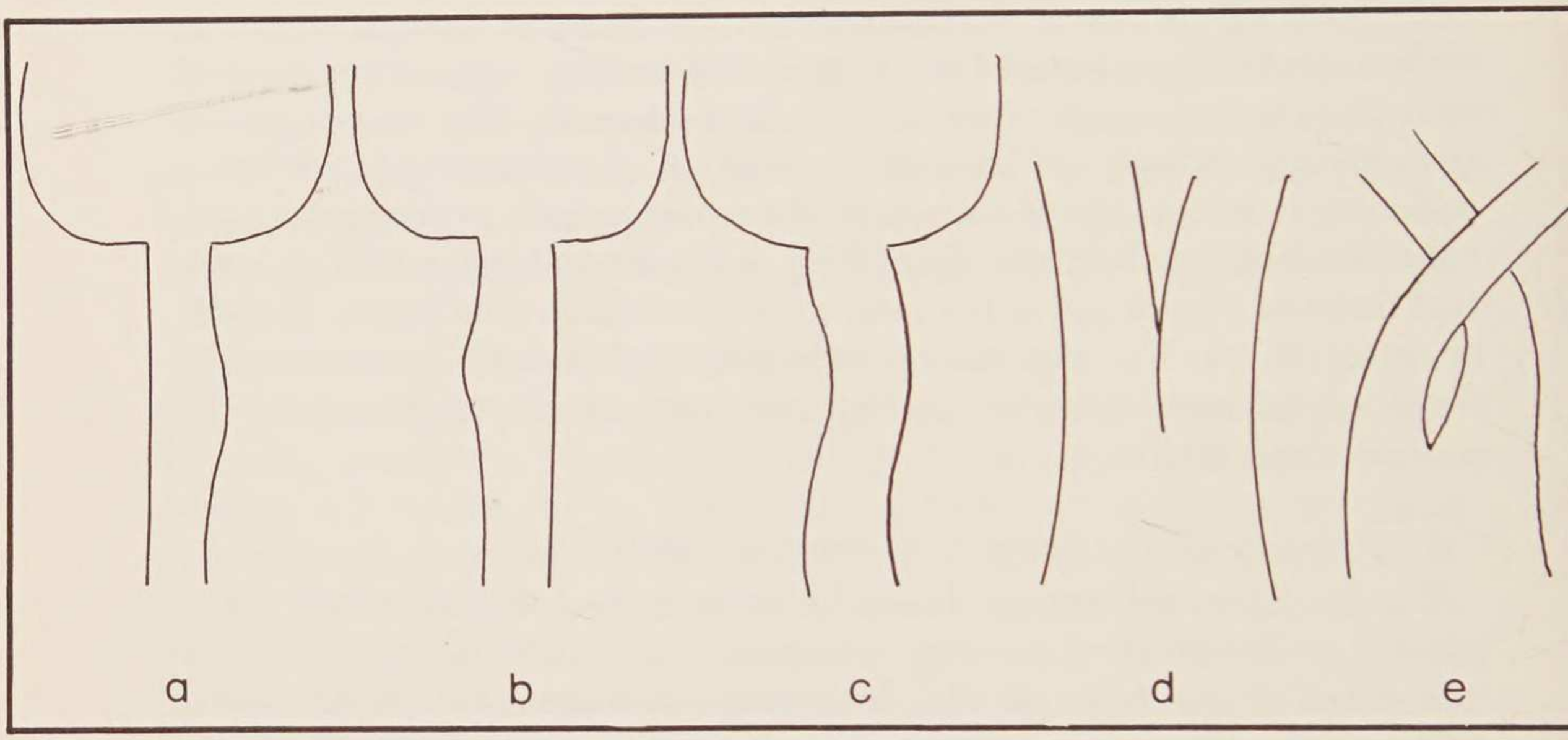
The last three renderings shown in figures 33b–d are sometimes exaggerated to the point of travesty, resulting in the forms shown in figures 34a–c. In this event the parallel, funneling forms are not to be evaluated so positively. Figure 34a suggests an indiscriminate acceptance of unconscious emotions, for example, while 34b may refer to the tendency to flood the mental processes with an excess of feeling content. In figure 34c the bridge function of the midsection of the trunk is no longer so effective, for its central part is actually constricted and may not be able to contain and support the "intake" of energies from the wide funnels both above and below.

FIGURES 34a–c



FIGURES 35a–e: Bulging or doubling in the trunk

Figures 35a, 35b, and 35c show three types of trunks which tend more or less in a straight upward direction, but are bulged in one or more places. The one-sided bulges depicted in figures 35a and 35b usually represent specific unfulfilled desires, or past emotional experiences which have an incomplete quality. When the bulge is on the right side of the trunk (figure 35a), the subject may have strong needs to be accepted by



FIGURES 35a–e

his father, particularly if he is a male and there are other signs indicating that he emulates the father. This kind of bulge may also stand for a love experience in the tree drawings of both male and female subjects. When the bulge is on the left side (figure 35b), on the other hand, it stands for a romance, but is almost always related to a longing for maternal approval.

When the whole trunk is diverted into a wave form, as in figure 35c, the significance relates to more basic traits of personality. The subject is rather mutable and easily influenced at the emotional level. He tends to overreact, frequently in an optimistic way.

Figures 35d and 35e depict trunks which divide and split into two separate parts well before the trunk-crown transition point. Both forms refer to a sense of inner division and ambivalent emotions. Figure 35d may be an expression of the divided loyalties encountered in subjects whose parents have been estranged or separated, but who have maintained contact with both of them. Illustration 29 (p. 185), which was drawn by a female graduate student, is a fairly good example of this type of trunk doubling, although very little of the trunk is shown. The subject was raised by her mother following the divorce of her parents when she was very young.

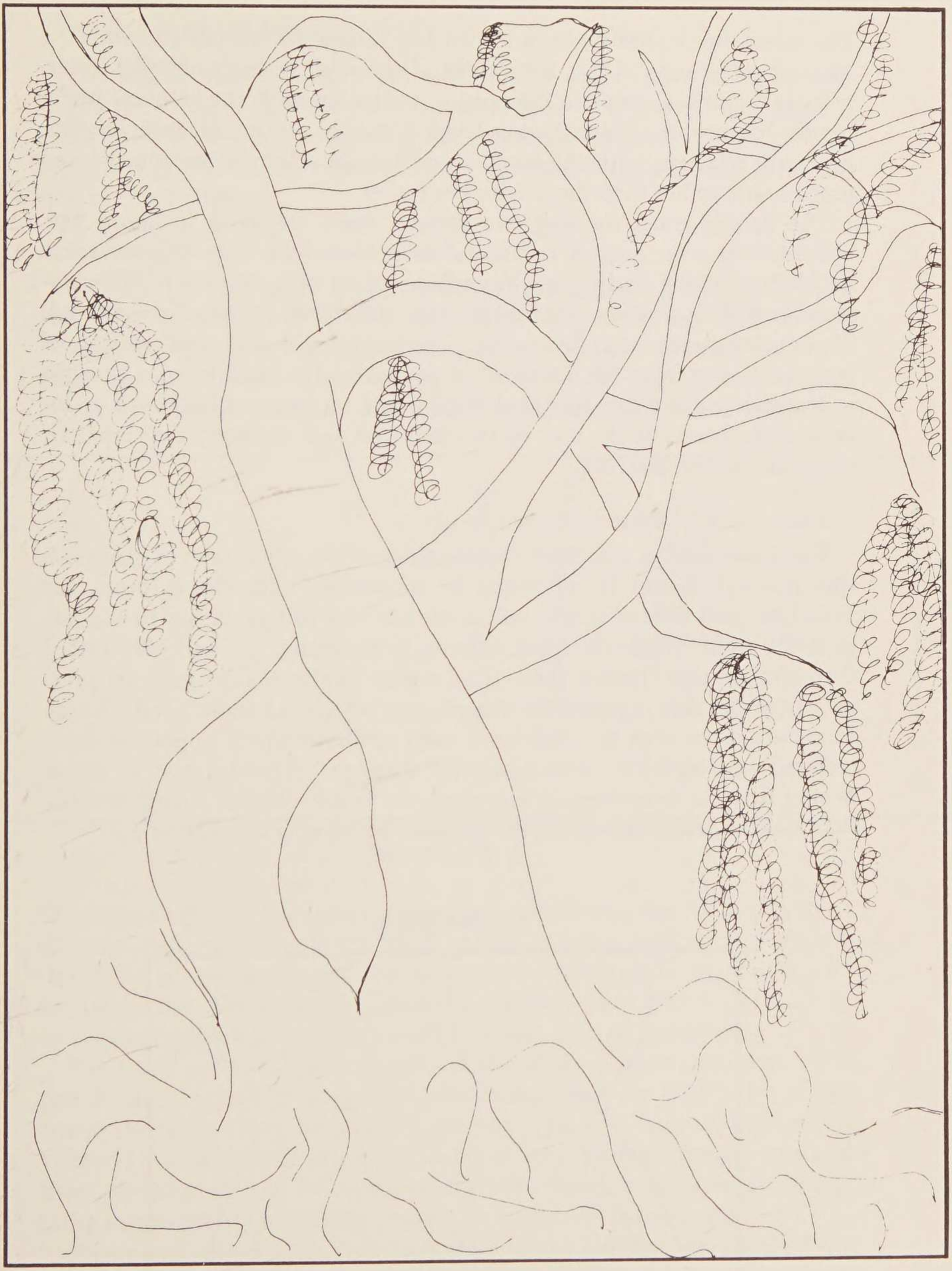


Illustration 43

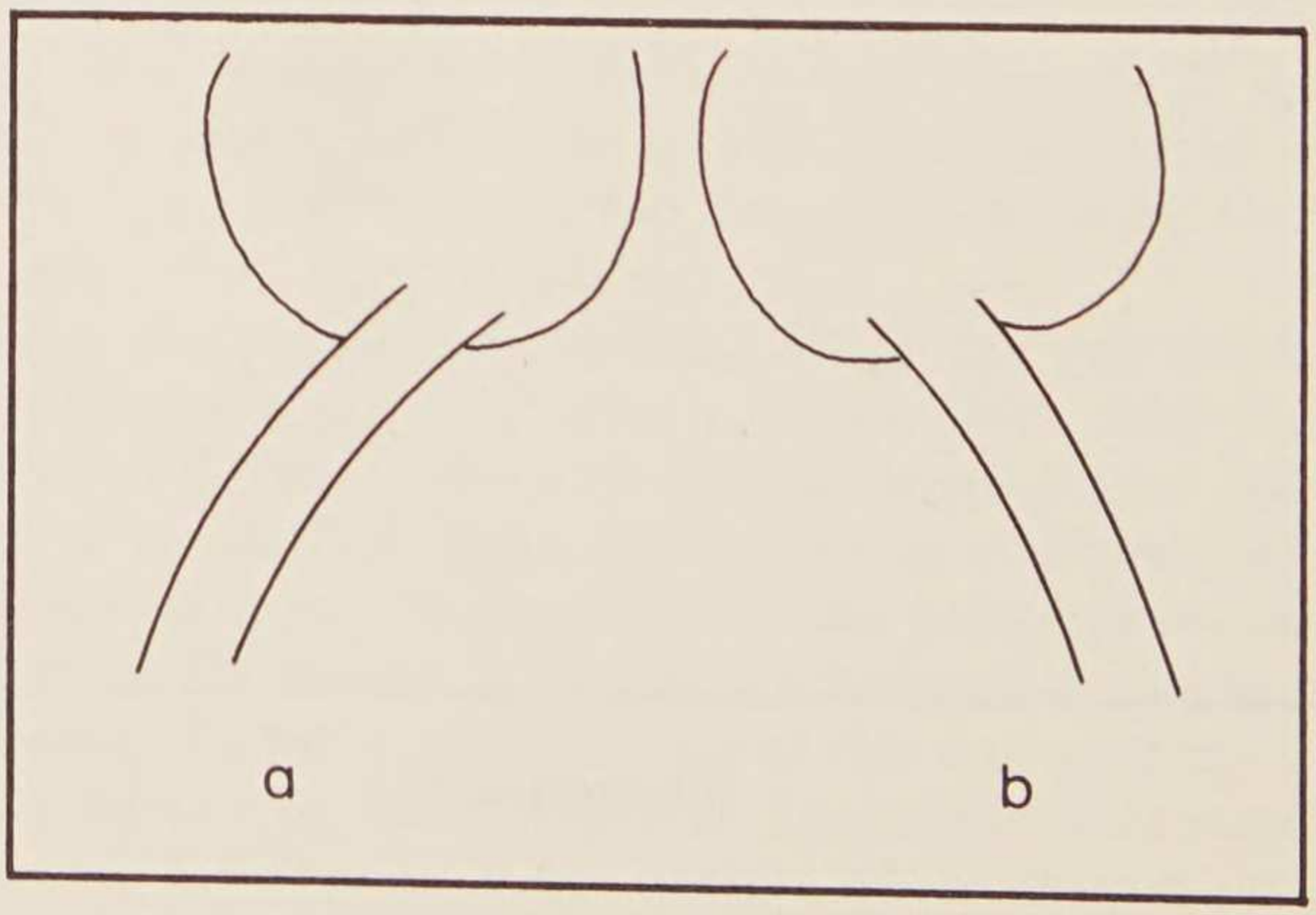
She maintains a strong contact with her father, for whom she shows a marked preference. While both sides of the tree, with its complex intertwining branches, point to difficulties in dealing with the internal male-female balance, the downturning lower branches on the left indicate that her early relations with the mother and female relatives are much more problematic to her than those with her father.

The double trunk forming two distinct trees, depicted in figure 35e, indicates an even greater emotional confusion. One may suspect some problem affecting early growth, perhaps of an organic nature. The unusual tree of illustration 43 is the only one of its kind we have encountered. This drawing was made by a nineteen-year-old girl who was not one of our clients, but from the comments supplied by the teacher who brought us the drawing, we gathered that there might be some undiagnosed endocrine disturbance at the root of the distorted and confused development suggested in the drawing.

FIGURES 36a–b: Bent or slanted trunks

The comments on directional inclinations of the whole tree in chapter 6 (pp. 94–104) should be reviewed in connection with these forms, for both bent and slanted trunks will cause the tree to lean either to the left or to the right. When the trunk is bent, as in figures 36a and 36b, rather than straight and slanted, there is an added implication of external pressure from the side opposite the direction in which the trunk bends. These forms are often seen in windblown trees or those which appear to have suffered considerable "environmental damage." The subject is either fleeing from an overweening influence, or, in the case of strong, flexible personalities, accommodating the pressure by leaning away from it.

FIGURES 36a–b

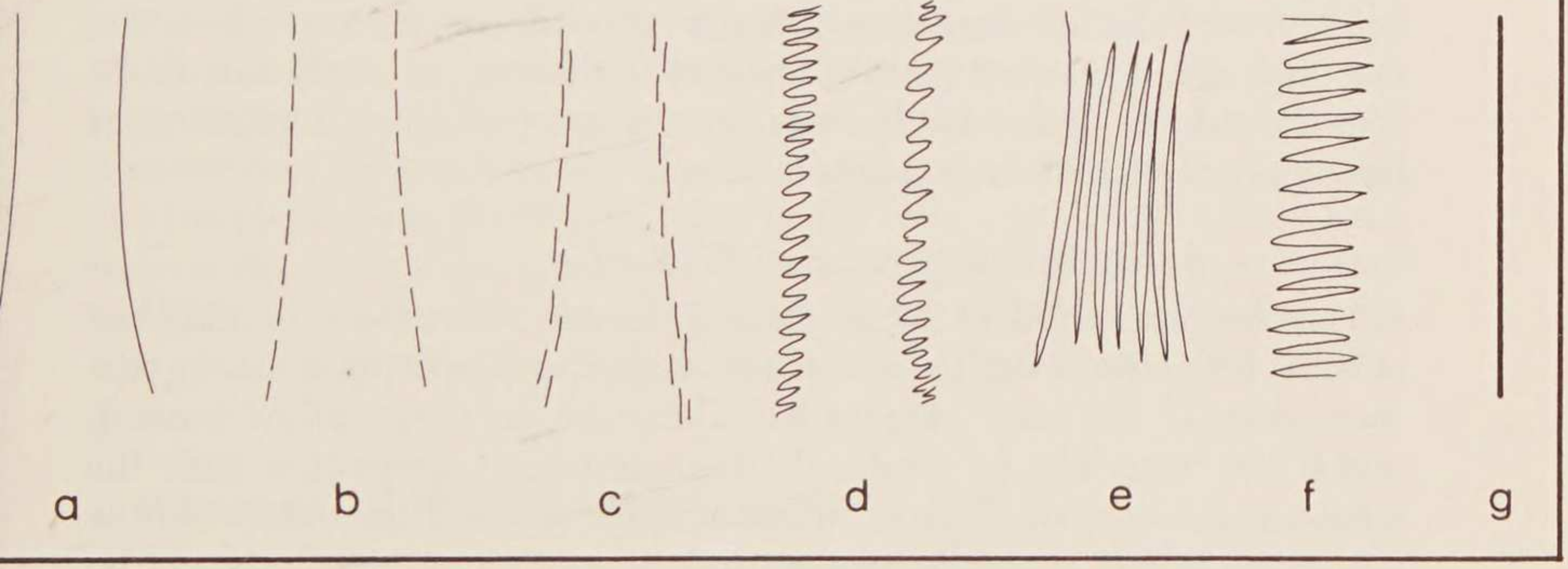


The outline of the trunk

The outline strokes with which the trunk is drawn may either be rendered consistently or with a combination of several forms. Sometimes a good many subtle clues regarding the emotional responses of the subject, as well as his early experiences, can be gleaned from a careful examination of these strokes.

FIGURES 37a–g: The outline of the trunk

Figures 37a–37d show trunks outlined with strokes which have been discussed in relation to figures 15a–p. The basic meanings attributed to the strokes carry more weight in connection with the outline of the trunk than they may have in some other parts of the tree. For example, if contiguous strokes (figure 37c) are used to form the whole of the trunk out-



FIGURES 37a–g

line, hesitancy and self-doubt, or marked sensitivity, may be taken to be primary traits; whereas if the trunk outline is made with strong continuous lines (figure 37a), and discontinuities appear only in one or two branches, the subject will be basically confident and direct, but may be cautious or uncertain in his approach to some areas of experience.

The trunk outline showing breaks in the stroke (figure 37b) may be of two kinds. If many small broken strokes are used on both sides of the trunk, the person may be a rather nervous type who feels uncomfortably vulnerable and anxious in a general sort of way. Isolated breaks here and there on either side of the trunk, on the other hand, may express vulnerability or receptivity to specific persons or emotional experiences.

Figure 37d shows a trunk outline made up of angular wave strokes. In this part of the tree the indication is of active defenses, rather than overt aggression. This kind of trunk usually goes with a firm "Do not touch me" attitude.

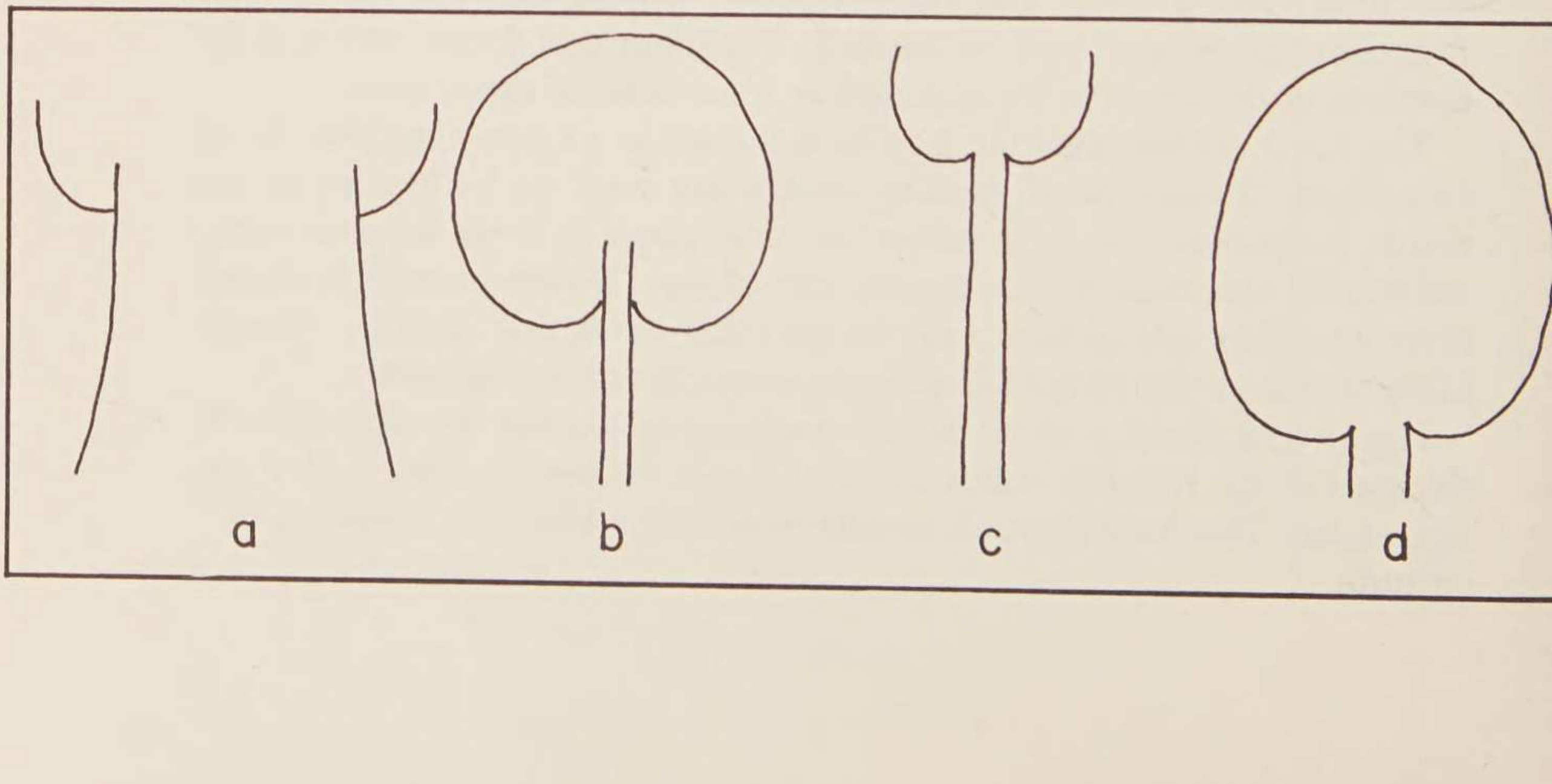
Figures 37e and 37f depict trunks which have no actual outline strokes forming their boundaries. These trunks are made up of shading, or many fine strokes, or scribbled lines. If the vertical strokes of figure 37e are rendered as a fascicle (sometimes the whole tree will look like a sheaf), the emotions are somewhat fragmented, but will withstand considerable weight of pressure. The horizontal strokes of figure 37f, on the other hand, point to a weak trunk which is in danger of collapsing under the weight of the crown. Should this form be rendered as a clear spiral, however, the evaluation may be much more positive, for the trunk then functions like a spring, and emotional resilience is usually strongly developed.

Figure 37g shows the single-stroke trunk, which we discussed in connection with abstract trees (chapter 7). In evaluating the one-dimensional trunk its relation to the rest of the tree drawing is of fundamental importance. When it forms the trunk of an abstract or fantasy tree which is made up of a few simple lines, it may be quite normal. On the other hand, should the one-dimensional trunk be combined with a full crown, one must usually suspect that the channel of emotions is overly narrow, or that the subject denies his feelings—not so much through repression as through deflection or shallowness of affect.

FIGURES 38a–d: The proportions of the trunk

The elongated trunk of figure 38c and the very short trunk of 38d have already been discussed in connection with the proportions among the three parts of the tree (chapter 6). There are, however, other ways in which the trunk can be rendered in an unnatural proportion with the whole, as the excessively broad trunk of figure 38a and the overly narrow one of 38b attest. The width of the trunk in relation to the crown may be taken as an indicator of the emotional depth of the subject (as distinct from the degree of dominance of the emotional function, signified by the

FIGURES 38a–d



length of the trunk). Within normal limits, a fine, broad trunk suggests a person of deep, warm feelings, while a slender trunk may be the expression of more delicate, subtle, or sensitive responses. When the trunk is excessively broad in relation to the whole, however (figure 38a), sentimentality and self-indulgence in emotions are indicated, rather than profundity of feeling. A trunk which is too narrow in relation to the crown, like that depicted in figure 38b, usually points to rather shallow responses and inadequate development of the feeling function.

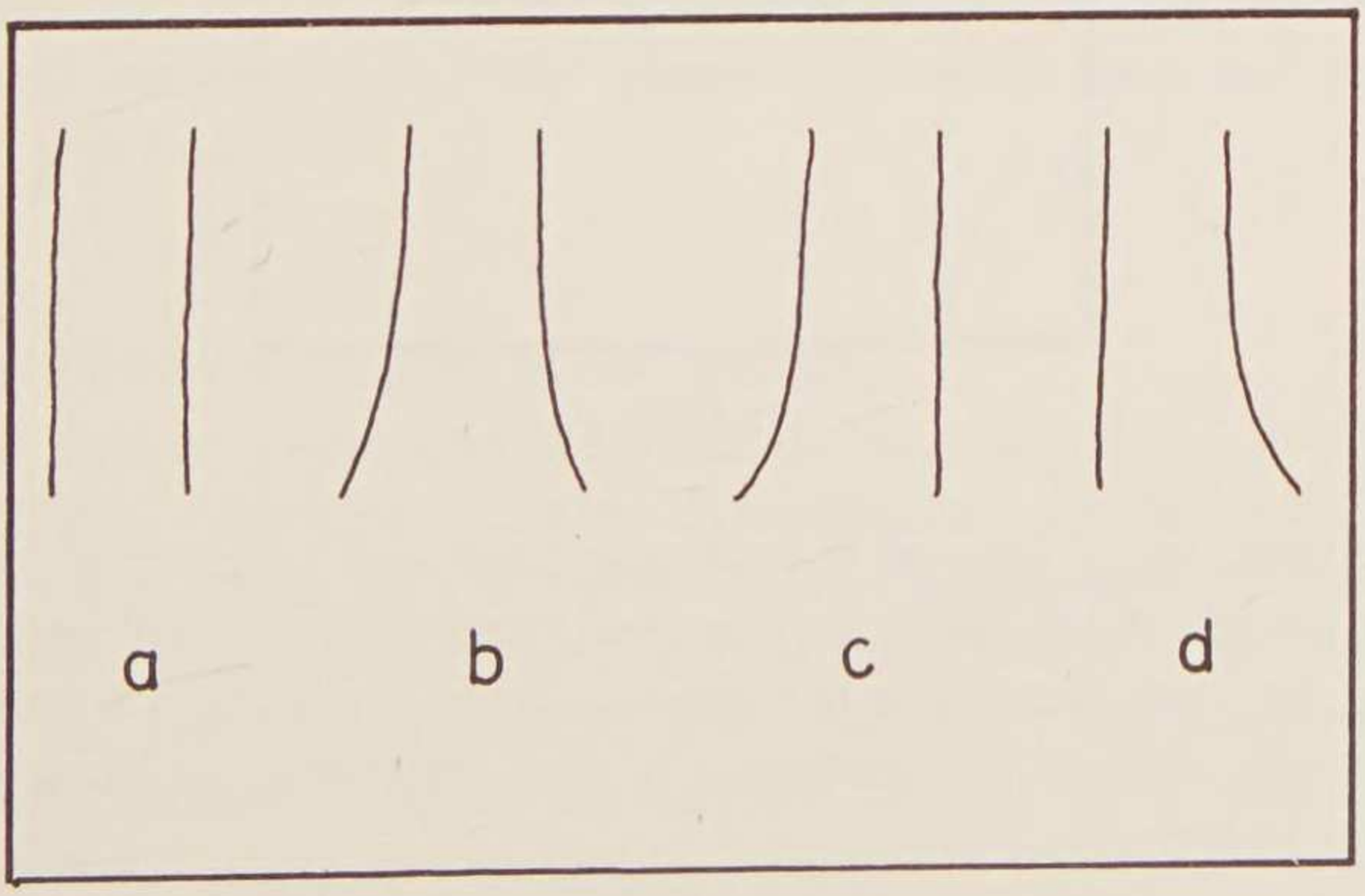
The base of the trunk

The significance of the trunk base and its transition to the root system has some parallels with the meanings given to the connection of the trunk with the crown. One major distinction which reduces the possibilities of a clear parallel, however, is that the entire root system is often left out of tree drawings, whereas the crown is only rarely missing. The base of the trunk is intimately connected with both the ground line and with the roots themselves, if they are present. One cannot enter on a systematic discussion of the trunk base without including references to the base line and the presence or absence of roots. In the following, we will distinguish some major groupings of patterns found at the base of the tree: (1) root and ground line both absent; (2) root absent, ground line present; (3) root present, ground line absent; and (4) both root and ground line present.

FIGURES 39a–d: Both ground line and root absent

When both ground line and root are absent, the tree will be open from the bottom. This openness is not necessarily positive, since with little or no base to the tree, a kind of instability, a "hanging in the air," may be

FIGURES 39a–d



typical of the subject. He may be vulnerable to sexual and unconscious materials, or he may be in direct, flowing contact with these areas, even though they are not differentiated or characterized in a specific way through the drawing of roots. When the trunk base is straight and open, as in figure 39a, the subject negates his own sexuality, either consciously or unconsciously. When the trunk widens at the bottom (figure 39b), the subject is making a stabilizing effort in the uncertain "hanging" situation, and there may be good contact with the instinctual layers of experience. When the widening is on the left only (figure 39c), the person has probably had a good relationship at the instinctual level with the mother, but his early sexual development has been in some way inhibited, possibly because of a stern father or hampering circumstances with regard to the father. Figure 39d suggests the opposite, and if found in the tree of a male, it may point to a slightly castrating mother. At the same time the broadening on the right is evidence of early sexual curiosity, often stimulated by a desire to imitate the father.

FIGURE 40: Trunk base serves as a ground line

When the base of the trunk curves outward to form the ground line, there is more stability than with the completely groundless, rootless forms, but there is still a likelihood either of shyness with respect to

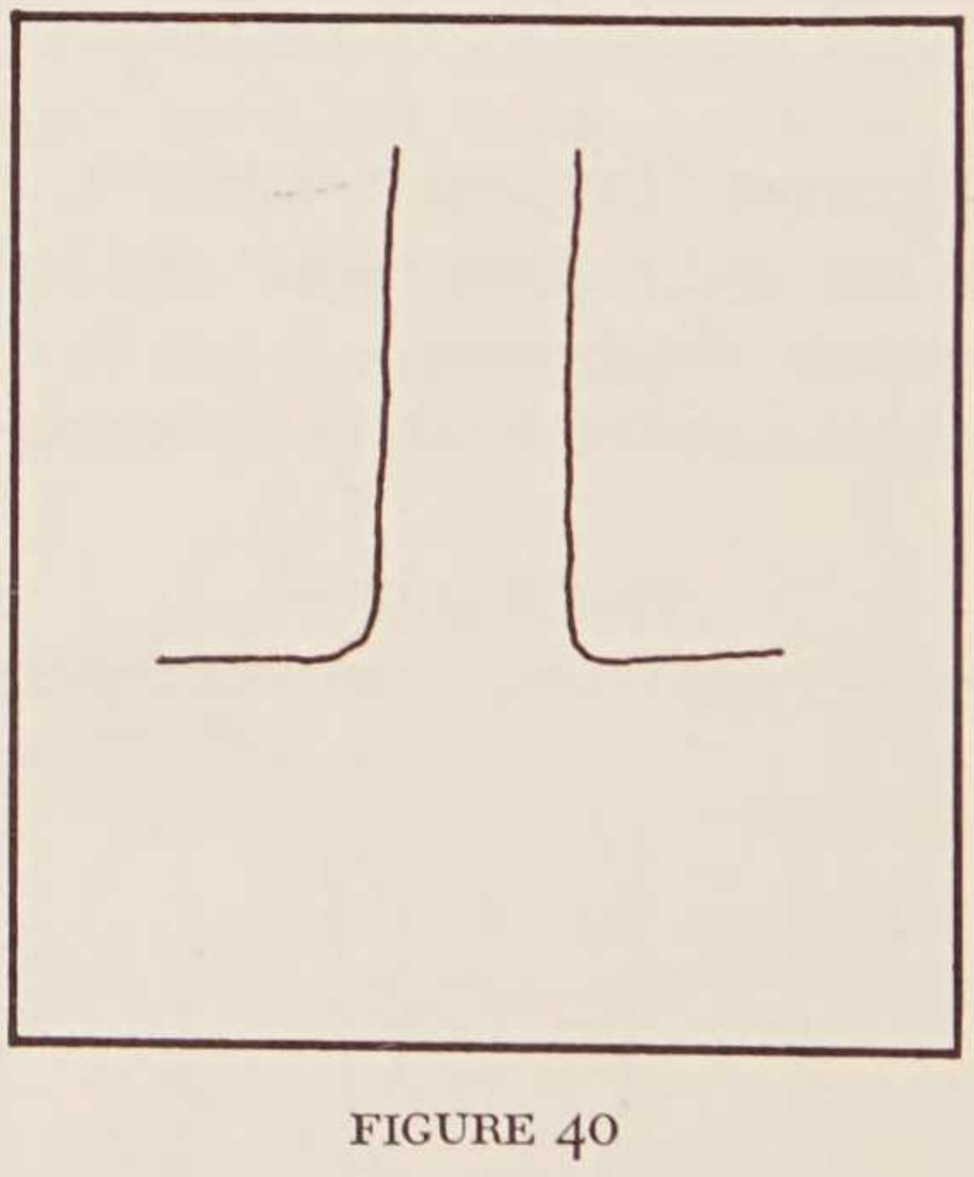
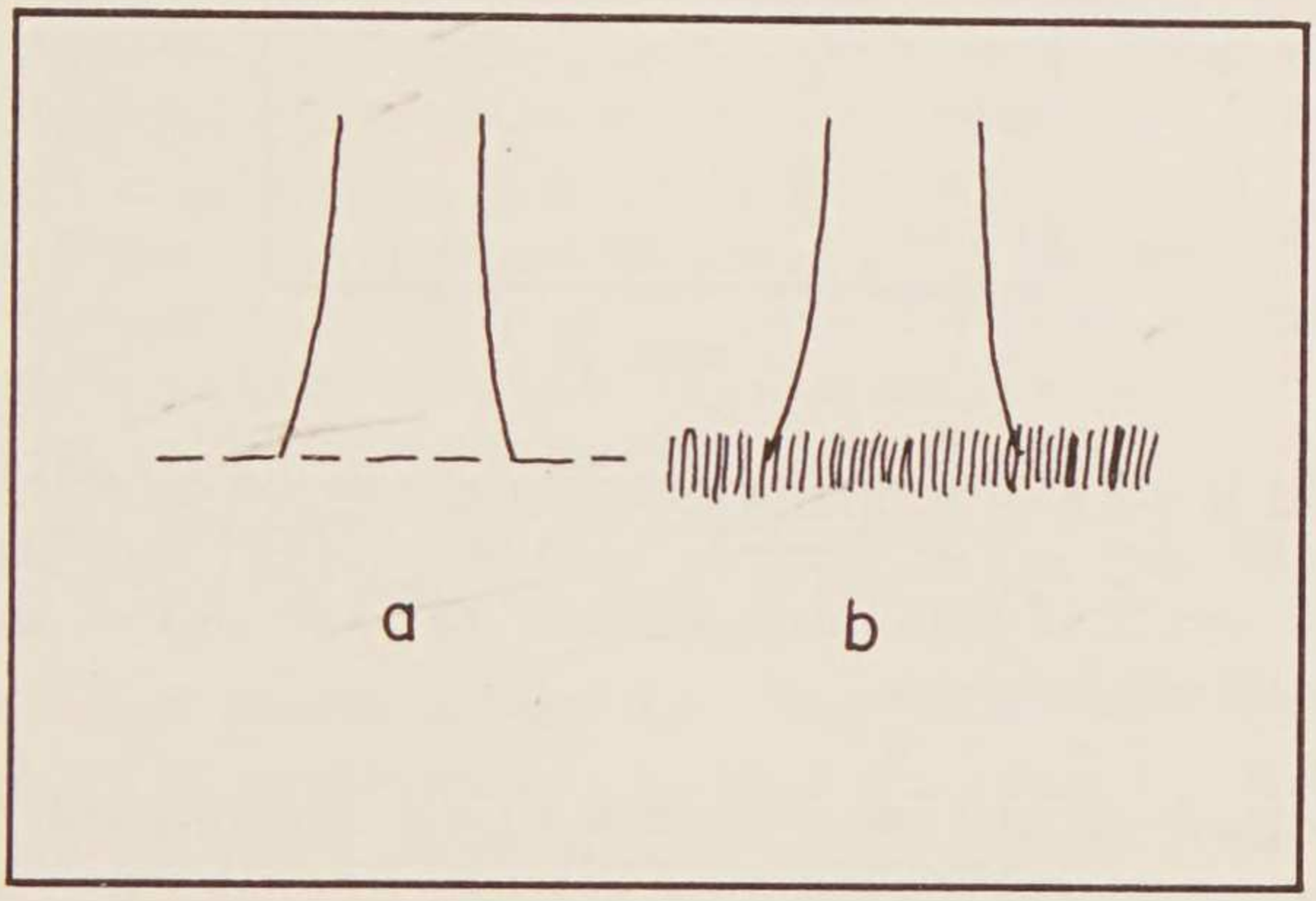


FIGURE 40

sexual matters, or of fear of the unconscious and instinctual realms. The subject is aware of his instability, and is attempting to balance himself by extending his own base in a horizontal direction. This is a self-conscious effort, directly related to awareness of and resistance to his own vulnerability from below.

FIGURES 41a–b: Root absent, ground line indicated

When the root is absent, with the ground line indicated either by broken lines or by grass, partially closing off the base of the trunk, the subject is less vulnerable than one who draws a completely open trunk base, but he will be even more shy. The grass or broken line serves as a sieve or filter which separates the sexual and emotional spheres to some extent. The free interaction of sexual and emotional energies is at least partially curtailed, and an attempt to control materials stemming from the



FIGURES 41a–b

unconscious is also signaled. The broken line of figure 41a is a simple filtering mechanism, whereas 41b suggests a more directed channeling of the controlled energies. It should be remembered, however, that the complete absence of roots implies a person who is rather wary of his own sexuality. (This statement must be qualified. It would appear to be true where the tree is fully delineated, particularly when branches are shown, but with rapidly drawn or abstract trees, where the concept "tree" is given economical expression, the absence of roots may not carry any interpretive significance.)

FIGURE 42: Root absent, ground line present

When the root is absent and the ground line completely closes off the base of the trunk, rather complicated dynamics may be inferred. This is a person who feels stable and is confident of his capacity to control his energies. At the conscious level he does not feel himself to be vulnerable; yet since he has some inclination to deny outrightly the importance and influence of instinctual energies, he may be "caught from behind" by his instinctual drives, being unconsciously vulnerable to all that is "hidden"

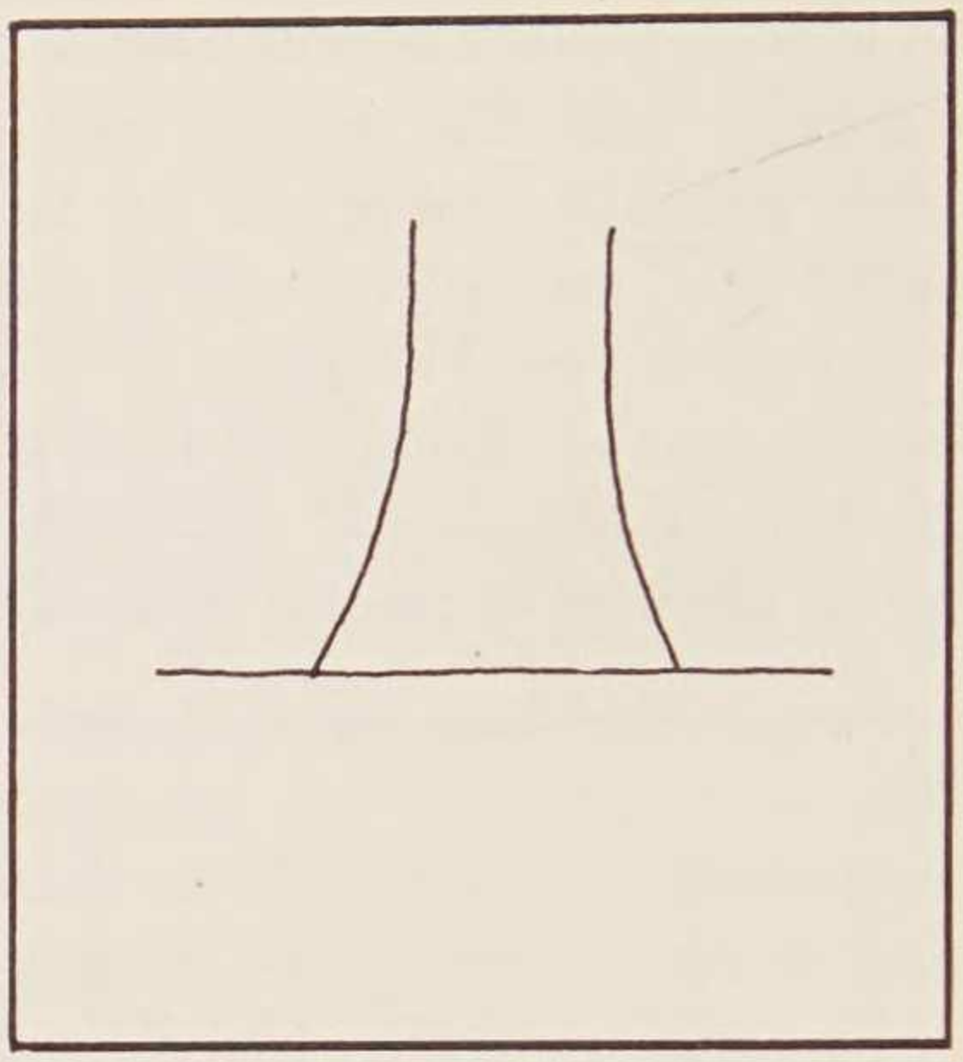
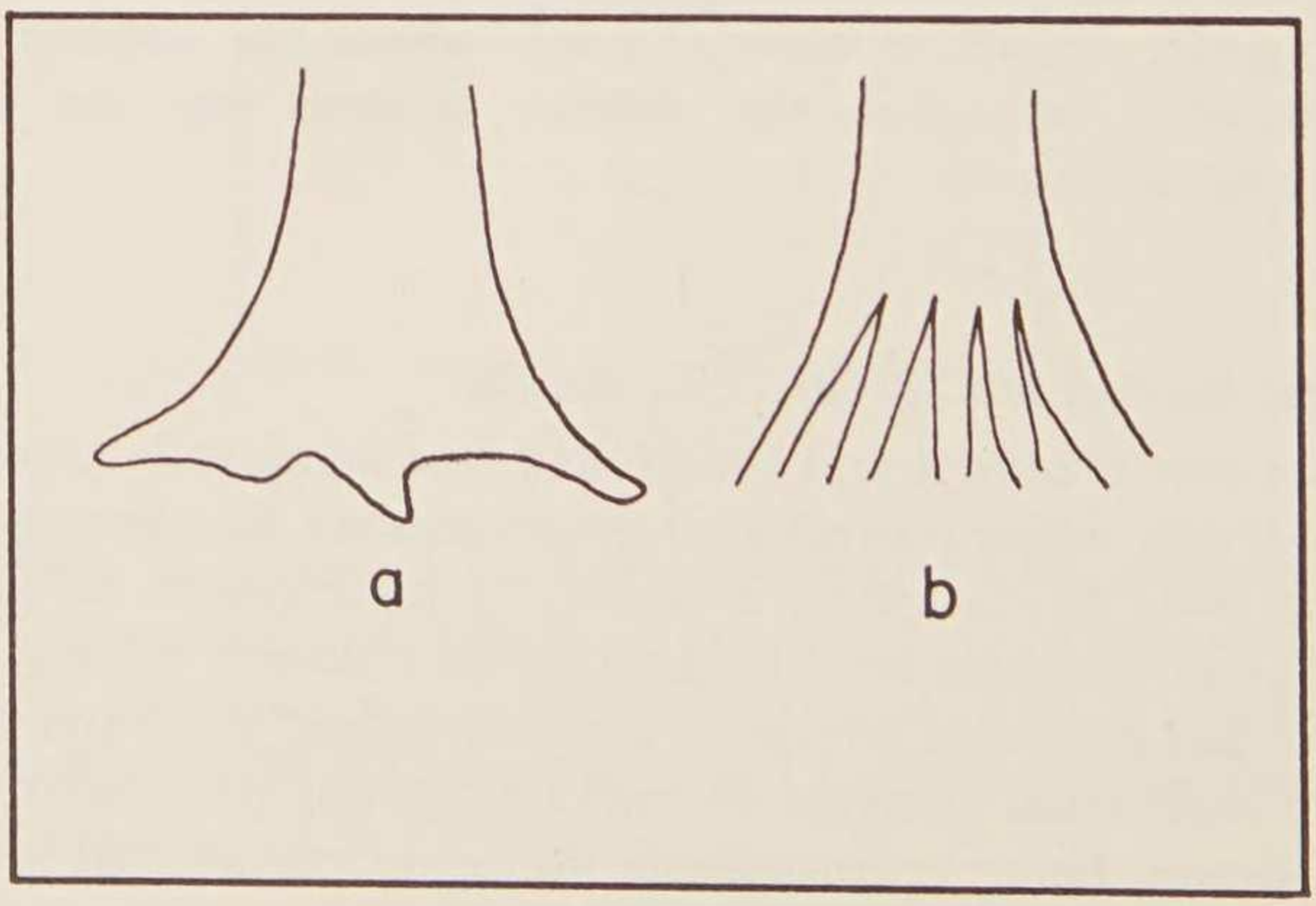


FIGURE 42

beneath the ground. Although such a subject may be capable of ascetic practices and may, in fact, exercise functional control over his "animal" nature, the quality of the control will tend to be repressive, and thus at least partially self-deceptive.

Figures 43a–b, 44, and 45a–d all show a trunk base in which the root is present, but no ground line is drawn. This may be rendered in three manners at the transition point from trunk to root: open, semiclosed, or closed. Whatever the degree of openness of the transition, however, these forms have the common meaning of a claim of self-reliance. The subject believes that he can experience adequate stability without leaning on the environment. He feels that he is "rooted in himself," if not "grounded in reality."

FIGURES 43a–b



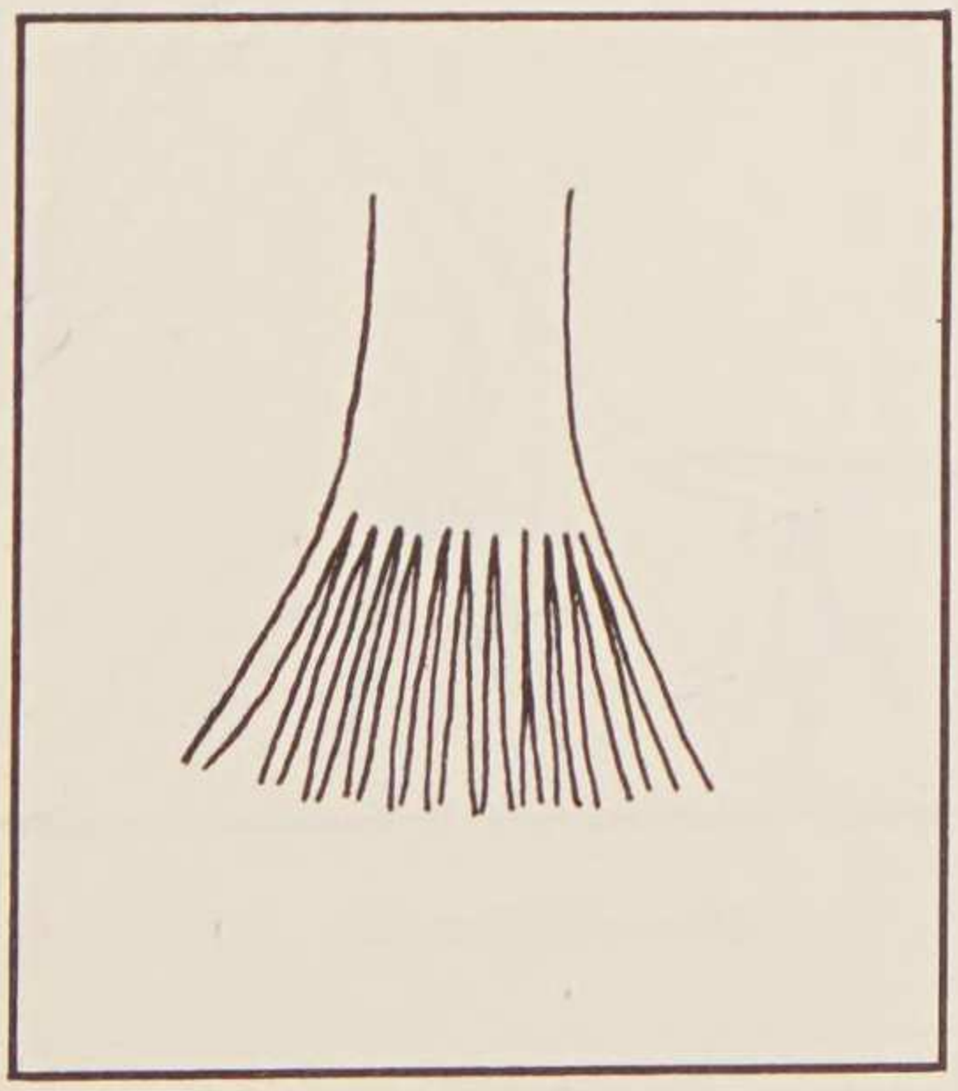
FIGURES 43a–b: Root present, ground line absent; open transition

An open transition from trunk to root, without ground line, indicates acceptance of sexual energies and a basic awareness of unconscious currents. The subject usually enjoys sexual experiences without self-consciousness; in fact, if the roots are elaborate, he may be somewhat self-absorbed or selfish in these matters, since he lacks the perspective of a ground. Figure 43b shows a full root structure which would appear to be penetrating down into the earth, even though no ground is present. Illustration 44 is an interesting and rather amusing example of this form, in which the roots look almost like moving appendages, as though the tree were "running" along the surface of the ground rather than penetrating a fixed position. In illustration 45 are seen the true penetrating roots without ground. Figure 43a shows a variation in which the ground is at least partially suggested by the form of the roots themselves, for they spread out horizontally on either side. In such a case the subject will be self-contained, but not as likely to be indifferent to or disdainful of his immediate environment as those who draw penetrating roots without a ground line. An excellent example of this form is seen in illustration 35 (p. 197).

FIGURE 44: Root present, ground line absent; semiclosed transition

The presence of a root structure containing a number of fine roots at the trunk base can produce a semiclosed transition, even in the absence of a ground line or a line clearly separating the trunk from the root. Like figure 41b, the indication is of some restraint coupled with a conscious effort to channel instinctual energies. In this form, however, there is the added implication that the subject fully acknowledges the importance of instinctual realms, and he is both less shy and better able to enjoy his own sexual nature.

FIGURE 44



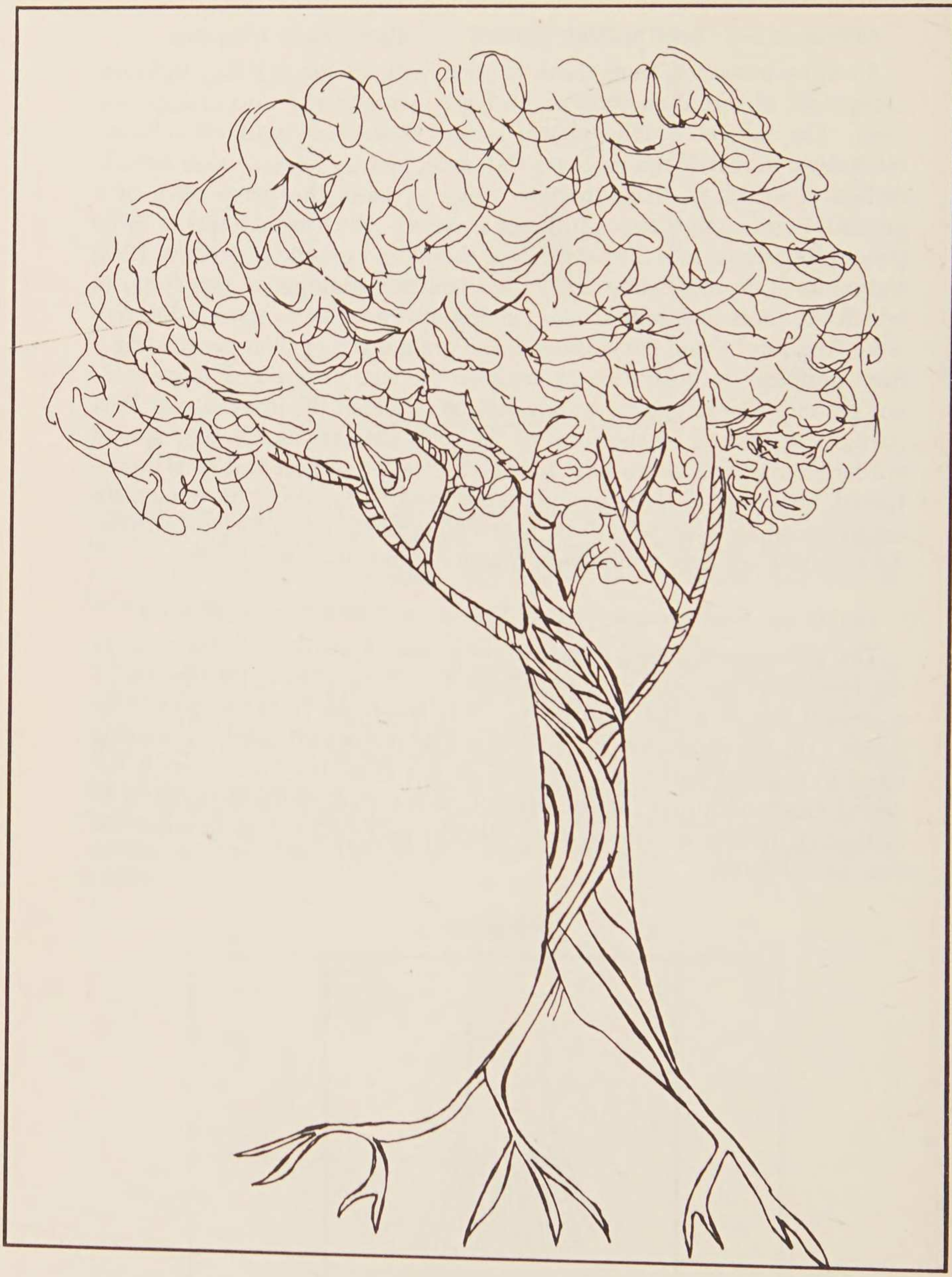


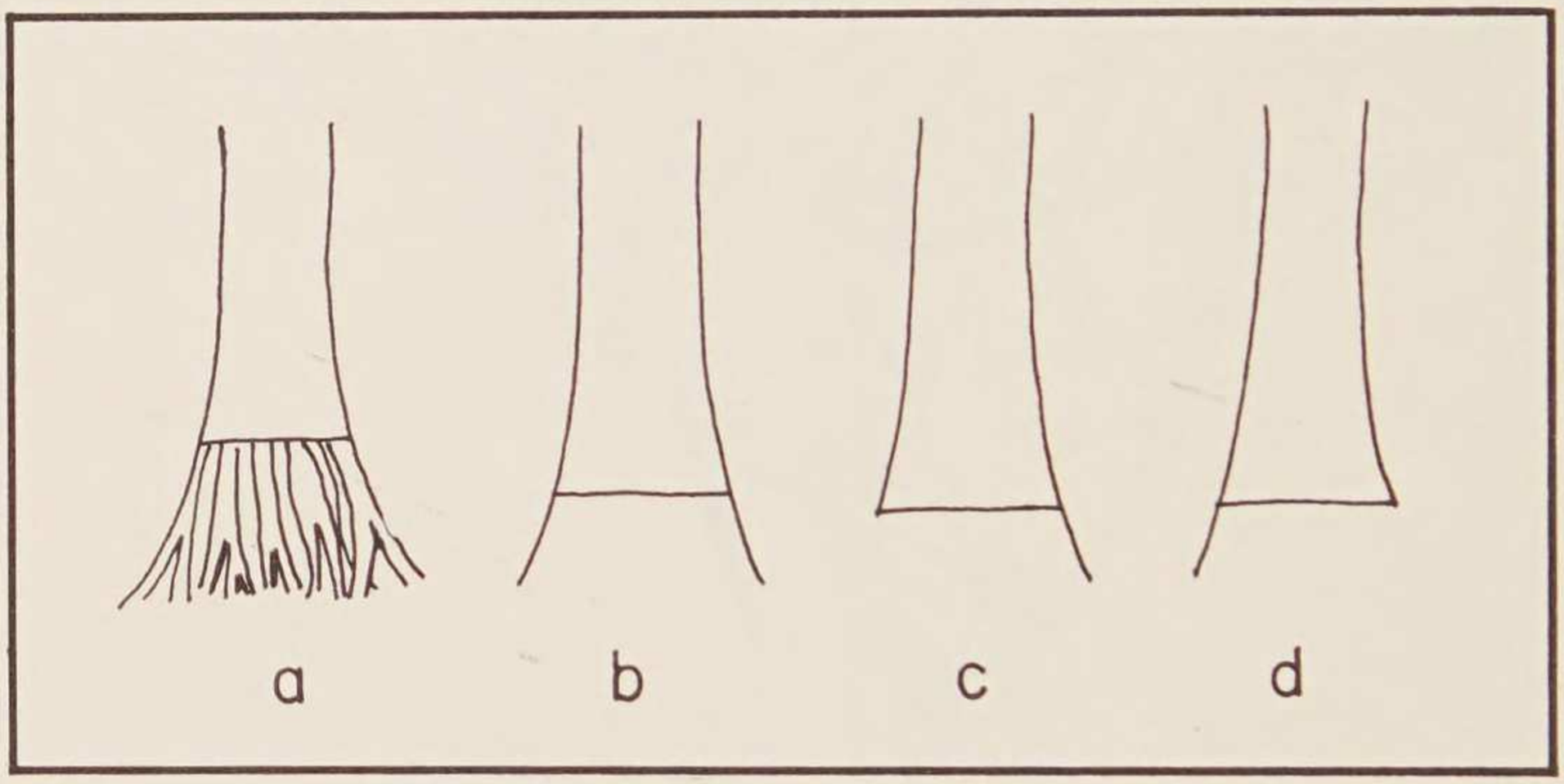
Illustration 44



Illustration 45

FIGURES 45a–d: Root present, ground line absent; closed transition

Here are seen four ways of rendering the base of the trunk in which the root is drawn (or at least indicated) without ground line, but the trunk-root transition point is completely closed. The cross-line in all of these figures may be seen as a kind of limited ground line, suggesting the place where it should be, but not extending out beyond the self. The implication is that the subject only recognizes the importance of the immediate reality (soil) in which he lives insofar as it relates to his self-survival. In all of these forms there is usually some kind of conscious attempt to isolate or close off the currents of unconscious materials and instinctual energies. When the roots are fully differentiated, as in figure 45a, there exists a constant danger of explosion. The subject is well aware of the power of



FIGURES 45a–d

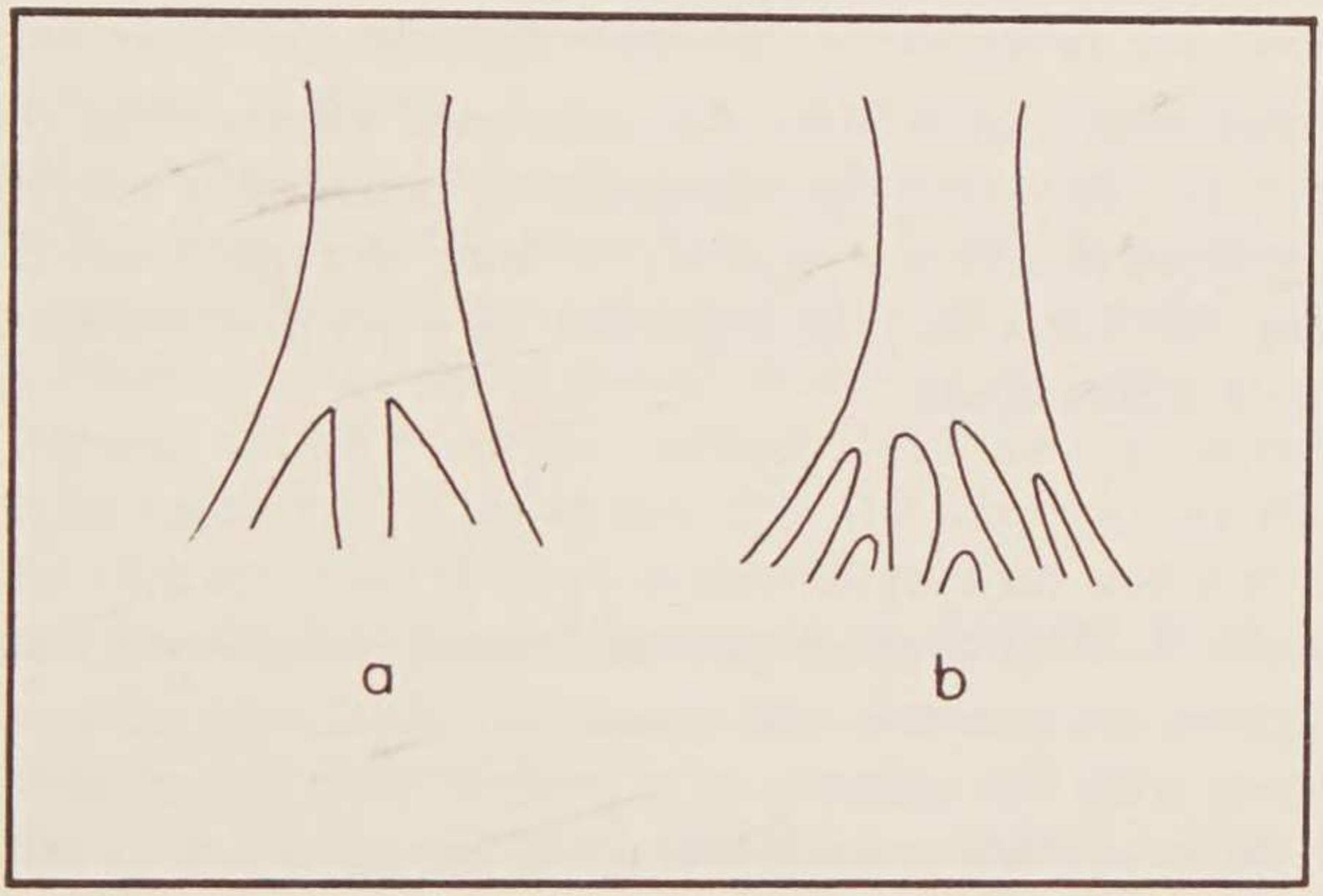
these unconscious currents within him, but he deliberately cuts them off, creating a situation of internal tension. In figures 45b, 45c, and 45d, where there are only slight indications of the root beneath the cutoff line, much better control is achieved, at less psychic expense. On the other hand, such persons are inclined to rationalize their need to discipline their instincts, especially their sexual drives. They may blame other persons as having imposed rigid controls upon them. In figure 45d, for example, where the indicated root is on the left, an invalid mother or a frigid wife may be "at fault," while 45c might be drawn by a male who blames a profligate father for his own subjective need to control sexuality. With figure 45b the blame is more likely to be generalized to the environment, a strict upbringing, or a rigid religious background.

The next nine figures show the rendering of the trunk base with both the root and the ground line drawn in. Again the point of transition from trunk to root may be open, semiclosed, or closed, but whatever the manner of drawing the transition, the subject experiences his roots as

belonging somewhere. The sense of security derives at least in part from the feeling of being supported by the immediate surroundings. There is also a better perspective than when the ground line is left out, for the subject is more aware of a reality outside the sphere of his own being.

FIGURES 46a–b: Root present, ground line present; open transition

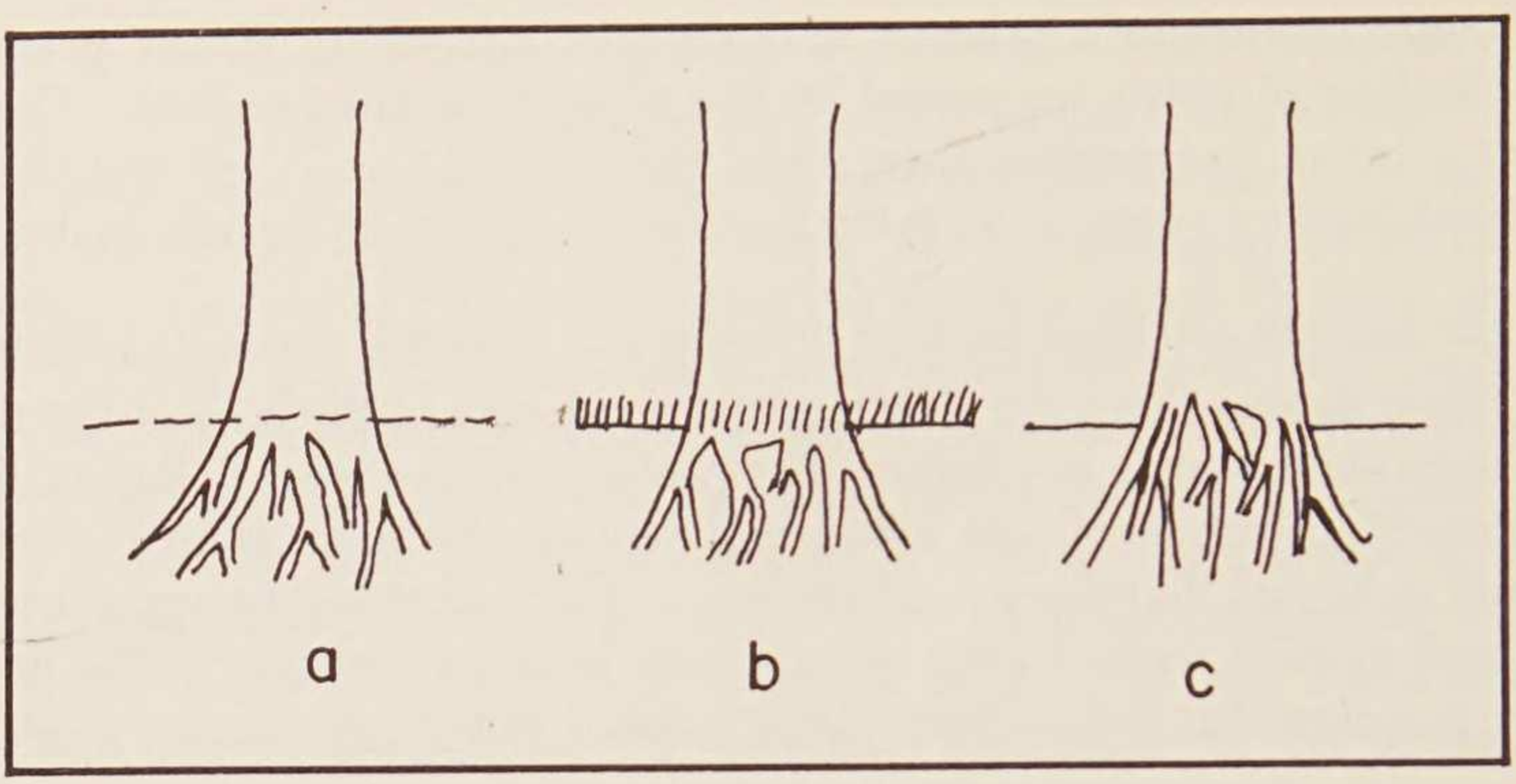
These figures show the most positive rendering of the base of the trunk, in cases where roots are drawn. The presence of the roots points to recognition of unconscious and instinctual realms; the open transition to the trunk indicates that there is a free flow of the instinctual energies upward, as well as easy access to the unconscious; and the presence of the ground line is a sign that the subject places himself in the perspective of his surroundings. The only difference between the two forms shown is that figure 46a depicts roots rendered simply and with economy, while the greater elaboration of the root structure in 46b suggests that the subject is somewhat more concentrated on the instinctual sphere. The difference may also be merely a matter of the style in which the whole tree is drawn, for in a tree which shows only two or three main branches, figure 46b would be an inappropriate manner of expressing the root structure, even for a subject who is thoroughly "in touch with his roots."



FIGURES 46a–b

FIGURES 47a–c: Root present, ground line present; semiclosed transition

In figures 41a and 41b we saw a semiclosed trunk-root transition without roots. In figures 47a and 47b, with the root shown, the filtering effect of the semiclosed transitions are more positive, because the filter is acting on something—that is, the subject's awareness of his own instinctual nature. Figure 47c may be compared with figure 44, for in both cases it is



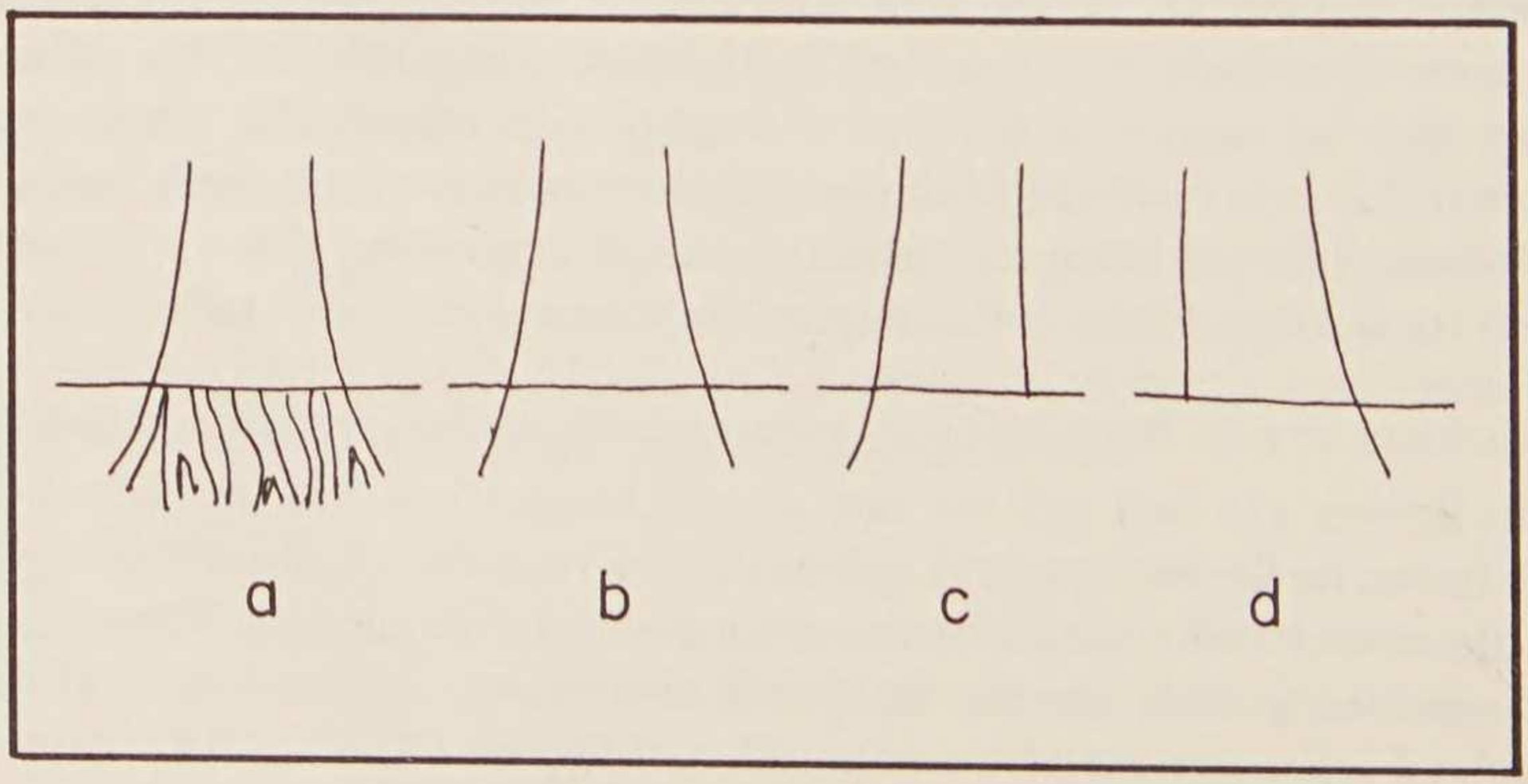
FIGURES 47a–c

the numerous roots which form the semiclosed effect. With the addition of a ground line, however, the channelizing potential is heightened by a realistic perspective and the capacity to draw strength from the environment. Thus, this form may be regarded as a positive expression of the trunk-root transition zone.

FIGURES 48a–d: Root present, ground line present; closed transition

These figures show trunk-root transitions similar to those depicted in figures 45a–d, with the addition of a ground line. The subject is equally concerned with a rather strict self-control, but he is not so self-absorbed, and much less inclined to play the martyr. The internal conflict expressed in the closing off of the root sphere is still present (especially in figure 48a), but it is somewhat mitigated by a general acceptance of reality.

FIGURES 48a–d



THE ROOT

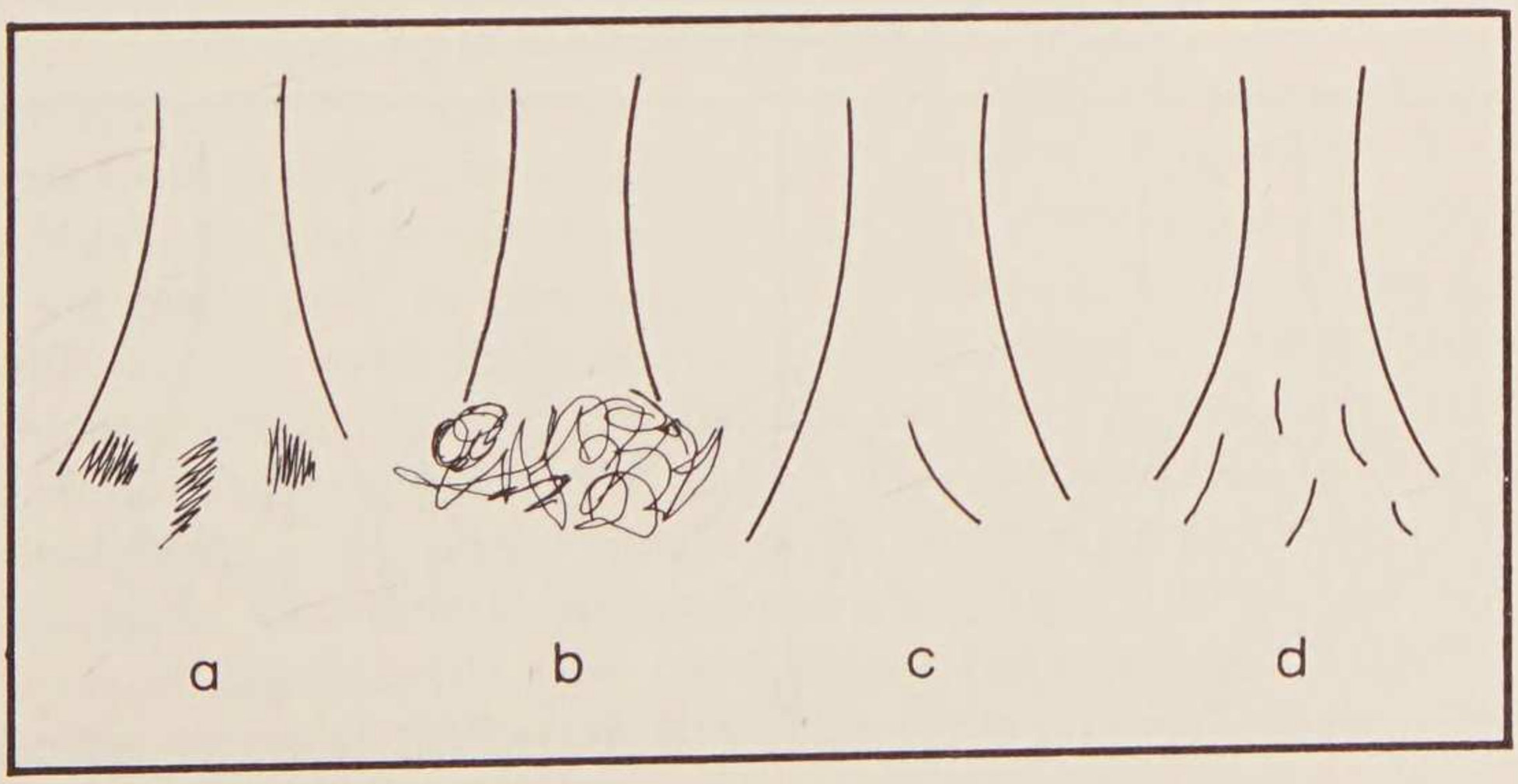
Since we have indicated that the root section of the tree has to do with the instinctual and unconscious sphere, it should be apparent that any unusual details or marked emphasis on this part of the drawing may point to problems of an unconscious nature, often having to do with the sex drive and sexual responses. If the roots are drawn in detail, one can gain insights even about quite normal persons with regard to their sexual type and the interaction of instinctual drives. When the root structure is well developed, one is usually dealing with a person who recognizes and accepts his own sexuality and is more or less at home with his instincts. The subject also feels literally "rooted," whether in his personal past, family, or culture. A direct access to unconscious materials may be indicated as well, especially if the transition points within the trunk are at least partially open; but the extent to which the individual is able to establish a creative flow between unconscious sources and conscious realization will depend on the development of the whole tree.

When looking at the root, one should consider: (1) the manner in which it is delineated; (2) its shape; (3) the strokes; (4) its structure; and (5) the root endings. If there is special emphasis on one area of the root, reference to schema 4 (chapter 6) may be helpful.

FIGURES 49a–d: Suggested roots

Roots which are barely indicated, like those discussed earlier in connection with figures 45b–d and 48b–d, obviously cannot be examined in detail. Their presence should be taken into account in the terms already discussed, with particular attention to any right or left side emphasis. Between these barely indicated roots and the clearly delineated ones,

FIGURES 49a–d



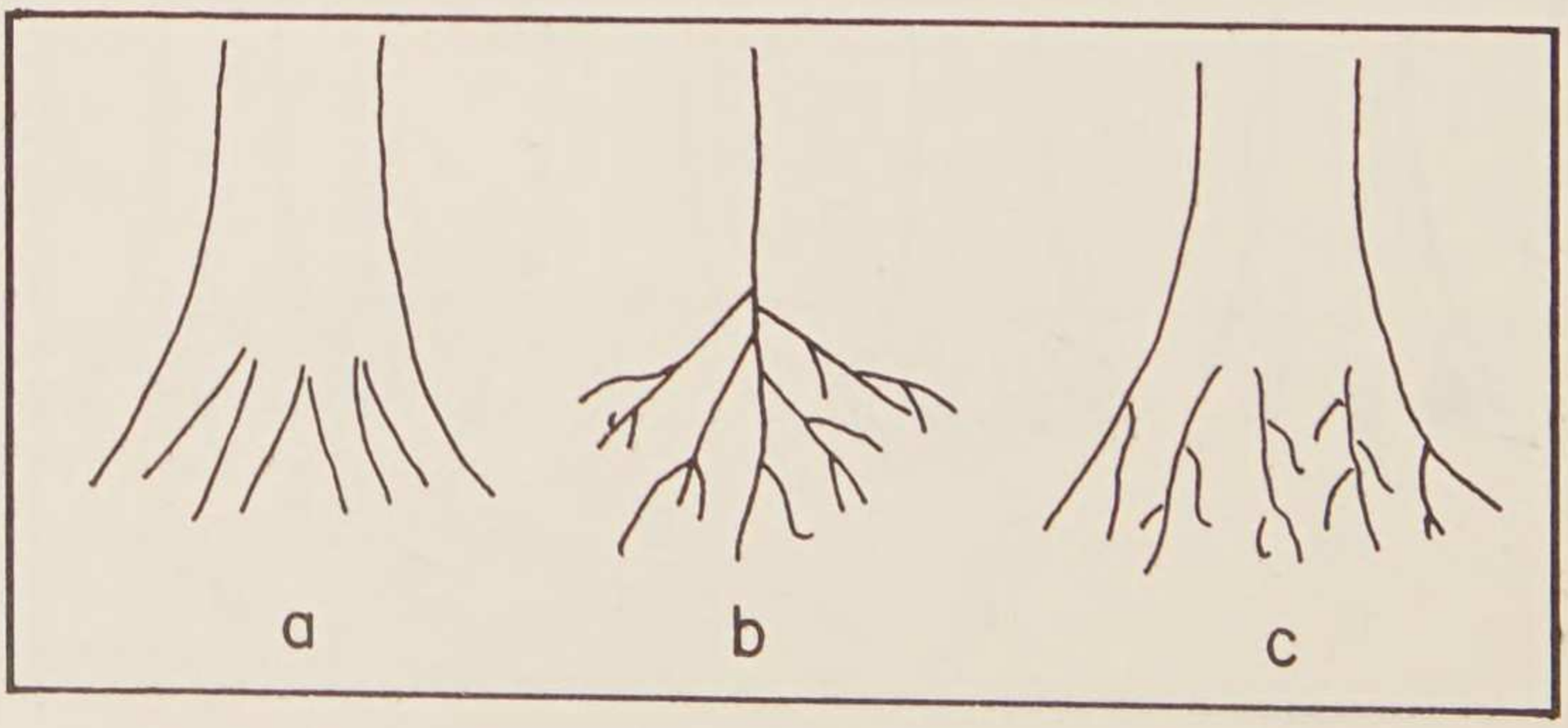
there are several kinds which are merely suggested or hinted at, some examples of which are shown in these figures. Figure 49a depicts roots suggested by shading, and 49b by scribbling. With both of these forms there is an indication of shame and "hiding," as in the crown which is filled in with shading or scribbling. Sometimes one finds delineated roots underneath the shaded or scribbled area, in which case the "hiding" motif is even more strongly implied. The shaded cover is less impulsive than the scribbled root, but both indicate some disturbance with regard to instinctual areas of experience. It is as though the subject were saying, "I know that it exists, but I don't want anyone else to know about it."

In figures 49c and 49d only one or a few scattered lines suggest the roots. Such trees are drawn by persons who accept the influence of instincts but are often underdeveloped in relating to their own drives or expressing their sexual interests: "I know that it exists, but I don't want to do anything about it." (Here again, interpretation should take into account the manner of rendering the tree as a whole. If scattered, suggested lines are characteristic of the whole tree, the simple, indicated roots may express normal sexual development.)

FIGURES 50a–c: Clearly delineated roots

When the roots are clearly delineated, they will be drawn either with double or single lines. The double-line root of figure 50a, and the single-stroke roots shown together with an abstract single-stroke tree (50b), may both be considered as normal. However, when single-stroke roots are drawn at the base of a representational tree, as in figure 50c, some artificial abstraction with respect to the instincts is implied. The person may enjoy sexual experience, for example, but he may be rather cold in such relationships, or even apparently able to turn his responses on and off at will, since this sphere is "separated" from the rest of the personality. Even where the transition from roots to trunk is basically open, incongruity in

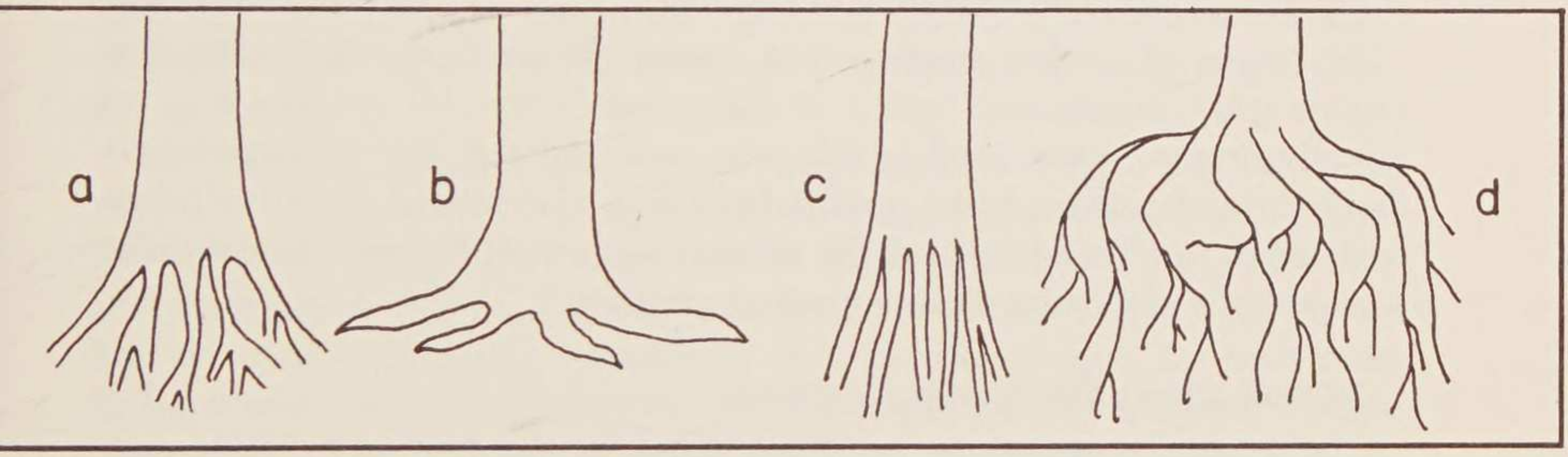
FIGURES 50a–c



the manner of delineating the roots indicates difficulty in integrating the sexual experience with the emotional and mental spheres. There will often be a contrast between the *persona* and the private life. For example, such roots might be drawn by a polished, gentlemanly professional man whose secret life is startlingly promiscuous.

FIGURES 51a–d: The shape of the root

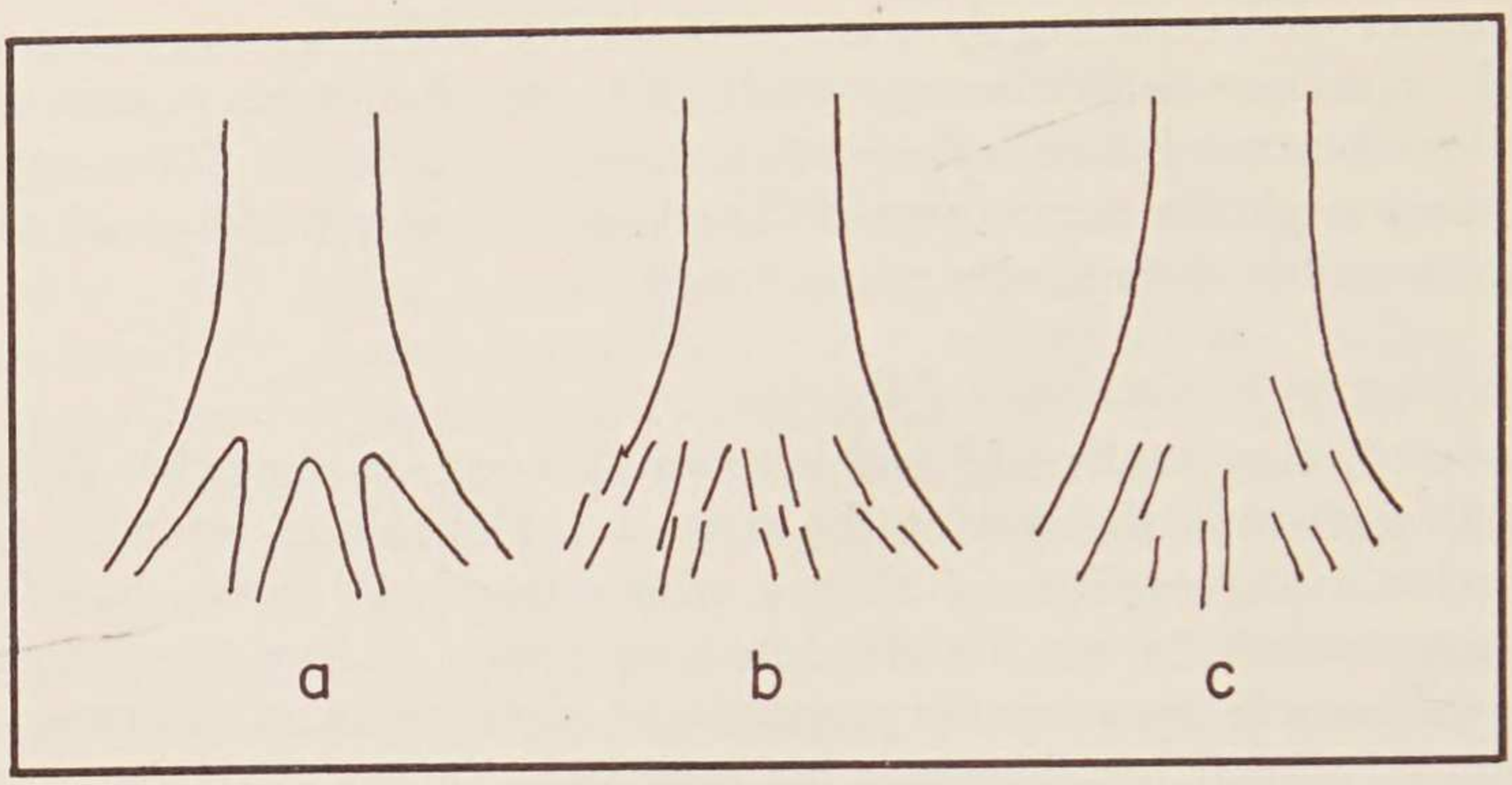
The root often "trails off," and is more likely to be somewhat diffuse or unfinished than the rest of the tree. It is difficult to establish any comprehensive groupings of shapes which they may form, but four common possibilities are illustrated in these figures. Figure 51a is meant to depict more or less normally proportioned roots, neither too narrow nor too broad, neither too deep nor too extensive. Figure 51b shows roots which are definitely flattened, moving along the surface of the ground.



FIGURES 51a–d

This usually indicates feelings of insecurity, coupled with tremendous efforts to keep the self in balance. Such flat roots are often drawn after deep traumatic experiences or serious illnesses. We have also seen them repeatedly in the trees of recovered alcoholics. See illustration 59 (p. 339), the first drawing of case history 1, for an example.

In figure 51c the roots are shown compressed closely together. This points to an emphasis on social instincts or "niche" competition. The subject thinks that he has to wedge himself into a social situation which is not yet really open to him. Or, if he has already achieved the desired social goals, he wants badly to hold on to his status, and feels uncomfortable about the unfamiliarity of the ground which he is treading. Figure 51d depicts disproportionately large and elaborate roots, indicating an overemphasis on the sexual sphere or an excess of energy invested in the unconscious. Exceptional interpretations may apply to the rather large number of psychiatrists who have drawn trees with elaborated roots, since the nature of their work involves a focus on unconscious materials.



FIGURES 52a–c

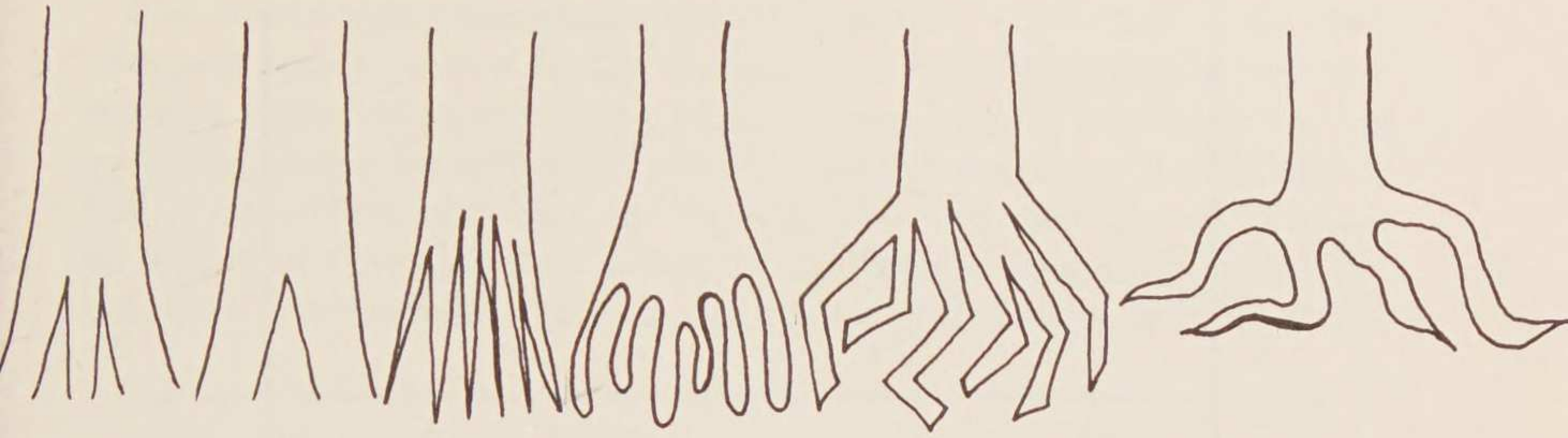
FIGURES 52a–c: The rendering of the root

The types of strokes employed to render the root may be continuous (figure 52a), contiguous (52b), or dispersed (52c). All of these may be equally normal when used in the root area, but the first suggests more dynamic and self-confident sexual behavior; the second is either more hesitant or more modest; and the third is somewhat inclined to coquetry –or perhaps ambivalence about sexual matters.

FIGURES 53a–f: Simple root structures

The general structure or pattern formed by the root as a whole may provide clues about basic personality traits. In these figures are shown six types of roots which do not contain any branchings or crossings, but are distinctly different in appearance. The simple straight roots shown in figure 53a have no special significance unless they are sufficiently compressed to convey a clear impression of digging into the earth, in which case they often stand for an attempt on the part of the subject to establish himself in an environment which is not completely his own.

Figure 53b shows a simple, dichotomous root structure. Here the instinctual behavior is dual and there is an attempt to balance one instinct against another. The best example of this division of the entire root into two parts can be seen in illustration 39 (p. 212). What is probably in question with this person is a rather careful balancing of sexual drives against the "fight for position." The subject has, indeed, a strong sexual drive which is not inhibited in the flow up through the emotional zone, nor consciously disdained, but she is careful not to let her sexual needs override her attempts to achieve status. Neither, on the other hand, would she be able to suppress or sublimate them in the interest of professional or social achievement. This splitting of the roots into two main divisions might also refer, in a woman's tree, to a balancing effort between sexual



FIGURES 53a–f

and maternal instincts, but in this case the subject is a young unmarried college student whose conscious energies are largely devoted to the shaping of a career.

In figure 53c we see highly compressed roots, coming to a point at the end. The compression refers to social ambition, while the pointed endings are suggestive of sadistic tendencies. In illustration 45 (p. 233) an excellent example of this type of root can be seen. It was drawn by a skilled and devoted veterinarian who comes from humble origins. He does seem to have some sadistic tendencies, but these are, for the most part, sublimated into a fascination with rather elaborate veterinary surgery.

The curved, fingerlike roots of figure 53d suggest a certain amount of greed and a strong need to hold on to all that has been achieved or secured. When the root is angular and grasping, as in figure 53e, these tendencies are exaggerated. Extreme consciousness of ownership of possessions may be characteristic, and when the person has money, he might be inclined either to usury or to hoarding.

The wavy, wandering roots depicted in figure 53f indicate a laissez-faire attitude, and a certain laziness. Much more importance is given to the pleasure principle than to either social status or possessions.

FIGURE 54: Simple, crossing root structure

If there are several main roots shown and only one of them is crossed over or under one of the others, as illustrated in the figure, what is usually in question is the subordination of one instinct to another. For example, the instinct for self-preservation might be partially suppressed by the maternal instinct. If there is a complete intertwining of main roots, without secondaries, the deep layers of the personality may find easy access to the archetypal myths of origin. Sexual behavior may take on an oceanic, diffused, melting quality. In such a case the subject himself may not

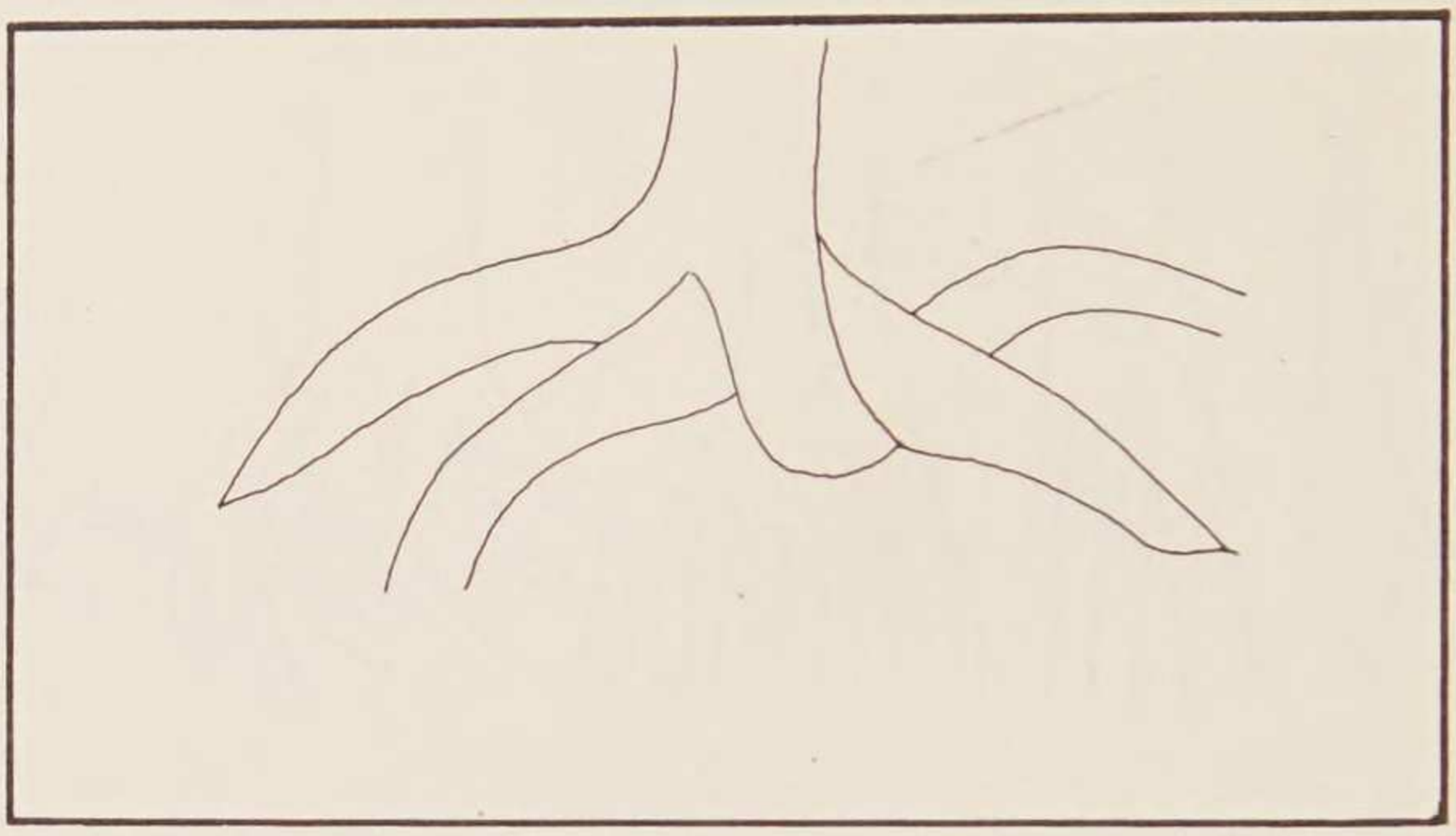


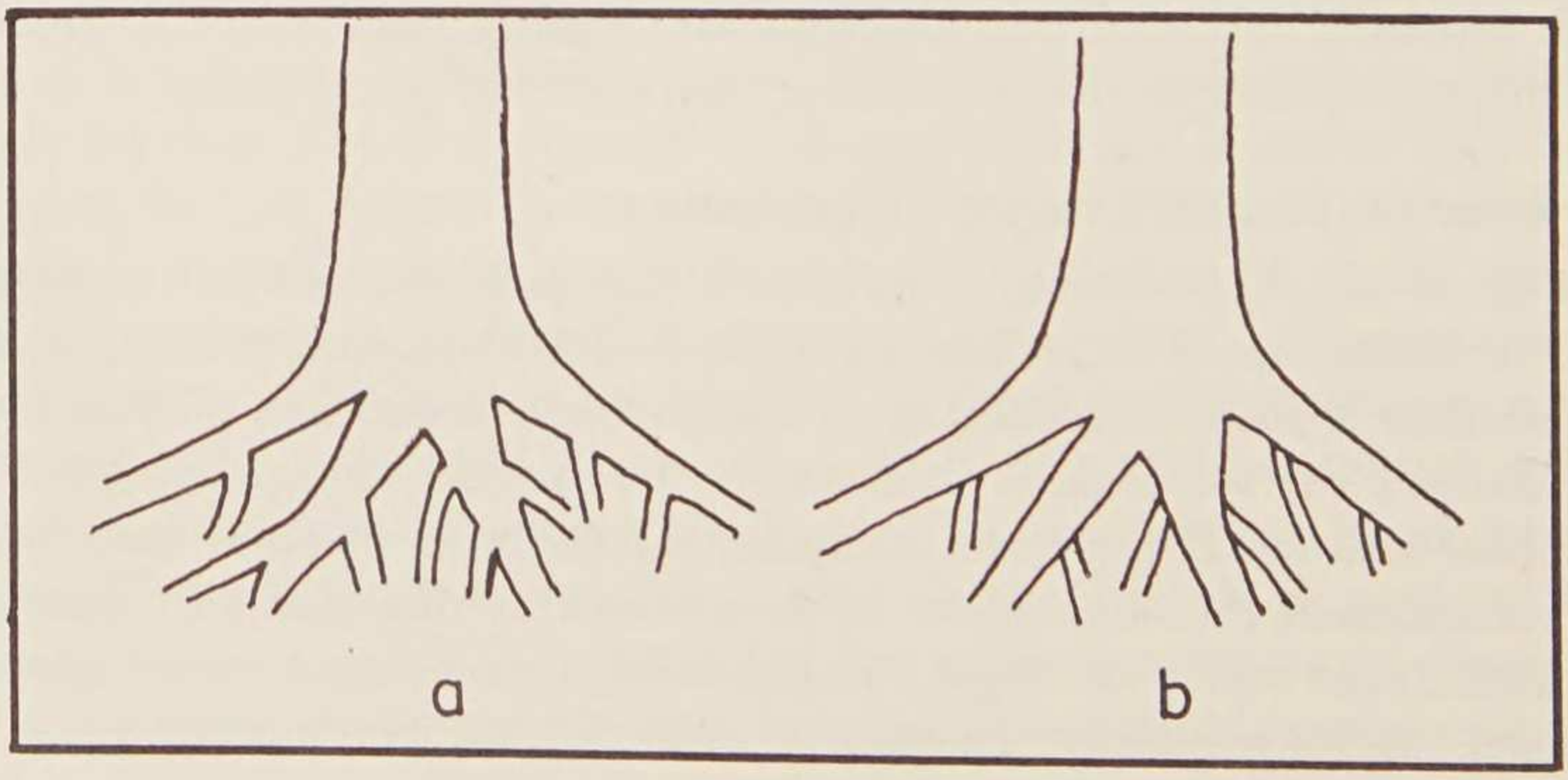
FIGURE 54

regard his instinctual responses or sexual behavior as problematic, but these may be difficult for partners to comprehend, especially if the subject is male.

FIGURES 55a–b: Branched, noncrossing root structures

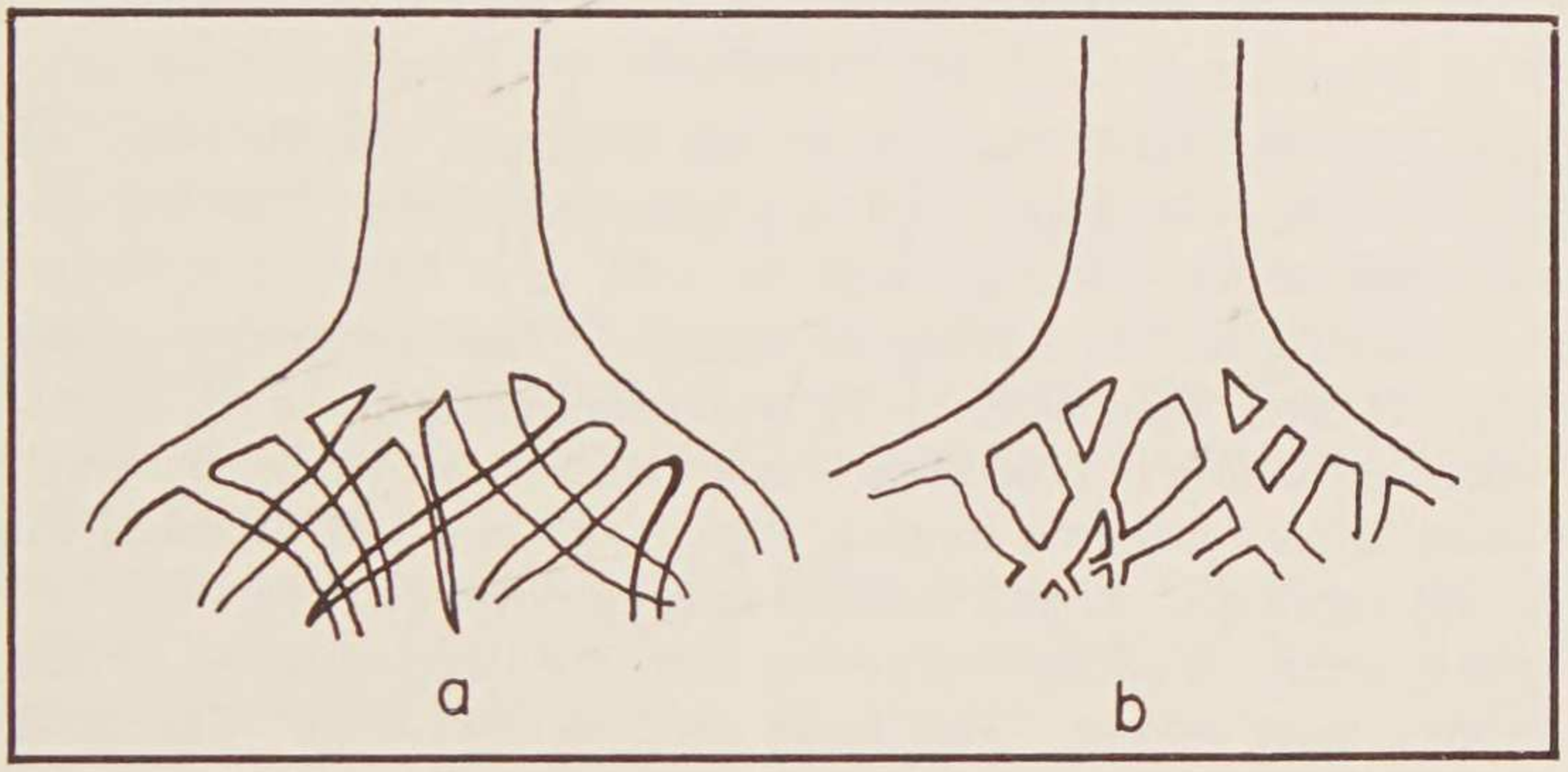
As in the branches of the tree, when the roots have secondaries coming off the main root, the small root may be either open at the point of connection, as in figure 55a, or it may be closed, as in 55b. In general the complex or branched roots indicate that the subject is aware of more complexities and ramifications in the instinctual sphere. When the point of origin is open, this may be taken as a positive indication of free energy exchange in the unconscious. When the secondary roots are closed off from the primaries, the subject may be aware of many complex unconscious currents, but block some of them off while accepting others. The sexual drive may be emphasized, but sexual behavior is often lacking in imagination.

FIGURES 55a–b



FIGURES 56a–b: Branched, crossing root structures

The criss-crossing branched roots of figure 56a, where there is no clear over and under pattern in the crossing, are in part analogous to criss-crossing branches in the crown—that is, they suggest confusion and an overcomplicated or contorted experience of the unconscious and instinctual layers. There may be some fixation with unconscious materials and an abnormal expenditure of energy to no effect. More specific interpretation may sometimes be made, in accordance with schema 4 (chapter 6),



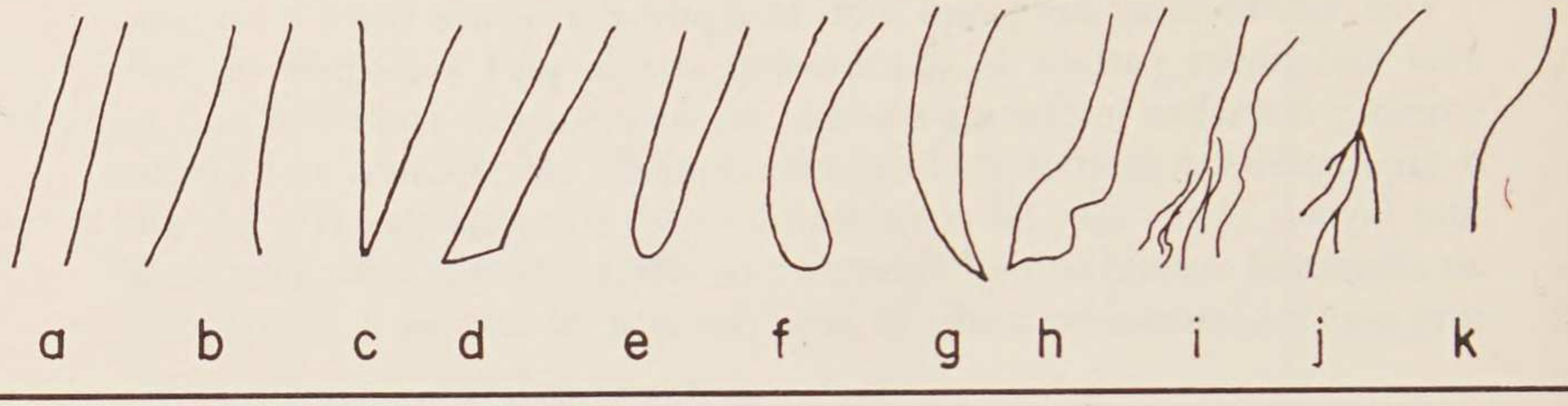
FIGURES 56a–b

if there is emphasis on one special part of the root structure. The quality of the lines should also be assessed with some care, if such a complex root is drawn.

Where the root is branched and there are intertwined crossings expressed three-dimensionally as in figure 56b, a similar complexity in the unconscious may be inferred, but without the confusion or blocking of energy currents indicated by criss-crossing lines. If the rest of the tree is positive, this may be a very creative sign. Imaginative sexuality and a playful approach to the instincts is also suggested. See illustration 33 (p. 191) for an example of roots of this type.

FIGURES 57a–k: The endings of the roots

Since it is fairly common for roots simply to trail off into the ground, there is often no ending distinguishable, even when the roots are clearly drawn. However, where endings are delineated or the open ending is not a mere fading out, certain traits can be described from them. Most of these have some parallels with branch endings, but since the roots always have to do with the earth, the meanings suggested by their endings will not be identical with those of the branches. Also, some forms which are regarded as negative when they appear on branches are not so strongly



FIGURES 57a–k

interpreted in the root endings, as, for example, the clawlike forms.

Figure 57a shows a simple, tapering, open-ended root. This has no special meaning. If the root widens at the end, as in figure 57b, there is a kind of "sucking up" of instinctual energies. The wedgelike ending of figure 57c is often seen where a subject experiences his environment as somewhat unfriendly or hostile and feels that he must wedge his way into it in order to gain a secure footing. Figure 57d is a sort of chisel shape, which may represent either a forceful sinking down of the roots or a subconscious cutting off of the energy flow from the deepest layers, as though the subject were saying, "This is as deep as I can go." The straight, rounded ending of figure 57e points to a comfortable satisfaction regarding the instinctual area signified by its placement. Figure 57f, on the other hand, is like a finger which is holding on; greed and attachment to possessions are suggested. In its exaggerated form it becomes a claw (figure 57g), pointing to a more desperate clinging and, occasionally, to tendencies toward usury. Figure 57h, the hoof form, is a rarely encountered root ending. We have seen it associated with two quite different types. The first is one who seems literally almost to stomp on his own instincts in a destructive and indiscriminate manner. The second type is represented by persons who have a sense of magic connection with deep unconscious forces. In these cases one may, perhaps, suppose some tie with the ancient symbol of the "devil's hoofprint."

The last three root endings depicted (figures 57i–k) are all fairly common and, with the exception of the last one, quite positive. Figure 57i shows a diffuse trailing off of the root, as though the connection to the depths of the psyche were an indefinite matter which has no cutoff point. The fine hair roots of figure 57j are a very healthy sign, indicating a subtle extension into the "soil" which permits absorption of the nourishing aspects of the unconscious and points to sensitivity with respect to experience and expression of instincts. The last form, figure 57k, may be seen either in single-stroke roots or in vaguely indicated root structures. It has no special meaning unless it twists or turns at the end point in such a way as to resemble one of the hooked or fingerlike double forms.

THE GROUND

We have already dealt at some length with the ground line in connection with the transition area between trunk and root. The ground is a somewhat larger topic than the ground line, which it comprehends, since the former may be represented in a three-dimensional way. A complex manner of drawing the ground may also be extended to include landscape, a subject matter to be taken up in chapter 11.

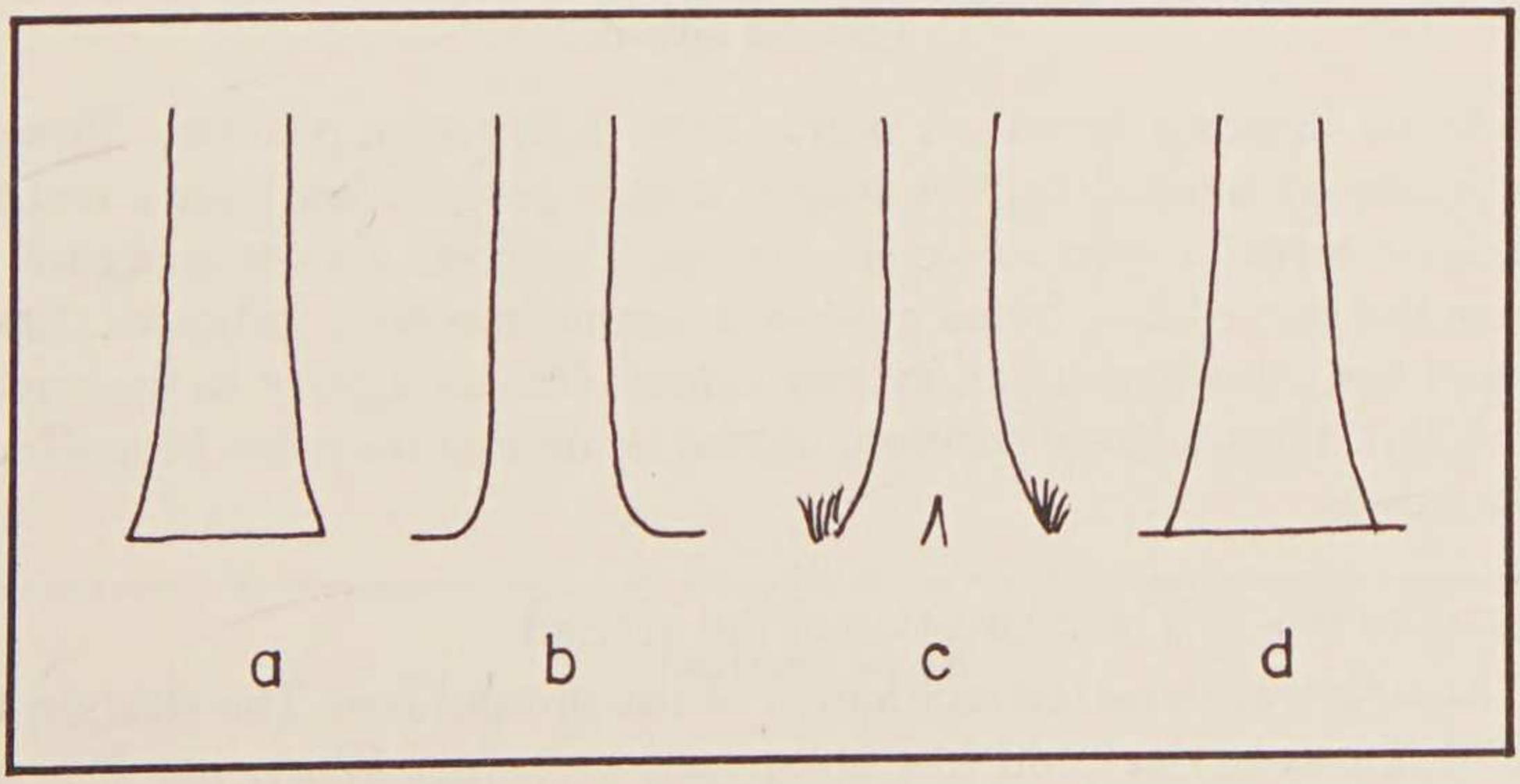
In general the ground represents the immediate environment in which the subject lives. If it is drawn in complex perspective, the person feels that he has his own particular niche in the environment, that his place is both defined and limited. This may express either a positive sense of belonging or a limiting, confining preoccupation with one's origins. As in every other factor to be examined in the drawings, much depends on the particular way in which the details are rendered and on the tone or feeling which they convey.

The figures and comments which follow treat five aspects of the drawing of the ground: (1) rendering; (2) execution; (3) inclination; (4) composition; and (5) position.

FIGURES 58a–d: Simple rendering of the ground

The four drawings shown in figures 58a–d define three ways in which the ground may be shown as a single line: suggested (without actually being present) by the line separating trunk from root (58a), barely indicated as in 58b and 58c, or fully developed as in 58d. All of these renderings have already been discussed, with the exception of figure 58c. (Figure 58a refers back to figures 45a–d; 58b is discussed under figure

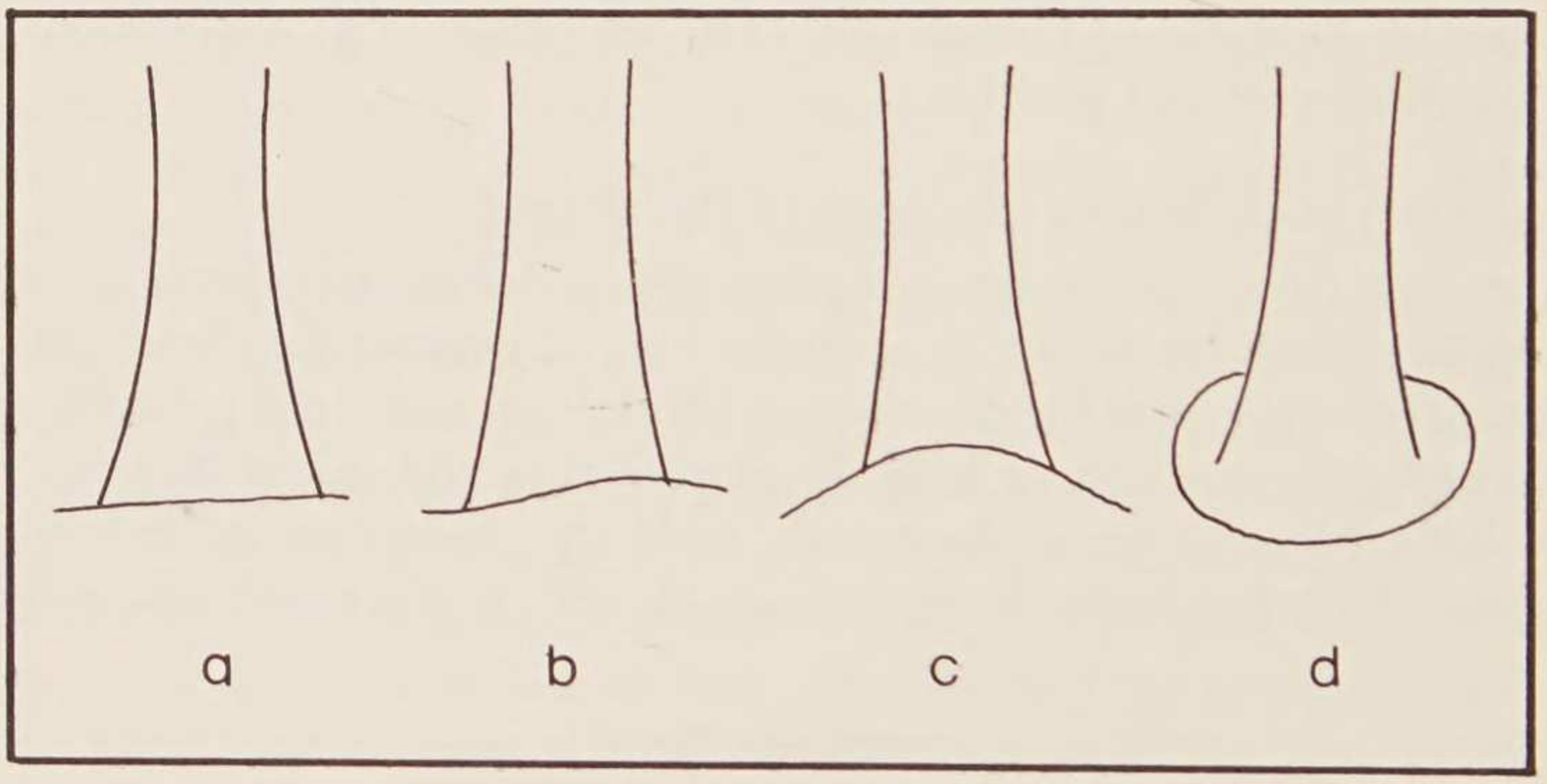
FIGURES 58a–d



40; and 58d, though it has many variations, corresponds as it is here drawn to figure 42.) The faint rendering of ground shown in figure 58c is an indication of rather strong instinctual urges which the person wants to cover up. The tufts of grass serve as a "decoy"—a way of diverting the attention of others so that they will not take note of the person's sexual nature. The exemplary husband and father who carries on well-concealed affairs with his secretaries might draw a ground like this; so may the adolescent girl who projects an impression of complete innocence after she has already given up her virginity without any particular struggle. Illustration 46 is an excellent example of this form.

FIGURES 59a–d: The execution of the ground

The execution of the ground or ground line may consist of straight or curved forms, as shown in figures 59a–d. A straight line always indicates the simple plane of the immediate environment. The irregular curve depicted in figure 59b means that the subject believes the ground to be shifting, with accompanying insecurity feelings. When the curve forms a hill (figure 59c), there is a sense of self-satisfaction. The person feels him-



FIGURES 59a–d

self to be "looking down" at others from a superior position. However, this is usually a self-deceptive stance, a vain pose, rather than a real indication of superior gifts or achievements. The form shown in figure 59d, where the curved line forms an island around the tree, indicates that the subject has a sense of isolation from others. He has a place in the environment, but it is a solitary position, or else he deliberately sets himself apart from others.

FIGURES 60a–c: The inclination of the ground

These figures show the inclination of the ground line. The straight horizontal line is normal and has no special meaning. When the line is in-

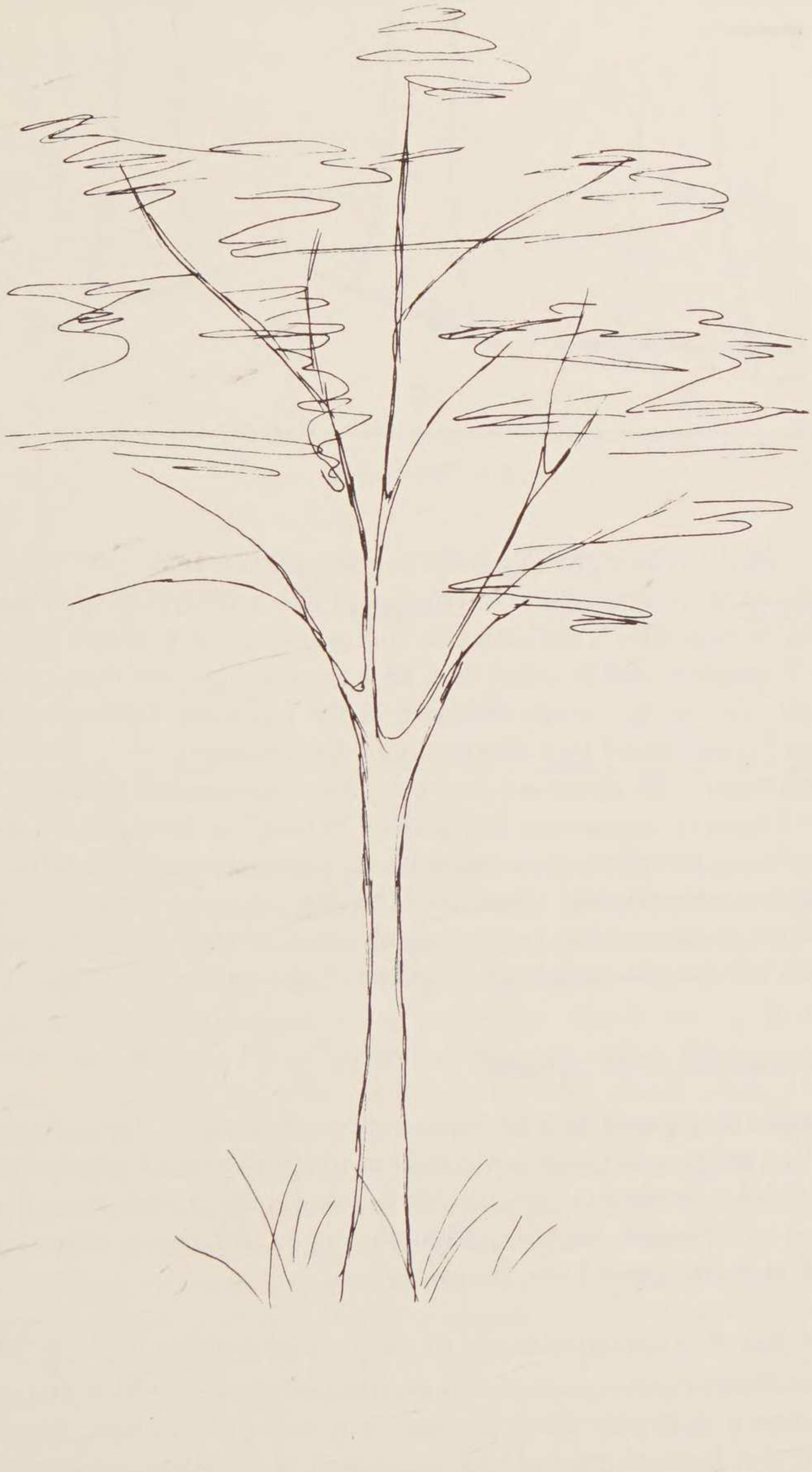
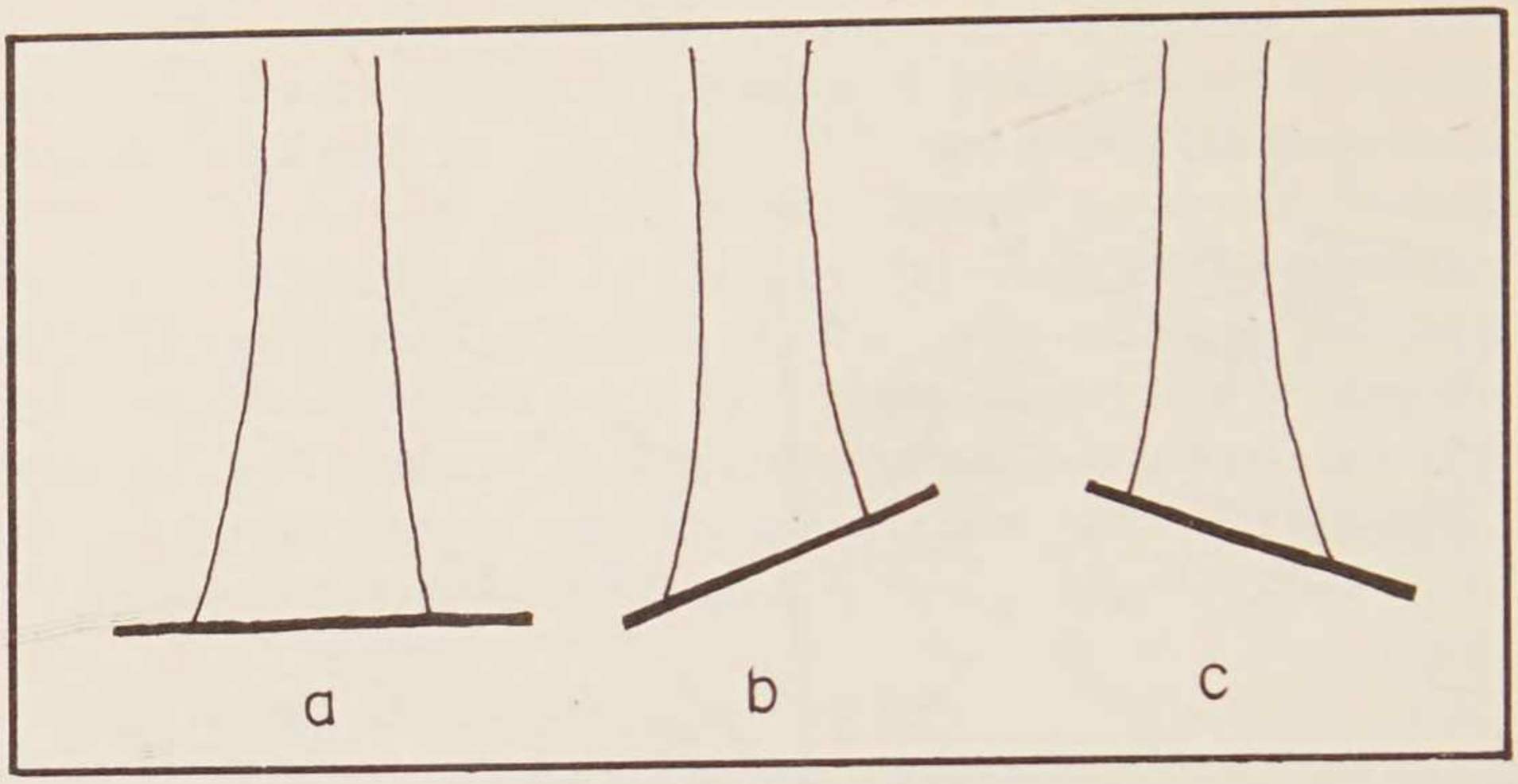


Illustration 46



FIGURES 60a–c

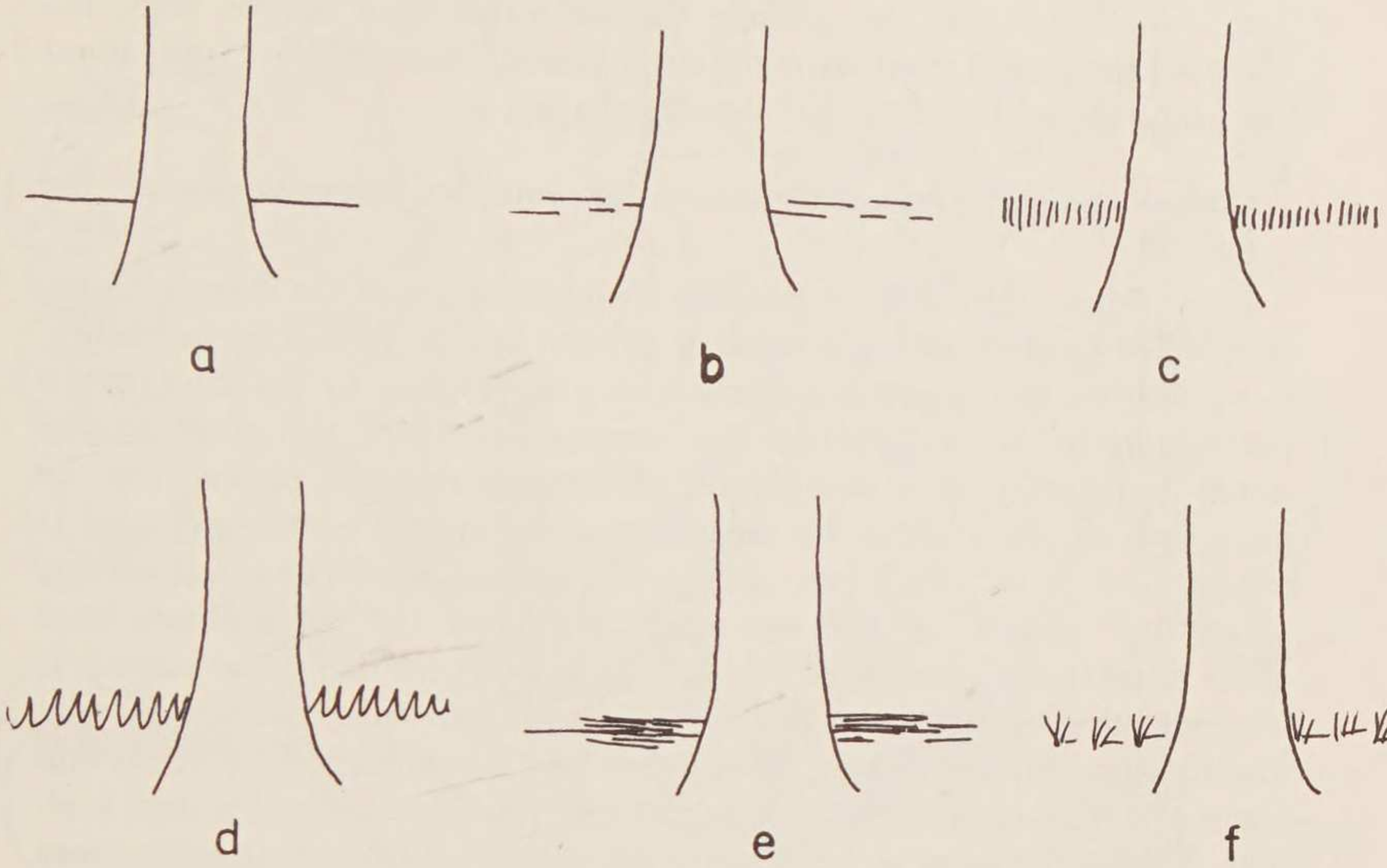
clined upward to the right (figure 60b), the person feels that he can use the resources of his immediate environment like a springboard. This angle suggests a person who is enthusiastic and optimistic if it is combined with a basically positive and hopeful tree. If, however, the tree tends predominantly leftward, or the whole is drawn in the left zone, this inclination of the ground could point to a sinking back into passivity or a retreat from life's challenges. The downward-turning line represented in figure 60c is usually a negative indication, suggesting "falling" or losing one's ground. It is sometimes literally associated with a progressive deterioration in the individual's environmental situation. However, in some rare cases it may be a positive manifestation, indicating an effort to climb out of oppressive conditions toward the imaginative realms of the upper left zone.

The composition of the ground

Although the ground is most often represented either by a single continuous line or by a series of horizontal or vertical strokes which form the impression of a horizontal ground, it is sometimes drawn in a three-dimensional or complex manner. Figures 61a–f and 62a–c show various ways in which the ground can be composed.

FIGURES 61a–f: Two-dimensional or simple composition of the ground

In these figures are represented a number of ways in which the ground may be drawn in forms which are basically two-dimensional. Figure 61a is the simplest form of ground line, composed of a continuous line or lines (depending on whether or not the line crosses through the trunk). This signifies recognition of the close environment and some feeling of connection with it, but the subject does not place any special importance on his milieu. These simple lines are rarely absolutely straight on either side of



FIGURES 61a–f

the trunk, but when they are, as in illustration 33 (p. 191), the subject may be slightly rigid in his manner of relating to his surroundings. When the line is formed with broken or contiguous lines, as in figure 61b, the subject feels sustained by his environment, but he views it as likely to undergo at least minor changes of a positive rather than a threatening kind. The line of fine vertical strokes or grass shown in 61c indicates that this person is able to make direct use of his immediate circumstances in relation to his own development. Figures 61d and 61e, which are made up of rapid or scribbled strokes, have basically the same meanings as 61c and 61b respectively, except that these forms approach the three-dimensional effects to be discussed in relation to figures 62a–c. Figure 61e especially, which is a very common manner of drawing the ground, often results in an irregular line of horizontal strokes which give an effect of depth. This may usually be regarded as positive, unless the strokes are very confused or emphatically dark scribbles, in which case the subject may be expressing a protest against his present circumstances. The line of tufted grass forming the ground in figure 61f is a somewhat ambiguous sign, for it carries both the positive meaning of recognition of the immediate milieu, and the slightly negative meaning attached to all "decoys." The subject may pretend to be caught up in or concerned with his environment as a way of diverting attention from himself. The "decoy" is not specifically

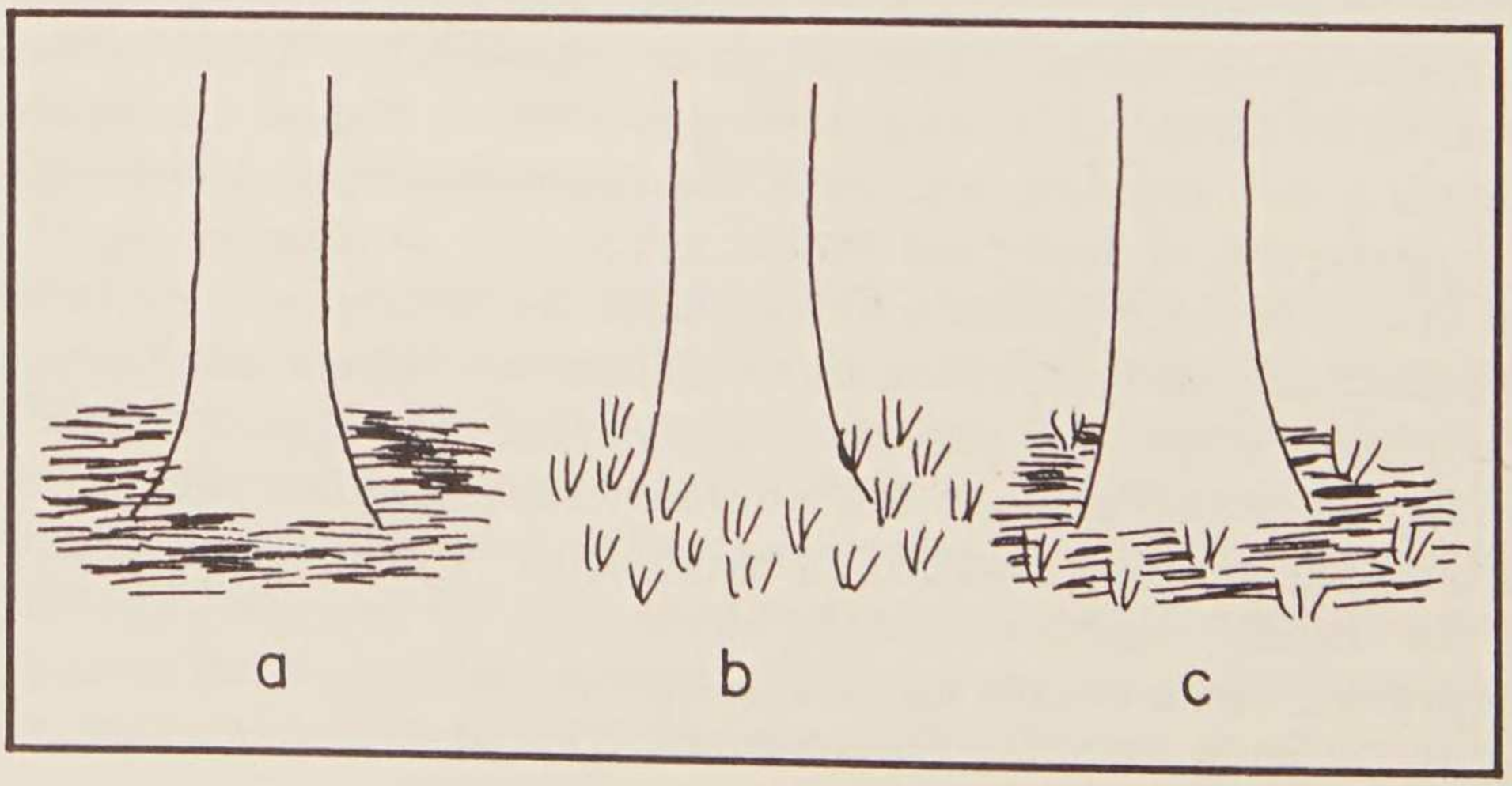
designed to cover sexual behavior, as in figure 58c, but is a more general detractor. Should the line include flowers rather than simple tufts, the "decoy" meaning is then strongly emphasized. More will be said about this in the discussion of special signs in chapter 11.

FIGURES 62a–c: Three-dimensional or complex composition of the ground

These figures depict three possible representations of the complex composition of ground, giving a sense of perspective or three-dimensionality. In all of these the subject emphasizes his own position by pointing up the perspective in which he stands. As mentioned earlier, this three-dimensional representation of the ground also means that the person feels he has a defined place within his environment. When the complex ground is represented as in figure 62a, this is a more or less neutral expression of feeling "placed" in the surroundings. When the three-dimensional effect is composed mainly of vertical strokes (figure 62b), the subject is confident that he can make positive use of his particular position in relation to his ambitions. When, as in figure 62c, a composite of vertical and horizontal lines constitutes the complex ground, there are ambivalent feelings. A defined role or niche is seen at times as helpful and at other times as limiting. The subject needs the security of knowing where he stands, and yet desires at the same time to overcome the limitations which accompany this sense of having a clear role.

Since the manner of drawing the ground, like so many other factors in the tree drawing, rarely corresponds exactly to the forms shown in the schematized figures, it may be useful to refer again to some of the illustrations as examples. Continuous ground lines are seen in illustrations 32 (p. 189) and 27 (p. 182). In the latter the line forms a slight hill, not extreme enough to point to arrogance, but sufficiently marked to give an impres-

FIGURES 62a–c



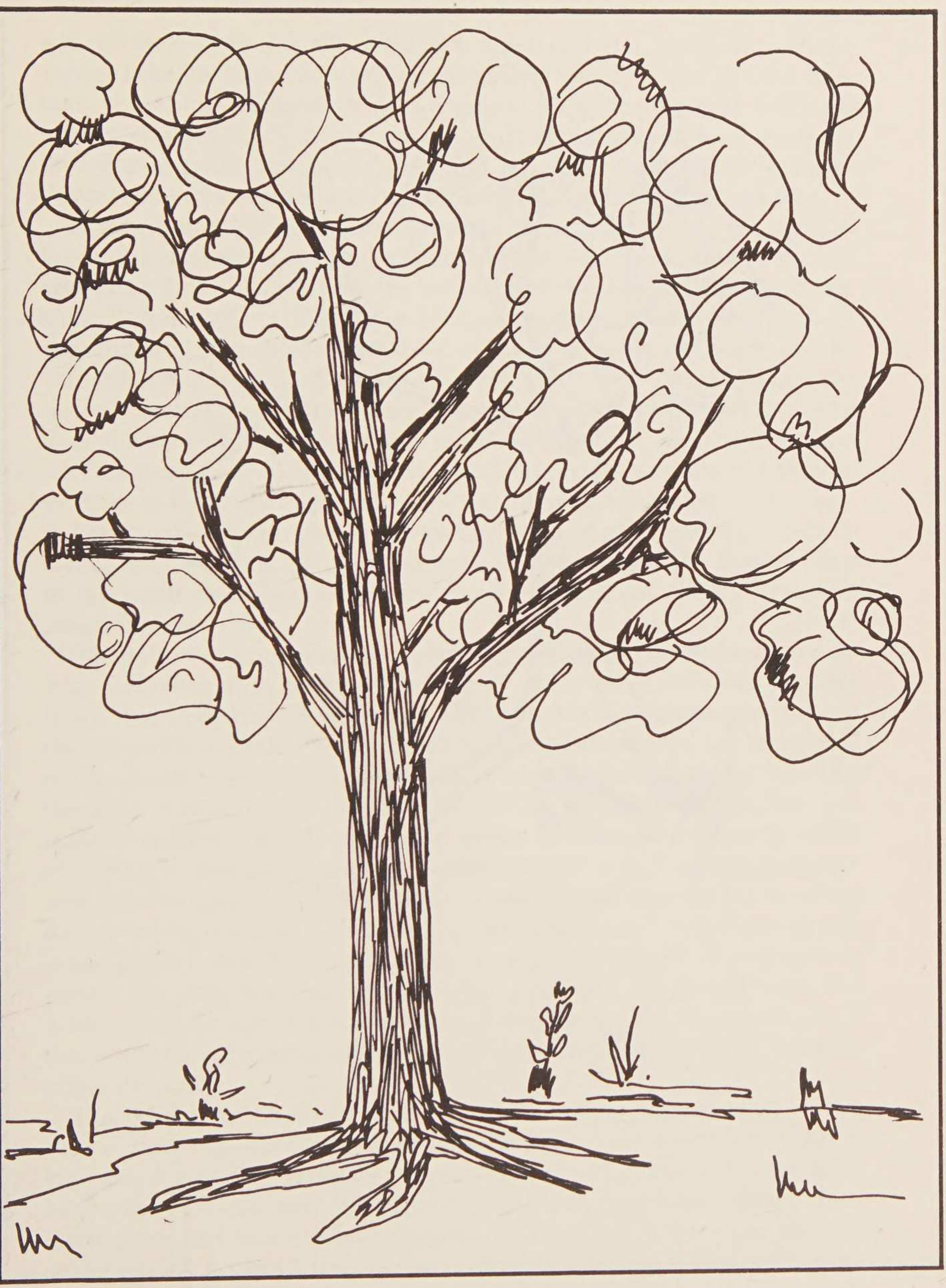


Illustration 47



Illustration 48

sion of three-dimensionality and to suggest that the perspective of the viewer is below the tree. A horizontal ground made up of scribbled lines may be seen in illustration 39 (p. 212), while the vertical scribbled ground appears in illustration 25 (p. 179). Also included here are three new drawings—illustrations 47, 48, and 49—all of which show a three-dimensional rendering of the ground, each in a quite different manner.

In illustration 47 the ground corresponds roughly to that depicted in figure 61f. However, its three-dimensional nature is emphasized by the spreading root structure and the presence of the flowers—definite decoy signs. The drawing is that of a professional woman—now divorced—who is the mother of two children. At the time when it was made, however, she was still living with her husband. Her grasp of reality is notable and she makes effective use of her environment in her attempts to spend a good deal of time with her children and raise them properly, while at the same time carrying on with her work. Her ambivalence toward her life state at the time of the rendering—feeling but not actually being alone in her marital relations— is expressed in the vertical tufts of grass crossing the horizontal lines. She felt her situation to be restrictive, and the flowers close to the trunk clearly speak for her unsatisfied, but not overtly admitted, sexual desires.

Illustration 48 originates from a young, unmarried professional woman who had taken up a position hundreds of miles away from her parental home shortly before the drawing was made. The three-dimensionality of the ground is indicated by scribbled lines on both sides of the trunk and by the heavy shading on the left root. The scribbled lines have basically the same meaning as in figure 61d—i.e., the subject feels that she can make immediate effective use of her milieu. In this case it was a question of relying on colleagues for such simple matters as finding an apartment and more complex demands for help, as taking over some of her teaching duties "while she gets accustomed to the new place." The three-dimensional ground with these more or less vertical lines clearly shows that the person fits into her environment. But that this adaptation was not achieved by the most selfless means, and that her appeal to others was not due to timidity, becomes clear by analyzing the other structural features of her drawing.

The third illustration, 49, was made by a young woman who, at the time of drawing, was trying to reach a decision about whether to enter a long and demanding graduate program in a scientific field or to remain in her rather free and easy life of part-time typist, part-time "loafer." Her intelligence and capacity for responsibility were not in question, but she exhibited the typical ambivalence of those rendering the ground as in figure 62c, between desiring to have and fulfill a defined social role, and wanting to retain ease of life style and freedom from the pressures of a limiting program. Eventually she decided on the formal studies.

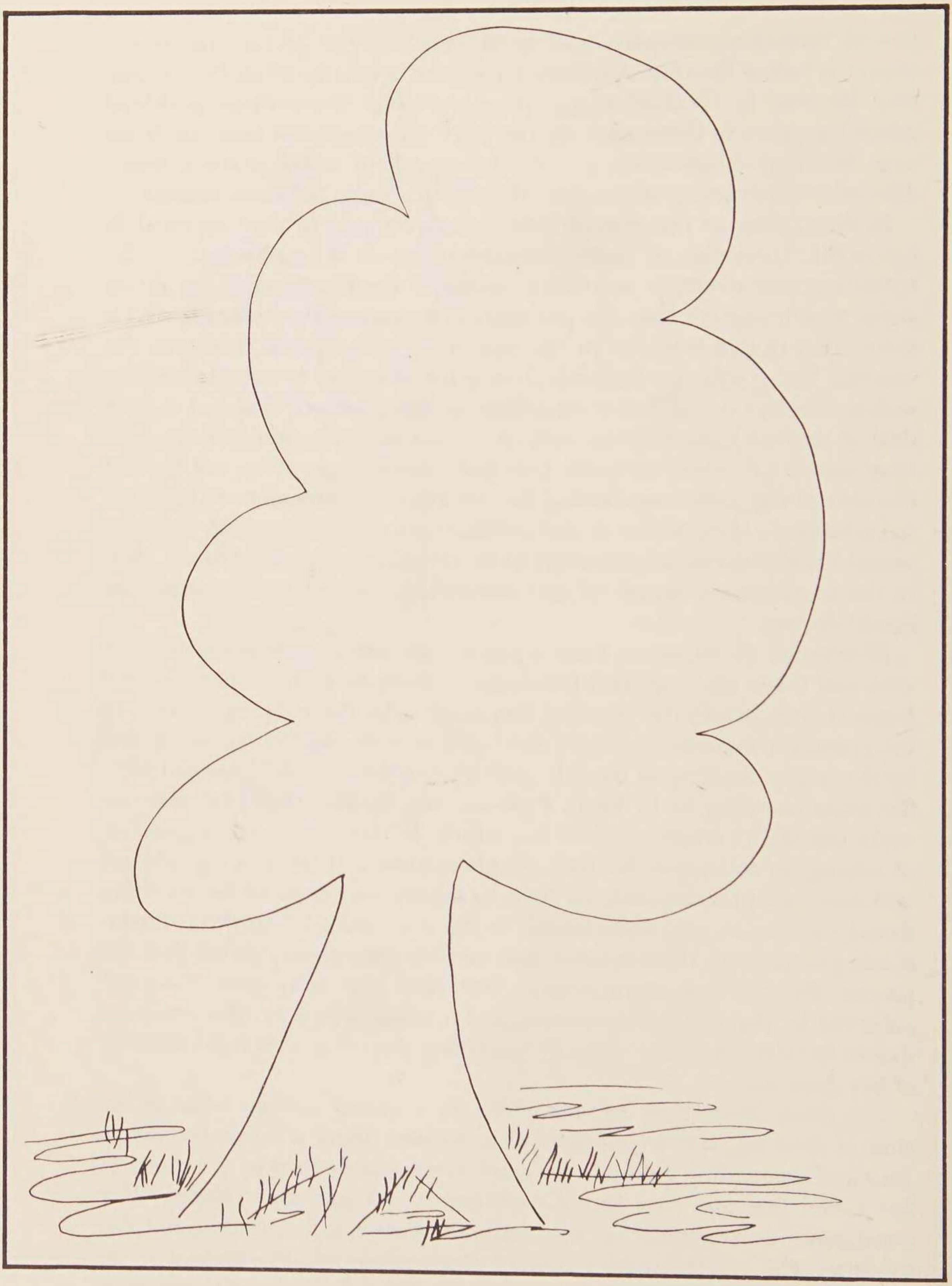


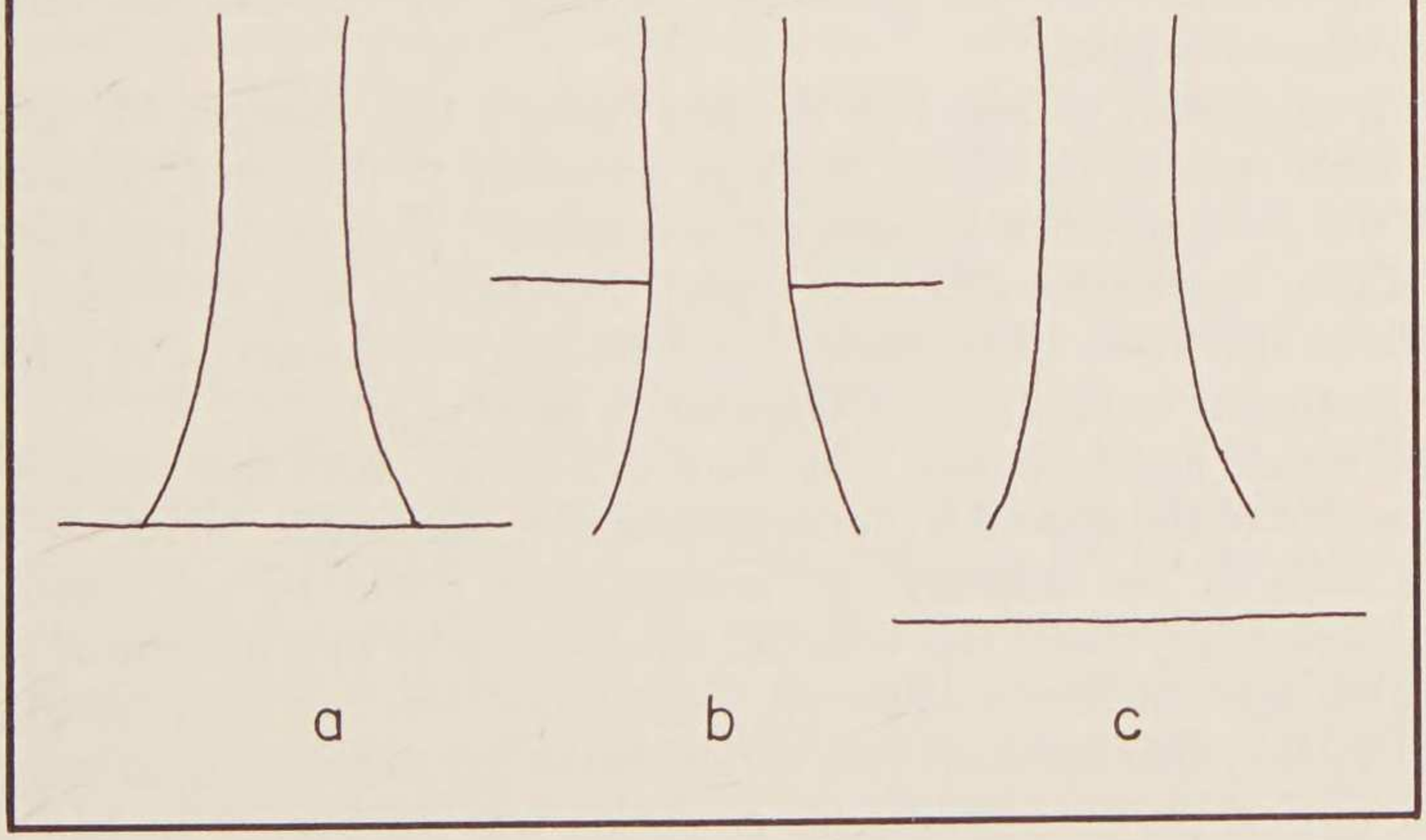
Illustration 49

FIGURES 63a–c: The position of the ground

The ground or ground line is normally positioned as in figure 63a, more or less at the base of the trunk, or, if roots are drawn, not too far above or below the beginning of the root structure. Should it occur very high above the base of the trunk, as in figure 63b, the subject's emotional interactions with his immediate milieu are emphasized. This high placement of the ground also frequently stands for ambitions which the person feels are either beyond his reach or at least unlikely to be achieved in the near future. There is a certain separation from reality, not through escape, but because the manner in which the subject wishes to participate in his milieu is not possible for him.

When the ground is definitely below the base of the trunk as in figure 63c, the individual is, so to speak, "hanging in the air." The meaning of this form differs from that of drawings in which no ground line at all is indicated, however, in that the person recognizes the importance of the real world which surrounds him, but cannot seem to succeed in getting in touch with it. He lacks the confidence or even the pretense of self-sufficiency which is typical of those who draw no ground line. He thus suffers from the impression of being "suspended in the middle of nowhere," and may feel definitely cheated of the support which he needs from his surroundings.

FIGURES 63a–c



There is considerable discussion in the literature—especially in German and French—about the vertical placement of the ground, or horizon, where psychotics are concerned, particularly those with one of the schizophrenic syndromes. Rennert's works on this subject (1963; 1966) are generally accepted. He showed that during the course of paranoid schizophrenic episodes (as distinct from those of other syndromes) there is first a vertical displacement, followed by a complete disappearance of the ground or horizon (combined with diminished attempts at perspective), leading eventually to maplike representations in landscape drawings. Rennert thought this to be both an extremely sensitive prognostic sign of the disease process, occasionally occurring several months before the frank manifestations of the psychosis, and a good indicator of the therapeutic progress of the patient in remission, the reappearance of the ground signaling improvement. He ascribed this phenomenon to the pathodynamics of the diseased personality, which, in its " . . . unfreedom is more or less confined in the flatness of the earth in which he perseveres, while at the same time the world loses both its organization of space and physiognomy, in which world the position of the patient becomes displaced" (Rennert, 1966; cited in Rennert, 1969, p. 24; our translation). This concept of the meaning of horizontal displacement was enthusiastically acclaimed by Navratil (1969), one of the most active of European psychiatrists working with the drawings of psychotics. It was also basically accepted by Fischer (1971), although the latter expanded it and made it a step on his "continuum" toward reaching the ecstatic state—i.e., that condition when the distinction between the "I" and the external world ceases to exist.

It is interesting to note that by 1969 Rennert had changed his opinion and reinterpreted his earlier findings according to the more fashionable idea that schizophrenic manifestations represent, in general, regressions to childhood expressions (Rennert, 1969). Needless to say, we do not subscribe to this view. (The reader is referred to our discussion of Suchenwirth's studies on Gestalt disintegration in chapter 3.)

We would also take issue with Rennert's strong claim that vertical displacement of the ground is pathognomonic for schizophrenia, for we have seen such in the drawings of persons who could by no means be described as psychotic and who did not seem to be in a premorbid state. To give one concrete example: A young man who had been bedridden with tuberculosis for some months drew the ground line in an exaggerated vertical position. Before his condition was discovered he had been accustomed to an active life involving various sports, and he expressed tremendous frustration that his disease made such pursuits impossible. In this case we knew the patient well and can state that he evidenced not the slightest trace of schizophrenic ideation before, during, or after his hospitalization for tuberculosis.

10

Shading

Still nursing the unconquerable hope
Still clutching the inviolable shade
Matthew Arnold,
The Scholar Gypsy, 1867

AS Buck (1966) has rightly pointed out, the use of shading techniques in the drawings may be either a normal or a pathogenic sign, depending on the manner in which it is rendered. In his view, when shading is used to achieve three-dimensional effects, or where the effect created is similar to that of a trained artist attempting to show, through realistic drawing techniques, the play of light on the tree, then it may be regarded as "normal." On the other hand, if the shading is excessively dark, reinforced, or misplaced this is to be taken as a pathogenic sign.

The use of shading techniques in various parts of the tree has three possible general meanings. It may stand for a shielding mechanism, or a way of protecting the self against external influences felt by the subject to be undesirable or overwhelming. Second, it may be used to cover up a specific event of which the subject is ashamed, or which constitutes a painful memory. Third, it may symbolize hidden aggression. The execution of the shading and the position of the shaded areas within the tree will usually indicate fairly clearly which of these three basic meanings is expressed.*

* To point out all instances of agreement or disagreement between our interpretive suggestions and those of other workers with drawings methods would have made the text unduly complicated, and for the most part we have refrained from so doing. We

We would agree with Buck that there is a distinct difference between drawings in which soft, consistent shading is used to represent the play of light and shadow on the tree, and those in which only one area is shaded, or the shading is excessively reinforced, or is inconsistent with the actual relation between light and shadow. On the other hand, it is our contention that the symbolism related to shading techniques can be utilized to elucidate aspects of personality expressed in drawings of the first kind, since even the healthy adult may feel the need to protect himself from certain influences, or to hide some corner of his psyche, or even to entertain some hostile feelings. The differences in interpretation of "positive" and "negative" shading will therefore be one of degree rather than of kind.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the use of shading techniques from the drawing of bark. In effect they have similar meanings, at least as far as shading on the trunk is concerned. However, since bark per se is discussed in chapter 11 under "Special Signs," we will reserve comments on that type of shading which is used over the *whole* of the trunk and treat it later as a bark rendering. Here we will discuss only shading which is limited to part of one section of the tree—as, for example, the left side of the trunk, or one single branch, or a special area in the crown.

From the point of view of drawing technique, the "proper" use of shading may be regarded as a three-dimensional representation of the physical phenomenon of the play of light on the tree. Thus, when the shading is consistent, the position of the sun will be implied. If the light comes from the right, shading on the left refers to resistance to influences from the feminine zone, but, in addition, receptivity to the right zone is implied, for the sun stands for power and potential psychological illumination.

Where there is no shading at all, the implication is that the tree is illumined from the front. This suggests a direct, unmediated projection of the self into the drawing. The unshaded tree is typical in most abstract tree drawings, where, indeed, one has a combination of very direct and at the same time sparse or simplified self-expression.

If there is a great deal of shading used in an attempt to express three-

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wish, however, to emphasize our observation that the almost universally held opinion that shading is an anxiety indicator is without foundation—unless one assumes that covert anxiety is behind all other interpretations of the use of shading. Handler and Reyher (1964) showed that the majority of their subjects utilized *less* shading when exposed to artificial conditions of stress. In a 1965 review article, the same authors concluded that the deployment of increased shading under experimental stress (compared with the control drawings of the same subjects) correlated positively only for those subjects who could be described as "copers," and was negative for those who were "avoiders." These authors were dealing with figure drawings, where the introduction of shading may be quite a different matter from its use in the tree drawing. Nevertheless, in our own experience with trees we have found that persons who are overtly anxious tend to draw with fine, broken, and/or contiguous lines, rather than to utilize "protective cover" in the forms of shading, bark, and so on.

dimensional light effects, but it is inconsistent, appearing here on the right, there on the left, considerable confusion may be inferred. The extent to which it is used on both sides should, of course, be taken into account. If most of the tree is shaded toward the left and there is one special area where shading appears to the right, the indication is of a particular locus of conflict or strain toward which the subject feels he must put up some kind of defense, rather than of generalized confusion.

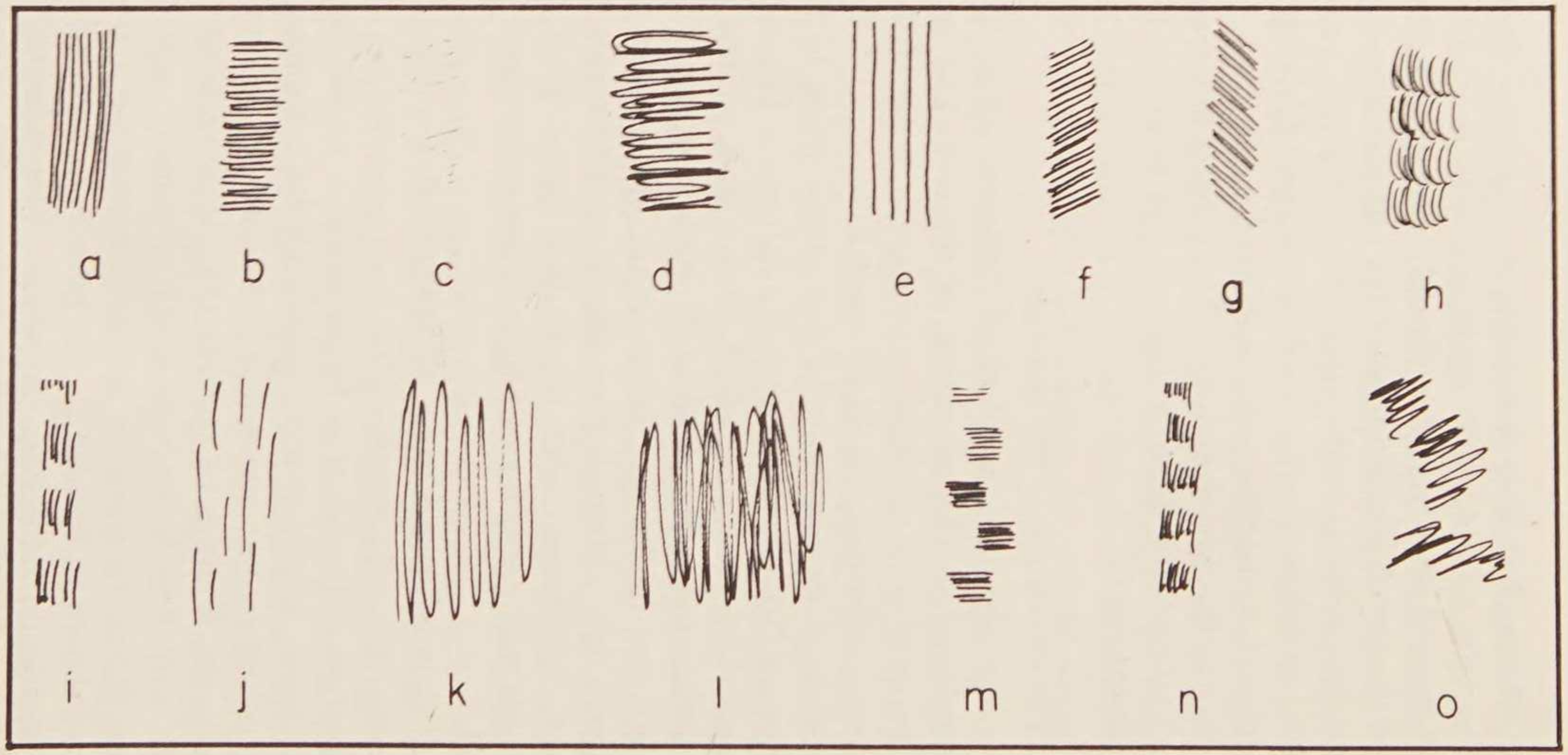
The use of shading in the tree drawing will be considered according to: (1) execution; (2) patterns of distribution; and (3) the parts of the tree in which shading is employed.

FIGURES 64a–o: The execution of the shading

In these figures are shown a number of different stroke techniques which may be employed in the execution of shading. The majority of these strokes are expressive of shielding mechanisms, some of them effective defenses, others ineffective efforts to resist influences. A few of the strokes are suggestive of aggression, and still others point to the use of shading to cover up or "hide" some areas of experience. When the shading consists of parallel vertical lines which form a dark, almost solid blot (figure 64a), the indication is of a definite shielding device which permits no exchange of energies in the area in question. The parallel horizontal lines shown in figure 64b, although they also form a compact block and stand for defenses, will leave room for limited possibilities of energy exchange, since some influences may be able to penetrate the horizontally constructed shield.

When the shading is light and solid, as in figure 64c—often created by smearing the strokes of a soft pencil—what is in question are the subtle and usually ineffective defenses of a hypersensitive personality. Figure 64d, on the other hand, which depicts horizontal lines forming loops at either side as the pencil moves continuously, is a rather hostile expression of shading. Usually the feelings of vulnerability leading to the need for defenses alternate with hostile feelings leading to expression of aggression. An extremely defensive stance is implied by multiple parallel vertical lines, like those shown in figure 64e, for here each layer of resistance to influence or penetration reinforces the whole. This is an expression of an effective shield, but it differs from that in figure 64a in that the subject's defense system is less likely to be apparent to others.

When the lines of the shading are parallel and diagonal, as in figures 64f and 64g, one must assess both their direction and the side of the branch or trunk where they appear. Diagonal lines rising from left to right (figure 64f) indicate shielding against feminine influences if they appear on the left side of the tree. On the right side, however, they may have two possible meanings. In some cases they stand for aggression toward men or male peers or the father; in others these lines may repre-



FIGURES 64a–o

sent a highly channeled receptivity to influences from the male zone. Diagonal lines rising from right to left (figure 64g) never seem to stand for channeled receptivity. They are either an expression of resistance to male influences, if on the right side of the tree, or a sign of aggressive behavior toward women, if on the left side.

The group of curved, sectioned shading lines depicted in figure 64h is one of the most effective defensive shields. It suggests reinforced resistance to influence, like figure 64e, but it is also strengthened by flexibility. When, on the other hand, the shield is made up of sets of parallel lines which are separated by clear spaces, as in figure 64i, one may say that the defense system is "full of holes," and is rarely able to protect the subject from repeated painful experiences, just where he feels himself to be most vulnerable. There is nearly always in such cases an "Achilles heel," the specific nature of which is often revealed through other details in the drawing. The discontinuous parallel lines shown in figure 64j likewise suggest an "Achilles heel," but it is rarely as evident to others as with persons who execute shading which is full of breaks. Where these discontinuous lines are used, there will be some general effectiveness in the defense system, so long as the subject's most vulnerable spots are not inadvertantly or deliberately invaded.

When the pencil moves in continuous vertical strokes which form loops on both ends of the shaded patch, as in figure 64k, the shading nearly always stands for a "cover" rather than a shield, whether found in the crown, on the trunk, or over the roots. This type of rendering, which is usually limited in area, is often used to hide a specific experience which the subject regards as shameful or too painful to bring out into the open. The crossing, intertwined vertical lines shown in figure 64l may also be used to cover over some painful experience, if they appear in an isolated area, especially in the crown. Where such lines are employed as shading along the whole length of the trunk, however, they may be seen as a very effective shield which is both difficult to penetrate and strong enough to withstand pressure.

The patchy groups of dark horizontal lines (figure 64m) are used as shading expressions by subjects who feel very insecure. Their defense mechanisms are obvious to others, but at the same time are largely ineffective. This form of execution can be compared to bricks, piled one on top of the other without the use of mortar, which will collapse immediately if one of them is slightly displaced. When the lines are patchy groups of vertical strokes, as in figure 64n, the subject will also be insecure and will exhibit his defensiveness, but the shield will be slightly more effective than that of 64m.

Finally, there is the scribbed shading shown in figure 64o, which is quite commonly seen in the crown and also appears fairly frequently around the roots. This is nearly always an expression of concealment,

which is related more to shame than to fear of being hurt or to general vulnerability.

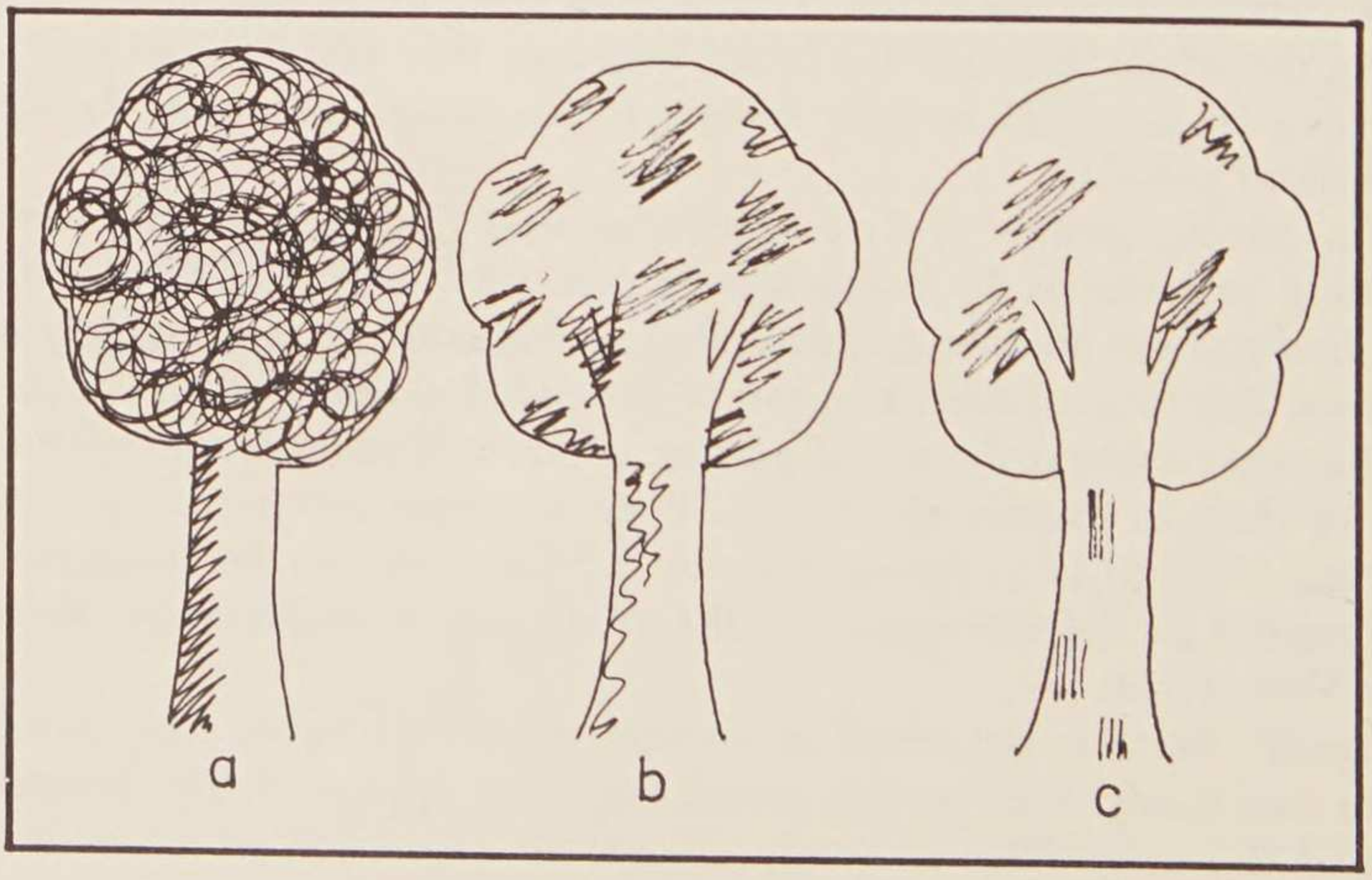
FIGURES 65a–c: The extensiveness of the shading

In these figures are shown three degrees to which the use of shading may be employed in terms of extensiveness throughout the tree. When the shading is exceedingly compact and appears more or less on the whole tree (figure 65a), one may infer a systems of defenses which is conscious and relatively controlled. The subject is well aware of his vulnerability, or, where the shading is used as a cover, has a generalized need to hide himself, and has worked out a complex set of reactions designed to protect himself. When the crown is heavily shaded, many varieties of strokes may be employed, which have already been discussed in connection with figure 18 in chapter 9.

The patchy but still relatively extensive use of shading depicted in figure 65b, is expressive of much less conscious but quite widespread defense against vulnerability. The subject nearly always feels some shame or resentment about his oversensitivity, although he may not be able to articulate these feelings. This degree of shading distribution is the most likely to involve some hostile defenses or aggressive behavior, although this should not be inferred unless supported by the manner of execution. (Subjects who are not aggressive by nature may feel a generalized sense of helplessness, which will be expressed in the line quality of the drawing as a whole.)

If the shading is loosely distributed in special areas, as in figure 65c, it

FIGURES 65a–c



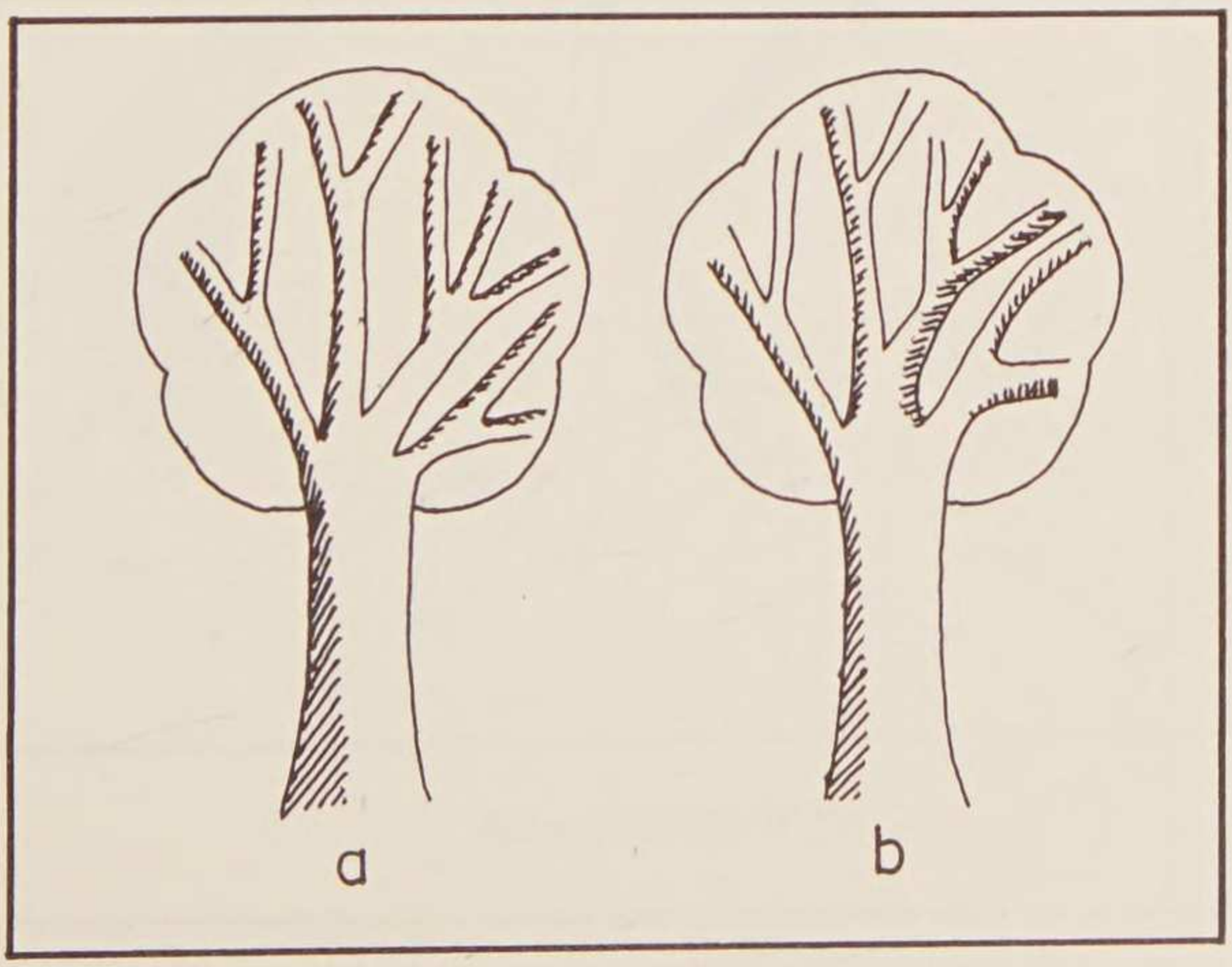
refers either to specific events which cause feelings of shame or to particular influences which the person feels he must resist. These may be either conscious or unconscious resistances, depending on the subject's basic level of self-awareness.

FIGURES 66a–b: Consistency of the shading according to direction

When shading is drawn consistently on one side of the tree, as in figure 66a, one has a definite expression of preference for the opposite side, from which direction the light comes, and of conscious resistance to the "shadow side." This may be a "normal" representation, depending on the rendering of the tree as a whole and the execution of the shading. Nevertheless, even in the relatively healthy individual, shading to one side is generally related to a need to resist influences from the kinds of experiences or persons symbolized by that side. This resistance is often a conscious attitude established as a reaction to the dominance of one or the other of the parents. It sometimes happens that one will see heavy shading on one side of the trunk—the right side, for example—while at the same time the crown develops toward the right without shading. In such a case the subject usually has well-established emotional resistance to the influence of his father, but this has not prevented him from developing, in his maturity, in typically male directions, or from being open to rational and practical influences at the mental level.

When the shading appears inconsistently on both sides, as in figure 66b, some degree of confusion is suggested. If there is shading on both sides of the same sphere, especially on the trunk, the confusion is to be taken quite seriously. Illustration 5 (p. 119), which was discussed in connection

FIGURES 66a–b



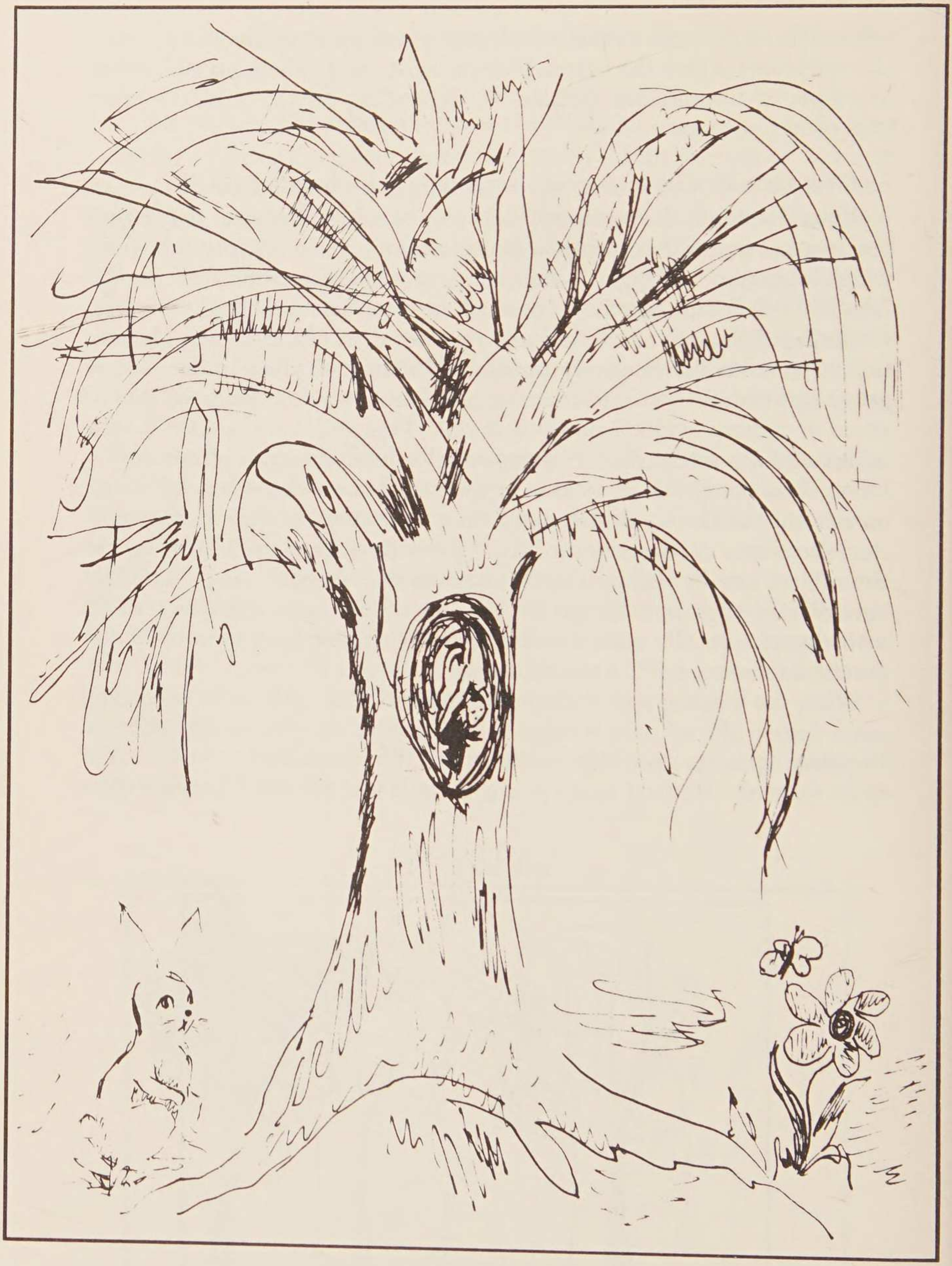


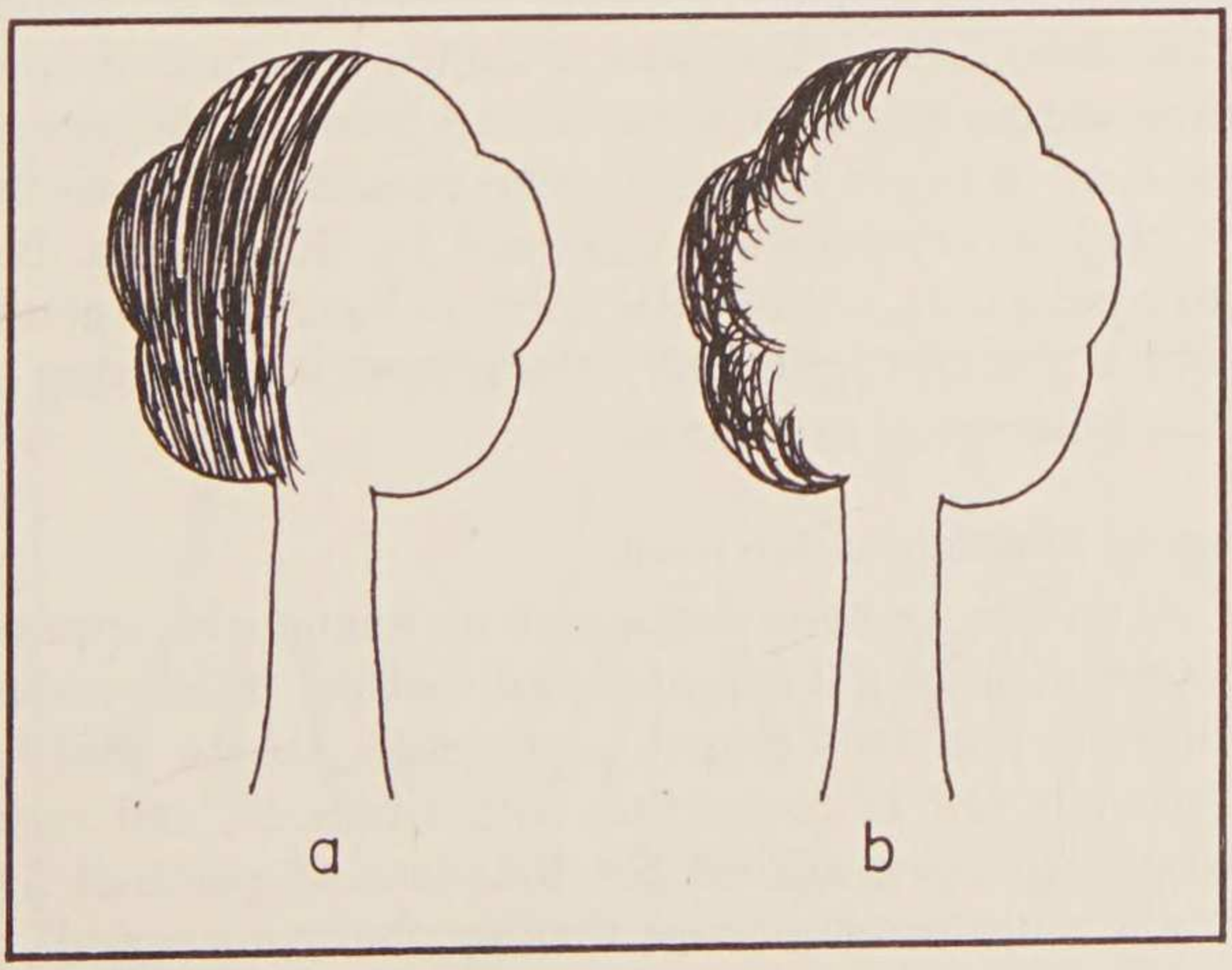
Illustration 50

with the dead tree, shows some evidence of the emotional ambivalence expressed by inconsistent shading. In illustration 50 we see shading which is both inconsistent and patchy, appearing in irregular patterns throughout the whole tree. In drawings where one sphere is shaded toward the left and another sphere toward the right, the implications are not quite so serious, especially if the shading is not too extensive. Occasionally one will see a tree in which the shading is carefully consistent with the exception of one or two isolated areas, in which case the location where the "wrong-sided" shading appears represents a problem. A good example of an isolated inconsistency can be seen in illustration 36 (p. 199), in which the entire tree is shaded on the right, with the exception of one secondary branch near the top central part of the crown.

FIGURES 67a–b: Shading on one side of the crown

These figures show two ways in which the crown may be definitely shaded to one side. Shading is shown to the left, but the comments apply equally to shading on the right, except that the resistance is to opposite zones of influence. If the shading covers almost the whole half of the crown, as in figure 67a, the subject will be inclined to completely block off incoming experiences from the zone of influence involved. His resistance may be conscious, but his unconscious wish is to deny the existence of the "undesirable" influence by totally shutting it out of his experience. This type of heavy shading to one side of the crown is most often seen on the left, in which cases it frequently has to do either with religious influences or with fear of "magic" or irrational forces. When the shading to one side of the crown is less extensive, covering the outline but not the

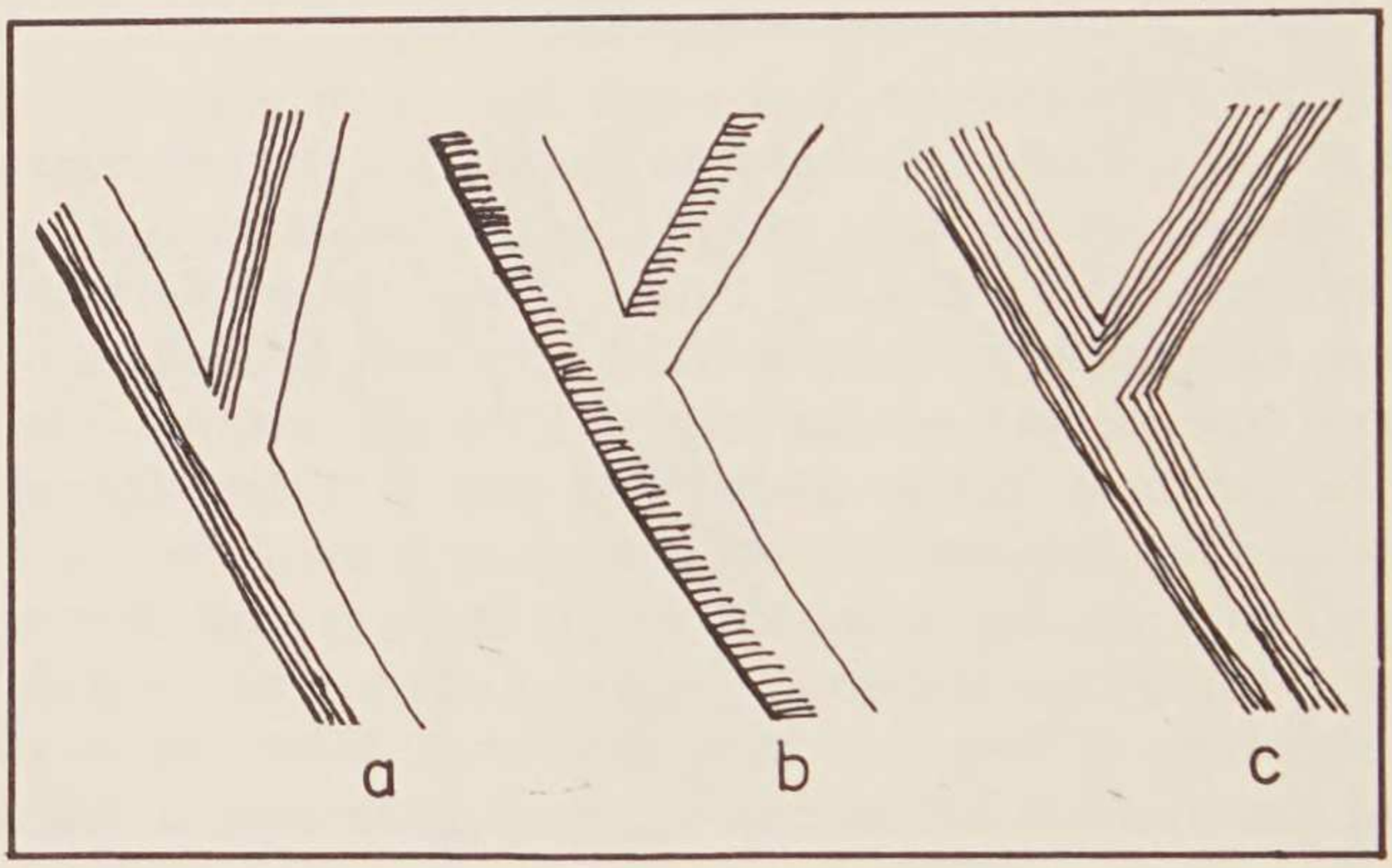
FIGURES 67a–b



whole side of the tree, as in figure 67b, the general temerity of the subject about this zone of influence is in question. He does not build an active defense against the feared influence, but expends energy in avoidance or anxiety.

FIGURES 68a–c: Shading on the branches

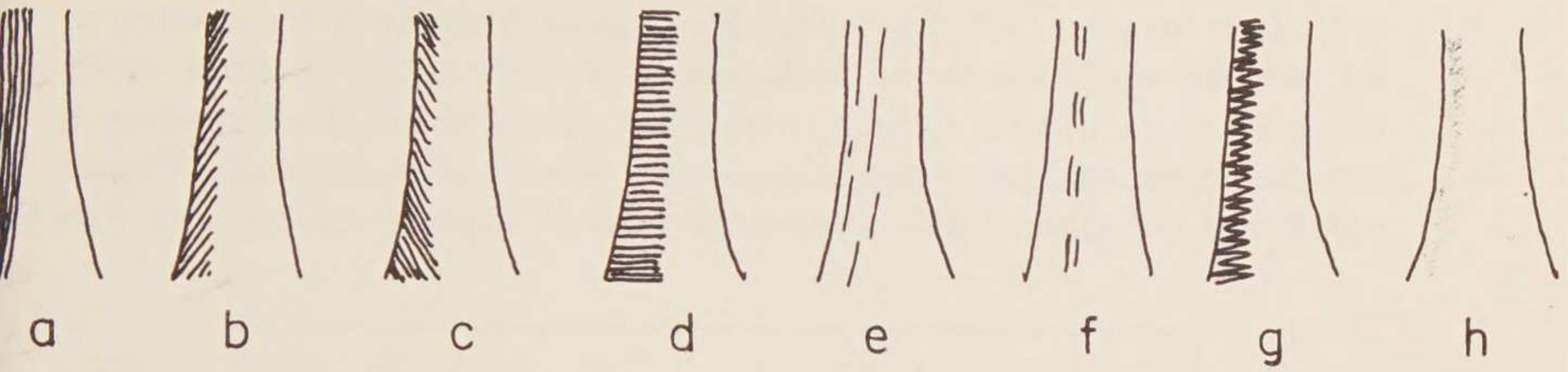
Shading may appear on the branches in many forms, in either consistent or patchy fashion. Here are shown only three possible ways of shading the branches where the entire branch is involved. When the lines are parallel to the outline of the branch, as in figures 68a and 68c, the potential for energy flow throughout the branch is consciously restricted. When the lines appear on one side only, as in figure 68a, the subject is expressing his need to defend himself against a known influence of which he is afraid. If they appear on both sides of the branch, the restriction of energy is due more to vague feelings that he should not pursue the line of endeavor or kind of experience symbolized by the branch, because it might lead to a painful end. When the lines are basically perpendicular to the outline of the branch (figure 68b), the subject is expressing a definite rejection of some person or experience.



FIGURES 68a–c

FIGURES 69a–h: Shading on the trunk

The part of the tree where shading most commonly appears is the trunk. This is not surprising if it is accepted that the trunk symbolizes the emotional functions and early growth experiences, for the need for defenses is most strongly felt in connection with emotions, and resistance is most commonly expressed against the influence of parental figures. In these figures the various manners of shading the trunk are all shown to



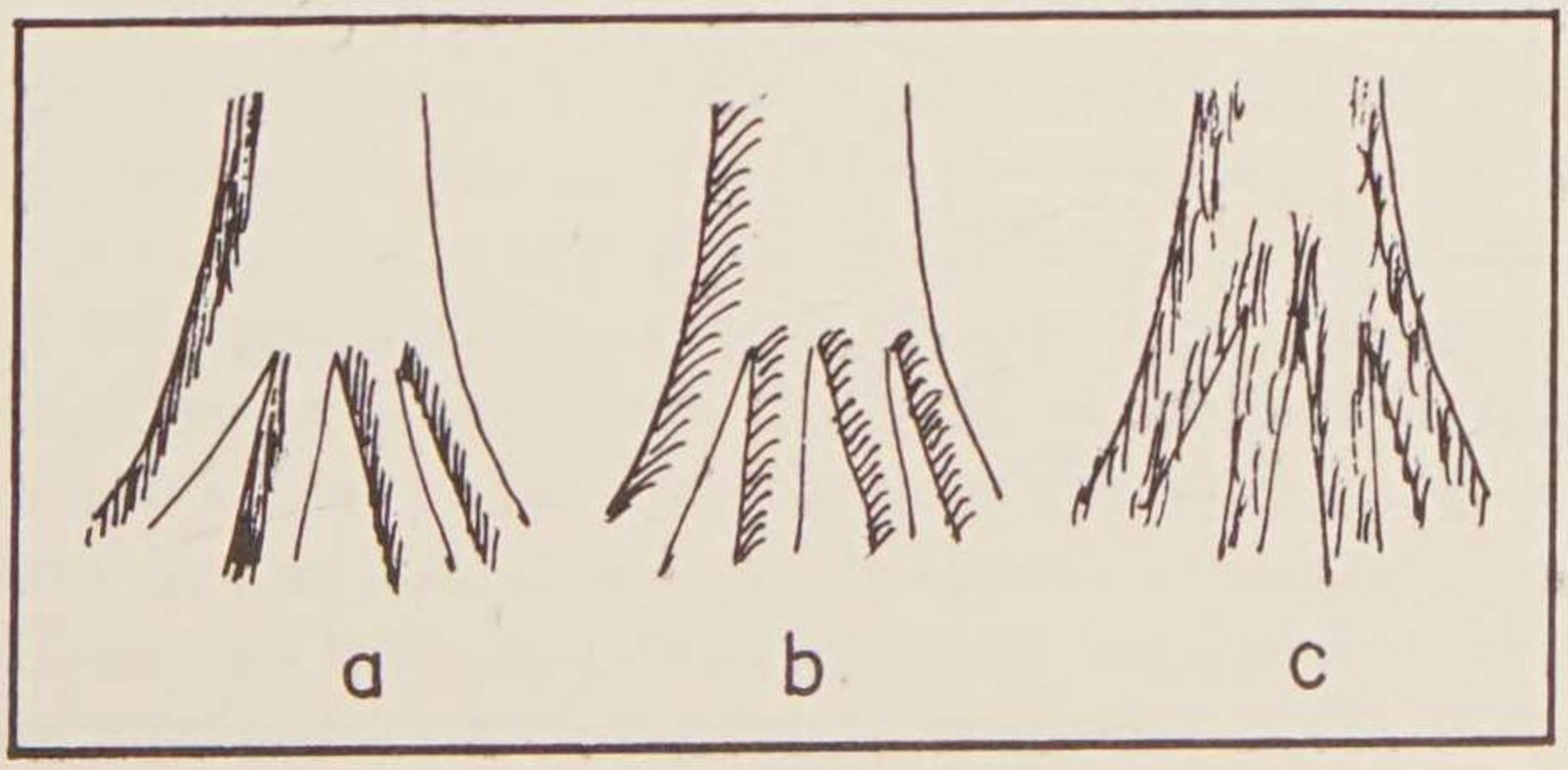
FIGURES 69a–h

the left, suggesting resistance to maternal and female figures. Shading may equally well appear on the right, in which case it may express self-protection in connection with early love experiences, as well as resistance to paternal or male influences. The reader should refer back to the discussion of the execution of the shading (figures 64a–o), which can be applied directly to the numerous ways of shading the trunk depicted here.

FIGURES 70a–c: Shading on the roots

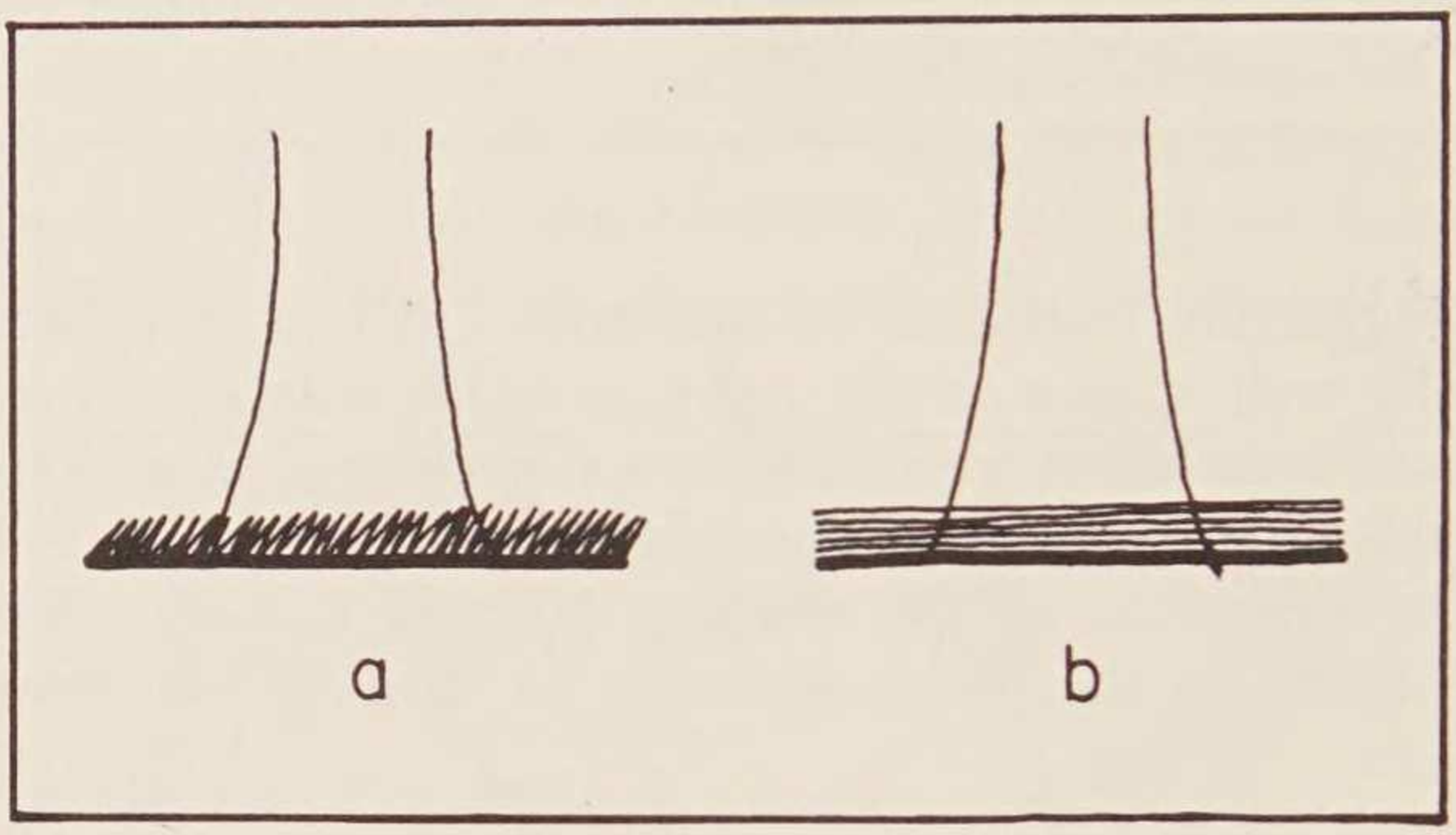
Unlike shading on the branches, shading on the root area is almost always an unconscious expression, and rather than restricting the flow of energy, it may actually throw emphasis upon the root. Only in the form of shading depicted in figure 70b is resistance expressed. Fear of becoming pregnant, in a woman's drawing, or resistance to becoming a father, in a man's drawing, may be taken as a possible interpretation. The parallel lines on the roots of figure 70a, on the other hand, express an unconscious emphasis on the reproductive instinct, for in this style the shading reinforces the root. Where irregular shading is shown all over the root area, as in figure 70c, there is a general unconscious emphasis on everything which may be represented by the roots: sexuality and the whole of the instinctual realms must be negated.

FIGURES 70a–c



FIGURES 71a–b: Shading on the ground line

It often happens that the ground is rendered completely by shading or by partially scribbled forms, as has been shown earlier. In some cases, however, there will be a clear ground line drawn over which shading is superimposed, still permitting the original line to show through. Figure 71a shows the ground line covered by vertical shading strokes, and 71b



FIGURES 71a–b

by horizontal strokes. With both of these the addition of shading may be taken as an indication of shame, slightly less marked in figure 71a than in 71b. Figure 71a is most often seen in the drawings of young or immature subjects who are preoccupied with birth, which they regard as a forbidden theme. The subject who covers the ground line with horizontal shading, as in figure 71b, usually feels that everything to do with the symbolism of the roots is "forbidden territory" and that any knowledge about the instinctual realsm must be negated.

11

Special Signs and Extraneous Elements

Nature is a temple in which living columns sometimes emit confused words. Man approaches it through forests of symbols, which observe him with familiar glances.

Charles Baudelaire,
Correspondances, 1861

SPECIAL SIGNS

WHAT WE CALL "special signs" may appear in almost any area of the tree. Included in this designation are: (1) buds and flowers; (2) leaves; (3) fruit; (4) bark; (5) a separate branch appearing below the crown; (6) a separate root drawn above the ground; (7) various kinds of scars, broken or sawed-off branches, and knotholes; (8) accidental drawings which can be identified as resembling parts of the human body or other objects; (9) the accidental writing of letters, numbers, or other symbols; and (10) stars and crosses appearing in the foliage or the shading.

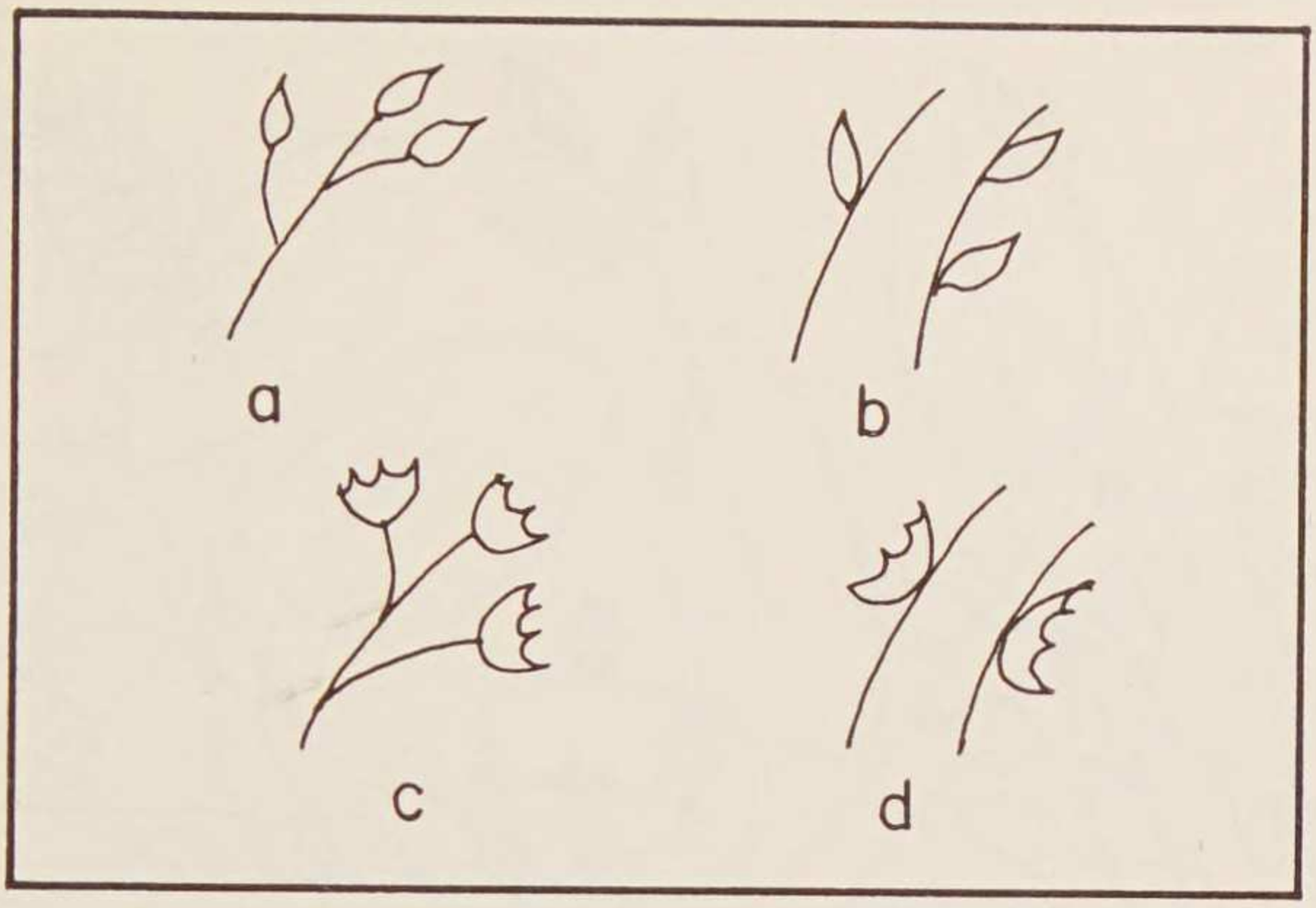
Some of the special signs—such as flowers, fruit, bark, knotholes, or broken branches—will be drawn deliberately, as part of the subject's intentional expression of the tree theme. Others—such as human body parts, letters, crosses, and so on—usually appear as unintentional drawings emerging from the technique of delineating the foliage or the shading. These accidental signs are most often found in the crown of the tree, frequently in trees where the foliage is indicated with scribbled strokes or

strokes executed with rapid movements of the pencil, as, for example, in illustration 47 (p. 251). There are many exceptions to this, however. Sometimes one finds an accidental special sign in an exceedingly simple tree. A good example is the "penis" formed by the two base lines of illustration 10 (p. 135), which is an abstract tree consisting of only three continuous lines. In some drawings, *both* deliberately drawn and accidental special signs will appear, as in illustration 50 (p. 264). Here the knothole with a small animal peering out of it is a deliberate special sign. The rabbit, flower, and butterfly are "additional signs" (to be dealt with later in this chapter). But a number of accidental special signs are also visible in the shading and the rapidly scribbled foliage of the crown, most notably numerous "pincer" forms.

We regard these special markings in the tree as of considerable importance for two principal reasons. First, from the nature, number, and placement of the signs (especially scars, broken branches, knotholes, crosses, and stars) the interpreter can glean precise clues about events or developments in the biography which have had special significance for the subject. Second, regardless of whether the signs are deliberately placed in the tree or are apparently accidental results of the drawing technique, they may be seen as projections of unconscious desires and preoccupations, or of basic attitudes. Some of the special signs, of course, carry more significance than others. The presence of buds, leaves, fruit, or bark have more to do with attitudes which are often obvious to the observer without benefit of the tree drawing, whereas major scars or "suggestive" motifs may lead to the uncovering of hidden or repressed material. In any event, whether these signs appear only as extremely subtle suggestions or as obvious aspects of the detailed rendering of the drawing, they should be taken into account for a thorough analysis. Where the special signs refer to events in the biography, some interpreters will be better than others at pinpointing the precise nature of the event, but in any event these marks can provide at the least a basis for fruitful questioning of the subject, if such is appropriate to the circumstances.

FIGURES 72a–d: Buds and flowers

We mentioned in connection with branch endings that a bud at the end of a branch, like that shown in figure 72a, expresses a general attitude of positive expectation. There is a certain unknown quality to this sense of anticipation, since a bud can unfold into either a flower or a leaf. When the buds are shown on the sides of the branch, as in figure 72b, the same general attitude is conveyed, but in this case the presence of the buds will not determine the form of the branch endings, which must be analyzed separately. If the branch bearing buds on the side is a broad double one, as shown in the figure, there is a specific suggestion of rejuvenation, or a willingness to embark on a new beginning.



FIGURES 72a–d

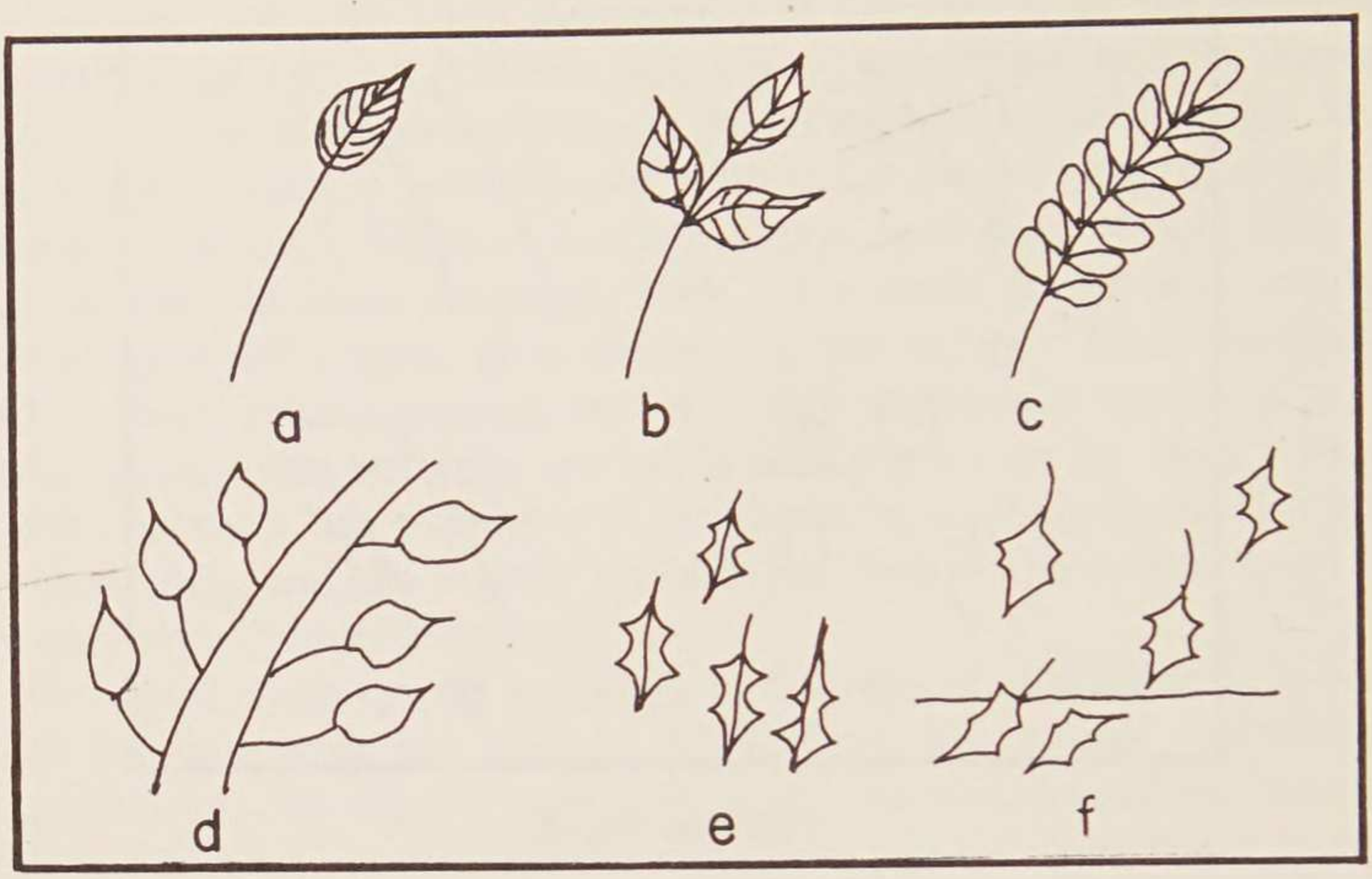
Flowers shown on the tree itself appear to be a relatively rare phenomenon (although there may be a geographical factor involved in the infrequency of flowering trees in our collection). Flowers, like buds, suggest an attitude of youthful expectation, but of a more defined sort. Where the flowers are drawn as in figure 72c, one may also infer a natural expression of joy. The direct attachment of flowers to major branches (figure 72d), on the other hand, is a slightly suspect sign. This form is often related to artificial "decoration," or a need for self-enhancement.

FIGURES 73a–f: Leaves

We have already spoken at some length about the use of clearly delineated leaves in connection with the drawing of foliage in the crown. In general, where leaves are drawn, the surface area of the crown is increased and possibilities of contact with the larger environment are enhanced. Leaves are often an expression of curiosity and interest in subtle explorations. On the other hand, leaves may also represent a protective device, especially if placed at the ends of branches, since they can serve as a buffer or filter for both incoming and outflowing energies.

Where a single leaf is shown on the end of a single-line branch (figure 73a), it serves to soften the piercing quality of the ending and to increase the "reach" of the subject toward the broad environment. The element of curiosity is most strongly expressed in leaves drawn as in figure 73b, at the end of either a single or a double branch. Where numerous small leaves are carefully rendered along the branch, as in figure 73c, a decorative and stereotyped feeling is conveyed, usually related to patterned thinking. Here imagination and curiosity are subordinated to learned responses, and the self-protective meaning is emphasized.

If numerous single leaves are drawn on a wide branch in a clearly sepa-



FIGURES 73a–f

rated manner (figure 73d), these may usually be regarded as "decoys." There is often some problem connected with the branch or branches involved, and the leaves serve to distract the observer and turn his attention away from the problematic area. This meaning should be applied mainly to the realistically drawn tree. An exception may be seen in illustration 51, which is basically an abstract tree drawing. In this case the huge, separated leaves attached to the two main branches are a primary factor in the subject's expression of the tree concept. The drawing is that of a young woman who is an internationally renowned potter, with a clever mind and a rich imagination. Here the very large leaves carry a meaning which is more frequently expressed in the form of fruit—that is, they refer to actual achievements and defined creative gifts. As with so many of the trees in our collection where the drawing is basically an abstraction of the concept "tree," the markedly simple structure of the tree itself, together with the oversized leaves, would be regarded by both Buck and Koch as indications of extremely limited intelligence. Aside from the fact that the subject is known to have an excellent mind, we asked several "untrained" observers to give an opinion as to what kind of person had drawn this tree, and the consensus was that it must be the drawing of a mature, self-confident, and highly imaginative adult.

Two more ways in which leaves may be included in the drawing remain to be discussed in connection with figures 73a–f. The first (figure 73e) refers to leaves which are dispersed in the crown, without being attached to branches. This form will usually be found in an abstract deciduous tree with a closed-crown outline. In such a case the leaves refer to specific ideas or emotions, depending on the area in which they are

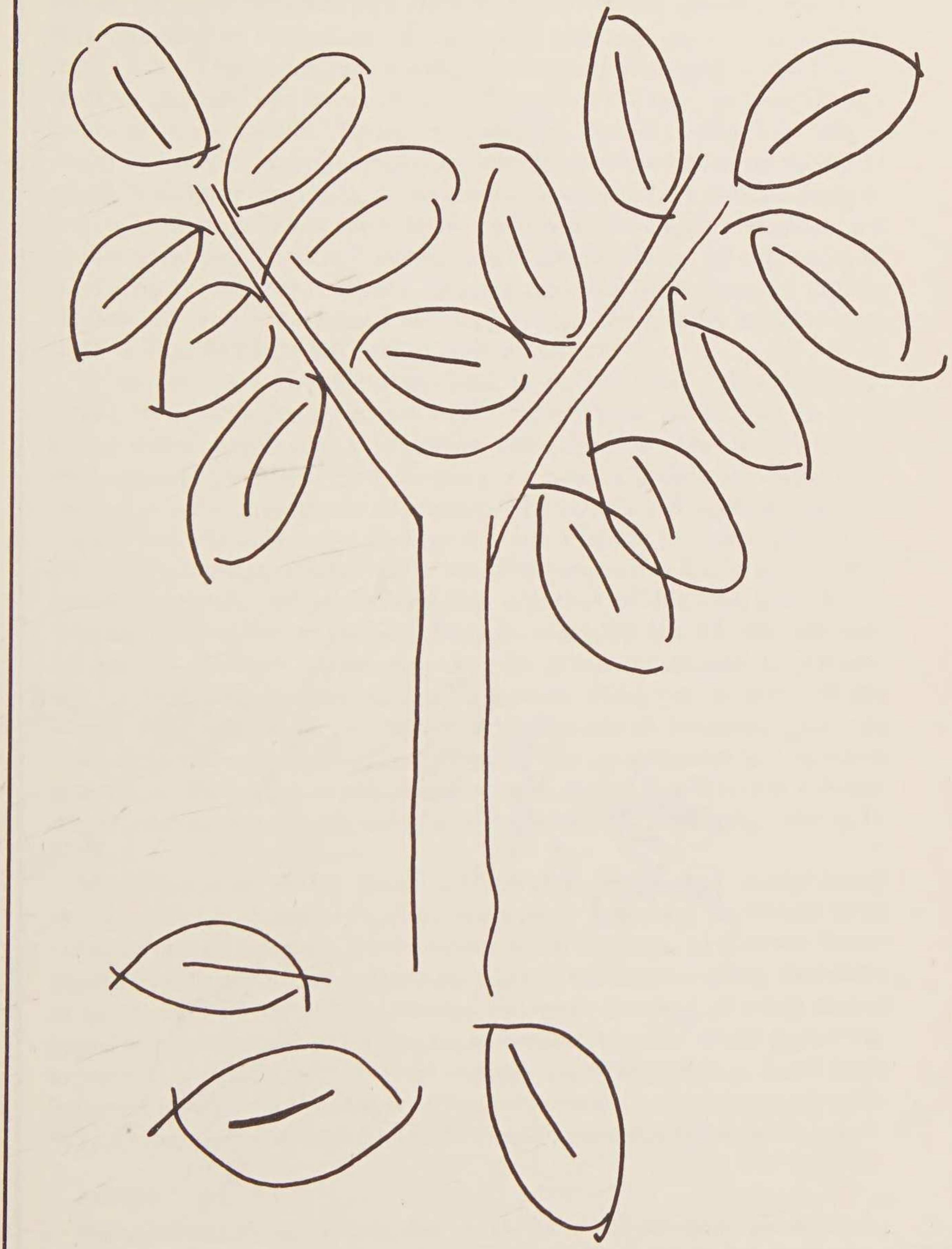


Illustration 51

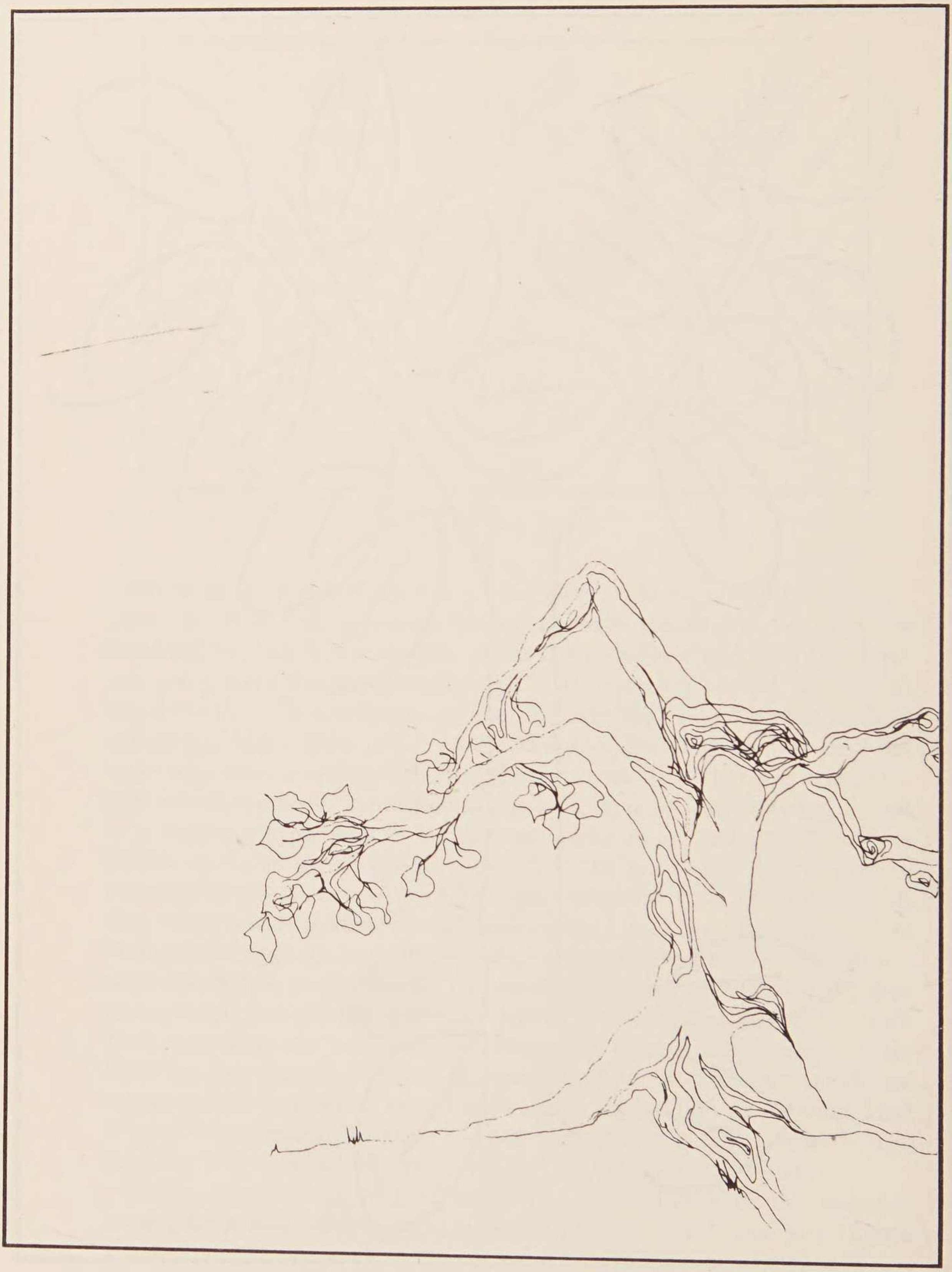


Illustration 52

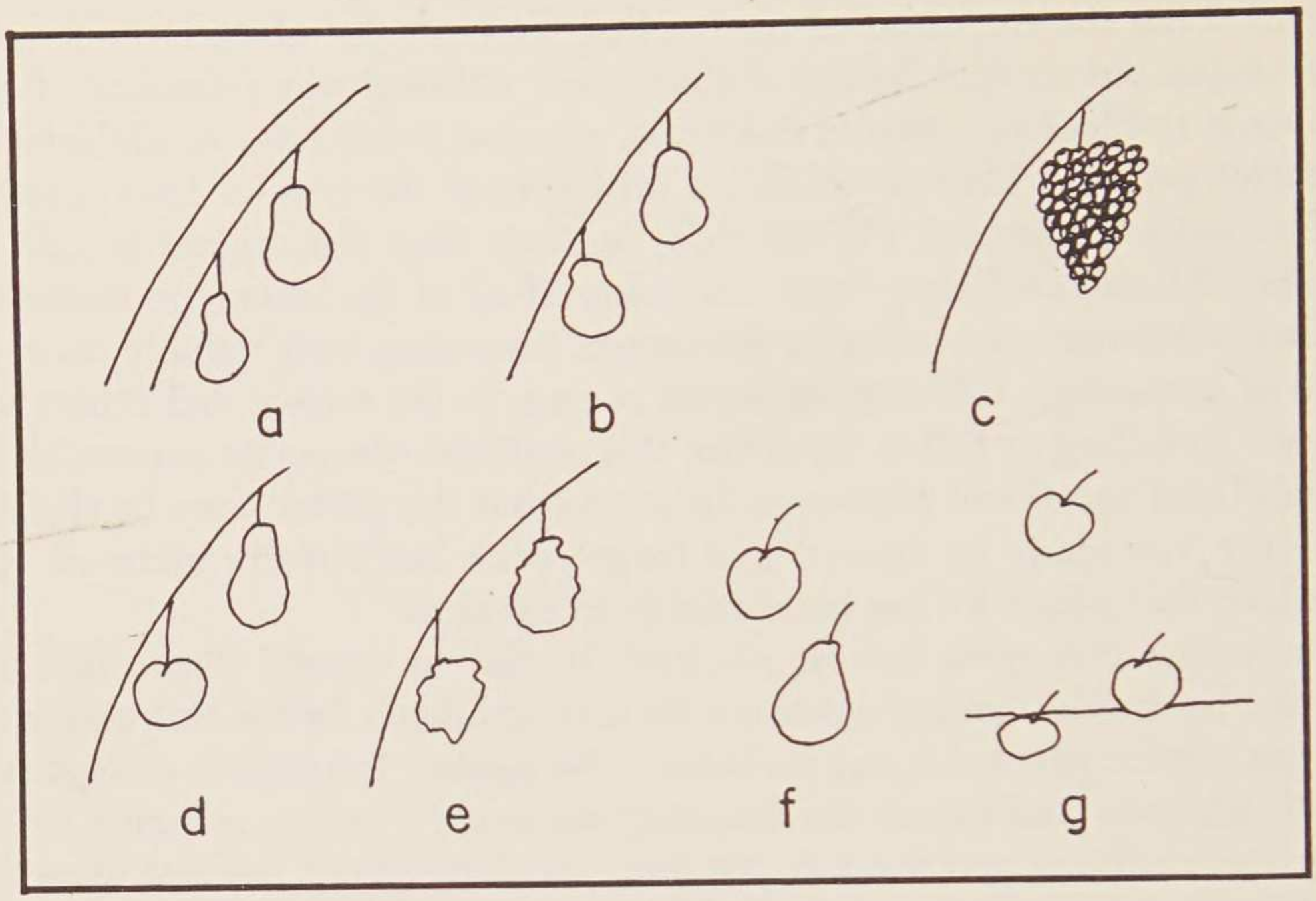
found. Like the inclusion of unattached fruits in the abstract fruit tree, they represent an enrichment of the crown, although the reference of the leaves is to ideas or complex reactions, whereas fruits refer to children or creative projects. Leaves which are falling from the tree, or have already fallen onto the ground (figure 73f), indicate that the subject is able to shake off losses or disappointments easily. If all of the leaves are shown as fallen, with none remaining in the crown, there may be a definite sense of loss or mourning. When some leaves remain in the crown and others are shown as falling or fallen, however, this is almost always an expression of mental and emotional resilience. In some cases the person may be slightly shallow, too ready to discard and forget what has already matured and died, or that which he has been unable to develop.

In connection with leaves, we wish to discuss briefly illustration 52, drawn by another young woman with artistic talents, but in this case with rather serious psychological problems. The subject is a female college student. About a year before the drawing was made a broken romance threw her into a state of profound depression. She entertained suicidal ideas for a time, but was able to get through the worst period by concentrating on her serious interest in the study of art. The presence of the large, healthy-looking leaves on the partially broken branches of this tree, placed in a "depressed" position on the page, may be regarded as a hopeful prognostic sign. The subject would appear to be genuinely depressed, reaching out for help from the mother, and uncertain about the direction of her future. However, in spite of the many indications of emotional pain and marked security needs, the leaves may be seen as symbolizing a renewed interest in life and a certain fundamental confidence that the creative potential is strong enough to survive the period of "damaging" life problems.

Mention should also be made of illustration 75 (p. 391), where many small leaves are shown without connections to branches. This is not to be taken as representing the form just discussed—isolated, unattached leaves shown in the crown—for in this case there is no crown outline, and there is an obvious disparity between the elaborate drawing of small stereotyped leaves together with a trunk and branch structure which appears to represent a dead tree. Further remarks on this drawing have been reserved for part IV because it cannot be properly analyzed by approaching its separate parts according to this method of detailed observations.

FIGURES 74a–g: Fruit

Some comments on fruit in the crown have already been made in the discussion of types of trees in chapter 7. Fruit often has to do with children and attitudes toward children, especially in the drawings of female subjects; in a larger sense, the presence of fruit may be related to "creative progeny," or the sense of achievement. In general, we regard the



FIGURES 74a–g

presence of fruit in the crown as a positive sign, although obviously it is not always so, as, for example, when the fruit is shown as rotting.

Figures 74a and 74b show ripe fruit attached to a double- and a single-line branch, respectively. Both of these are relatively neutral positive signs which should be interpreted according to their specific placement. The principal difference is that if the single-stroke branch of figure 74b is a tertiary one in a two-dimensional tree, the final fulfillment of a long-term effort is symbolized. Occasionally one will see fruit attached to the branches of a tree which is made up entirely of single-stroke branches (see illustration 13 on p. 141), in which case it does not carry this special meaning. Where bunches of berries are shown hanging on the branches, as in figure 74c, the meaning is somewhat different from that of other fruits. Berries are similar to decorative flowers and the decorations shown on a Christmas tree, for they point to both festive expectations and a tendency on the part of the subject to overrate his own minor achievements. There is nearly always an underlying need for praise, combined with bragging and self-display. If the berries are unduly heavy in relation to the size of the branch, there may be an almost embarrassing disparity between the subject's actual gifts and his self-view.

When two different types of fruit are shown in the same tree (figure 74d), two possible meanings should be considered. If the subject has children of both sexes, or deals with them professionally, the two types of fruit may simply represent male and female children. If, however, the interview the subject does not support this meaning, the incongruous

fruits may be taken as a sign that the subject is dissatisfied with his achievements or is generally uncertain of his goals.

Figure 74e depicts fruit which has rotted on the branch. Here the reference is nearly always to some kind of failed effort. If the subject is a mother, the rotten fruit may symbolize maternal disappointment, either because she feels the children have failed her or because she regards them as failures.

As mentioned in reference to the abstract fruit tree, unattached fruits in the crown (figure 74f) nearly always refer to children. In any case, in our experience, this form has only been seen in the trees of women.

Falling or fallen fruit (figure 74g) is often drawn by women when they realize that their children no longer need maternal care. If the fruit lying on the ground is rotten, the reference is sometimes to a miscarriage. Fallen fruits may also symbolize an achievement which has lost its meaning.

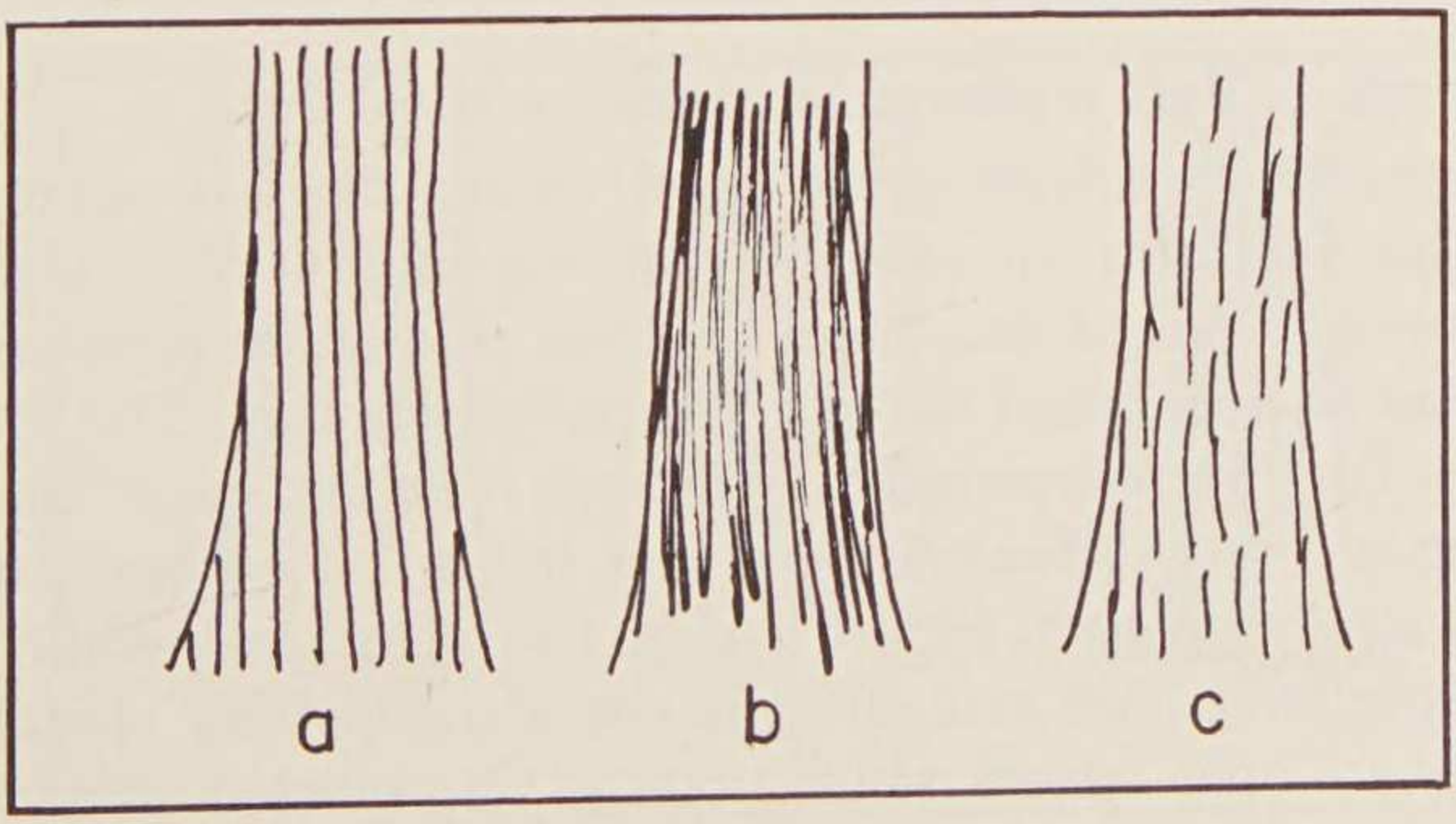
Bark

The next figures illustrate various ways in which bark may be shown on the trunk (and sometimes the branches) of the tree. Many of the comments on shading—particularly on the execution of the shading—can be applied directly to the delineation of the bark. While shading symbolizes general defense mechanisms, shielding, resistance, or "hiding," a fully delineated bark represents armoring. Most of the shading techniques express unconscious resistance, whereas bark refers to a conscious effort to protect the self, most often in the emotional (trunk bark), but sometimes also in the mental sphere (bark on the branches of the crown).

FIGURES 75a–c: Vertical-line bark

Of the three bark types rendered with long vertical lines, only figure 75b is a really effective armor, for it is both flexible and solidly closed to

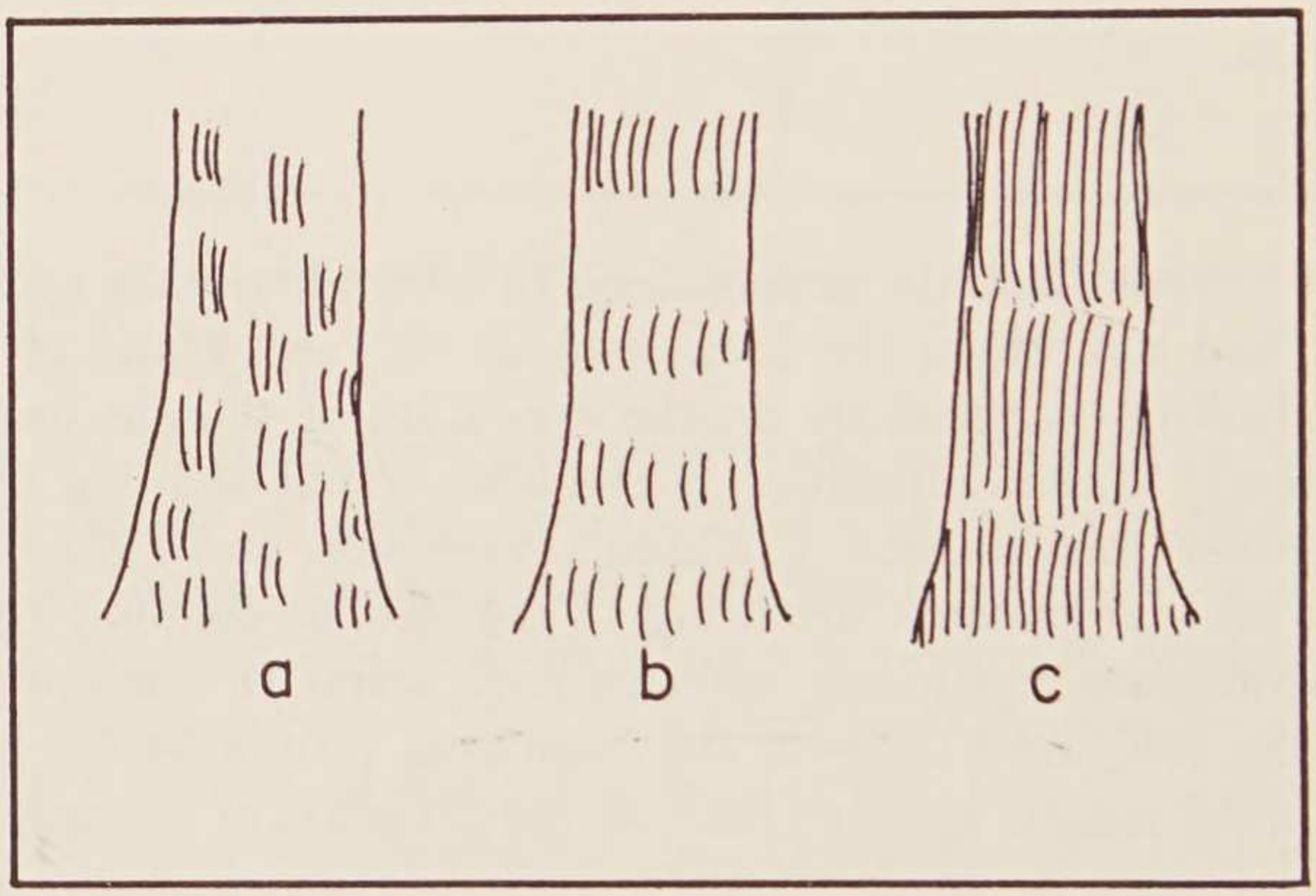
FIGURES 75a–c



entry from the side. The person who draws long vertical, parallel lines, as in figure 75a, is attempting to control and channel his energies, while simultaneously protecting himself from "invasion" by others. His defenses are too rigid, however, to stand up under steady pressure. If the lines are discontinuous, as in figure 75c, there are plenty of weak points in the armor. With this rendering the outline of the trunk will often show discontinuities as well, in which case one may be able to determine exactly in which directions the subject feels vulnerable.

FIGURES 76a–c: Bark rendered with broken vertical lines

None of these three forms represents an effective self-armor, and all of them suggest vulnerable spots or an "Achilles heel" motif. Only in figure 76c are specific areas of vulnerability indicated, however. Figures 75a and

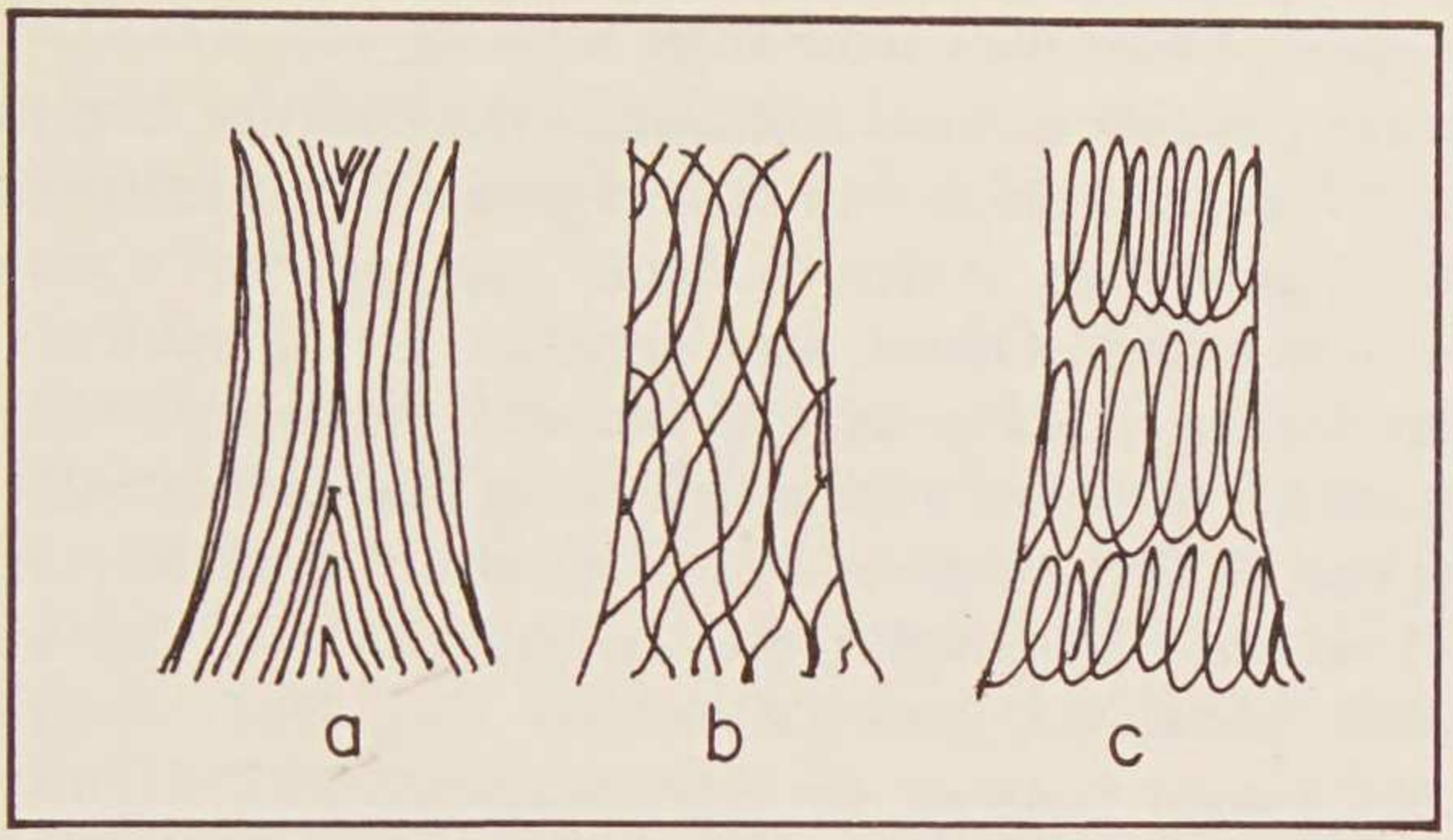


FIGURES 76a–c

75b will be drawn by subjects who know that their vulnerable points are easily exposed, in spite of their efforts to build up protective devices.

FIGURES 77a–c: Bark rendered in curving vertical lines

Figure 77a shows a bark made up of vertical lines in mirror opposite curves. This indicates an extremely strong and flexible trunk which, though heavily armored, can bend to either side under pressures without breaking, as well as guard the self against penetration. The intertwining lines of the bark form depicted in figure 77b function like a "coat of mail." It is strong and very difficult to penetrate, but it is not a heavy armor, and permits flexible responses. Figure 77c, on the other hand, while it also has a certain flexibility and resilience, is not a particularly effective armor, since there are open spaces which point to unprotected vulnerable spots.

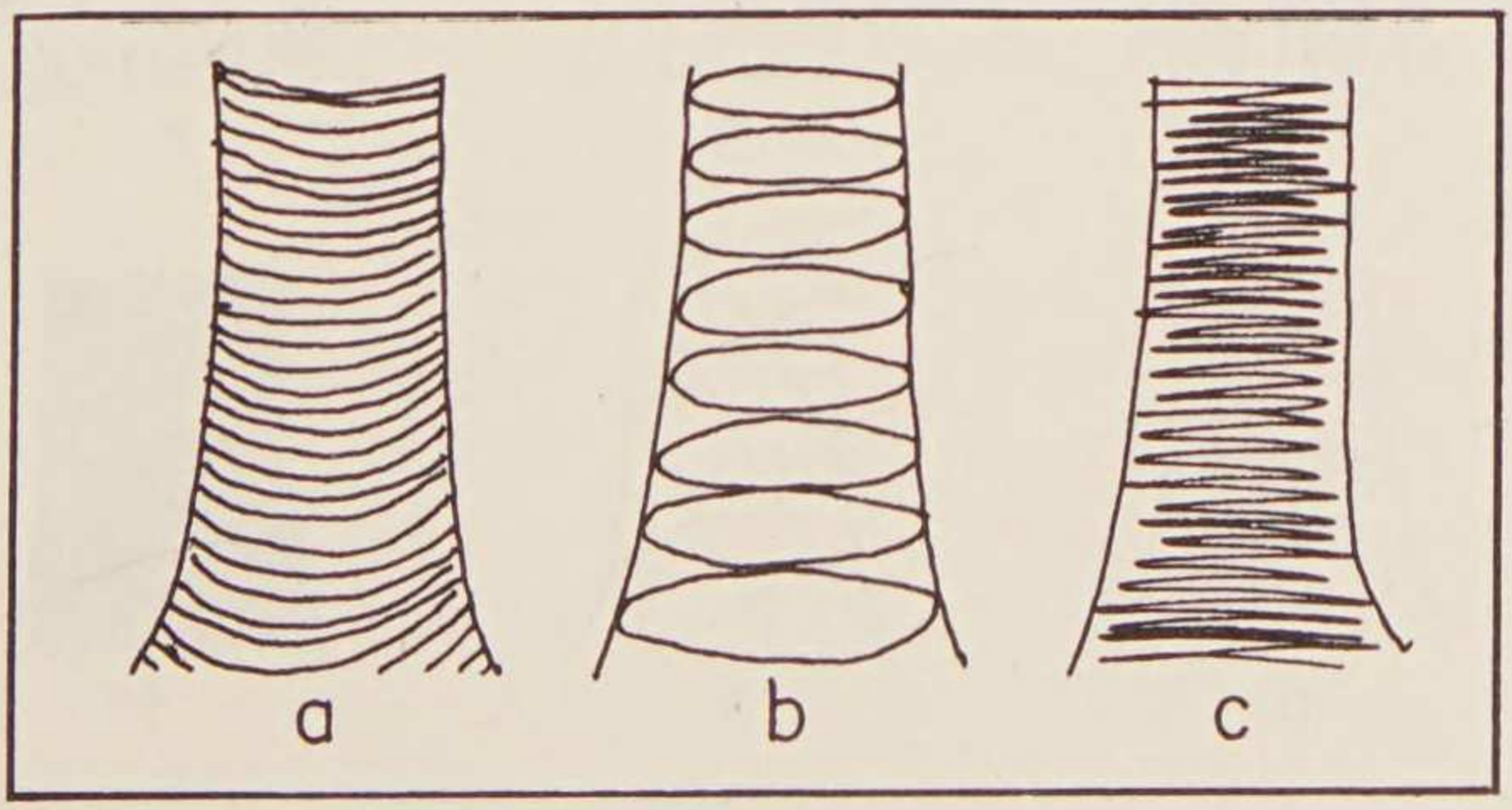


FIGURES 77a–c

FIGURES 78a–c: Bark rendered with horizontal lines

The continuous horizontal, curved lines of bark shown in figure 78a represent one of the most effective armors against emotional approach, more flexible than continuous vertical lines, but equally as difficult to penetrate. This form is often seen on the trunks of palm trees, in which generic type the subject is often closed to feeling interactions, in spite of the usually elongated trunk. Figure 78b shows what we call the transparent trunk. As an armor this is not at all effective, and in spite of the subject's conscious efforts to close himself off from emotional approach, he frequently displays his reactions quite openly. Where the circular form is compressed and drawn with a continuous motion of the pencil as in figure 78c, on the other hand, the bark rendering has the appearance of a compressed spring, indicating both internal resilience and a wealth of potential emotional energy. This kind of bark is not particularly effective as a protection against outside influences, but it points to a person who does not really need to armor himself, even though he may assume a self-protective pose.

FIGURES 78a–c

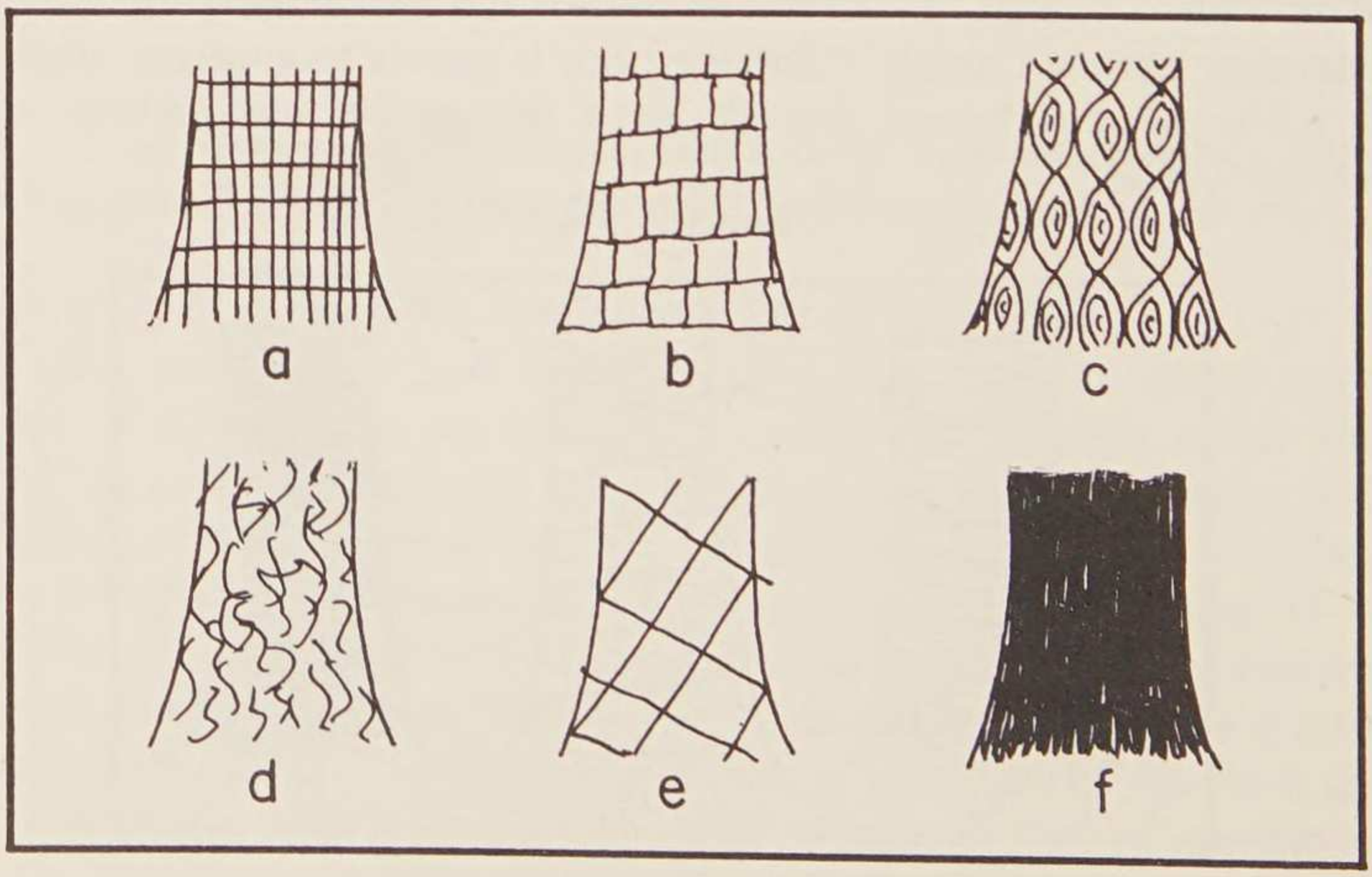


FIGURES 79a–f: Other bark renderings

Many other possible ways of delineating the bark are seen in drawings, some of which are represented in these figures. The combination of vertical and horizontal lines shown in figure 79a suggests a carefully reinforced defense system. Others may impinge on the subject's emotional sphere, but his basic self-protective structure holds up well. The trunk rendering shown in figure 79b, which looks like the shingles of a roof, would appear at first to stand for a carefully constructed system of defense. However, like shingles, the separate pieces of this kind of bark can be easily detached, and the subject may find himself suddenly exposed and caught unaware by impacting emotions. Figure 79c represents what may be called a signet bark. In nature this kind of bark surface results from early leafing on the trunk, which leaves scaly scars. Psychologically, this rendering of the bark may refer to a compulsive elaboration on a single painful experience from childhood which the subject uses as the basis for a martyr attitude, hoping that this will excuse him from emotional involvements. On the other hand, this kind of armor is sometimes mainly decorative, in which case the person tends to cling to fantasized feelings that he uses to avoid the impact of real emotional influences from without. In neither case is this type of armor really effective.

The irregular curving lines of figure 79d, forming no direct pattern, show that the individual makes an effort to create a system of emotional self-defense, but does not take it too seriously and is not particularly upset to discover that it is ineffective. Criss-crossing diagonal lines on the trunk, like those shown in figure 79e, act like a fence around the emotional field. They serve more as a deterrent than as real armor. Lastly, the

FIGURES 79a–f



blackened bark of figure 79f must be mentioned. If the trunk is really solidly filled in with dark lines, the indication is that the subject completely rejects and blocks out all approaches and influences in the emotional sphere.

In the illustrations throughout the text are a number of trees with well-delineated barks. Particularly interesting are illustration 3 (p. 94) (which corresponds to figure 77b), illustration 6 (p. 125) (which corresponds to figure 79d), illustration 38 (p. 208) (a palm tree with a "fence" bark), and illustration 44 (p. 232), which shows a variation on the decorative bark, suggestive of absorption in emotional fantasy.

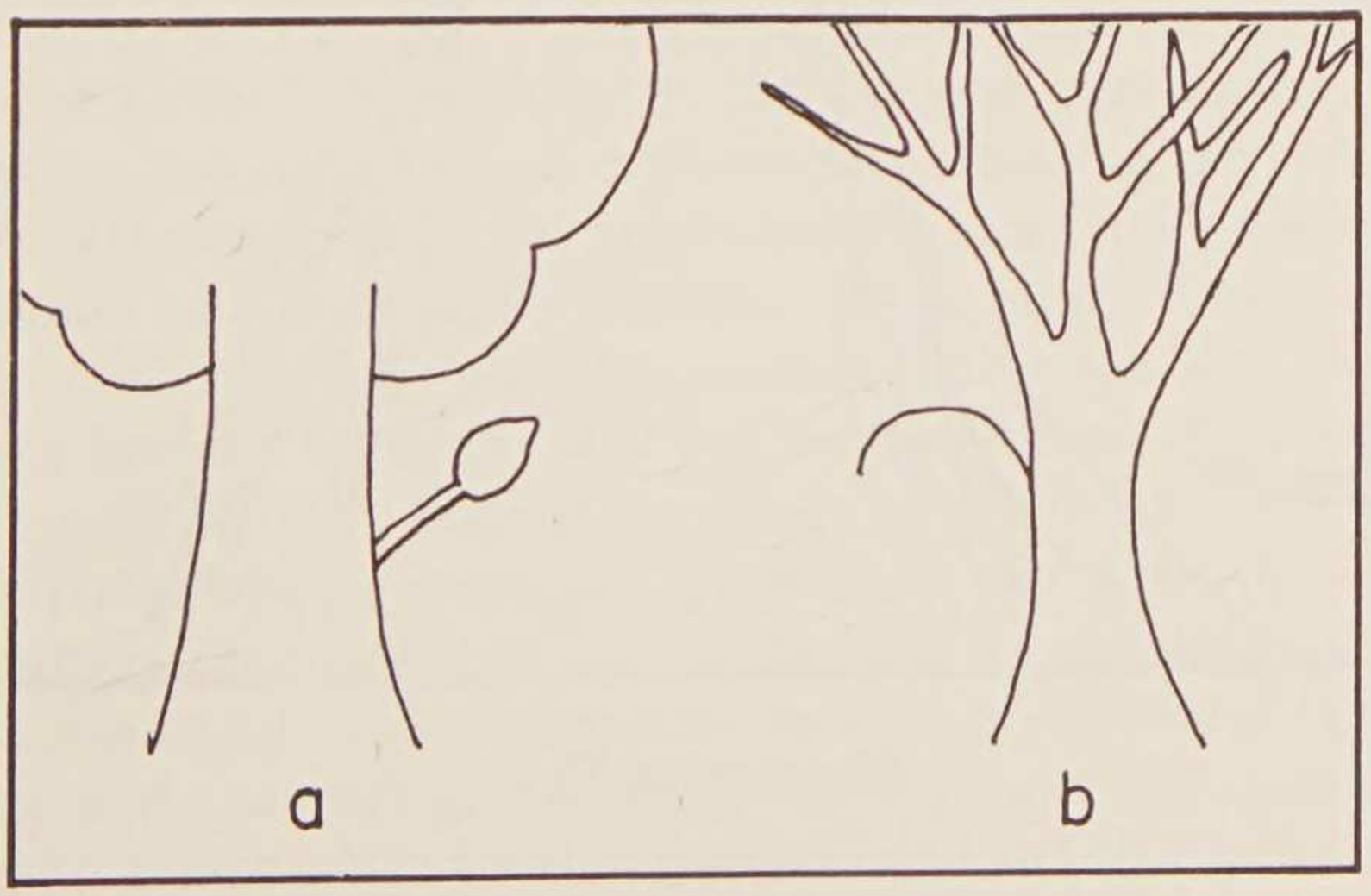
It should be noted, before leaving the subject of bark, that interpretation of detailed rendering of the bark on the tree must be mitigated by some knowledge of the subject's behavior. In certain cases, especially where one of the less effective or decorative barks is drawn, it may represent a learned attitude of "One *ought* to have defenses against emotional incursions," rather than a truly defensive, self-protective armor designed to avoid emotional contacts.

Branches and roots out of position

FIGURES 80a–b: Single branches drawn below the crown

These figures depict two ways in which a single branch may be drawn well below the main part of the crown. There are, however, a large variety of forms which such isolated branches may take, on either side of the tree. They may appear as broken or sawed off, as branches partially dead but showing a few buds or leaves, as fully alive, as single strokes with or without secondaries, or even as branches which are not actually connected either to the trunk or to the rest of the crown in any way.

FIGURES 80a–b



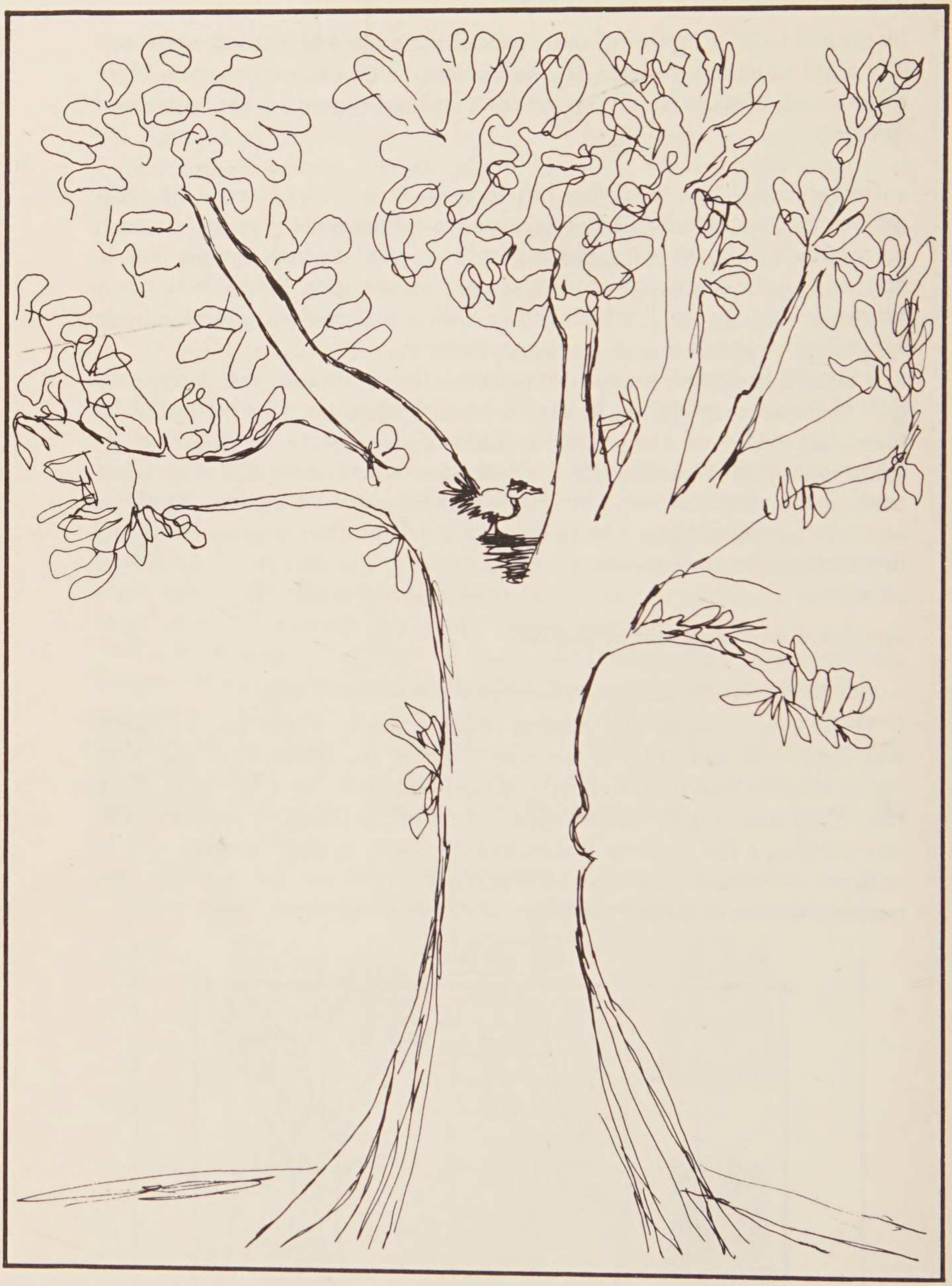


Illustration 53

In illustration 53 may be seen a fairly good example of a living branch below the right side of the crown, although in this instance it is close enough to the main crown to be considered as part of it. In this same drawing leaves are shown on the left side of the trunk, which is another manner of indicating foliage below the crown even where an actual branch is not shown. For an example of the unattached branch see illustration 34 (p. 194), which contains the interesting and rare phenomena of several double- and single-stroke branches actually floating beneath the crown. The much more common phenomenon of a broken-off branch can be seen in illustration 24 (p. 172).

In general, branches shown below the crown refer to events and projects which belong to the past. The nature of the event, the attitude of the subject toward it, and the extent to which this element of the past is actively related to the present will depend on the side of the trunk on which the branch appears and the manner in which it is drawn.

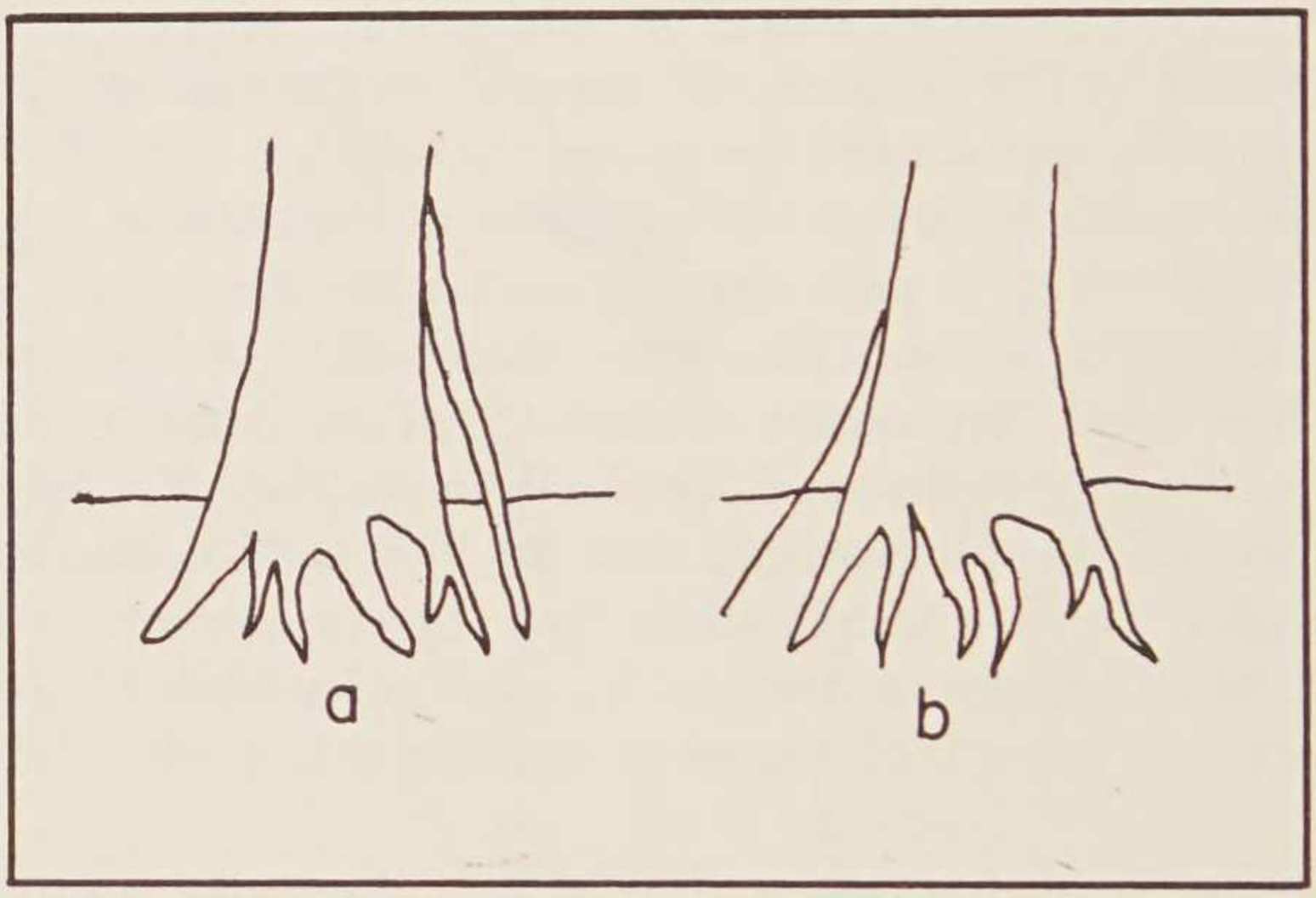
When the branch occurs on the right side of the trunk it may represent one of the following: a past identification with the father, an aborted project or effort, or an early love affair which did not lead anywhere. If the branch is dead, unpleasant memories will surround its reference. If there are a few leaves, the memories will be positive. If it appears to be very much alive and still growing, then the indication is usually of an old project or idea which is unrelated to the subject's current mental efforts, but which he still hopes to develop. In some cases such a "growing" isolated branch may refer to the hope of reviving a love affair from the distant past.

With isolated branches on the right side of the trunk, whatever is represented has usually been terminated by the subject's own will or by the mere passing of time, although when the branch is shown as broken or sawed off, he may believe otherwise (see the comments on sawed-off and broken branches which follow shortly). On the left side of the trunk, however, the reference is nearly always to something which has been aborted contrary to the will of the person. It may be an aborted affair, pregnancy, or project. If the isolated limb is very much alive, it constitutes either a positive memory or a source of continuing fantasy, although the sense that the experience has been brought to a forced ending against the individual's will is usually conscious. With subjects who are highly developed in terms of self-awareness, such a "living" isolated limb on the left side may indicate recognition of the loss symbolized by the branch as a useful, though difficult, learning experience. When the limb is dead, it will be remembered as a negative, involuntary loss. Very often, in these cases, the mother is blamed as having directly or indirectly caused the aborting of the experience. Where the branch to the left is a sawed-off limb, blame of the mother is also indicated, but the more specific content of a homosexual experience (real or fantasized) can often be inferred.

FIGURES 81a–b: Single roots shown above the ground line

When a single root is shown above the ground line on the right side of the trunk, as in figure 81a, interpretation will depend on the sex of the subject. With males, what is suggested is a strong sexual identification with the father, where the subject's impression of the virility and sexual behavior of the father will determine his self-view in these respects. In the drawings of female subjects, the reference is more simply to early childhood fascination with the male genitalia, usually of either the father or brothers.

The general meaning of the isolated root on the left side of the trunk is more or less the same for both sexes, but differences in interpretation



FIGURES 81a–b

depend on whether the root is shown as a double stroke or as a single line like that depicted in figure 81b. If the former, the root functions like a prop for the left side of the trunk, and indicates that the person is fixated at early stages of instinctual identification with the mother and is still in need of a symbiotic relationship with her as a support for his emotional life. Where a single stroke descends from the trunk down into the root area, the meaning is quite different. The subject is expressing a need to reject the mother, usually because there is already an overlystrong instinctual identification with her, associated with difficulties in his sexual responses as an adult.

Scars, knotholes, and broken branches

Before entering on a discussion of the figures showing different renderins of scars, broken branches, knotholes, and other signs of damage to the tree, some general comments should be made, for these are the most

important of the special signs which are drawn deliberately. All of these marks refer to something which is highly troublesome to the subject, and they are therefore of special significance for the interpreter who is working in depth, whether as a consultant or a therapist. Some of the scarring marks may represent objectively traumatic occurrences, such as the death of loved ones, serious accidents or illnesses, rape, or dramatic changes in life circumstances. Sometimes they refer to events which seem less serious to an observer, but have been experienced subjectively as traumatizing, such as a sexual approach which the person *interpreted* as assault, or any event leading to painful embarrassment or "loss of face." In still other cases they symbolize unconscious preoccupations, particularly with birth, the reproductive processes, and sexuality.

In general, scars and cuts on the sides of the trunk and broken or sawed-off branches refer to traumatic losses or to body traumas resulting from accident or illness. Knotholes drawn on the trunk itself nearly always have something to do with either reproduction or sexual experience per se. They may, for example, symbolize preoccupation with pregnancy, or they may stand for actual exposure to molestation, sexual assault, or rape. Knotholes appear far more frequently in the drawings of adult women than men (in our sample the ratio is nine to one). In the majority of cases, in the drawings of women, the reference is to some kind of sexual assault. It may be an actual rape, an attempted rape, or a sexual experience in which the woman was a quasi-willing participant but had subsequent subjective reactions similar to "rape trauma."

In the drawings of males, knotholes almost never refer to homosexual assault, although when they appear on the far left side of the trunk this possibility should be considered. Most of the time, when adult men draw knotholes, the reference is to a heterosexual encounter which was traumatic for the subject. Either castration fears or the experience of impotence are most commonly involved. With some men the knothole stands for impotence on the occasion of the first sexual experience, which, even though long since resolved in later life, remains a source of subtle unconscious fears. (The timing of the events associated with these major trauma scars on the tree will be discussed in chapter 12, "Time Determination.")

Before turning to a description of the figures depicting scars and knotholes, it should be mentioned that knotholes in the tree drawings of young children and adolescents must be interpreted somewhat differently from those found in adult drawings.

In the drawings of children, while it is possible that knotholes express preoccupation with reproduction, or even experiences of sexual assault, another meaning is suggested both by their frequency in both sexes and by their typical rendering. Children's knotholes are commonly drawn with an animal inside, or the knothole is spontaneously described as the

"home" of some small animal. (See illustration 41 [p. 216], where the six-year-old girl makes a large knothole the shelter of a bird's nest.) Since children commonly emphasize the trunk, knotholes may be seen as a way of enriching the content of the emotional sphere. In fact, there is some support for the view that a hole in the bark is regarded by young children as a "way into the tree," and that a knothole may thus represent a kind of psychological "door" through which the child enters his own interior world. (See the three-year-old's drawing shown as illustration 40 [p. 215], where an actual door appears in the base of the trunk, and the knothole seems to suggest a window.)

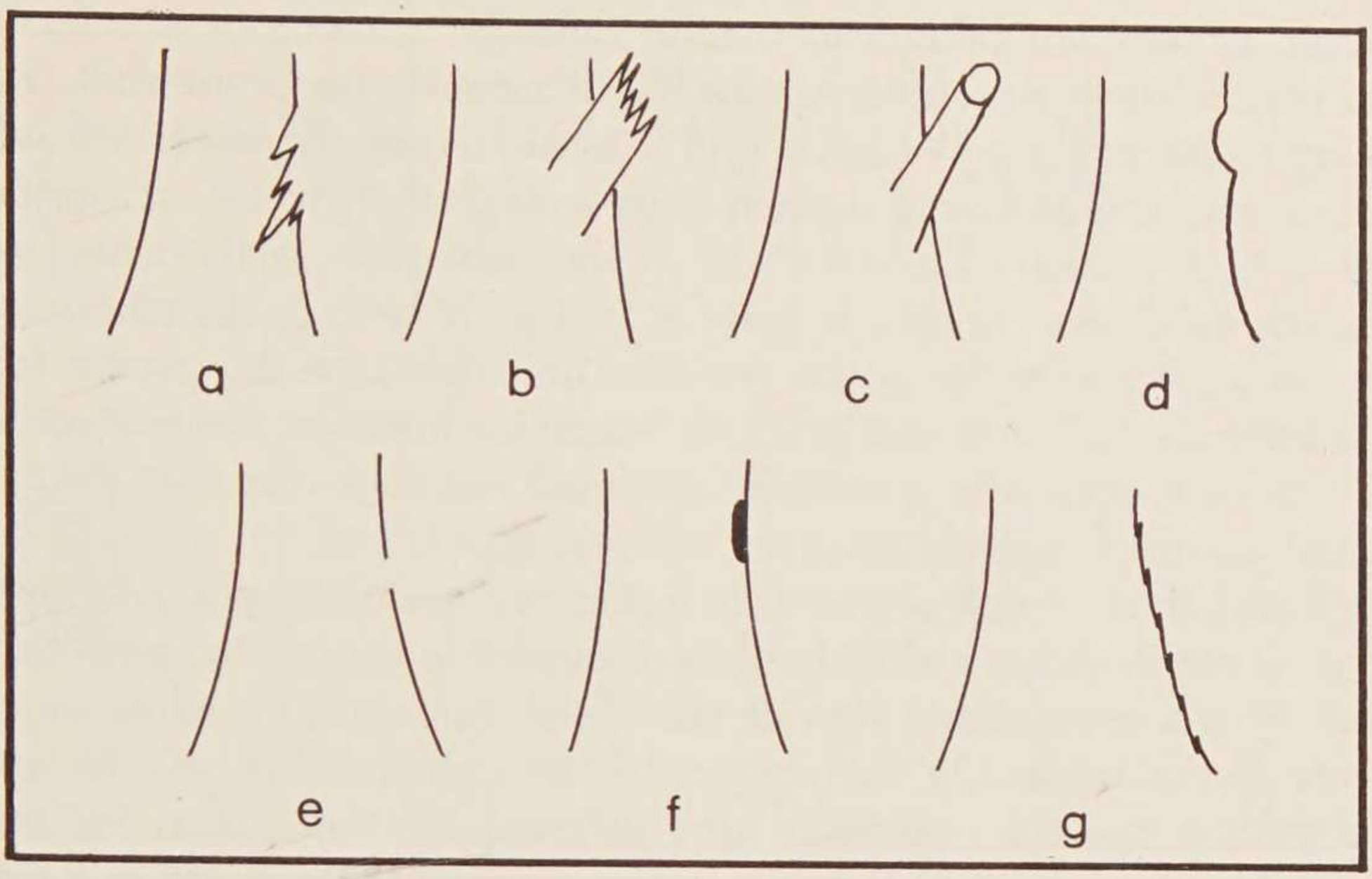
When dealing with the tree drawings of adolescent subjects, the sexual symbolism of knotholes is more directly applicable, but there are still some distinctions from the interpretations suggested for adult drawings. In our collection of trees drawn by adolescent girls (ages fourteen to seventeen), a high percentage of them contain knotholes (61 percent). In many instances this may refer to the preoccupation with reproductive functions which follows the onset of menstruation. On the other hand, in some of these renderings the knotholes are so dark and prominent that actual coition, rather than mere fantasy or preoccupation, should be considered as a possible reference. As examples of these very emphatically drawn, blackened knotholes, see illustrations 30 (p. 187), and 34 (p. 194).

We have said that in the drawings of adult women, knotholes often refer to sexual assault. With adolescents, on the other hand, when the reference is to actual coition, the subjects have only rarely been the victims of rape, even if the knotholes are rendered in an emphatic manner. It would appear that these girls have been traumatized by the initial sexual experience—or even sometimes by relatively "innocent" experimentation—even though they have been "willing" participants. Since our collection of drawings from this age group is of recent date, we have not had the opportunity to pursue a longitudinal study with any of these subjects, but we suspect that in the case of those girls who have not actually been raped or violently attacked, the knotholes will tend to disappear with time. It should also be mentioned that when the scar is extremely prominent or is emphasized by the use of a drawing technique different from that employed for the rest of the tree, it may symbolize a very recent trauma, in which case its longitudinal placement may not correspond to the date of the traumatic event (see chapter 12).

Turning now to the figures, we will differentiate some of the specific forms which scars and knotholes assume in tree drawings.

FIGURES 82a–g: Scars and truncated branches

Figure 82a represents a major scar caused by lightning, while the broken branch shown in 82b might result from either lightning or damage from a strong wind. Both of these marks are the result of "natural



FIGURES 82a–g

damage" to the tree, and their psychological reference is usually to unavoidable painful events or to the general negative impact of the subject's environmental situation. A large lightning scar on the trunk frequently refers to loss of loved ones through death, particularly the death of a lover. In some cases it may also refer to serious accidental injury to the body. In the lower part of the tree, a broken branch on the right side may symbolize an affair which simply died out, but which still retains importance for the subject. If the broken branch is a secondary, and especially if it is partially disconnected from the main branch, the reference may be to the loss of a child. If the child is lost after birth, the branch usually appears on the right, whereas small broken-off branches in the lower left crown may represent miscarriages or abortions. Broken branches high in the crown symbolize projects which have come to a sudden end, often as the result of difficult life circumstances. When sawed-off branches are drawn (figure 82c), similar kinds of losses or truncated projects may be symbolized, but in such cases the subject places blame on some human agent. When this type of truncated branch is seen in the upper crown, the reference may be not only to the termination of the project pursued, but more specifically to resentment at not having received anticipated rewards. Again the subject will tend to blame someone for his disappointment, whereas with broken branches he will be more resigned to the inevitable frustrations of human life. Should there be a large number of either broken or sawed-off branches in the tree, the person may view himself as an innocent victim, and feelings of self-pity or tendencies toward self-dramatization may characterize his basic attitudes.

The hole in the side of the trunk shown in figure 82d is a rather pecu-

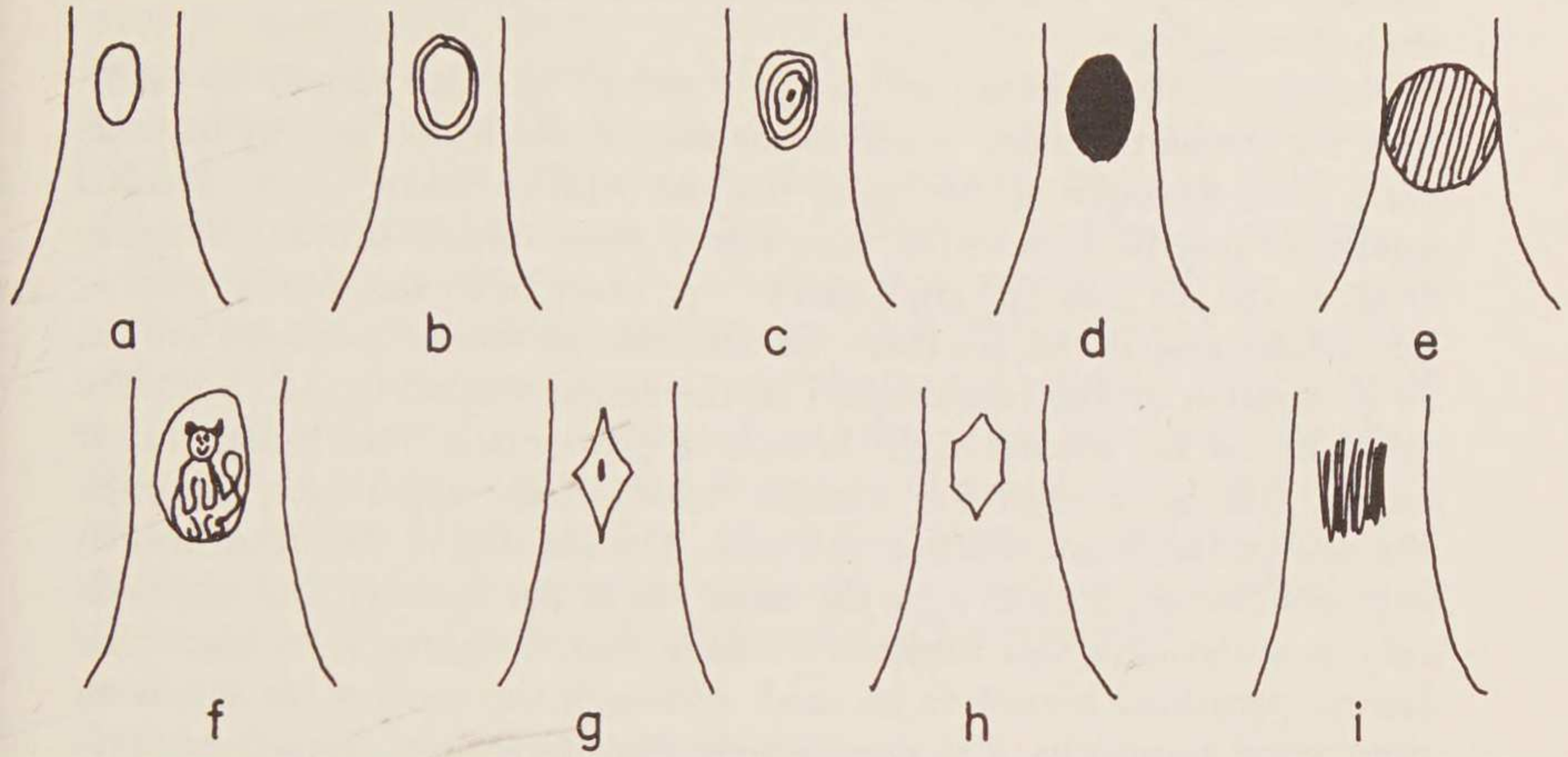
liar form, usually not related to natural damage. Sometimes it refers to sexual play without penetration, which was nevertheless somewhat traumatizing to the subject. We have seen it most frequently associated with sexual experiences of young women with a stepfather, uncle, or brother, where actual coition did not take place, but the relationship was sufficiently incestuous in tone to leave strong guilt feelings. In other cases the reference seems to be to the loss of a branch which the person feels should have started from that point, as when, for instance, the subject has met someone to whom he is sexually attracted and then discovers that the potential partner is already involved with his best friend.

The break in the trunk depicted in figure 82e has many possible meanings, some of which have already been discussed in connection with trunk outline. It is a generalized sign of emotional vulnerability when on the left side of the trunk. On the right side, the vulnerability will be associated with a specific emotional hurt inflicted by the father, by male peers, or by a former lover. It also sometimes refers to the death of a close relative, but only if this has occurred while the individual was still a young child. Figure 82f usually does not indicate objectively traumatic events, but rather experiences which have been embarrassing or emotionally painful because the subject has created an imaginary relationship which fails to develop in reality.

Many discontinuities on the right side of the truck as in figure 82g, represent penetrations of the emotional sphere. The reference may be to peer relationships, innocent romances, or early sexual affairs; in any event, these marks indicate that the subject is inclined to become deeply involved with a number of different people.

FIGURES 83a–i: Knotholes

We have already discussed the sexual symbolism of knotholes in some detail. Here it should be mentioned that the size of the knothole in relation to the width of the trunk may help to distinguish between those which refer to sexual experience per se and those which suggest preoccupation with procreation. The smaller knotholes shown in figures 83a–d, as well as the diamond-shaped ones of 83g and 83h, symbolize the vagina, whereas the very large knotholes of 83e and 83f are more likely to refer to the womb. The small and relatively simple knotholes of figures 83a and 83b usually represent either sexual assault or an initial sexual experience, the only difference being that if the outline is reinforced, as in 83b, the shock impact is greater. Where many circles are drawn inside the knothole, the scar may be seen as "healing," and the experience is usually found to date from the relatively distant past. The completely blackened knothole of figure 83d, on the other hand, suggests a great deal of shame associated with the experience involved, and may also be an indication that the scar is fresh. Past experiences regarded by the subject as shameful



FIGURES 83a–i

will be shown in the form of a shaded knothole which blends into other markings on the trunk; whereas a heavily darkened knothole standing out on a bare trunk seems to be more typical for recent experiences.

A knothole covering the whole width of the trunk, as in figure 83e, nearly always represents preoccupation with procreation, and has not been seen in any drawings of our male subjects. Where the large knothole contains a small animal (figure 83f), a certain ambivalence about childbearing is indicated. The animal may be regarded as "positive," while the knothole itself is somewhat "negative." If the subject is a woman, she may feel that it is a wonderful thing to bear children, but be fearful of the pain of childbirth, for example; or, if she is unmarried, she may have a general desire to have children, but still feel that it would be bad to become pregnant. We have never seen this form in the drawing of a mature man, but occasionally it will be drawn by a young man who is "in love" and has some settling or nesting desires, but feels at the same time that marriage constitutes a threat to his freedom.

The diamond and hexagonal shapes of figures 83g and 83h are seen almost exclusively in the drawings of male subjects. The diamond shape may symbolize the "biting vagina" and be closely related to castration fear. The hexagonal knothole is somewhat more abstract and will usually be seen as an "old scar."

Figure 83i falls somewhere between shading on the trunk and a clearly delineated knothole. Since it is not representative of actual scarring damage to the tree, it is the most likely to refer to an imagined experience, although it always indicates subjective pain. It is included here because, if it stands alone in the center of the trunk without a lot of other

shading marks, it will have the same sexual associations as the clearly drawn knotholes.

Among the illustrations, 45 (p. 233), and 27 (p. 182) should be examined for "embarrassment" scars on the side of the trunk, and 53 (p. 282) for a clear example of the trunk marked with a "biting" scar. Shaded knotholes may be seen in the drawings of three female subjects, illustrations 21 (p. 168), 25 (p. 179), and 27 (p. 182). In 21 the shame motif is powerfully underlined, for there one also sees an umbrella-shaped crown. In illustration 27 the combination of the single shaded branch with the knothole on the second right branch is particularly interesting, for it implies that the subject felt sexually "used" in the experience, although she was probably not raped in this case. The shading of the small branch suggests that she tries to wipe the affair out of her memory, but succeeds only in underlining her subjective feeling that she alone is to blame for having permitted herself to be used. Although the subject has not been questioned about this, it is also possible that the shaded branch has reference to an abortion.

In another female tree, illustration 50 (p. 264), which is the drawing of a high school teacher, a knothole containing an animal may be seen. Here the womb motif is clearly expressed in the very large size of the hole.

Among the drawings of male subjects, prominent knotholes may be seen in illustrations 5 (p. 119), which has been discussed as a "dead tree," and in illustration 22 (p. 169). The latter was drawn by a volunteer subject who is a college professor, and we do not have detailed information about his intimate life. However, it is known that most of his childhood was spent in concentration camps and that he was heavily exposed to war trauma, so in this case, the reference of the large scars may not be exclusively sexual. See also chapter 14, "Case History 2," for comments on a large diamond-shaped knothole in a series of tree drawings from a male subject.

Accidental signs

In the next group of figures representing special signs, nearly all of the forms shown, with the exception of the Christmas tree decorations, will more often be accidentally than deliberately drawn. If one is going to pay attention to accidentally appearing signs or objects, the number of different kinds of things which may be seen is almost infinite. Here we have picked out some forms which were found fairly frequently in tree drawings, separating them into parts of the human body, human genitalia, letters, numbers, abstract symbols, crosses, and small objects. Interpretation of these accidental special signs should be approached with caution and can rarely be accomplished without some feedback from the subject. Often it is best to use these as a basis for probing the subject without

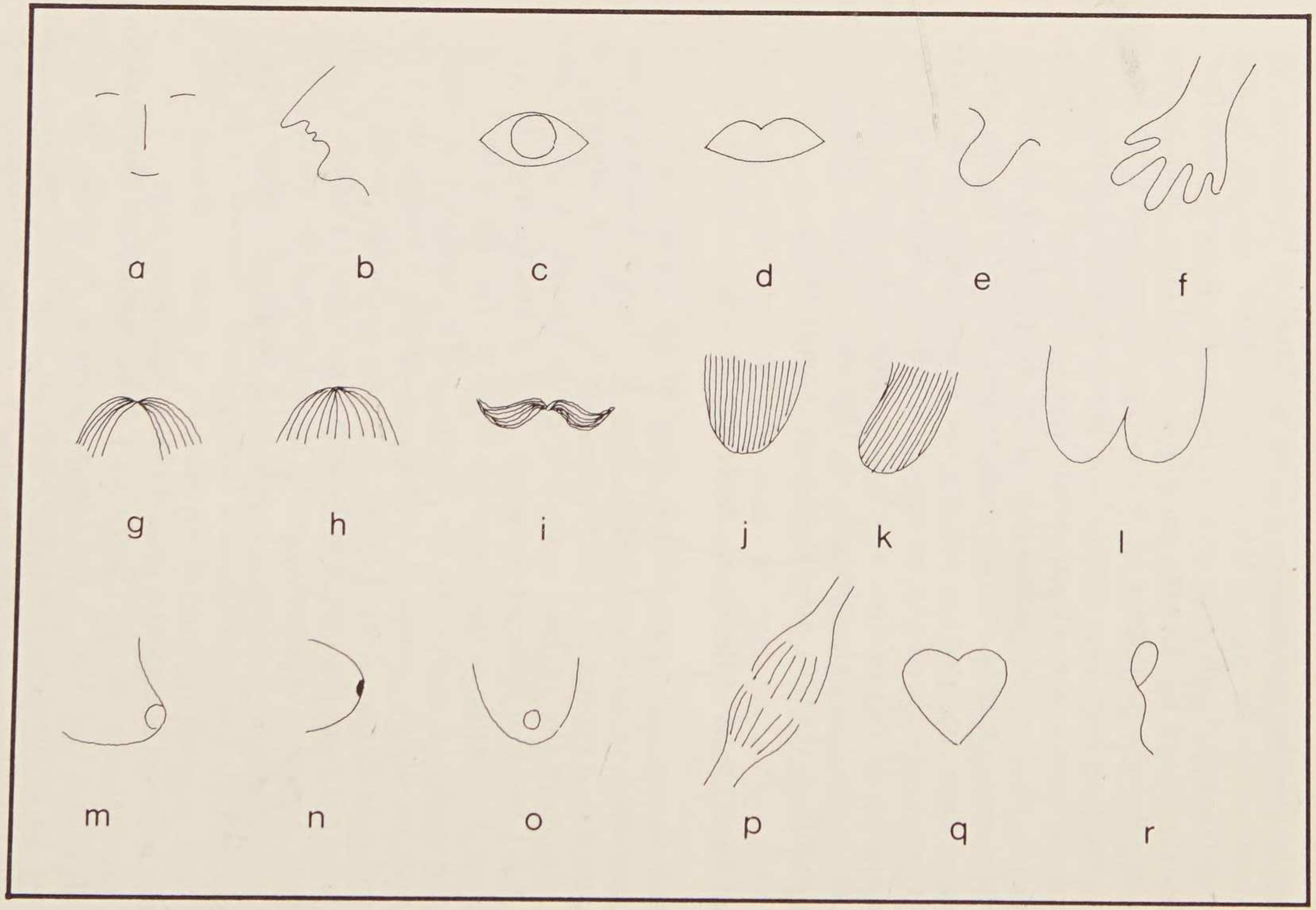
mentioning to him that questions or insights are based on his drawing, for even in cases where the sign is fairly well delineated, the person may deny that it has any significance when he learns that it results only from an accidental effect of his drawing technique. On the other hand, he may readily recognize the pertinence of the examiner's questions when he is not aware that they have been inspired by his own accidental drawings.

The objective critic may also question how accidents of the drawing technique can yield reliable information about the psyche of the individual. Without attempting to create a sophisticated rationale for the meaningfulness of these signs, we can only say that in our experience they have been just as consistently reliable as sources of insights about our subjects as other aspects of this method which may seem to be more logical or more easily justified on a theoretical basis. However, we will devote some space in part IV to the uses of accidental sign interpretation.

FIGURES 84a–r: Parts of the human body

In these figures are shown various parts of the human body which appear commonly as accidental special signs. If a face is drawn full-face, as in figure 84a, it represents a mirror image of the subject, who may be slightly narcissistic or at least overabsorbed in himself. A profile face (figure 84b) has two different meanings. If it is looking into the tree, either from the outside in the form of a cloud or from the outer foliage facing the center, it represents the "other," whose approval is sought. There may be slightly paranoid feelings, or simply a strong desire to please and gain the approval of others or of one particular person. If the profile faces out from the tree, it represents the subject's attitude toward the "other." A stern, disapproving profile turned toward the lower part of section 9, for example (according to schema 4, chapter 6), might suggest a disdain for high finance, whereas a smiling profile directed to the right middle zone suggests approval of the concrete, or positive feelings toward associates involved in activities related to that area of the page.

The appearance of an eye (figure 84c) often symbolizes illumination, especially if it is very high in the crown. Lower in the crown, the reference may be to the subject's pet projects, to which he assigns a high value. The basic meaning of the eye motif is "seeing the hidden connections." Whether or not this has a reality reference will depend both on the position of the eye and on the actual gifts of the subject. The mouth (figure 84d) has many possible meanings. If it is well drawn, with the formation of actual lips, it often means clinging to memories of early sexual exploration. If it is less well delineated, but gives the impression of a partially open mouth, it usually refers to oral sexual fantasies, both heterosexual and homosexual. If it appears high on the left side of the crown, however, the open mouth may symbolize oratorical gifts, an interest in



FIGURES 84a–r

acting, or singing. The tongue (figure 84e) is a sign of mockery, either of self or others. When self-mockery is involved, the tongue will appear just above a cross or star in the crown, indicating that the subject is slightly contemptuous of his own identification of some kind of life crisis. A hand (figure 84f) may refer to three different matters. When it is approaching a part of the tree where a problem is suggested by other signs, the subject feels that someone is meddling in his affairs or interfering with his way of handling his life. (Here reference frequently may be to the therapist or counselor, especially in initial sessions.) If the hand is in the center of the tree pointing downward toward the crown-trunk transition, it has a meaning similar to fingerlike roots—that is, the subject himself is trying to hold on to or grasp for solid support. If the hand is reaching upward from within the tree it is a distress signal, like a call for help.

All of the different versions of mustaches and beards shown in figures 84g–84k refer, in the drawings of male subjects, to male vanity and preoccupation with virility. In the drawings of females these signs usually imply early identification of "maleness" with the mustache or the beard, and suggest the possibility of at least a minor fetish.

The sign representing the human posterior shown in figure 84l can be a very important special sign, especially if it is clearly or repeatedly drawn. In the drawings of men it is frequently associated with homosexual experience, whether imagined or actual, in those of women it usually refers to the mother, and suggests disapproval or even disgust about the mother's sexuality. Sometimes, however, this sign will represent the woman's desire to be sexually subdued, perhaps in a violent fashion. In such a case it will appear on the right side of the crown, whereas it is most often seen in the lower left portion of the crown or even on the left ground line in female drawings.

The pendulous breast depicted in figure 84m is usually found in male trees, and may be taken as a sign of partial disgust or an early negative imprint about the form of the female breast. This sign often appears, interestingly, in the drawings of men who are breast fetishists and who are only interested in women whose bosoms meet the standards of *Playboy* magazine. In one case we have seen a breast of this form which was actually entered as a knothole on the trunk, and in this instance it seemed to represent a trauma related to very late weaning. Breasts of this type appearing in a female drawing usually stand for the woman's dissatisfaction with her own natural body shape. She may or may not actually have pendulous breasts, but for one reason or another she feels that her breasts are ugly and is preoccupied with this negative self-evaluation. The profile breast shown in figure 84n and the more normal hanging breast of 84o (which is also represented in graffiti fashion as a plain circle with an inner dot) simply imply preoccupation with the female upper anatomy. These signs are almost always seen only in the drawings of male subjects.

Figure 84p represents anastomosis, which occurs in the body at the connection of arteries and veins. While this is a natural anatomical phenomenon in the human body, it is not a particularly good sign in a tree drawing. It will be seen in the intertwining of two branch endings, generally where one branch is turning downward and meets another branch which is turning upward. This suggests a potentially explosive situation, and in most cases both of the branches involved will show other signs of unresolved problems.

The heart form of figure 84q is one exception to the accidental nature of this group of special signs, for although it may occur in the crown as an accidental drawing, it is also sometimes consciously drawn on the trunk of the tree. Drawn deliberately on the trunk, it is either an adolescent expression or a mocking, skeptical sign. If a heart appears as an accidental sign in the crown it is usually an indication that the subject sees himself as generous and warmhearted. If it appears in connection with a relationship problem, it may also point to a simple, direct approach on the part of a subject who is inclined to "wear his heart on his sleeve."

The last of this group of signs, figure 84r, depicts the male sperm. This may refer to wasted energies, usually combined with some feelings of regret about having "thrown myself away." On the other hand, if this sign appears high in the crown it may mean that the subject is convinced that he possesses important "fertilizing" ideas. In the drawings of females the form suggests receptivity to ideas. Interestingly, the sperm sign does not seem to be associated with either a desire for or a fear of pregnancy.

It will be useful to look through the illustrations for examples of these forms, for in this way it will be seen that some of them may be very easily discernible, while in other cases one has to look quite carefully at the fine details before the signs are perceived. In illustration 26 (p. 180) a clown's profile can be seen in section 6 of the page, looking outward from the interior. In this case the reference is probably the subject's attitude toward her father's business efforts. The face is both mocking and rather sad. The father is a "poète manqué" who is forced to engage in business but is not particularly successful at practical pursuits. His daughter, who loves her father very much, apparently feels sorry for him, but is also faintly contemptuous of his worldly efforts.

For an example of the open mouth, see section 8a of illustration 44 (p. 232). An upward-reaching hand is seen in illustration 48 (p. 252) as a major offshoot of the crown. Appearing in section 8a, the subject is probably seeking help from religion, or hoping to find comfort in mystical experiences. In illustration 39 (p. 212) there is an excellent example of the human posterior. It appears in section 5a, and would seem to be directly related to resentment of or shame regarding her mother's sexual activities.

Several breast forms appear in the crown of illustration 3 (p. 94). In effect, this male subject was raised in an all-female family and has

definite "harem" fantasies, which at times he has attempted to make into a reality. The most typical one can be seen in section 8b, where it is associated with that part of the page assigned to hope.

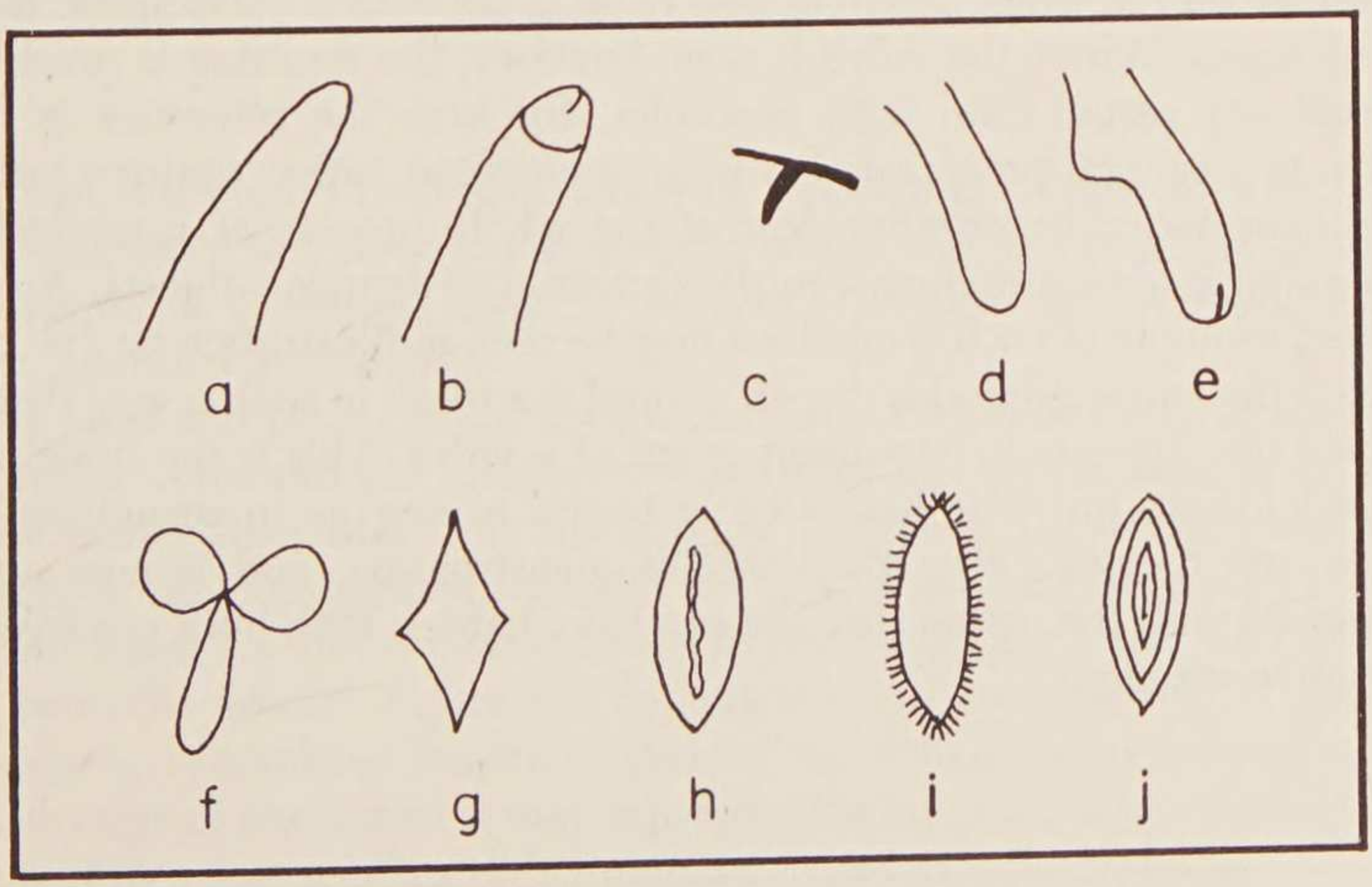
For an example of anastomosis, section 4 of illustration 29 (p. 185) should be examined. The subject has ambivalent feelings about both her mother and her sister, who is schizophrenic, and the peculiar energy exchange between the branches is probably a matter of her fear of becoming like the sister, combined with an identification with the negative emotions of her mother, which she rejects consciously but from which she is unable to free herself.

Two very clear sperm forms can be seen to the right of the tree in illustration 24 (p. 172). In this drawing of a male subject who has been an alcoholic and been through a divorce, the reference is definitely to wasted efforts, or energy which has been "blown away" with no gain to himself. Looking again at illustration 44 (p. 232), a sperm form is seen in section 4, in the lower outline of the crown. Here what is expressed is the woman's ready receptivity to memories and moods.

FIGURES 85a–j: Human genital parts

The general meaning of human sexual organs is quite obvious. Distinctions can be made according to where they appear in the tree, and also according to their actual form. The erect penis, like those shown in figures 85a and 85b, refers in drawings of both male and female subjects to fantasies or desires for new sexual experience. In the drawing of a man this form may also symbolize a self-claim regarding his own sexual prowess. On the other hand, we do not believe that the appearance of penis forms

FIGURES 85a–j



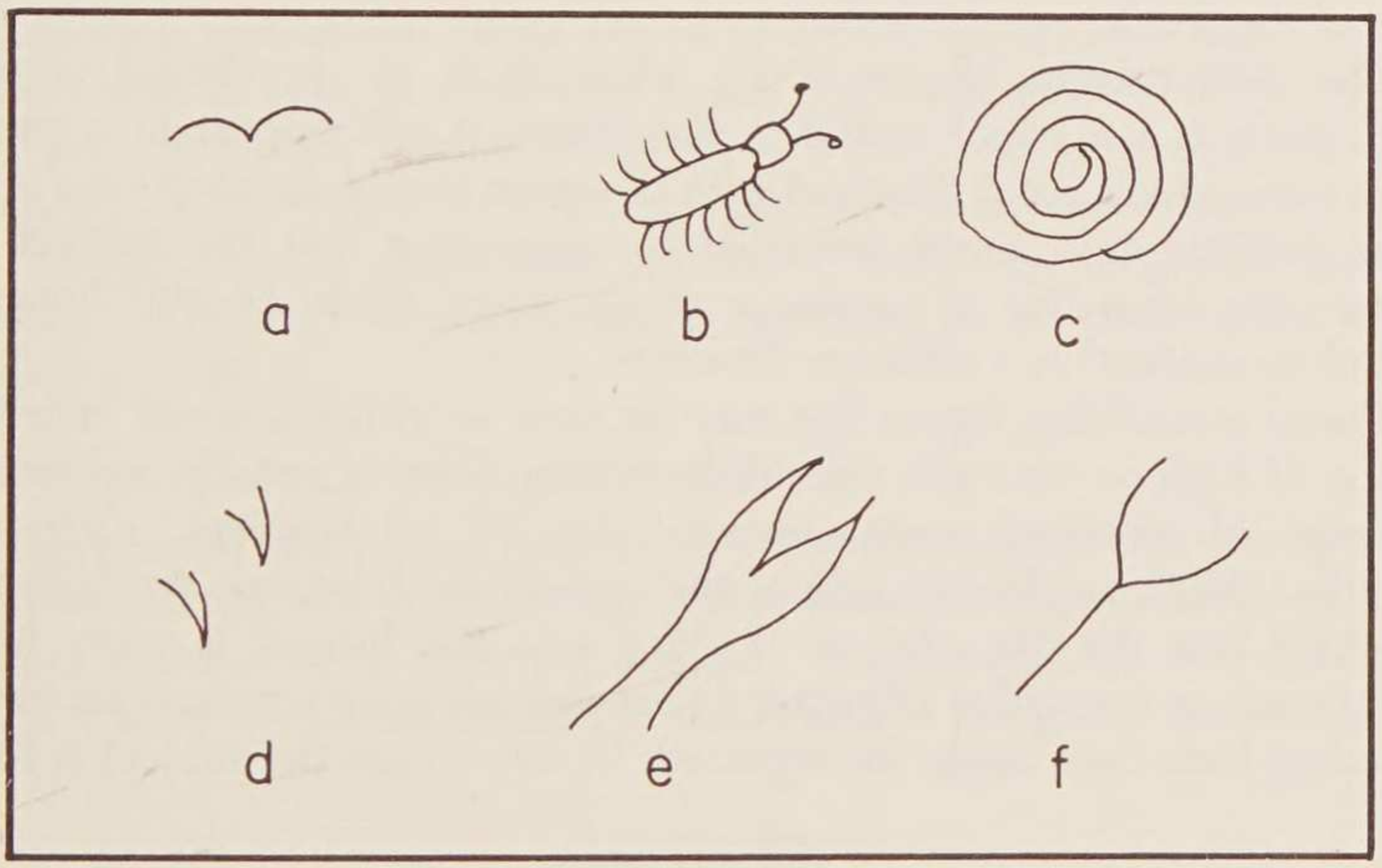
in the female drawing has anything to do with penis envy. Figures 85c–85f are all forms of the nonerect penis. In a male they may represent impotency or fear of impotency. In a woman's drawing they may refer to bad experiences as far as the partner's sexual performance is concerned. In the male drawing the side of the tree on which the penis is drawn may establish a subjective "blame." On the left side the subject may accuse either his mother or a frigid wife, on the right side the rigid upbringing of father or church, or the poor example set by his father. While figure 85c may not look very much like an actual penis, it is a form found in abstract trees, where everything is simplified. An example of such a subtle form is seen in illustration 16 (p. 174). The subject was impotent for years as a result of Reiter's disease. This condition is now classified as one of the rheumatoid disorders, but it has been considered to be communicable; hence the subject's tendency to blame his wife as the source of his problem.

It should also be mentioned that figure 85f may be interpreted either as a penis form or as a scissor. If it stands for the latter, it will be associated with some part of the tree which the subject wants to "cut off," and can usually be distinguished in this way from the penis.

Figures 85g–85j depict the female genitalia. The simple diamond shape is a common graffiti sign for the female sexual parts. Figures 85g–j all refer to the vaginal entrance, whereas 85i represents the vulva. Figure 85h differs from 85j only in that the former stands for virginity. In male drawings inclusion of these vaginal forms implies a rather adolescent preoccupation with female sex organs or fixation at a voyeuristic level. In the woman's tree the meanings are more complex. If such a sign appears in the crown, it might refer to a rape which has been sufficiently well assimilated into consciousness so that it no longer appears as a knothole on the trunk. It might also have to do with a masochistic desire to be raped. Where the vulva is seen, however, the meaning is much less specifically sexual than with knotholes, for here the reference is most often to a general preoccupation with procreation, either positive interest and expectation or negative fear of the whole process of reproduction. This sign is almost exclusive to the drawings of female subjects. A fascinating example of such symbolism may be seen in illustration 34 (p. 194), where the entire ground is drawn around the trunk in such a way that the whole tree appears to be emerging out of a vulva. This is the drawing of an adolescent girl who has recently begun to engage in sexual explorations, not too long after the onset of menstruation, and is now almost obsessed with the notion that she can have babies, with both positive and negative reactions.

FIGURES 86a–f: Animal forms as accidental drawings

The schematized flying bird shown in figure 86a is a very common accidental sign. Appearing in the crown, it suggests fleeting ideas. If the crown is well developed, bird forms represent an enrichment of mental content. In a poorly developed crown, on the other hand, they may refer more to fantasies which the subject uses as an escape from the task of ordered thinking. Forms resembling bugs (figure 86b) are nearly always related to indications of failure or "dead material" in the tree. They suggest a slightly masochistic dwelling on failed efforts or relationships. The snail form (figure 86c) usually symbolizes a psychological recoiling in



FIGURES 86a–f

one area, sometimes in connection with "protecting" a new idea or project. Sometimes this form has a stem, in which case it resembles either a fern sprout or a bishop's cane. If the former, it is a sign of hope; if the latter, a symbol of authority.

The claw and pincer forms shown in figures 86d and 86e have obvious aggressive connotations. However, when they are in the interior of the crown rather than drawn at the ends of branches, they may stand for aggression directed against the self. The pincer may also resemble a scissor and stand for the subject's desire to sever one particular part of the tree from the whole. Figure 86f depicts a lizard's tongue which, within the crown, symbolizes sensitive "feelers" or nonintellective exploration. On the edge of the crown it may represent the subject's desire to frighten others away without being either aggressive or seriously defensive.

FIGURES 87a–k: Miscellaneous objects as accidental signs

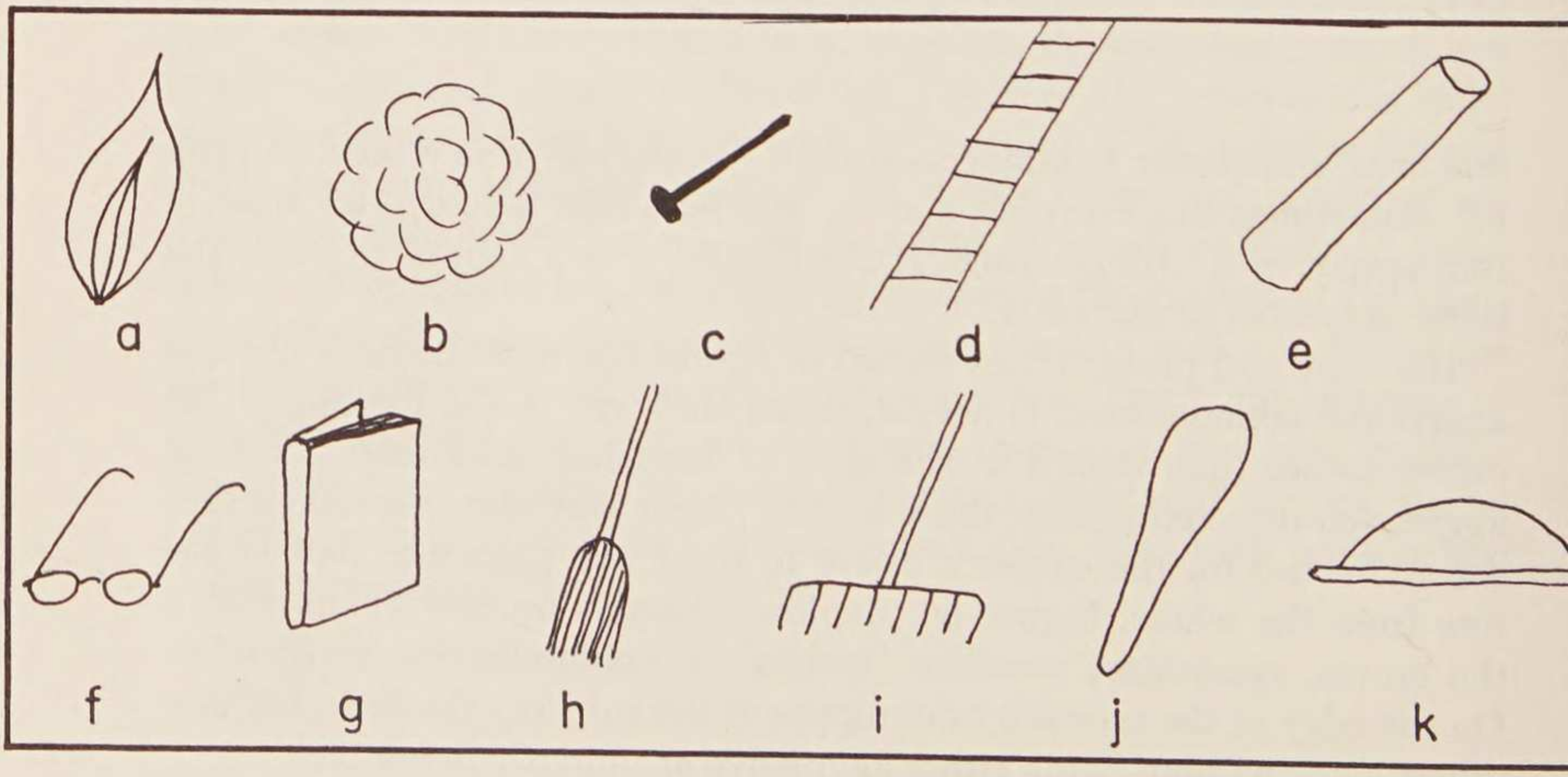
Here are depicted a few nonanimal objects which may appear in the drawings as accidental representations.

The flame form (figure 87a) refers to hope, enthusiasm, or a "burning idea." Puffs (figure 87b), which are common manifestations in rapidly drawn foliage, are a sign of an active imagination and are often associated with fluency in the expression of ideas. Marks resembling nails (figure 87c) may be seen as irritants or "sore points" which are not nearly as serious as heavy scars and trauma marks, but still refer to specific negative experiences. (This is one of the accidental signs which may appear on the trunk as well as on branches in the crown.) An example may be seen in illustration 45 (p. 233), where two nail-like forms are shown on the left side of the trunk.

The ladder form (figure 87d), when it is an accidental sign in the crown, is a mark of ambition. Sometimes it will appear in a part of the crown which is not identical with the main line of development of the tree, pointing to a secret ambition or suggesting that the subject has chosen his main line of endeavor of necessity, while he still hopes to "climb to success" in a different direction.

Forms resembling figure 87e may be seen as either a scroll or a telescope. If high on the right side of the crown, what is usually represented is hope of receiving some concrete sign of achievement, such as a diploma. High on the left side of the crown, the telescope symbolism of "looking into the distance" or "looking into the future" is more likely. Eyeglasses or spectacles (figure 87f) are a much more common accidental drawing form than might be expected. In some cases the subject is found

FIGURES 87a–k



to be actually worried about his eyesight. In a more general sense, however, spectacles may symbolize difficulty in focusing on a particular area, or the need for an external device to clarify what is perceived.

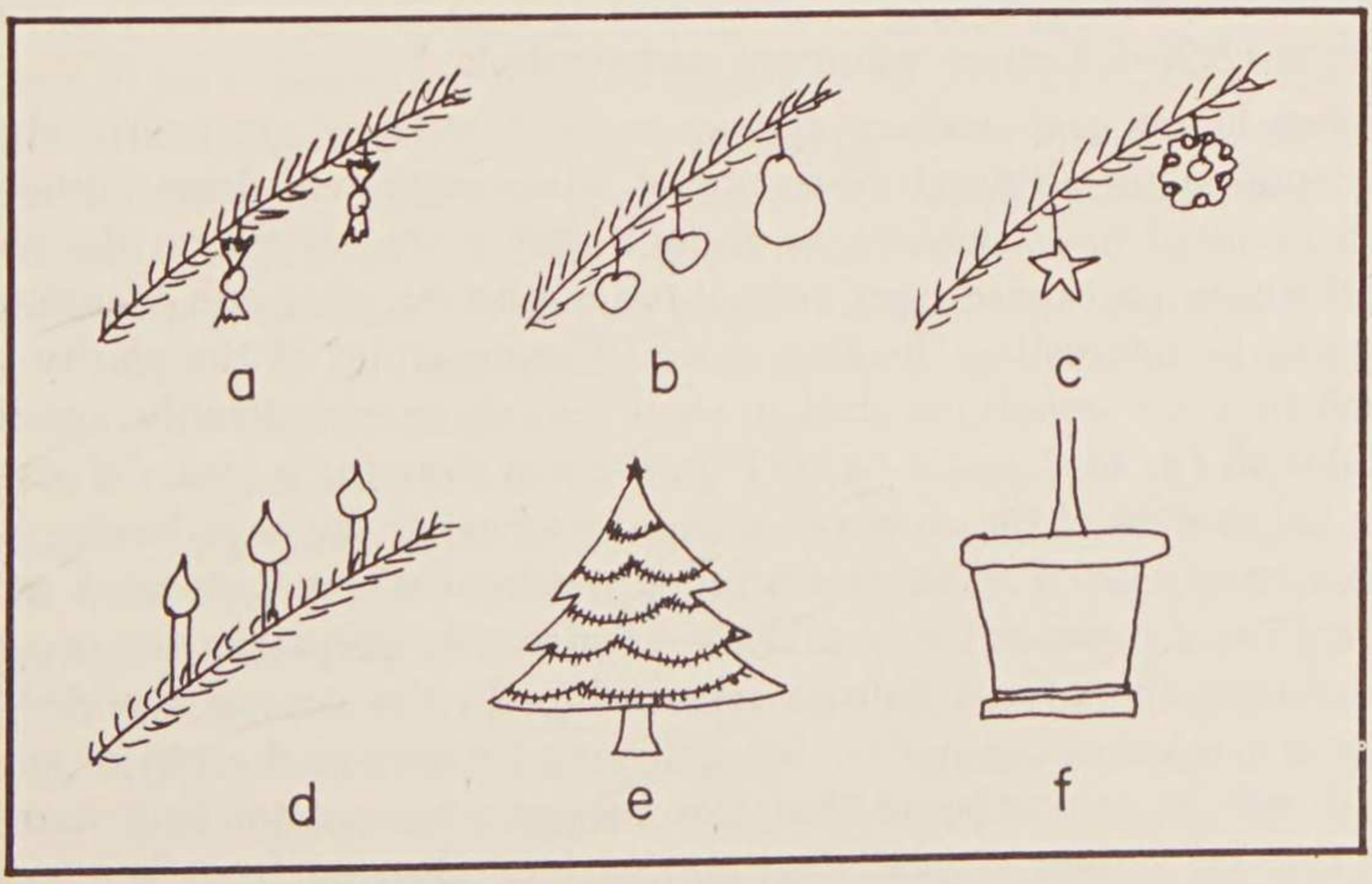
Forms resembling books (figure 87g) are also fairly commonly seen in trees where straight, scribbled lines are used to draw the foliage. These refer quite literally to study or "bookishness." A broom form in the crown (figure 87h) suggests the need to clean up the area involved, which is nearly always somewhat confused. The rake (figure 87i), on the other hand, means "ingathering," or consolidation of the materials expressed in the adjacent parts of the crown. It should be apparent that, as accidental drawings, these last three forms will never appear precisely drawn as in the figures. Nevertheless, where they can be identified, they frequently seem to carry the "literal" symbolic meanings suggested.

The club and helmet forms shown in figures 87j and 87k may be quite clearly drawn, even as accidental forms. The club is obviously an aggressive sign, while the helmet is defensive. What is to be underlined, however, is that these signs will refer to aggressive or defensive reactions *only* in the special area where they are found, and may thus often stand in contrast to the fundamental attitude expressed in the tone quality of the tree as a whole.

FIGURES 88a–f: Christmas tree decorations

The general meaning of drawing a Christmas tree has been discussed in chapter 7. Here we will add only a few comments on the kinds of decorations which may be shown on the tree. The candy, fruit, and decorative balls or stars shown hanging from the branches in figures 88a–88c all are

FIGURES 88a–f

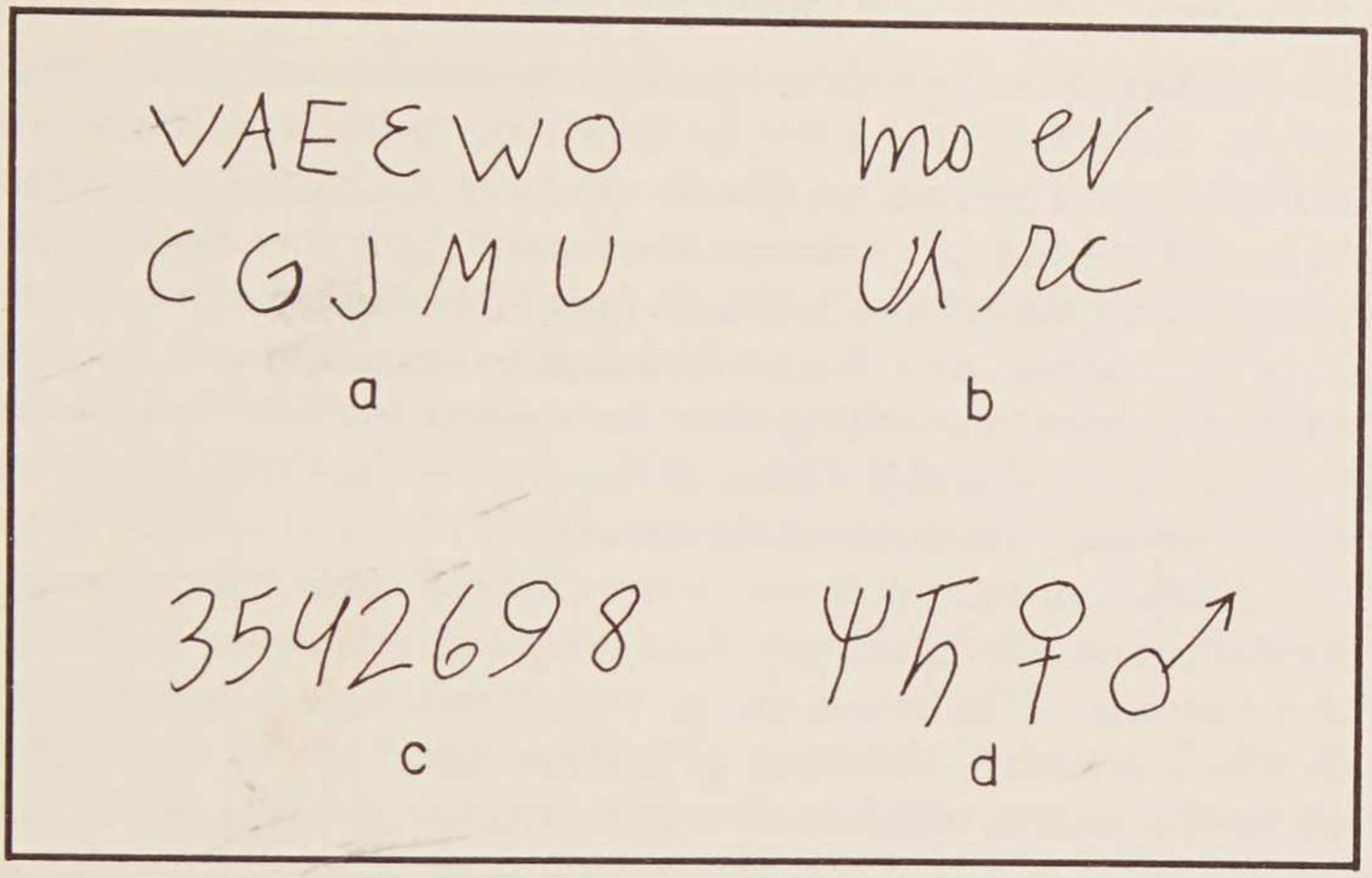


expressive of magnanimous impulses. Like decorative flowers and artificial leaves, however, they often suggest that kind of "giving" which is at least partially motivated by the need for attention and recognition from the receiver. Where the Christmas tree is decorated mainly with burning candles, as in figure 88d, a desire for illumination is expressed. This however, will tend to be passive and most frequently will be related to a traditional religious practice or a dogmatic belief system. When a garland chain is shown encircling the whole of the tree (figure 88e), the festive and expectant mood expressed in the choice of the Christmas tree type will be mitigated by the subject's need for self-control. In adult Christmas tree drawings this type of decoration is nearly always combined with a precise and rather painstaking delineation of the tree itself. We have seen three such drawings by somewhat obsessive-compulsive persons, making valiant efforts to enjoy themselves largely because they were constantly being told by friends and family that "they should be more relaxed." Two of the subjects, after laughing with the examiner about the double-bind nature of this "helpful" advice, proceeded to draw regular pine trees and launched on enthusiastic discussion of their ambitions. These were, of course, special cases in which the original selection of the Christmas tree theme was apparently more an expression of social pressures than of spontaneous choice. In any event, a full garland as a decorative motif points to some degree of reserve.

When an elaborate holder is drawn at the base of the Christmas tree trunk, as in figure 88f, a kind of artificial effort to contain sexual and unconscious forces is suggested. Sometimes the base of the tree will be obscured by the addition of gift packages. These are analogous to flowers or bushes around the base of a natural tree, and should be interpreted as "decoys."

FIGURES 89a–d; Letters, numbers, and symbols

When letters and symbols appear in the tree, they are nearly always accidental signs, although occasionally adolescents will draw initials, or the venus and mars symbols, as though they were carved on the trunk. For the most part these signs are not too important, although occasionally they can be interesting "leading clues." For examples of the clarity with which they are sometimes drawn, even though unintentionally, see illustrations 26 (p. 180) and 2 (p. 78). In the first drawing a clear "3" can be seen to the right of the crown in section 9, a part of the page having to do with competition. The subject attends a school where 3 is used as the symbol for a superior mark, and she is presently preparing for competitive examinations for a college scholarship. In the second drawing the musical symbol of the upper clef staff may be seen at the top of section 8a. It will be remembered that this subject's twin sister is a musician and that he derives a great deal of vicarious pleasure from her musical activities.



FIGURES 89a–d

When letters appear in combinations, they sometimes refer to the initials of someone who is important to the subject. Usually this is not of any great significance, but occasionally the hidden identification will be important. In one case, for example, where the initials "G. M." appeared quite clearly in the fantasy section of the crown (not illustrated in this book), the subject said she had no important involvements with anyone with those initials, and then added after a pause that it could be her best friend's husband, whose initials would fit. The matter was not pressed, but this minor opening was picked up in a later session by the subject herself. It turned out that she had been having elaborate sexual fantasies about this man, and although there was no reality reference for them, she suffered such guilt feelings that she had been making excuses not to see her friend. Later it became clear to her that the content of the fantasies was directly related to her marital problems, and work on them not only relieved her guilt but also opened her up to new approaches in sexual relations with her husband.

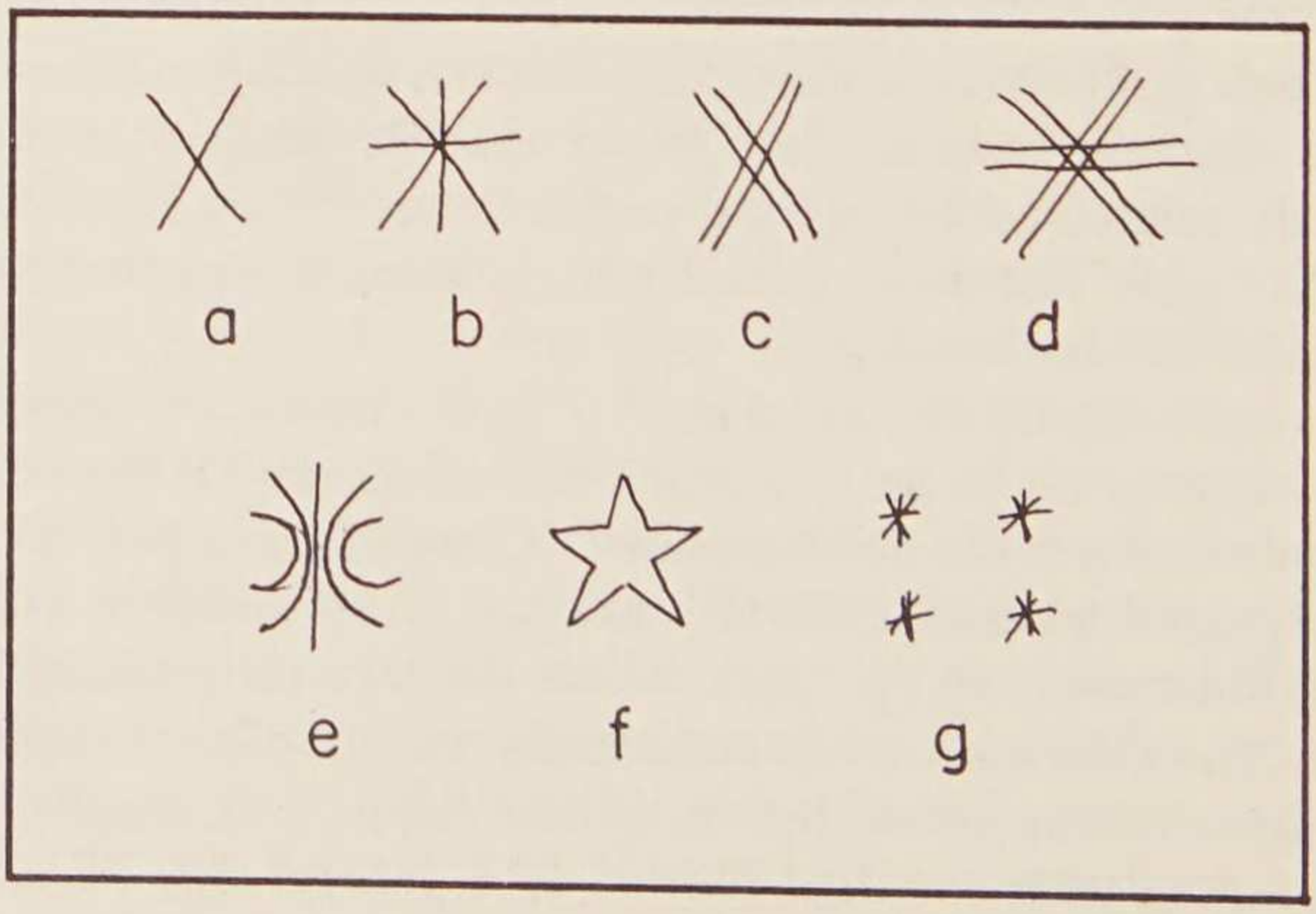
Numbers usually do not have such a direct reference, although sometimes they may point to an important date. The special case of the combined numbers 6-9 must be mentioned. These often appear in schematic form, as repeated combinations of brackets—( ). An excellent example may be seen in illustration 19 (p. 155), where the sign constitutes the decorative motif. The reference is *not* specifically to fantasies of cunnilingus, in spite of this common association in sexual slang. It is usually an expression of boredom with conjugal routine or a general sign of the need for imaginative sexual play.

FIGURES 90a–g: Crosses and stars

When the lines forming the foliage or the branches accidentally cross to form X's or stars, these signs can be important indicators. If the whole crown is filled with crosses, no specific meaning is implied, but where a limited number of isolated crossings are found, these may be interpreted as signs of "crisis points." The reference may be to an emotional upheaval, a crisis in relationship, or a dramatic change in circumstances, as well as to a voluntary decision resulting from an internal conflict. Both the area of the crown involved and the form of the cross or star will help to identify the nature and seriousness of the situation.

The simplest and most common form of these crisis indicators is the two-stroke X shown as figure 90a. An example may be seen on the right side of the crown in illustration 32 (p. 189). The X here falls just above a branch which is already shown as a "problem area" by the fact that it is the only major branch which is closed at its point of origin in the trunk. What is probably in question is the frustration of a line of development which the subject had hoped to pursue. The isolated X not only suggests that he experienced a conflict with respect to the frustrated project, but also that he blames external circumstances (probably the threat of the draft) for his inability to develop the pursuit. Where a cross made of three lines forms a star approximation (figure 90b), the element of blame is even more clearly projected. For example, in illustration 39 (p. 212), a crisis star is seen, again in the upper right part of the crown. This female subject, whose parents are divorced, was supposed to receive money from her father for her advanced schooling. She wanted to go to medical school and become a pathologist, but because her father did not fulfill his promise to pay for her education, she had to study medical technology instead, and is now paying her own way through graduate school.

FIGURES 90a–g



If the X or cross is formed by the actual branches of the tree, which is usually the case with figures 90c and 90d, the crisis will represent an internal struggle toward which the subject takes a "no blame" attitude. In illustration 26 (p. 180) there are several double X's high on both the left and right sides of the crown. In this case the reference is to a current crisis of decision making, having to do with choosing which of many talents to pursue as an academic specialty.

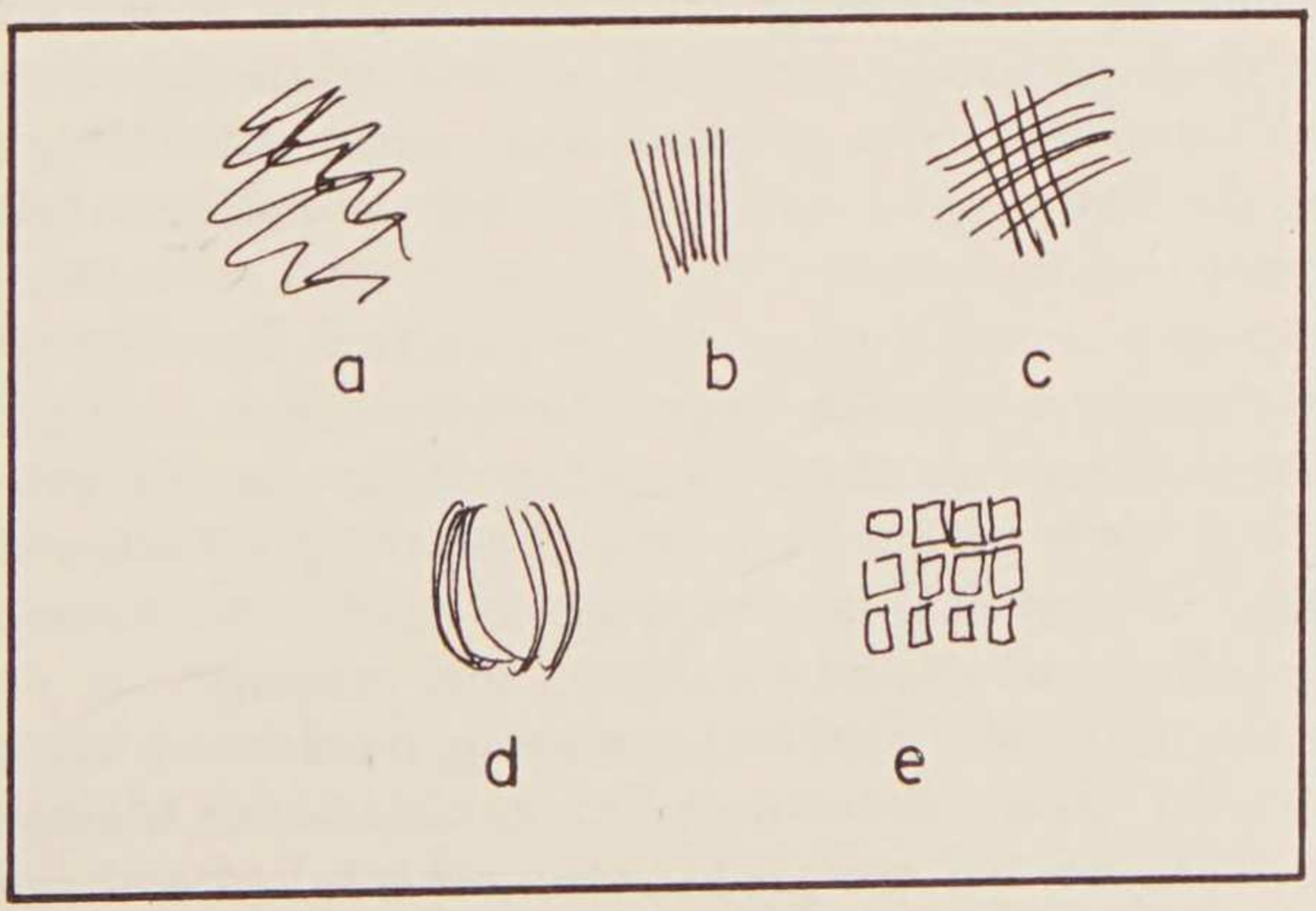
Stars formed like that depicted in figure 90e generally indicate a crisis stemming from internal inclinations which are opposite to the subject's chosen external behavior in the area involved. A more or less well-formed star, as in 90f, is usually only seen when a major crisis is in question, for to create a several-pointed star the pencil must cross many times over a restricted area.

Numerous small crosses or stars throughout the crown shown as separated forms (figure 90g) generally do not have a crisis reference at all, but suggest a sparkling personality, often expressed in gifts of scintillating verbal display or wit.

FIGURES 91a–e: Complex crisis indicators

We have already mentioned that shading over a special area may be a manner of "hiding" a painful experience. When the shading is reinforced, by repeated scribbling, as in figure 91a, by parallel strokes (91b), or by lines from two directions, as in 91c, the painful experience will usually also be viewed by the subject as a crisis. The shading strokes forming a partial oval, as in figure 91d, refer to a sexual conflict, even when found in the crown. They do not represent a sexual experience or trauma per se,

FIGURES 91a–e



but a decision which the subject had to make about a sexual relationship. Patches of small squares or geometric forms (figure 91e) refer to a past crisis which the subject claims no longer bothers him in the least, but which still carries associations weighted with unconscious affect.

ADDITIONAL SIGNS

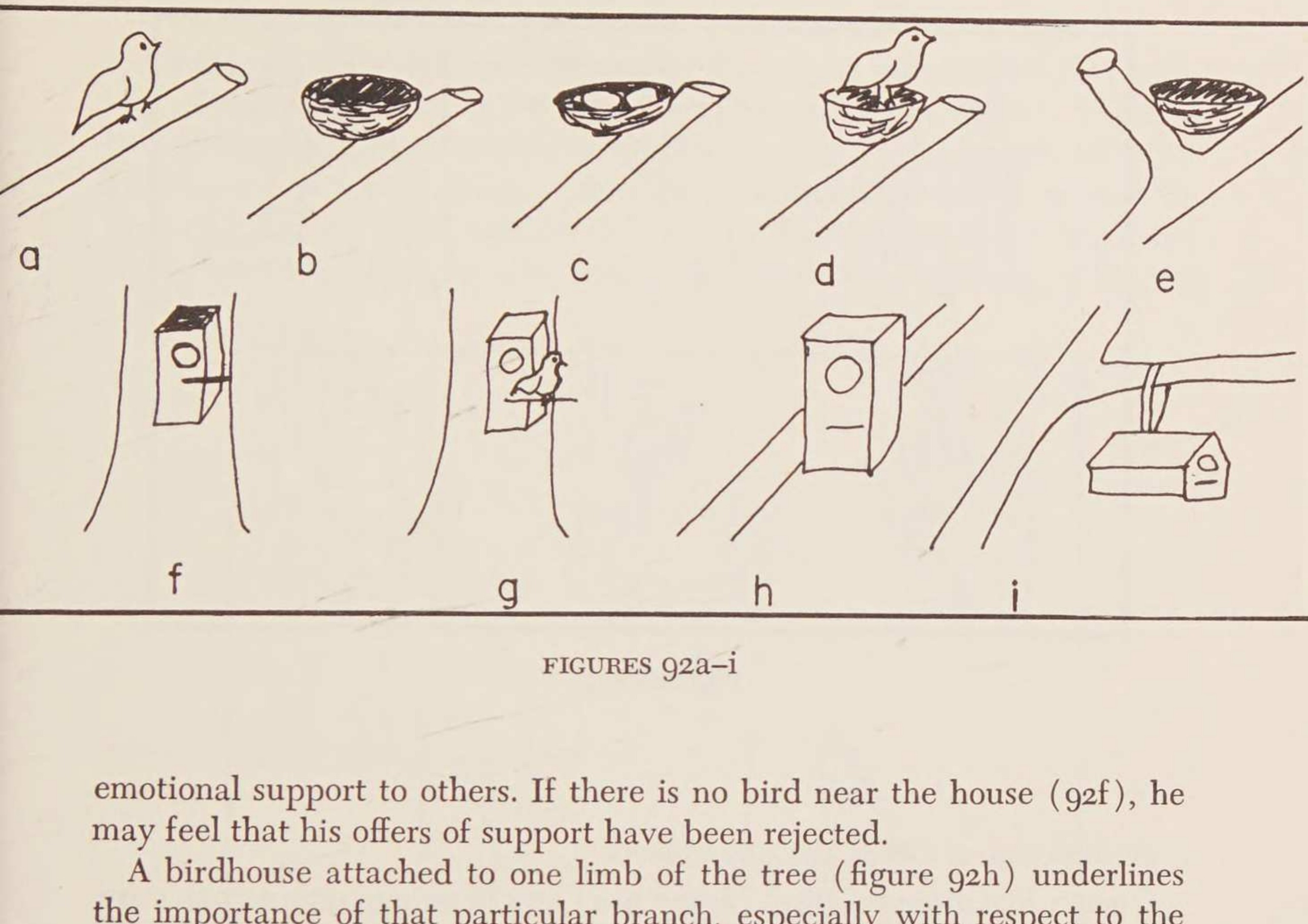
Some subjects will embellish the tree drawing with various additional objects. Some of these will be natural phenomena constituting a partial landscape, as when the sun, clouds, or bushes and flowers are shown. Frequently small animals and birds are drawn, either in the tree or near it. Man-made artifacts may also be added, the most common being birdhouses and fences. Some of these additional signs are definitely to be interpreted negatively, while others may be simply an enrichment of the subject's pictorial statement about himself. It may be said, however, that unless a full landscape is drawn, the inclusion of more than one or two additional signs, whatever their nature, is somewhat suspect in the drawing of an adult subject. Only a few commonly encountered additional signs will be treated in the figures which follow, since interpretation of the embellishments of the tree theme, as well as the tree shown in a full landscape, are matters beyond the scope of this book.

FIGURES 92a–i: Birds, nests, and birdhouses

While an accidental, schematized bird shown in the crown of the tree symbolizes ideas, a carefully drawn bird is a general sign of cheerfulness. If it is perched on a branch (figure 92a) it represents the subject's strong sense of hope that something positive will come out of the activity symbolized by the branch. If the bird is flying toward the crown it stands for the subject's receptivity to a pregnant idea or concept. Flying away from the crown, the bird may be seen as the carrier of an idea which the subject believes to be important.

When a nest is shown without eggs or bird as in figure 92b, the subject has a sense of lost hope with respect to the energies of the branch. An empty nest in the crook of two branches (figure 92e) may extend this feeling to one whole part of the crown. Where eggs are shown in the nest (figure 92c), or the bird is occupying it (92d), the sense of hope is usually specifically associated with family and progeny.

Birdhouses have quite a different meaning, for they are human artifacts and involve the "good will" of man. When a birdhouse is shown attached to the trunk (figures 92f and 92g) the subject is full of willingness to lend



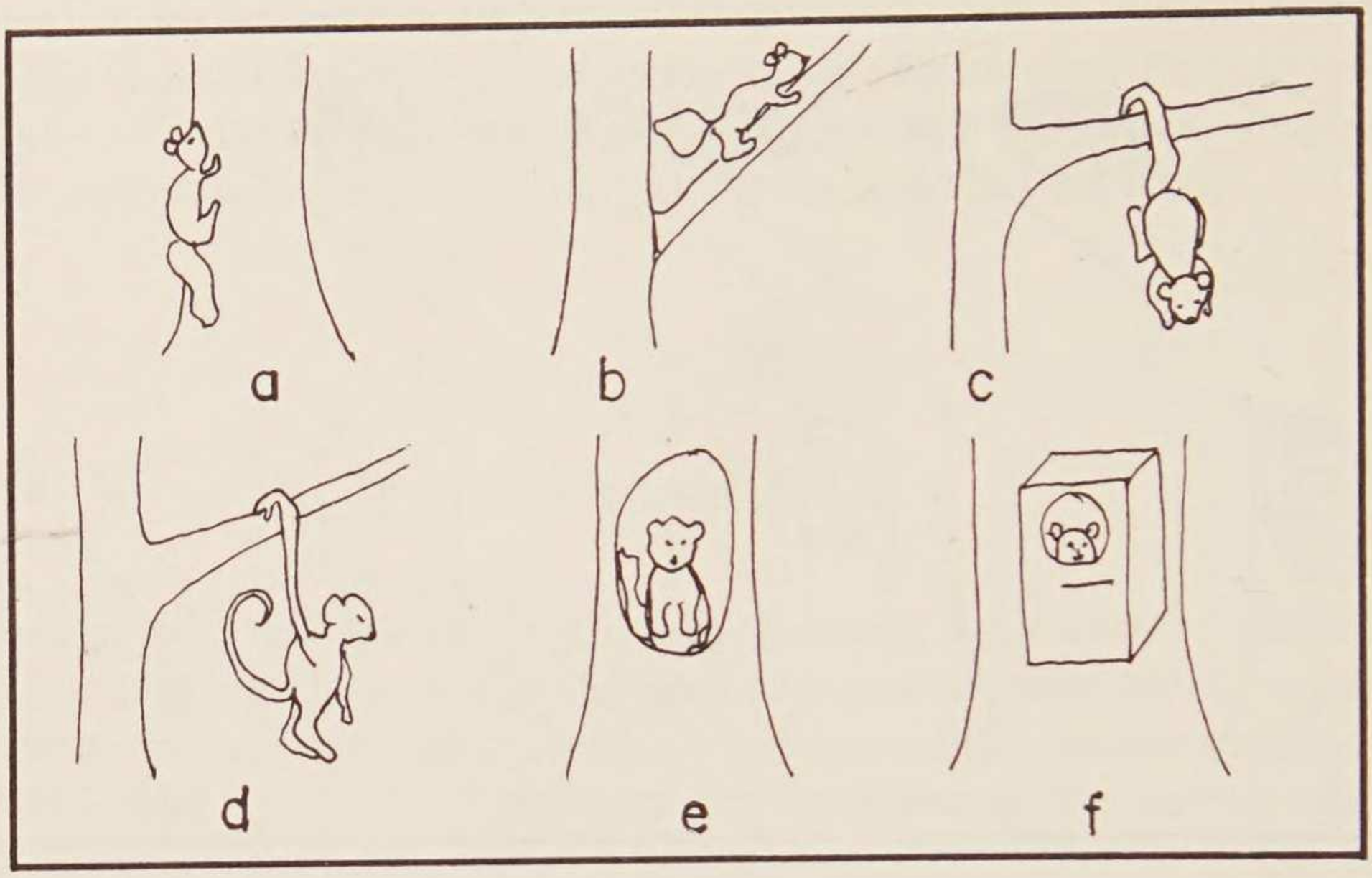
FIGURES 92a–i

emotional support to others. If there is no bird near the house (92f), he may feel that his offers of support have been rejected.

A birdhouse attached to one limb of the tree (figure 92h) underlines the importance of that particular branch, especially with respect to the subject's resources—inner or outer. If the birdhouse hangs from the limb, as in figure 92i, it has a special meaning: the subject is genuinely willing to support others, but he feels at the same time overburdened by the associated responsibilities.

FIGURES 93a–f: Small animals in the tree

When a small animal is shown climbing up the trunk (figure 93a) or one of the branches (93b), it represents an outside energy channel. Often when an animal is seen climbing the trunk (carrying energy from the sexual and emotional sphere to the crown), the tree will be drawn with closed transition points in the interior. The same is true of the animal climbing a particular branch, except that the nature of the blocked energy which is transferred to the small animal will be more specifically described by the position of the branch. Animals hanging by either the tail or the arm (usually monkeys) as in figures 93c and 93d are always a sign of self-mockery. We have already discussed the animal peering from a knothole (figure 93e), in which it is basically felt to be a "positive" justification for the existence of a "negative" scar. When a house is shown attached to the trunk with an animal inside (figure 93f), the emotional generosity of the birdhouse on the trunk is implied, with the added suggestion that the subject feels very protective toward "weaker" beings.

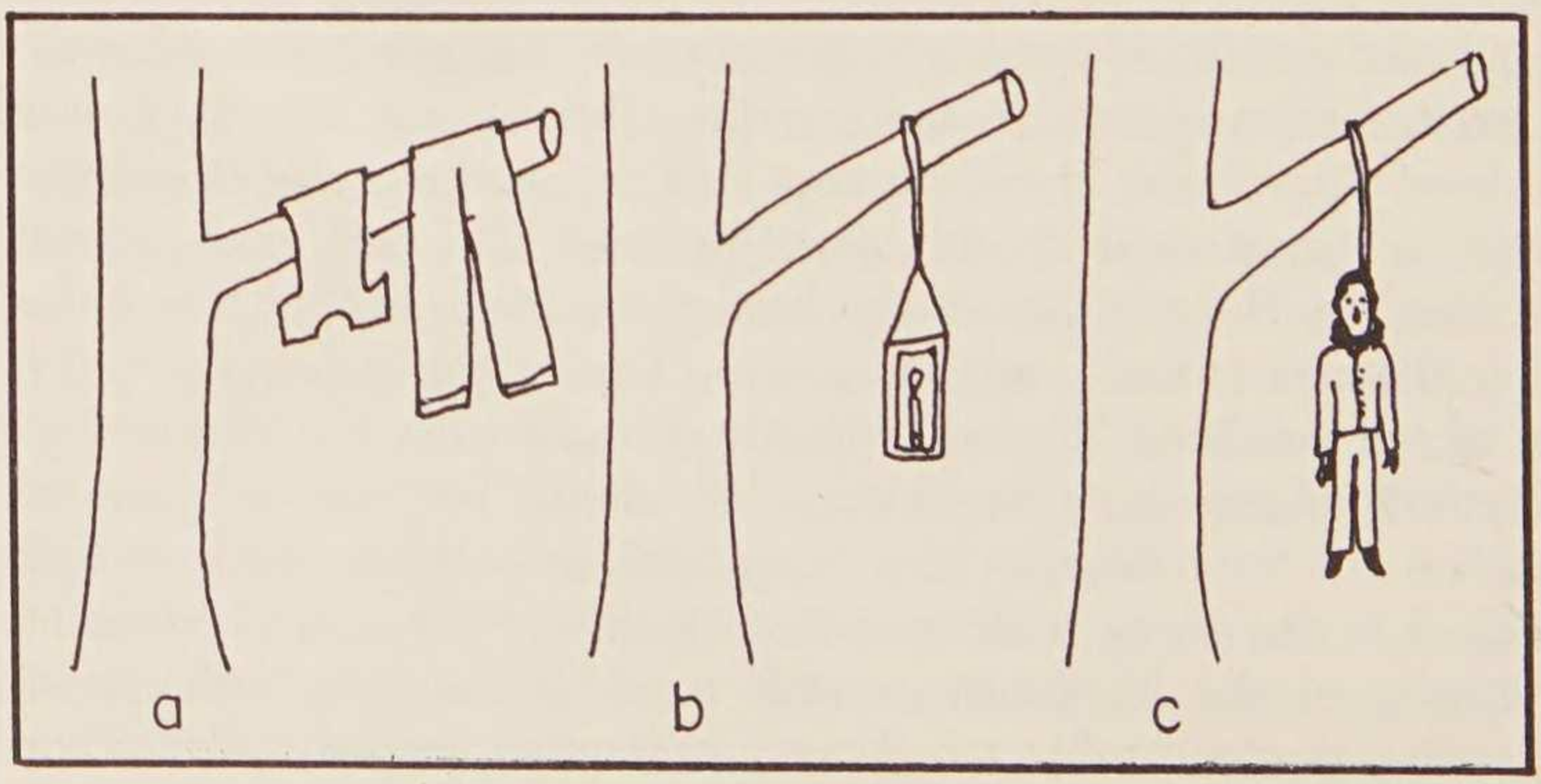


FIGURES 93a–f

FIGURES 94a–c: Other hanging objects

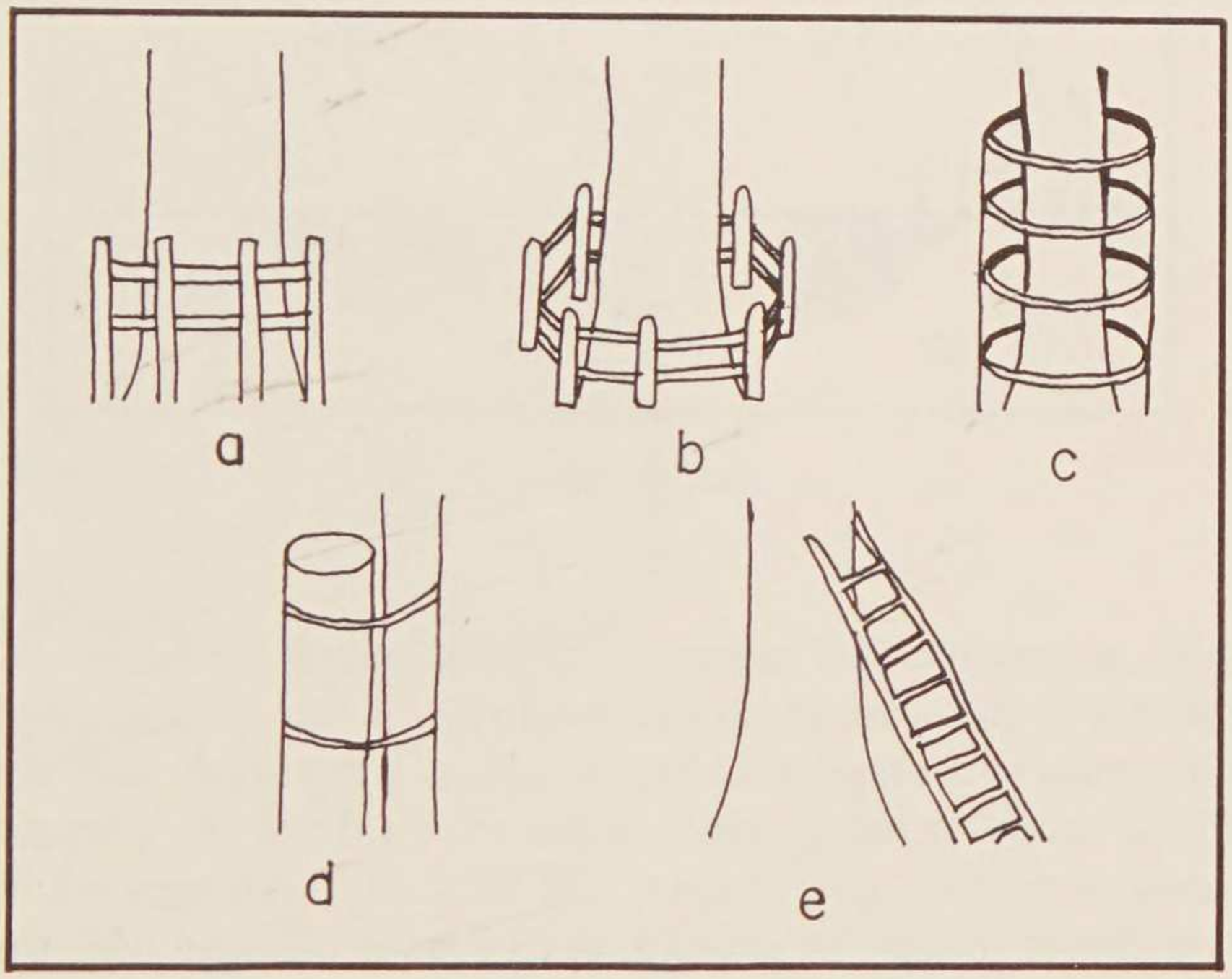
Objects like drying clothes (figure 94a) or a hanging lantern (94b) are nearly always seen on a low, dead limb of the tree. Both suggest that the subject tries to give some justification to the presence of the "useless" dead branch. When a lantern is shown, there is usually an illusory notion that the meaning of the "dead" experience has led to illumined self-understanding. The completely morbid connotations of a "hanged man" shown in the tree (figure 94c) are obvious.

FIGURES 94a–c



FIGURES 95a–e: Fences, support poles, and ladders

A fence shown at the base of the tree is a sign of extreme defensiveness and unapproachability in the sexual and lower emotional area. When a two-dimensional fence crosses in front of the tree (figure 95a), the subject is wary of frontal attack. A three-dimensional fence drawn around the base of the tree (figure 95b) is definitely a "Do not touch me" sign, and the subject feels that he must guard himself in all directions. If it rises



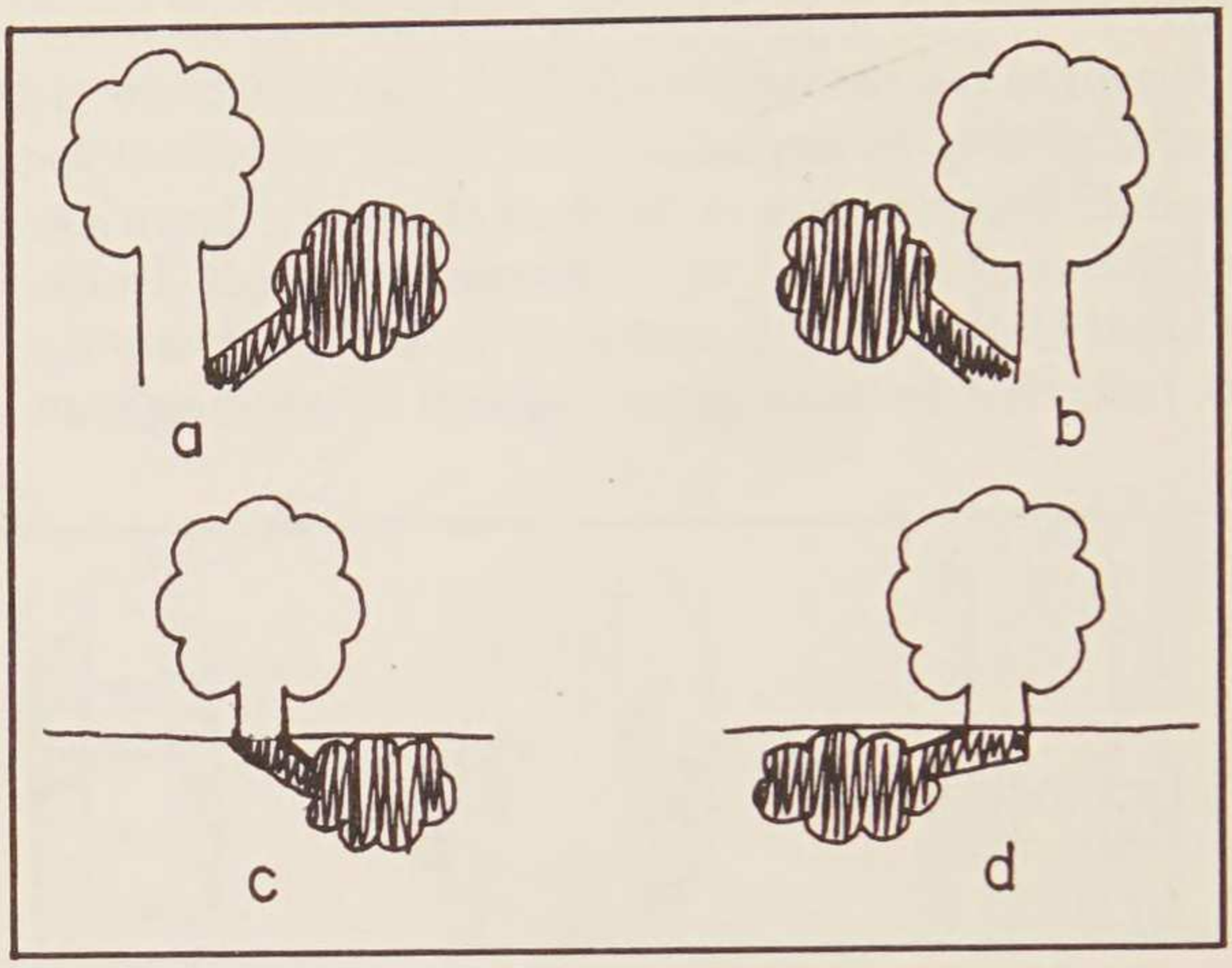
FIGURES 95a–e

high around the trunk (figure 95c), the whole emotional sphere is guarded. In general, while fences are drawn by subjects who are fearful of approach, they are only deterrents (whereas shading and bark are more indicative of defensiveness), since the need for a fence is usually related to the absence of effective internal defenses.

A support pole of any kind (figure 95d) is a sign of weakness in the feeling sphere and a direct indication that the subject will readily accept emotional support. When a ladder is shown leaning against the trunk of the tree (figure 95e), the person feels that his emotional responses are unfairly "used" by others, with or without his encouragement.

FIGURES 96a–d: Shadows of the tree

Trees drawn with a full shadow are relatively rare, even among subjects who render the play of light on the tree with accurate detail. The shadow symbolizes the subject's sense of being haunted by a dark alter ego. When it is shown to the right of the tree above the ground, as in



FIGURES 96a–d

figure 96a, a positive interpretation may be made, for this suggests a person who is both aware of his unconscious shadow and able to integrate it with his conscious responses. Figure 96b is sometimes seen where psychoanalytic "work" is being done on the dark side of the personality, but it still remains problematic, elusive, and basically unintegrated. When the shadow is shown below the ground, as in figures 96c and 96d, the subject is vaguely aware that he has a negative, shadowy self, but this is quickly negated by pushing the matter back into the unconscious sphere. In a representation such as figure 96d, especially, there may be a real danger of possession by the shadow archetype, involving both projections of the dark sides of the self onto others and haunting fears of pursuit by "dark" figures.

In actual drawings, the position of the tree and details of the rendering may expand these basic meanings. In illustration 54, the drawing of a male college student, the shadow below the ground and to the right is combined with a relatively small tree in a position pointing to clear domination of maternal influences. There is also a knothole on the trunk and a complex system of defenses in all spheres, with no roots shown. From this combination of factors it may be inferred that the subject had a weak relationship with his father, discourages emotional approach, ignores or denies his own sexual drives, and has suffered some kind of sexual trauma. In this case the "shadow self," which is sensed but negated, may refer mostly to relatively "normal" male sexual drives and the subject's need to break loose from the mother, rather than to the dark, socially unacceptable actions often associated with the unconscious shadow self.

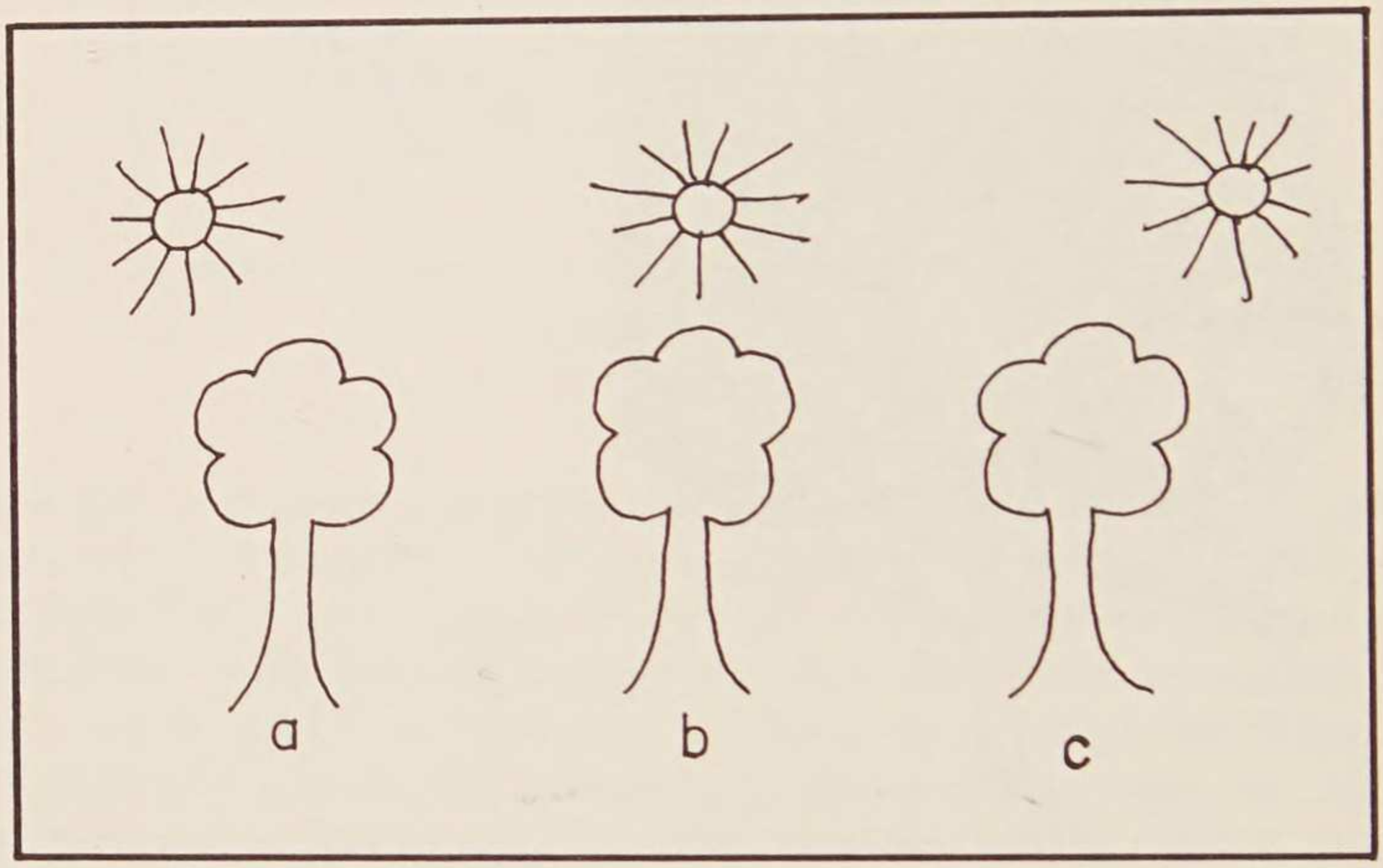


Illustration 54

FIGURES 97a–c: The position of the sun

A drawn symbol for the sun is a fairly important additional sign. In general, the inclusion of the sun means that the subject locates and concentrates a source of power and potential illumination within his broad environment. The sun is not too common in the drawings of adult subjects, but it need not be regarded as a "childish" sign unless it is anthropomorphized.

If the sun is drawn to the left of the tree, as in figure 97a, the subject may view his mother as a kind of hermaphroditic power who has been his source of both nourishment and social or spiritual understanding. The sun

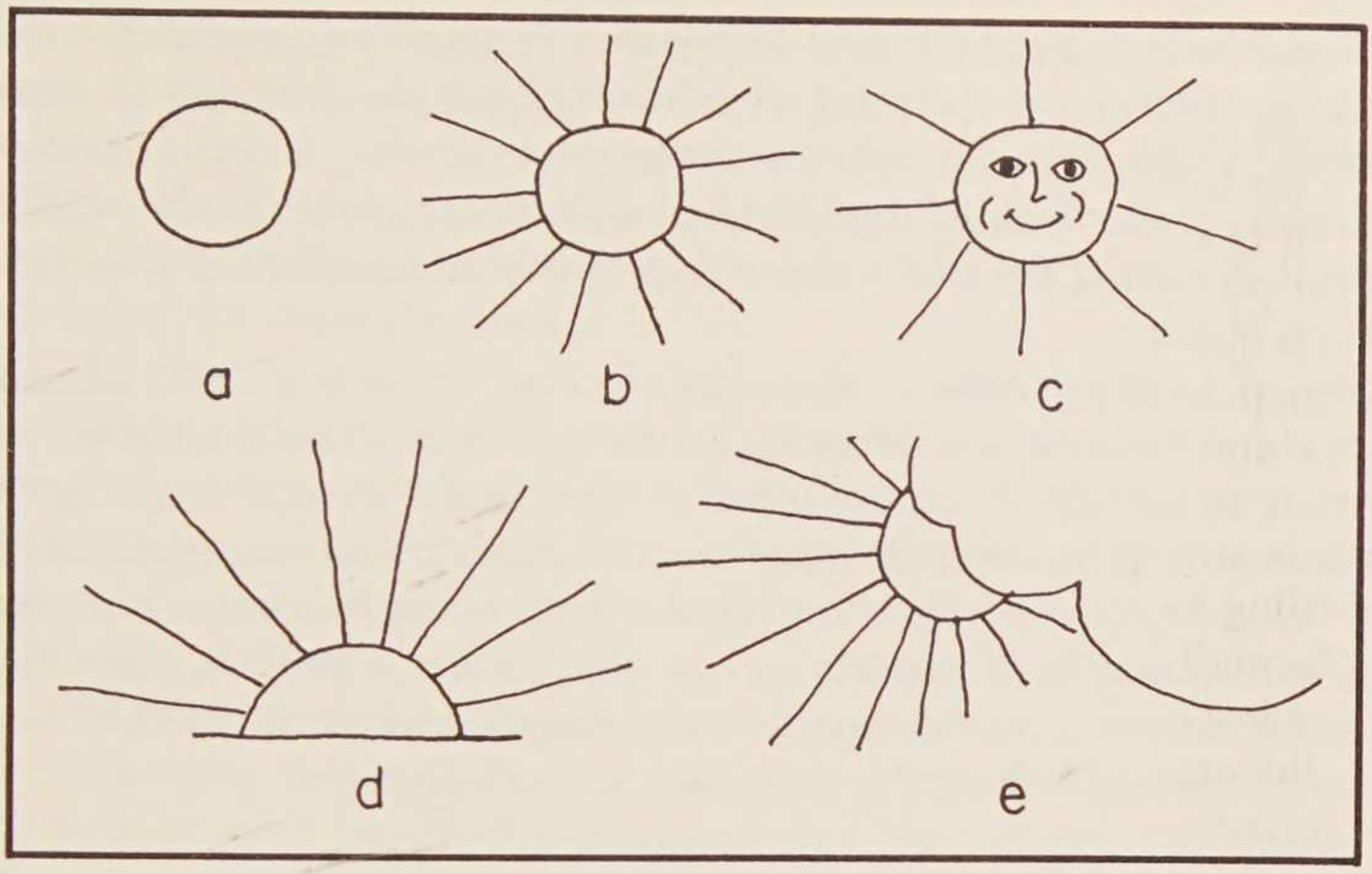


FIGURES 97a–c

in this position is also drawn by persons who have a strong relationship with a priest or minister. On a less personal level, this position suggests that the subject seeks understanding through mystical illumination or formal religious practices. Belief in an impersonal godhead or divine source seems, on the other hand, to be expressed in an overhead position of the sun (figure 97b). This position may equally well be interpreted as meaning that the subject relies on his own efforts in striving toward conscious understanding. The sun to the right of the tree (figure 97c)—the most common position—has several possible references. It may stand for the father, for the hero, or for the wise man. More generally, it suggests either that the individual values rational thinking, or that he identifies the "male" world with power.

FIGURES 98a–e: Special forms taken by the sun

The sun may be shown as a plain circle (figure 98a), but it is commonly drawn with rays, as in 98b. Rays tend to emphasize the localization



FIGURES 98a–e

of the source of power. The anthropomorphic sun (figure 98c) is very common in children's drawings (see illustration 42, p. 217). In the drawing of an adult, besides suggesting a somewhat childish nature, an anthropomorphic sun can always be related to projection of a particular person as the hero figure or guide. When the sun is drawn as in figure 98d, it generally is necessary to ask the subject whether a rising or a setting sun is intended, although rays usually seem to imply the former. A rising sun suggests a powerfully expectant state of mind. A setting sun may refer either to a sense of completion or finality in connection with one stage of life, or it may express a general feeling of depletion. When a cloud is shown partially covering the sun, as in figure 98e, ambivalence or uncertainty are implied. Either the subject is fearful of loosing his faith, or feels that a hero figure is loosing some of his magical powers, or he has the sense that matters he thought he understood clearly are becoming obscured.

Other objects in the sky

Other objects sometimes drawn in the day sky are clouds, lightning, and a vague shadowing which seems to represent the air itself. High clouds may be felt to be a kind of natural protective cover, but clouds drawn very close to the crown, especially if they are dark, stand for an obscure threat to the mental sphere. Lightning is a definite sign that the subject feels threatened by uncontrollable forces, and if the lightning is shown pointing at a particular area of the tree, it may be possible to define the fears quite precisely.

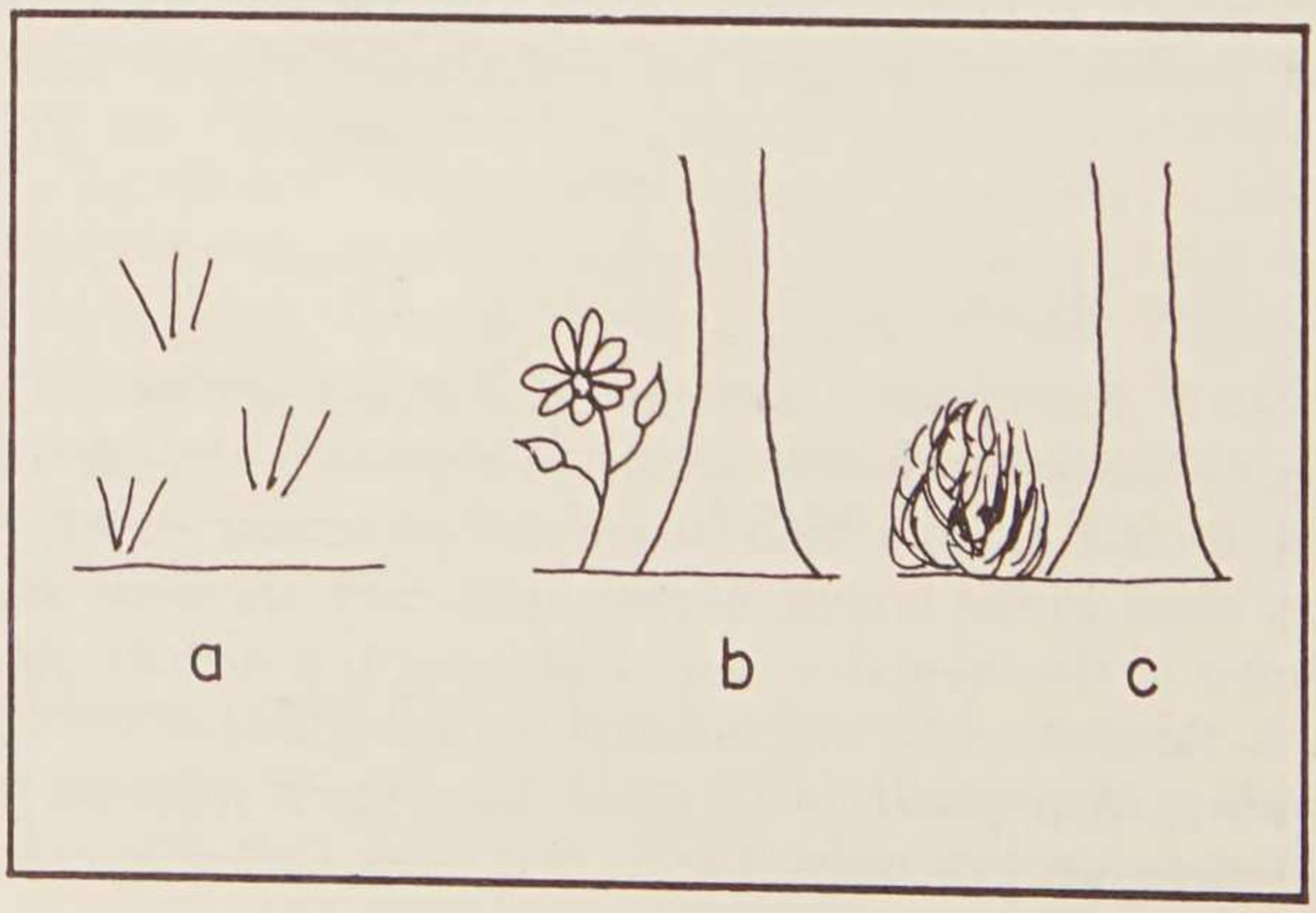
Vague lines around the tree which do not stand for anything, unless it is the air itself, have a special meaning. The subject is trying to establish himself in perspective in relation to the environment, but in a rather egotistical way. He "frames" his drawing with lines, as though he wanted to make it clear that the tree is the object of central importance (see illustration 39, p. 212).

The night sky is very seldom drawn, but when it is the inclusion of stars are to be seen as a reference to distant vision. The symbolism of the moon is an exeedingly complicated subject, but if its position is analyzed according to the zone of the page, and its fundamental maternal, mystery, and fecundity symbolism is kept in mind, an interpretation can be arrived at. For instance, in illustration 57 (p. 317), while a definite identification with the mother at the personal level is implied, contact with the inspirational forces of the feminine mysteries is also suggested.

FIGURES 99a–c: Decoys

The most common of all the additional signs are tufts of grass (figure 99a), flowers (99b), or bushes (99c) drawn near the base of the tree. The distance from the tree will determine to some extent how they should be interpreted, for if they are well separated from the tree itself they may constitute a partial landscape. When drawn near the tree, they are always to be regarded as "decoys." They look innocent enough and may appear unimportant to an inexperienced interpreter, but in our view they are particularly significant because they are always designed to divert attention away from something, and that "something" will be precisely what the interpreter should seek to uncover. Usually the decoys are found around the roots and the lower trunk, although, as we have already seen, some kinds of leaves and flowers in the crown may also serve this function.

FIGURES 99a–c



While distracting the observer's attention from the sexual area is a fairly obvious decoy trick, it should not be forgotten that negative emotions may be associated with the lower part of the trunk, and when an elaborate "nice" flower is drawn close to it, as in figure 99b, the subject may be ready to admit to the complexities of his sexual life, but absolutely unwilling to reveal his "nasty" emotions.

The difference between tufts of grass and flowers as decoys is mostly one of degree, although since men rarely draw flowers, they may create elaborate grasses instead. Where a bush appears (figure 99c), it may serve not only to distract attention, but also to cover or hide an area of the ground or root. Small animals shown near the base of the tree may also be seen as decoys, as may any other natural object which has "nice" connotations. The reader should look once again at the ground around the base of the tree in illustration 34 (p. 194). There the two flowers only serve to emphasize the procreation motif, but the subject's motivation for adding them may still be presumed to be to divert attention from the sexual connotations of the ground rendering.

LANDSCAPES

When the subject responds to the request for a tree drawing by rendering a full landscape, all kinds of objects and scenery may be included. Usually a scene in nature is depicted, but there may also be people or animals shown in action, or human artifacts of all sorts: cars, trains, factories, telephone poles, houses, and so on. All of these objects can be interpreted, but to discuss their meanings is beyond the scope of this book.

It seems to be common practice among some of the other investigators working with the tree test to reject drawings which do not conform to their expectation of "just a tree" or a particular type of tree, and to ask the subject to make a second drawing according to the examiner's specific request. There are two reasons why we do not do this. The first is that we often work with people who do not like to be "tested" and requesting a second drawing immediately may strain the cooperative mood of the client. The second and more important reason is that there is some individual, self-expressive meaning in the content of the first drawing, even if it is not actually a drawing focused exclusively on the tree theme.

When a full landscape is drawn, there is usually a central or dominant tree which can be interpreted according to the method we have described. But the fact of placing the tree in a fully developed scene has its own meaning. In general, landscapes are drawn by subjects who are exceedingly conscious of their interaction with the total environment.

They may be highly developed as individuals and are not necessarily extroverted types, but they cannot define themselves without reference to their surroundings.

The kind of background chosen for the landscape may express three different things. The subject's familiar, daily environment may be drawn; he may show a landscape filled with nostalgic ties to his early years; or he may depict the kind of place where he longs to live.

We do not intend to elaborate on possible forms to be seen in landscape drawings, but before turning to comments on some actual renderings, one point should be mentioned. If a lake is drawn near the central tree and a reflection of the tree can be seen in the lake, this must be viewed differently from the "shadow" reflection. There is some hint of narcissism in the mirrored tree, of course, but more important is the fact that the subject nearly always claims he can be very objective about himself. This is usually patently untrue, and these persons are consequently rather challenging and difficult clients.

Turning now to illustration 55, we see a central tree set against a backdrop of mountain scenery. It is a springlike scene, with a basically positive and happy feeling, although the presence of the clouds suggests some faint premonition that the prominently drawn sun may be obscured in the future. The drawing was made by the same young girl who drew illustration 26 (p. 180), so we already know a good deal about her. She recently visited California, where she wants to move, and in this case the setting is the projection of a longed-for environment. The mountains refer to her high aspirations, to that which "will be climbed" with an eager sense of challenge. She places the sun on the right, but the bird flying into the left side of the tree crown indicates that she is receptive to nonrational ideas, even though more attention is paid to the rational, male world. The tree is basically healthy, although here stereotyped elements are more noticeable than in her earlier full tree drawing. On the whole, this drawing is not as useful for detail analysis as her single tree, but it is a better expression of her happy feelings about simply being alive and young and ready for whatever the future may bring.

Illustration 56 is the drawing of a physician and medical researcher who was born in Ireland and now lives in the United States. In this case the setting is definitely nostalgic, for he described the landscape as an Irish country scene. Here two sources of power are shown, both stemming basically from the right: the sun and the flowing river. The presence of the river suggests that he is able to draw from the creative sources of the collective unconscious, especially as the river is "bridged" very near the central tree. The schematized birds shown in several parts of the sky indicate that he is receptive to ideas outside of his own discipline; he is, indeed, a man of broad culture, who is at the same time open-minded and capable of concentrated efforts in his work. The central tree is small, but

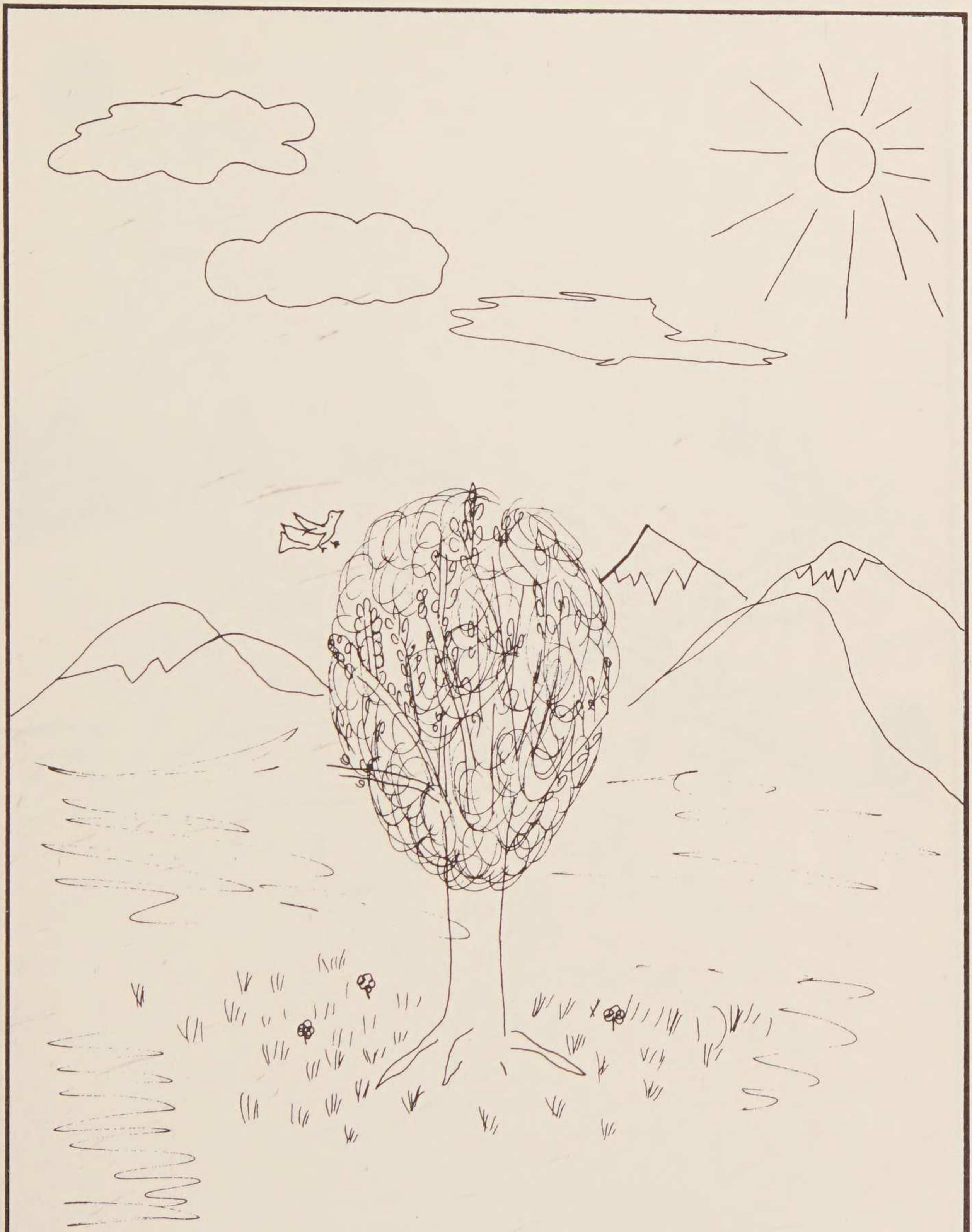


Illustration 55

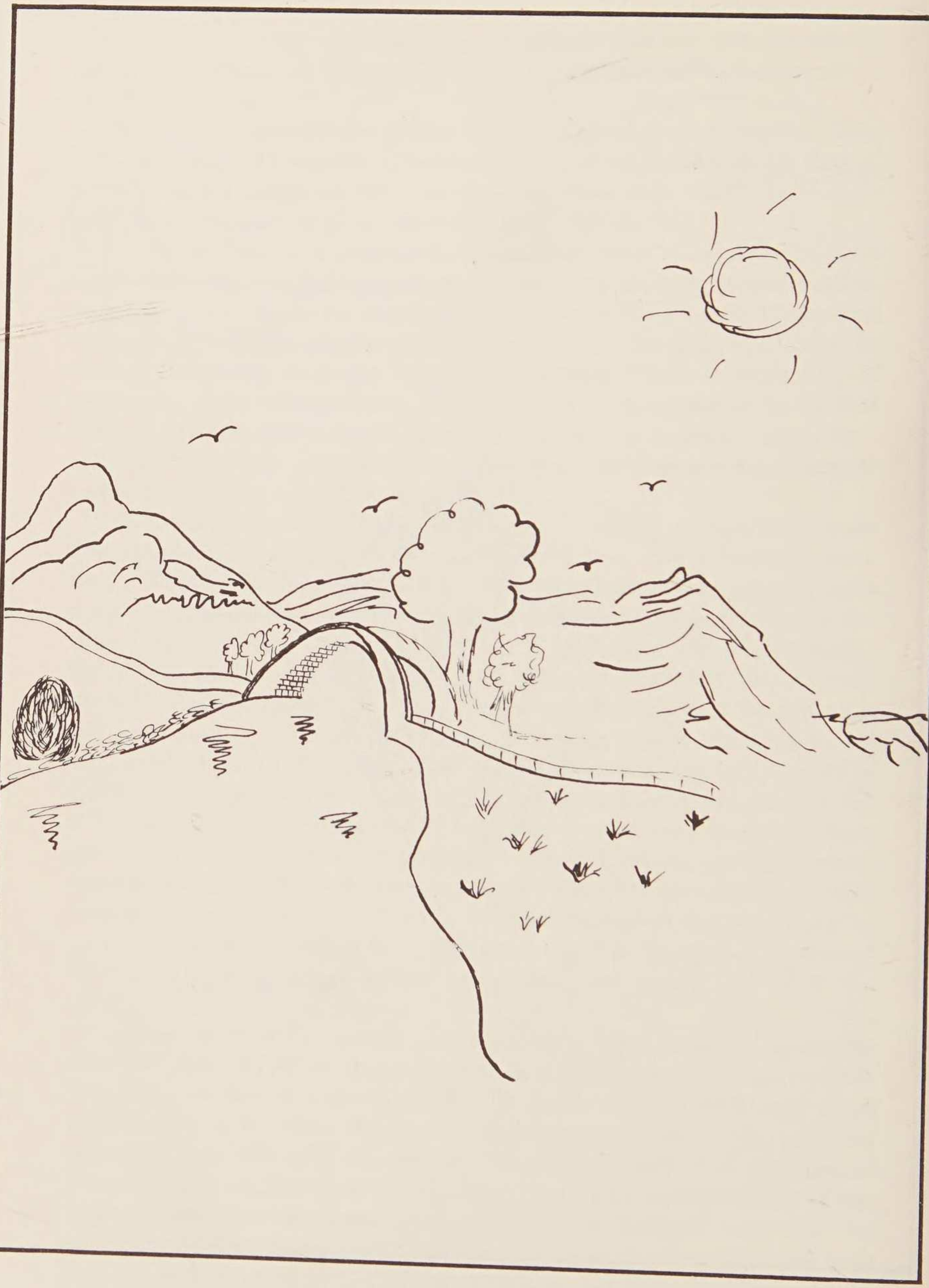


Illustration 56



Illustration 57

no less amenable to interpretation than an isolated small tree. Here, however, the size of the tree does not have the "overwhelmed by the size of the world" reference of the small tree surrounded by white space, for the environment is defined and the tree is securely established at its center. The size of the tree expresses the subject's capacity for hard work and ego concentration, while the setting symbolizes his awareness that his individual efforts have both their source and their meaningfulness in his relations with the whole.

The third landscape, illustration 57, is quite another matter. The subject is a nineteen-year-old female college student who describes the drawing as "winter night." She has lived all of her life in New York City and yearns for the country. However, the drawing suggests that she has no real sense of personal identity, for groups of small trees are drawn without showing one which can be discerned as separate from the "crowd." Even though there is no tree available for detailed analysis, one may infer from the presence of the full moon on the left that the subject is strongly identified with the mother. However, since the path leads to the group of trees on the right, efforts are being made to approach the "male" world, and perhaps also to "reconcile" the mother and father, who live together but are mentally estranged. In this case the landscape must be interpreted somewhat negatively, since it has a sad, "lost" tone and does not contain a central tree. Nevertheless, this drawing is still more positive than the "forest of trees" to be discussed shortly, for it indicates that the subject is looking for herself. Although the fantasy of "getting out of the city" still includes "identification with the crowd," the presence of the path may be regarded as a sign that she has some feeling of the direction in which she will find herself.

MORE THAN ONE TREE

More than one tree drawn on the page nearly always has some problematic reference, with varying degrees of seriousness. Three basic patterns can be distinguished: (1) one tree crossed out and a second tree drawn next to it; (2) two or more individual trees; and (3) a whole forest of trees.

FIGURE 100: One tree crossed out

When the subject begins a tree drawing and then crosses through it and draws a second tree, the first tree usually represents his "past personality." In our experience there is always a change in the type of tree. The subject will be in the process of a phase of critical reorientation. The

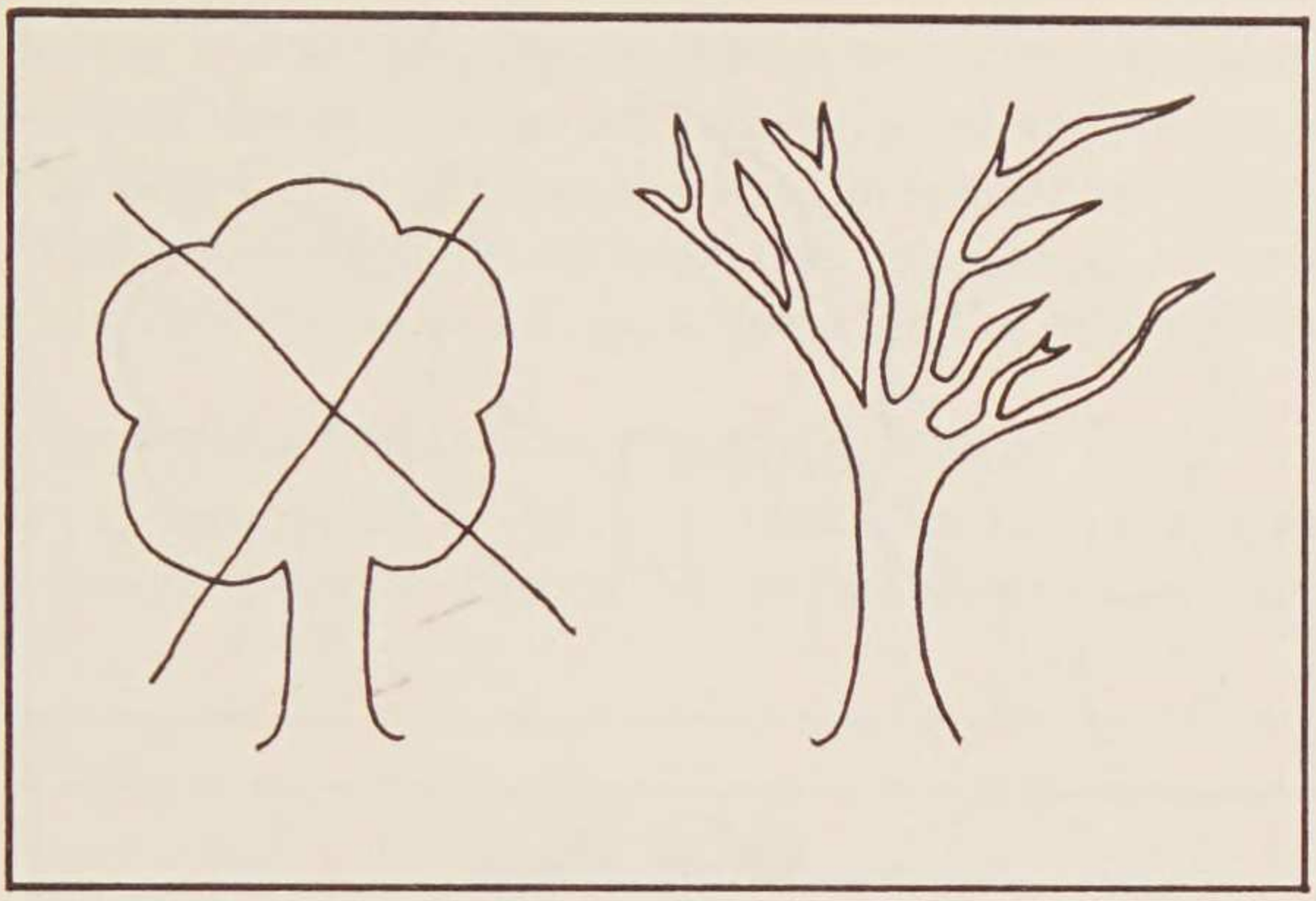


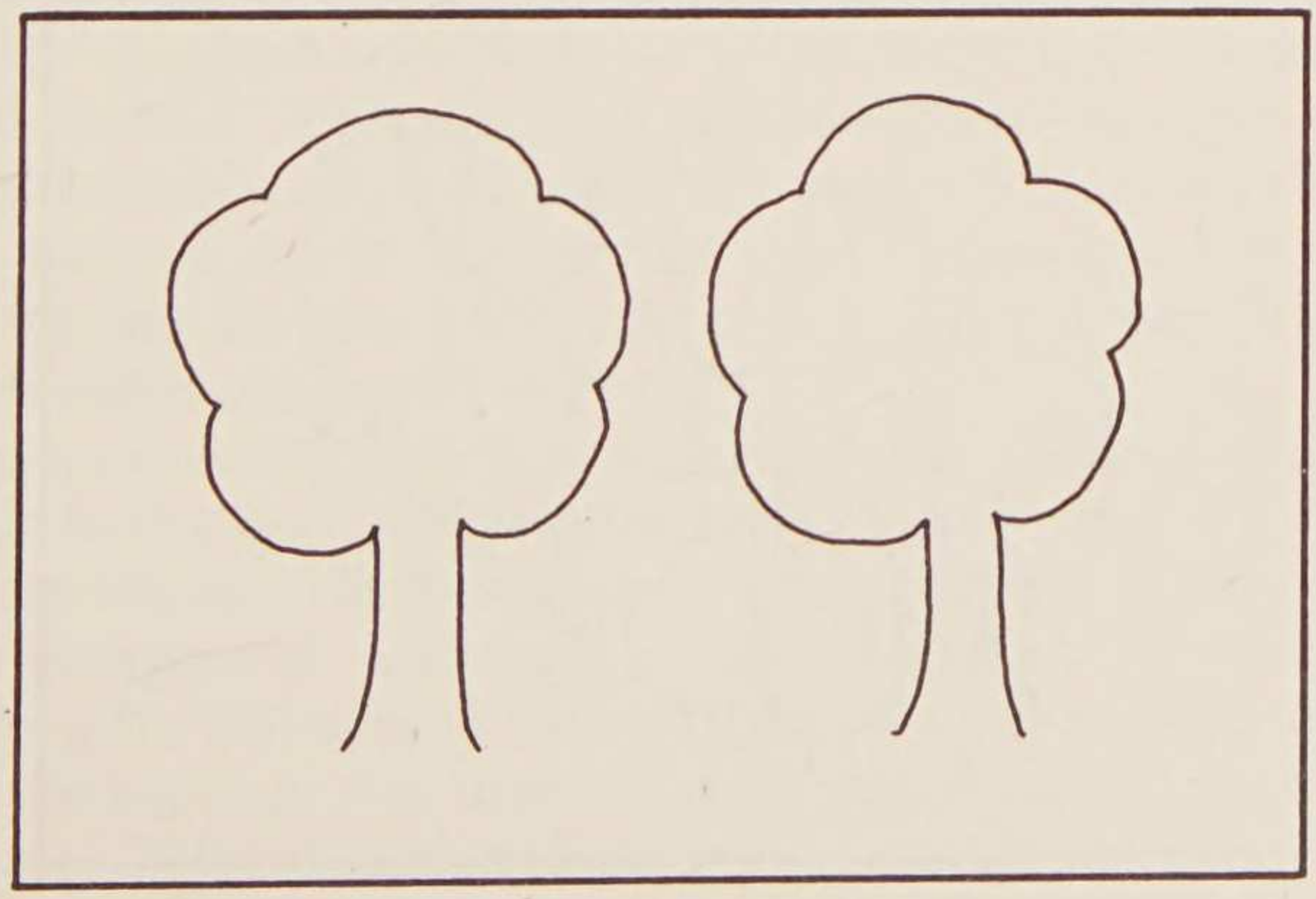
FIGURE 100

second tree should be analyzed in detail, but even if the first tree is incomplete, both its type and any details shown may be very useful in defining the nature and direction of the personality changes which are in process.

FIGURE 101: Two trees of equal weight

Where two trees of the same size are drawn on the same ground, the subject generally sees himself as a "complicated" person, although this form is rarely chosen by genuinely complex individuals. If the trees are of the same type and occupy two sides of the page, there is ambivalence about male-female influences. If they are of two different types but still of equal size and perspective, some of the "personality in change" meanings of the crossed-out tree are suggested, but without the implication that the transition has a direction from the old to the new.

FIGURE 101



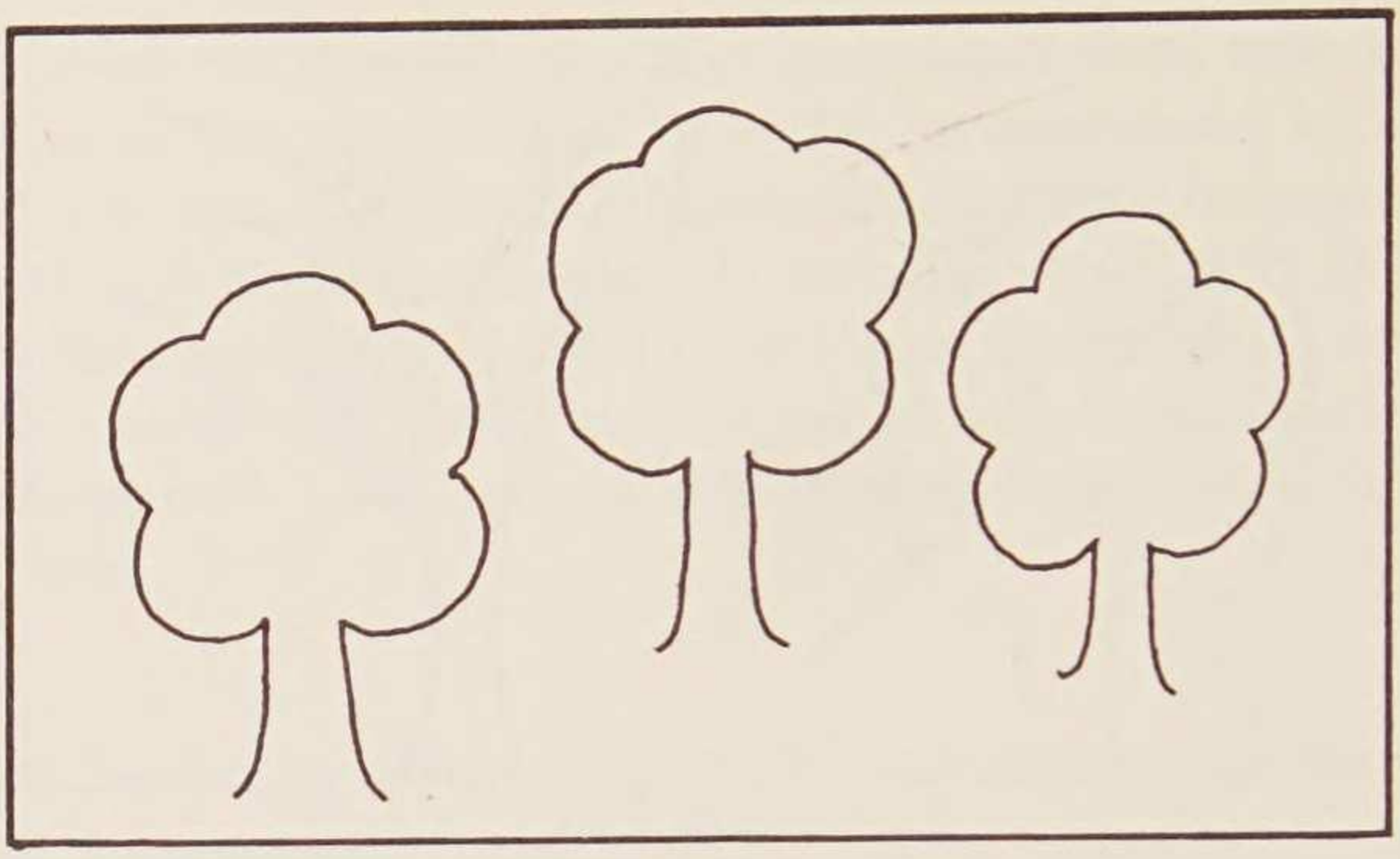


FIGURE 102

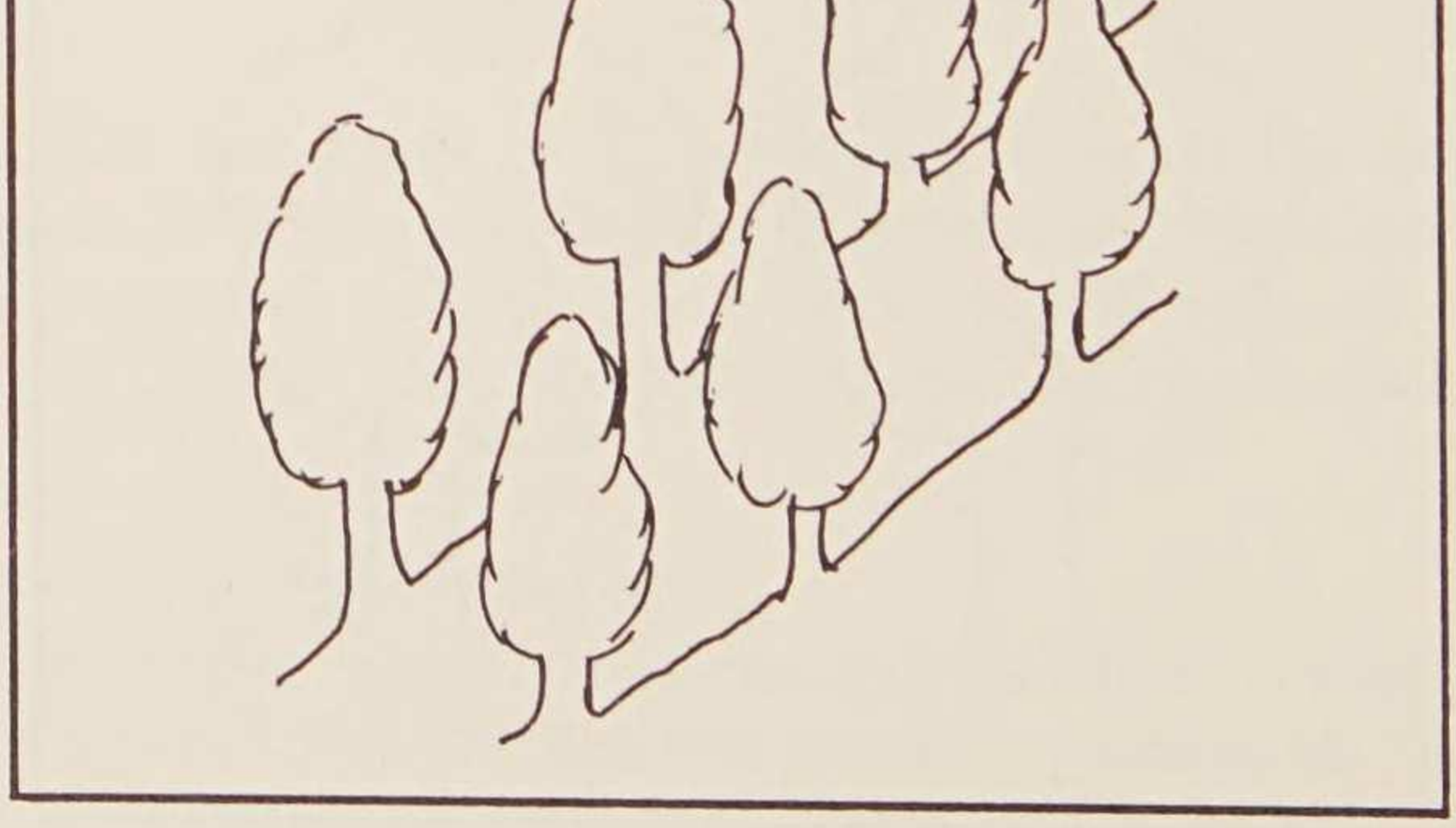
FIGURE 102: More than one tree in perspective

When two or more trees are drawn in perspective, the person will be strongly identified with family members or a small peer group. Although the tree which occupies the foreground may usually be taken as most representative of the subject, there is always some confusion about the self in the perspective of the group, as though the subject were fearful of separating himself from the latter.

FIGURE 103: A tree-lined avenue

When the subject draws a whole avenue of trees (usually poplars) the connotations are less negative than with any other manner of drawing more than one tree. Here the row of trees has some of the attributes of the full landscape, and although the individual will be strongly identified with social forces, the presence of the "road" may be taken as an indica-

FIGURE 103



tion that he has a sense of purpose. These drawings are usually made in perspective, and the tree in the near foreground can be used for detail analysis. The double row of trees also has the special meaning of pointing to a type who is able to draw on collective energies in his own strivings, which are usually focused on attaining some kind of social power.

FIGURE 104: Several trees with overlapping crowns

This form is a transition to the forest motif, for the subject will be identified with social, collective forces, but without a sense of individual pur-

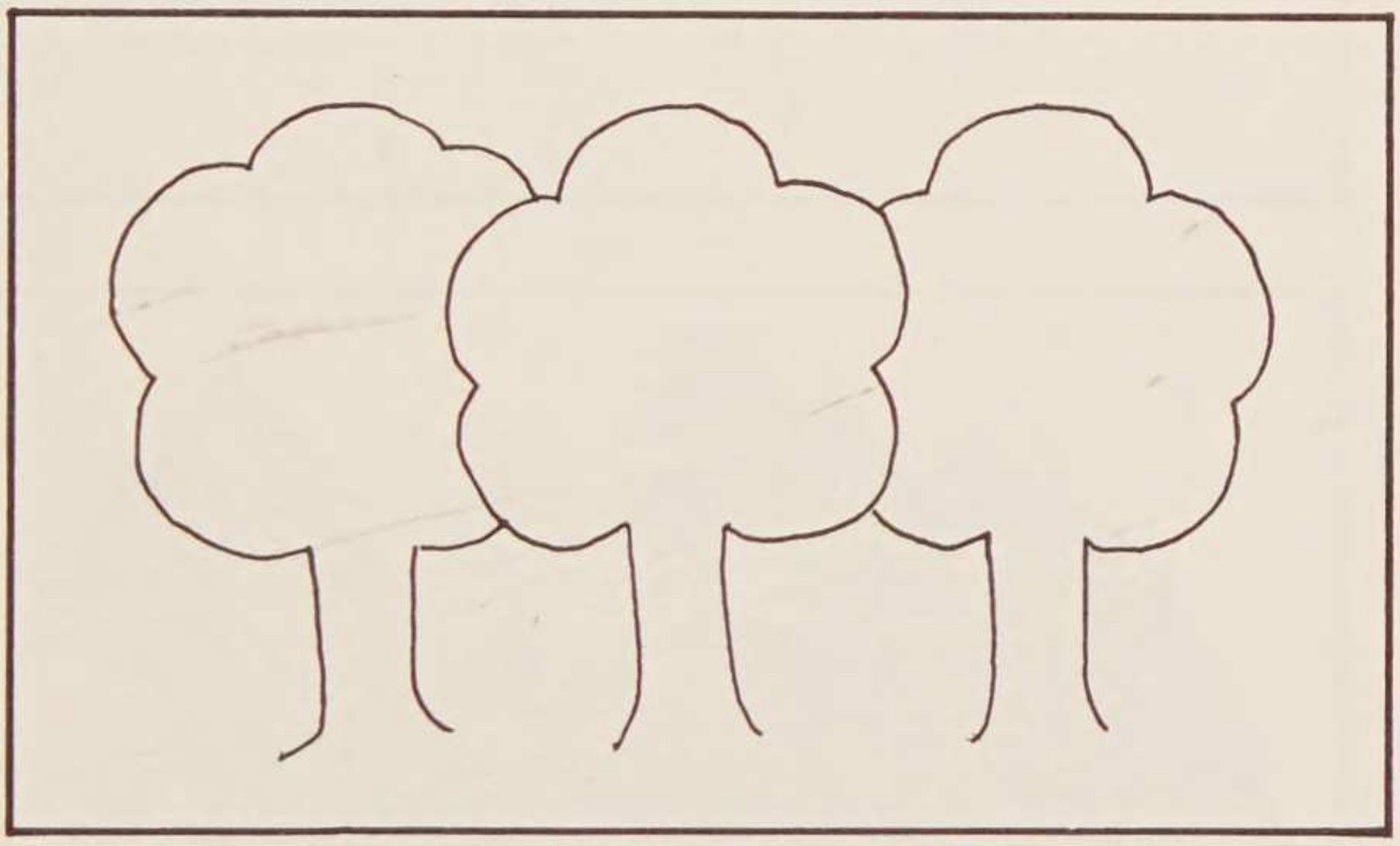


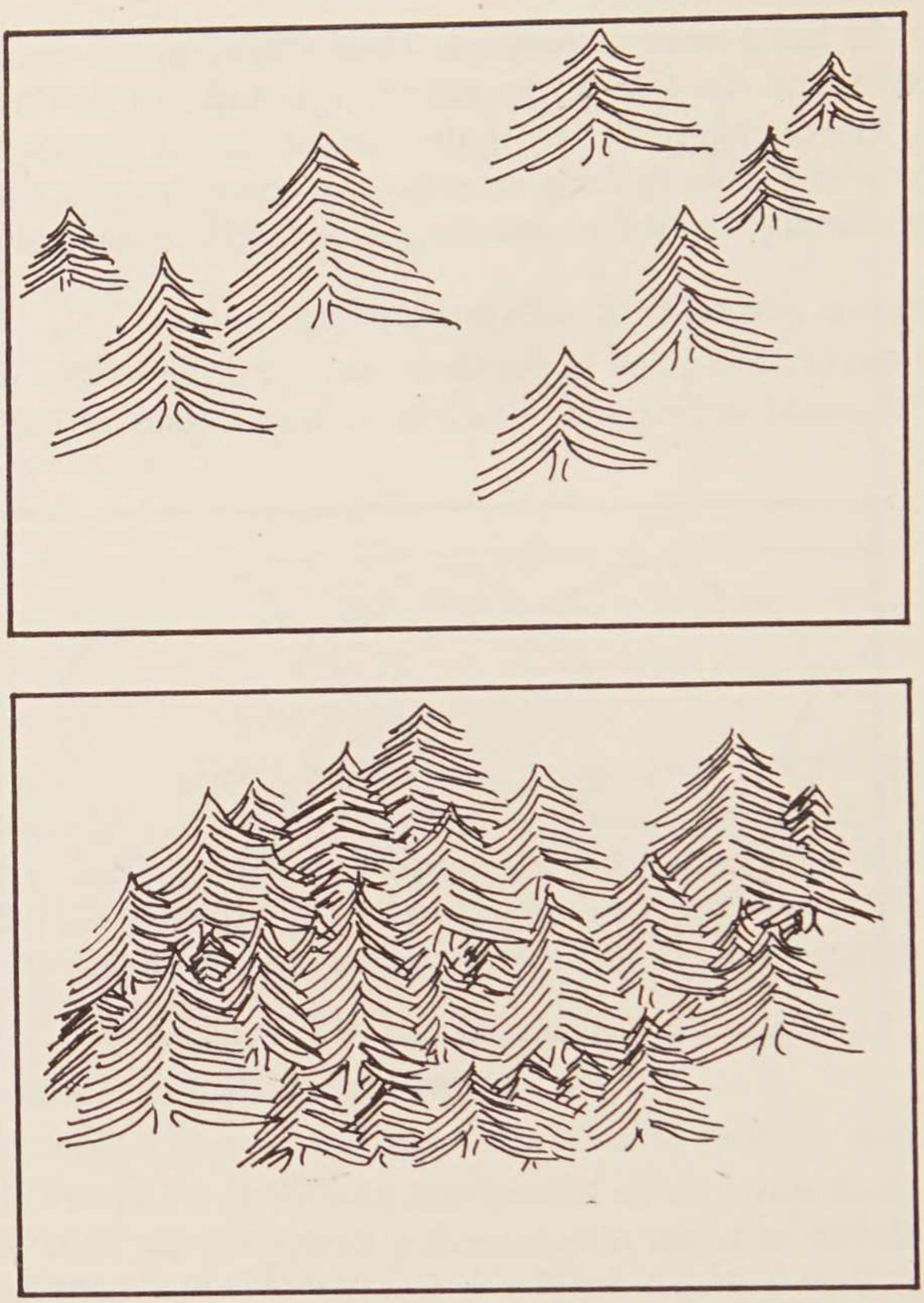
FIGURE 104

pose. He may appear to be individualized—that is, his overt behavior may be describable in terms of personality traits—but his behavior and his values will derive almost completely from conformist standards.

FIGURES 105a and 105b: Loose and dense forests

The drawing of a forest of small trees is typical of persons who are completely identified with the mass of humanity and feel that they are "lost in the crowd." Here there will not usually be even a pretense of positive identification with social values or movements, for the subject has no belief in his own worth. The only difference between the loose forest of figure 105a and the dense forest of 105b is that the subject who draws 105b feels suffocated as well as lost.

A drawing showing more than one tree on the page is included as illustration 58. In this case *both* identical trees in perspective *and* overlapping crowns are drawn. The subject is a young woman of very strict Irish Catholic background who comes from a tightly knit "clannish" family in which she is the youngest of four children. She was married about a year ago, but the marriage was annulled at the instigation of her parents, since her husband "refused to work for a living," and she is again living in the



FIGURES 105a and 105b

family home. She frequently speaks of entering a convent but also has some interest in studying to be a nurse. Although she is already so identified with the family group that transference of this dependence to the less personal family of nuns would probably be fairly natural for her, the numerous signs of sexual ambivalance shown in the drawn roots, well covered by grass (with the grass suggesting the vulva motif), make us inclined to encourage her instead to pursue the nursing studies. Although a great deal of shame about her "womanhood" is shown in the shading of the crown as well as the roots, she clearly would like to marry again. The trees show so little development of personal will that she is unlikely to do so unless the choice of a second husband is made by the family. In any case, her ambivalence about sexuality would probably be more harmoniously sublimated in a service profession than in the religious life.

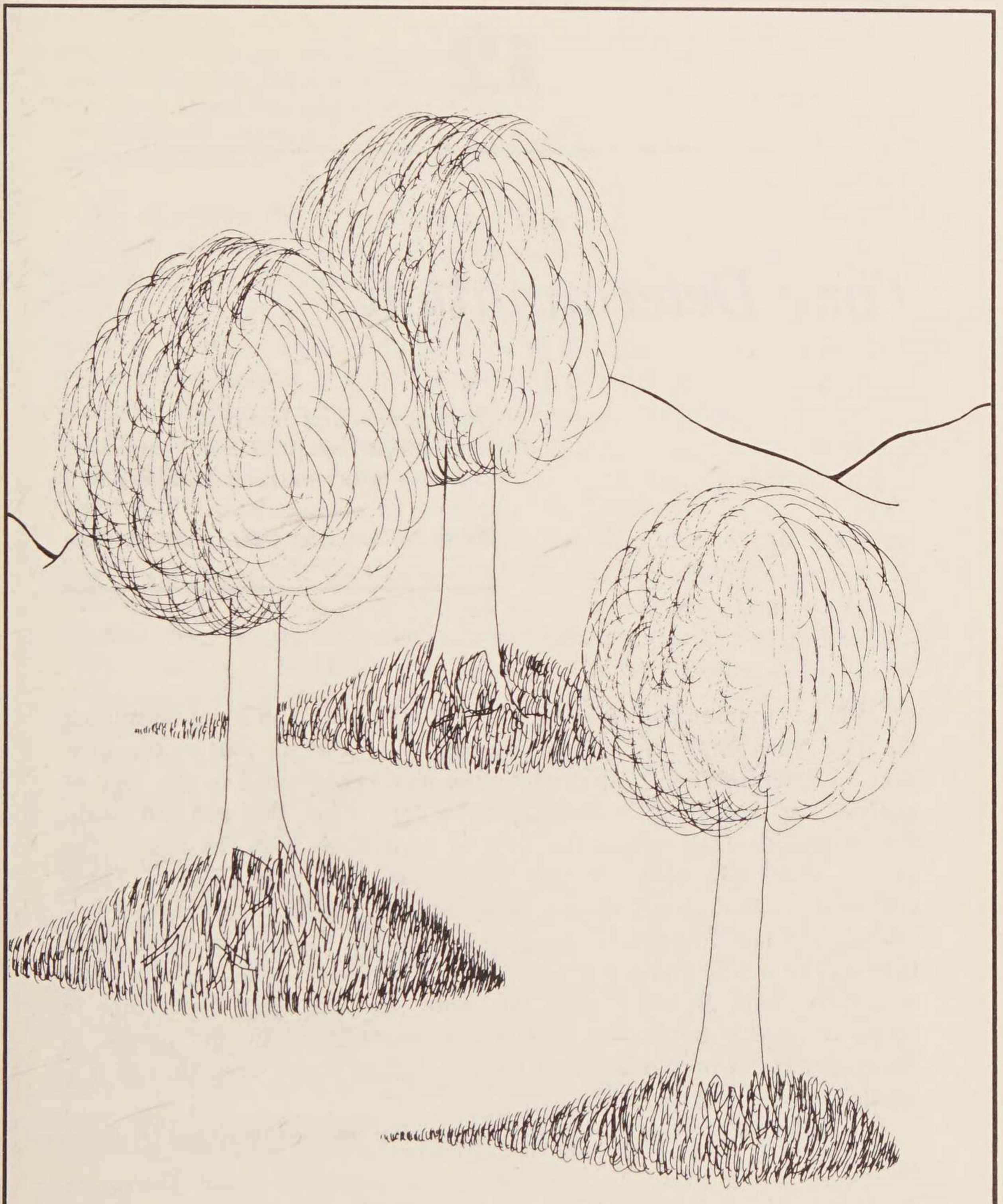


Illustration 58

12

Time Determination

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
and time future contained in time past.
T. S. Eliot,
Burnt Norton, The Four Quartets, 1935

AS WE have mentioned throughout the book, a method for determining the date when important events occurred is an integral part of the tree-drawing interpretation. Apparently other workers involved in this type of analysis also discovered, independently of each other, that one can establish proportionalities within the tree, in correlation with the age of the person, which will yield relatively precise dating of certain events. These are usually, although not always, episodes of a traumatic nature, and frequently are not consciously remembered by the subject. In some cases they will be totally repressed, particularly where one is dealing with early sexual traumata. In other cases the event has had deep importance in terms of psychic imprinting, but is not remembered by the person as being significant until analysis of the tree brings it out, even though it is available for conscious recall.

The underlying rationale for this recognition was summarized by Buck in 1948:

It has been found, for example, that scars on the Tree's trunk, broken or damaged branches, almost invariably represent "felt scars" left by psychic traumata in the subject's past, and the time of occurrence of the traumatic episode or episodes may be gauged roughly at times by assuming that the trunk's base (that portion of the trunk nearest the ground) represents infancy; the top of the tree, the subject's present life age; and the space in between, the intervening years. To illustrate: if the subject were actually thirty years of age and there was a scar on the trunk approximately one-third the distance from the base of the trunk to the Tree's top, a traumatic episode might be presumed to have oc-

curred in the life age nine to eleven area. The examiner might ask, "What very unusual thing happened to you when you were about ten?" It is postulated that only those events the subject himself regards as "scarring" will be symbolized, not necessarily events that to the objective observer might seem likely to leave permanent scars (Buck, 1948b, p. 340).

It is clear from this description that Buck is referring to a proportionality between the total height of the tree and the age of the subject at the time of drawing, in correlation with the proportional measurement of the height of the scar to the age of the subject at the time of the event in question. The second point to be noted in this passage is Buck's recognition that the traumatic quality of the episode is determined by subjective standards rather than by objective appraisal. A third point to be underlined for comparison with other methods is that in measuring the height of the drawn tree, Buck does not take the root into consideration, but begins the measurement from the base of the trunk.

Five years after Buck's original publication, Levine and Galanter (1953) set out to test his trauma mark hypothesis. Although the authors make reference to the page in Buck's text where the above quotation appears, their manner of paraphrasing his statement is highly misleading. They wrote: ". . . he [Buck] suggests that the ratio between the height of the traumatic indicator and the total height of the tree will yield the approximate age, plus or minus one year, of the occurrence of the trauma" (Levine and Galanter, 1953, p. 74). If this proportionality were indeed to be calculated, the numbers would always be less than one. One may assume that they carried out their measurements in accordance with Buck's actual statement, but at no place in their brief report of experimental results did they say exactly *how* they attempted to measure and correlate trauma marks with age. Furthermore, the authors did not like Buck's adherence to a *subjective* criterion of what is traumatic for any individual; therefore, they selected for their experiment the drawings of twenty-seven paraplegics, assuming that amputation of a limb must represent an *objective* traumatic event. Since the time of amputation in these cases was known, the tree drawings, they reasoned, should either show or fail to show the appearance and correct placement of a trauma mark in correlation with the known year of amputation. Only seven of the twenty-seven cases tested exhibited trauma marks at all, and none of these fell into the correct placement, according to the authors' interpretation of Buck's "measurements." They therefore concluded that "either the hypothesis has dubious validity, or that other unknown personality factors contribute to the appearance or non-appearance of such indicators on tree drawings" (Levine and Galanter, 1953, p. 74).

Two years later, J. Lyons (1955) reevaluated the whole problem of scars on the H-T-P drawings. He correctly pointed out that there are two underlying difficulties involved in investigating this problem:

(1) The question of criteria for determining the date and nature of the trauma. Is the trauma only that which seems traumatic to an outside observer, or shall one take the word of the subject himself? If the latter, does this not assume that the subject is always completely willing and able to remember and describe the traumatic event as such? (2) The question of comparability of units. What units shall be used to measure the proportionate height of the scar on the tree and the proportionate date of the trauma in the life span? Have we a right to assume, for example, that each year of life is experienced as equal to every other year, or that one half the height of the tree subjectively represents one half the objective life span? . . . If one had some trustworthy and completely independent criteria by which to define the traumata and then to locate it in the subjective life span of the subject, one could use this datum as validation.
(Lyons, 1955, p. 267)

Although Lyons did not regard it as essential to solve the difficult problem of validating the scar hypothesis in order to make fruitful clinical use of it, he attempted to do so in the following manner. He measured the height of the tree (T_h) in millimeters "from the lowest to the highest point where a mark was made on the paper" and divided it into the measurement of the height of the scar (S_h) in millimeters, taken from the lowest point of the tree to the middle of the scar. Through questioning he determined the age in years (Ea) when the subject indicated that the trauma had occurred, and divided this by the subject's age (Pa) at the time of testing. The relationship may be seen in schema 6 (p. 331). In this way Lyons obtained two ratios for each tested individual (q), which should have validated the hypothesis if they showed good correlation.

Since Lyons found that only 5 percent of the adult subjects in his sample drew spontaneous scars, and only 10 percent of the children tested (a surprisingly small number in comparison to our sample), he decided to induce his subjects to add a scar to their finished drawings by asking them to show where lightning had hit the tree at some time in the past. Later, in an interview about the rendering, he asked the question: "What is the worst single thing that ever happened to you in your whole life? When did it happen?" The induced scar on the tree and the localization of the trauma in the life span gave him the information necessary to correlate the two ratios referred to above. When these were calculated, he found that the correlation factor was 0.54, at better than 1 percent level of confidence.

In order further to rule out chance in the placement of the induced scars on the trees, he devised the following three experiments: (1) A seven-inch straight line was drawn on a piece of paper, and fifty subjects were asked to draw a line across it. The age of the subject here could not be compared to the length of the line; however, ratios obtained from actual tree drawings were correlated with the ratios calculated for the straight line and the placement of the crossing point. Such correlations showed no significance. (2) An empty tree seven inches in height was

mimeographed on a piece of paper and given to another set of fifty subjects, with the instruction that they should mark the tree with a lightning scar. Again the ratios were calculated and compared to those of actual tree drawings. No significant correlation was found. (3) Finally, with a new group of test subjects, the instruction was given to enter a lightning mark on their tree drawings, but instead of finding the date of the worst event in their lives, he asked them to identify and date the *best* thing that had ever happened to them. In this experiment the correlated ratios between placement of the lightning scar and the best life event were also without significance.

Based upon these experiments, Lyons concluded that the scars, whether spontaneous or induced, were not simply the result of random factors, but were expressive of events significant to the individual.

About a year later, Bolin and his co-workers (1956) attempted to replicate Lyons' experiment, but claimed that "no significant correlation was found between the relative height of the 'lightning scar' on the tree and the relative age of the 'worst event'! These two groups' 'scar' placement was not significantly different from 39 psychotic subjects' random placement of X-marks on prepared (duplicated) tree drawings" (Bolin et al., 1956, p. 397). It should be noted, however, that while the authors stated that they had followed Lyons' design faithfully, they deviated so grossly in one significant respect from his procedure that their negative findings cannot be said to constitute a rebuttal of Lyons' results, since they did not actually replicate his experiment. Lyons emphasized that "The two bits of information from each subject, the induced scar on the tree and the localization of the trauma in the life span, are . . . obtained *under two different sets* that are separated by at least an hour . . ." (Lyons, 1955, p. 268; emphasis added). Bolin and associates, on the other hand, induced the subject to place the "lightning mark" on the finished drawing and then *immediately* "asked him to recall the worst single thing that had ever happened to him and when it had happened" (Bolin et al., 1956, p. 396). The time lapse in Lyons' experiment was an important aspect of the design, exerting a natural and fundamental effect on the unconscious processes of the testees, permitting *dissociation* of the request to induce a lightning scar from the later question about conscious recall of the "worst event."

In the first edition of Koch's book (1949), no mention is made of the use of trauma marks on the tree drawings to establish the timing of significant events. In the revised edition (1957), however, he devotes a chapter to the discussion of the "Wittgenstein-Index," so named because the method came to Koch's attention through his correspondence with Dr. Graf von Wittgenstein, a German neurologist. Apparently neither Wittgenstein nor Koch were aware of the work of the American investigators discussed above, although one may presume that Wittgenstein's "remark-

able discovery" was made some time in the middle 1950s. His theoretical basis was the following: "Considering that the tree drawn at a particular moment can correspond only to the situation of the drawer at that moment, one should find a measure which manifests itself equally in the tree and in the life of the subject. The first attempts in this vein have already confirmed my supposition" (Koch, 1957, pp. 45–46; our translation).

His method is to measure the height of the tree (T_h) in millimeters, and divide this figure by the age (Pa) in years and months (expressed in fractions of the year) of the subject. The quotient is an index designated *i*, which Koch refers to as the Wittgenstein-Index. Any trauma mark (S_h) or other sign of sudden change in the tree—such as a twist in direction of a major branch—is measured from the base of the tree in millimeters and divided by *i*, which gives the exact age at which the event occurred (Ea) (see schema 6, p. 331). It is important to note that in this case the roots are taken into consideration in the measurements, while in his other calculations Koch omits the root area.

In Koch's use of this method, if the tree goes off the top of the page (in which case he says that the measurable height of the tree does not correspond with its intended length), he asks the subject to point out where he thinks the tree would end. Although Koch does not seem to be aware of any experimental validation of the placement of trauma marks in relation to age and has some mental reservations about how the apparently unconscious recording of a scar could reflect an almost clocklike precision of timing, he is basically enthusiastic about the successful application of the Wittgenstein-Index.

Koch also makes some mention, in the revised edition of his book, of a new technique of time measurements developed in the Netherlands. The method is described as follows. The subject draws a tree, and after its completion he is asked to cross through it with a line (cf. Lyons' induction of a lightning scar). The point where the added line crosses the tree is supposed to represent an important event in the subject's life. The time determination is complicated, according to Koch, and involves proportional relations of the subject's age, the total height, and one of the two sections of the tree, that below the crossing line. Although Koch does not explain exactly how his Dutch colleagues are measuring these relations, it would seem likely that the following proportions are used: the lower part (A in mm) divided by the unknown age of the trauma (Ea); correlated with the total height of the tree (T_h) divided by the subject's present age (Pa) (see schema 6, p. 331).

The technique used by Father Abel for determining age at the time of a trauma, recorded as a scar, is similar in basic concept to all of these methods. The underlying assumption is that the total height of the drawn tree represents the present age of the person, while the placement of a scar or trauma mark will appear at a height in the tree which is propor-

tional to the difference between the present age of the subject and his age at the time of the event. Therefore, if one wants to determine x, the unknown age at which the event occurred, one takes: height of the tree (in millimeters), divided by the age of the subject = height of the trauma mark (in millimeters), divided by x. In other terms, to obtain Ea one may divide the height of the trauma mark (S_h) by the height of the tree (T_h) and multiply the present age of the subject (Pa) by the quotient (see schema 6, p. 331).

These measurements include the root in determining the total height of the drawn tree. On the other hand, when the tree continues beyond the top margin of the page, no allowance is made for unfinished portions, for it is the drawn tree as it appears on the page which is regarded as representing the subject's present age. Furthermore, this method does not require the use of intermediary indices, like those of Wittgenstein or the Dutch investigators, but can be accomplished by solving a simple arithmetic proportion with one unknown.

An example of time measurements of trauma marks will be given in connection with the five drawings illustrating case history 2 in chapter 14. At this point we want to emphasize that although the time determination of a trauma mark can usually be made with reasonable accuracy in the *first* tree drawing, if the events associated with the scar are discussed with the subject, subsequent drawings may show a displacement of the mark in any direction. In the majority of cases, as the subject becomes more conscious of the meaning of the trauma and is better able to assimilate it into the conscious psyche, the scar tends to migrate upward in the tree, or may even disappear completely. On the other hand, if the subject finds himself in circumstances similar to those surrounding the original traumatic event, or if the trauma is still quite fresh, the mark may assume a *lower* position than would be expected by the time determination. In such a case one may suppose that the unconscious affect surrounding the trauma has been activated, and, instead of being better able to assimilate it and integrate its meaning into his conscious life, the subject falls into a state in which he is in the grip of the affect. Downward migration of a scar will be discussed in some detail in connection with case history 2 (chapter 14). We must emphasize that this example is somewhat unusual, since it is far more common for displacement of the scar to take place in an upward direction, particularly if the subject is in therapy and relief from the "psychic scarring" is one of the objectives of the therapeutic work.

SCHEMA 6: Time Determination

To clarify the material presented above and in schema 6, the following examples are given.*

Buck: $\frac{S'_h}{T'_h} = \frac{Ea}{Pa}$ (1)

Levine and Galanter: $\frac{S'_h}{T'_h} = Ea$ (2)

Lyons: $\frac{S_h}{T_h} = q$ and $\frac{Ea}{Pa} = q$, then $Pa \times q = Ea$ (3)

Wittgenstein, Koch: $\frac{T_h}{Pa} = i$, then $\frac{S_h}{i} = Ea$ (4)

Dutch workers: $\frac{T_h}{Pa} = \frac{A}{Ea}$ (5)

Our method: $Ea = \frac{S_h \times Pa}{T_h}$ (6)

By substituting values as read of this thirty-year-old subject's tree:

$\frac{25}{100} = \frac{Ea}{30}$, or $7.5 = Ea$ (1)

$\frac{25}{100} = Ea$, or $0.25 = Ea$ (2)

$\frac{40}{115} = q = 0.347$, and $\frac{Ea}{30} = q = 0.347$, then $10.4 = Ea$ (3)

$\frac{115}{30} = i = 3.83$, and $\frac{40}{3.83} = Ea$, then $10.4 = Ea$ (4)

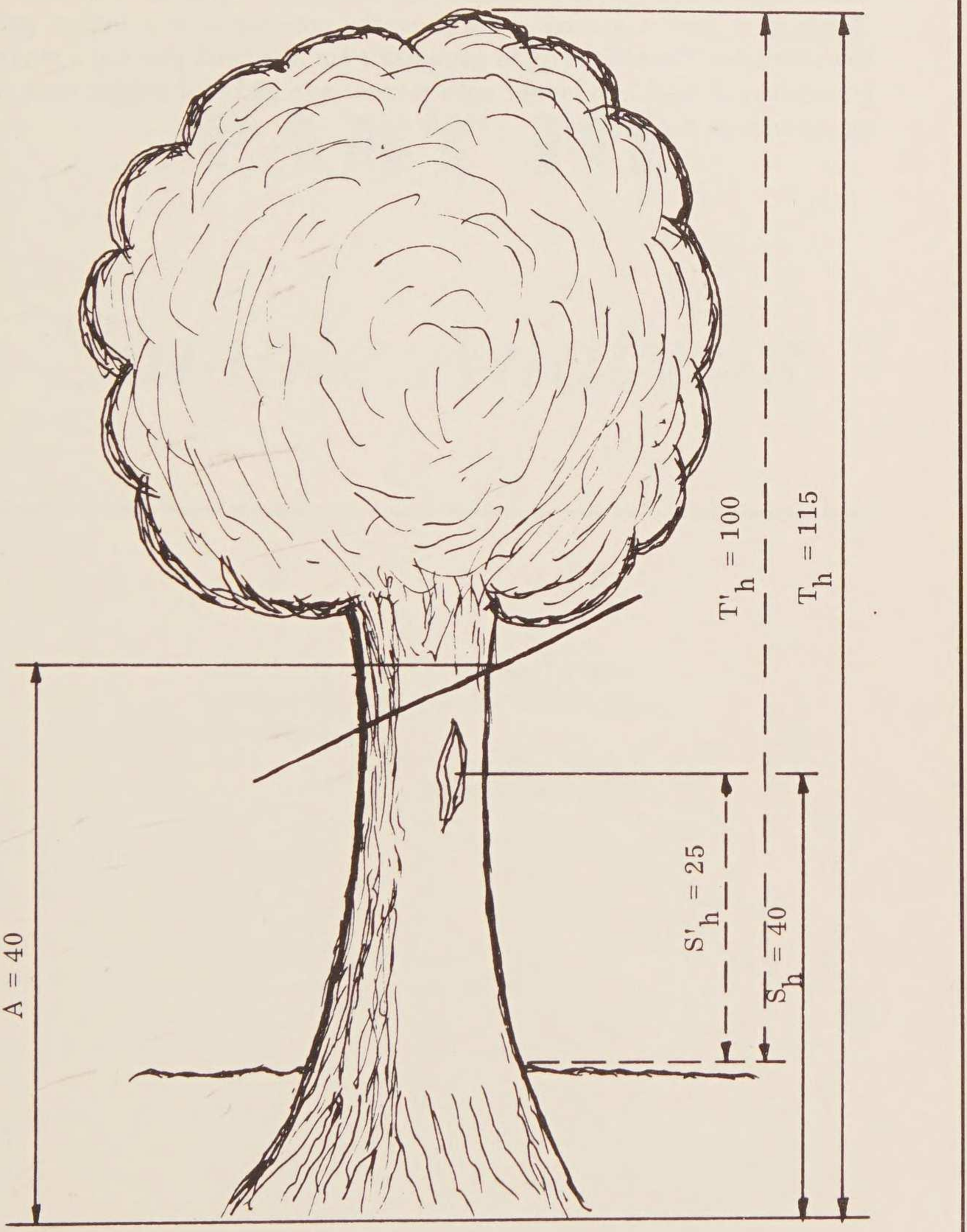
$\frac{115}{30} = \frac{50}{Ea}$, or $13.0 = Ea$ (5)

$\frac{40 \times 30}{115} = Ea$, then $10.4 = Ea$ (6)

* The following designations are used:

A is distance between lowest point on tree and induced cutting line
i is Wittgenstein-Index
Ea is age of subject at time of traumatic experience
Pa is present age of subject
q is quotient of Lyons
S_h is scar height measured from lowest point on tree
S'_h is scar height measured from trunk base
T_h is tree height measured between lowest and highest points on tree
T'_h is tree height measured from trunk base

Measurements of age in years and months (months expressed as fractions of years); of distance, in millimeters.



Schema 6: Time Determination

Equations 3, 4, 5, and 6 yield correct values. Equation 1 leads to erroneous results because it discounts the root, and equation 2 is absurd. Equation 5 gives a greater value since the crossing is at a higher point than the scar. The ratios (q) in equation 4 are identical, proving a perfect correlation of total tree height with present age and scar height with the age of trauma it represents.

PART III

Sample Analysis

Long is the road [of learning] through perception, short and efficient through demonstration.

Lucius A. Seneca,
Epistulae VI, A.D. 62

13

The Sample Population

They are ill discoverers that think there is no land, when they can see nothing but sea.

Francis Bacon,
The Advancement of Learning, 1605

DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF THE SAMPLE

WE STATED earlier that our subjects do *not* constitute a representative cross-section of the general population. Since we claim that our method has been most successfully applied to relatively normal adults of above-average intelligence, it seems of some importance to define the sample population more precisely and to say a few words about the mode of collection of the drawings.

About 75 percent of the drawings have been obtained from clients, students, volunteer subjects, and personal acquaintances; 15 percent of the sample has been contributed by local colleagues; 5 percent has been solicited in very informal situations by interested friends; and about 5 percent has been sent by colleagues from more distant cities. In most cases those drawings not obtained by direct contact have been supplemented by information regarding the educational level, IQ, and family situation of the subjects, but about 12 percent of the drawings in the collection are unsupported by this additional information. The age and sex of the subject is known in all cases, however.

We have traveled rather widely, working in several foreign countries as well as in the United States, and tree drawings have been collected from many areas. On the whole, however, the sample is heavily weighted toward Europeans and Americans of the white race. Nevertheless, in our

more limited experience with the interpretation of the trees of subjects of other racial or cultural backgrounds, we have found that the method seems to work equally well, so long as the insights derived are integrated with what is known of the culture involved.

The accompanying table, which shows the distribution of subjects by sex and profession, refers only to the drawings collected during the four year period 1966–1970, when we began to formalize our study of the tree. Whereas the total number of persons is 3,174, more than 4,000 drawings are involved, since in some cases a single subject has contributed several drawings.

It will be seen from the tabulation that the group of graduate students and professional adults taken together constitutes more than half of the test subjects. Although we have information about the intelligence level of most of the subjects, since this does not derive uniformly from the same standardized tests, it has not been possible to calculate the mean IQ of the whole population. We think it would be fair to say, however, that at least the above mentioned half of the sample, as well as many of the younger students and the nonprofessional women, may be described as belonging to a superior intelligence group. In a sense, then, our sample population is no more "normal" than those of Buck, Koch, or Stora, but it is weighted in the opposite direction—i.e., toward the high end of the intelligence scale.

We return to this matter of the intelligence level of our subjects because it bears on the issue of the appropriateness (and even the accuracy) of personality tests in general, and more specifically of our tree method compared with those of Buck and Koch, where adults of superior gifts are in question. We mentioned earlier that we administered the House-Tree-Person test to twenty of our own subjects, ten of whom were clients and ten volunteers. It was our purpose to examine Buck's use of the H-T-P as a measure of intelligence and to examine his hypothesis that if there is a marked discrepancy between the intelligence scores on the H-T-P and those obtained by means of other IQ tests, one may infer marked emotional disturbance. We therefore chose subjects who were known to be of superior intelligence and at the same time showed no signs of serious personality disorder. In addition to the fact that the H-T-P intelligence scores were in some cases *forty to fifty points lower* than those obtained by the same subjects on standard intelligence tests, with *no evidence of disturbance of emotional functioning* as an explanation for this extreme discrepancy, we also found it very difficult to get full cooperation from many of the testees during the administration of the Post-Drawing Interrogation. Some of them simply began laughing at the transparency of the questions, and asked us directly whether we took this test seriously. One of the volunteer subjects was a scientist who was partially

Distribution of Subjects By Sex and Profession

SUBJECTS	PROFESSION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Children (ages 3–12)		57	60	117
High school students (ages 13–18)		126	134	260
Undergraduate college students				
Majors in arts	582	280	302	
Majors in sciences	253	188	65	
Subtotal	835	468	367	835
Graduate students				
Candidates in arts	199	144	55	
Candidates in sciences (including medicine)	326	280	46	
Subtotal	525	424	101	525
Nonprofessional married women			107	107
Skilled workers		28	4	32
Unskilled workers		6	9	15
Farmers		8		8
Semiprofessional adults				
Fashion models and stewardesses	13		13	
Secretaries	41	1	40	
Lab technicians	128	77	51	
Subtotal	182	78	104	182
Professional adults				
Earth scientists	16	16		
Chemists	34	32	2	
Physicists, mathematicians, and astronomers	42	41	1	
Engineers	125	125		
Life scientists	189	166	23	
Psychologists, social workers, counselors	53	25	28	
Physicians	77	68	9	
Dentists	5	5		
Veterinarians	3	3		
Nurses	37	2	35	
Attorneys	22	20	2	
Political scientists, economists	8	8		
Historians	6	6		
Art and music historians	6	4	2	
Literary critics and college language teachers	22	13	9	
Journalists	5	3	2	
Poets, creative writers	17	15	2	
Philosophers	3	3		
Architects	14	13	1	
Filmmakers	4	4		
Sculptors and potters	8	5	3	
Painters	9	7	2	
Actors	27	17	10	
Dancers	11	3	8	
Musicians	47	42	5	
Priests and ministers	57	57		
Nuns	24		24	
High school teachers	97	50	47	
Grade school teachers	44	8	36	
Businessmen	63	60	3	
Accountants	6	5	1	
Military personnel and airline pilots	12	12		
Subtotal	1093	838	255	1093
Grand Total	2635	2033	1141	3174

familiar with the H-T-P, and said he would be glad to take it for us if we would let him draw on his own paper. He produced the drawing shown as illustration 59, followed by an elaborate commentary. While qualitative scoring of the tree and the houses would not point to a very high IQ, it should be noted that the "angel" is properly drawn with two arms, two legs, two wings, the correct number of toes, and accurately rendered genitalia, with the additional S_2 factors of flag in hand and the person shown as "doing something." Now, obviously, a serious tester would have to interpret this drawing as indicating severe resistance to the testing situation, as well as possible psychopathology. With the first we would agree, even though the subject made the drawing in a willing spirit. But a psychopath he is not. The gentleman is a person of wide culture and thorough training in science whose "spoof" drawing expresses ridicule of the test itself, an attitude which we find to be quite common among highly intelligent persons. In our opinion, one of the great advantages of the simple tree-drawing technique as a source of insights about personality is that it can be requested rather casually; even though the subject is told that his drawing will be interpreted, he does not have the subjective impression that he is being tested. Furthermore, when the tree is discussed with the subject, insights derived from the study of the drawing can be expressed in a manner appropriate to both his intelligence and his level of self-awareness. We believe it is partly for these reasons that we almost never encounter resistance when we ask people to draw a tree for us.

FIVE "IMBECILE" DRAWINGS

It is common practice among creators of "tests" or projective techniques to administer a "new" method to an experimental group of subjects for whom a common denominator can be established—whether a nosological classification (such as manic-depressive), a behavioral pattern (such as hostility), or a classification according to potential (such as moron). If a significant percentage of the criterion group respond to a part of the test in a certain manner, it is then often concluded that the same responses by other subjects are an indication that they may be identified with the common denominator which characterized the original experimental group. In the design of certain kinds of "real tests," *if* the experimental samples are sufficiently large, this may be a useful and valid approach. However, we feel that attempts to establish, through such approaches, the meaning of isolated "signs" in a method like the "tree-drawing test" is not

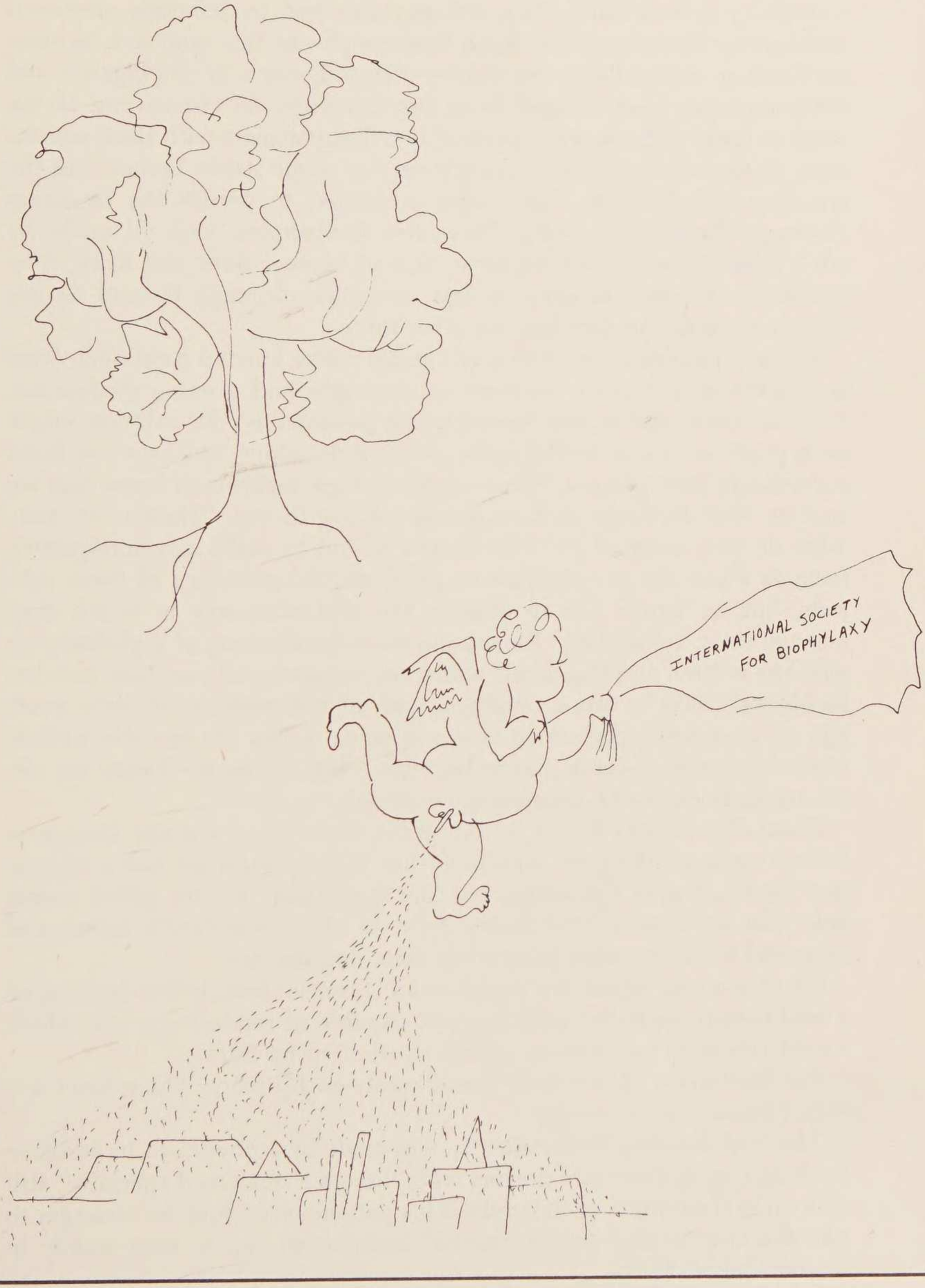


Illustration 59

only likely to be a blind alley, but may also lead to definitely erroneous conclusions. Both Buck and Koch have employed this approach to standardization, especially in connection with judgments of intelligence and developmental level inferred from the drawings. In our review of the work of these authors, we expressed our disagreement with their conclusions about certain "signs," among them the single-stroke branch and the one-dimensional trunk. The reader is invited to peruse the drawings shown as illustrations 60–64. These five illustrations were all made by adult subjects, and unless we have misread Messrs. Buck and Koch, they would be classified as more or less imbecilic, although 62 and 64 are slightly more acceptable than the other three.

Three of the drawings were made under rather hurried conditions (two during the dinner break between an afternoon and evening conference, and one backstage at the theater), and presumably the subjects *might* have produced more aesthetically pleasing drawings had they not been exceedingly busy persons. However, all of these individuals knew that we analyze tree drawings, and each was willing to say, "There's my tree, what do you make of it?" We do not intend to make any interpretive remarks about the personalities or psychological problems of these subjects, but we would like to identify the particular way in which they manage their "imbecility." Illustration 60 is the drawing of a philosopher who has written and published numerous volumes and countless articles. In his early days he was a musician, and his compositions of forty years ago are now being performed as avant-garde works. He has also written several volumes of verse, and in his leisure time if he can locate his oils among his books and manuscripts, he paints.

Illustration 61 was drawn by the prima ballerina of a major European ballet company. We have no idea of her IQ, although she has a reputation for reading in the wings, but she is certainly a very gifted young lady. She is clearly a "kinesthetic" type, in Mattmüler-Frick's terms, and appeared to be in motion even while sketching the tree.

Illustration 62, which we would call a "fascicle" tree, is the drawing of a well-known American painter, quite capable of rendering a tree which would satisfy all the realistic criteria so admired by Buck.

For illustration 63, we hardly need quote an IQ score. The subject is a Nobel laureate in chemistry.

The final drawing, illustration 64, was made by a physician. In addition to being one of those rare doctors who, though a renowned specialist, still gets up in the middle of the night if his patients need him, he manages to find the time to play several musical instruments and to read widely in the humanistic fields.

These five illustrations are not unique in our experience, although admittedly three of them were drawn in haste under nontest conditions.

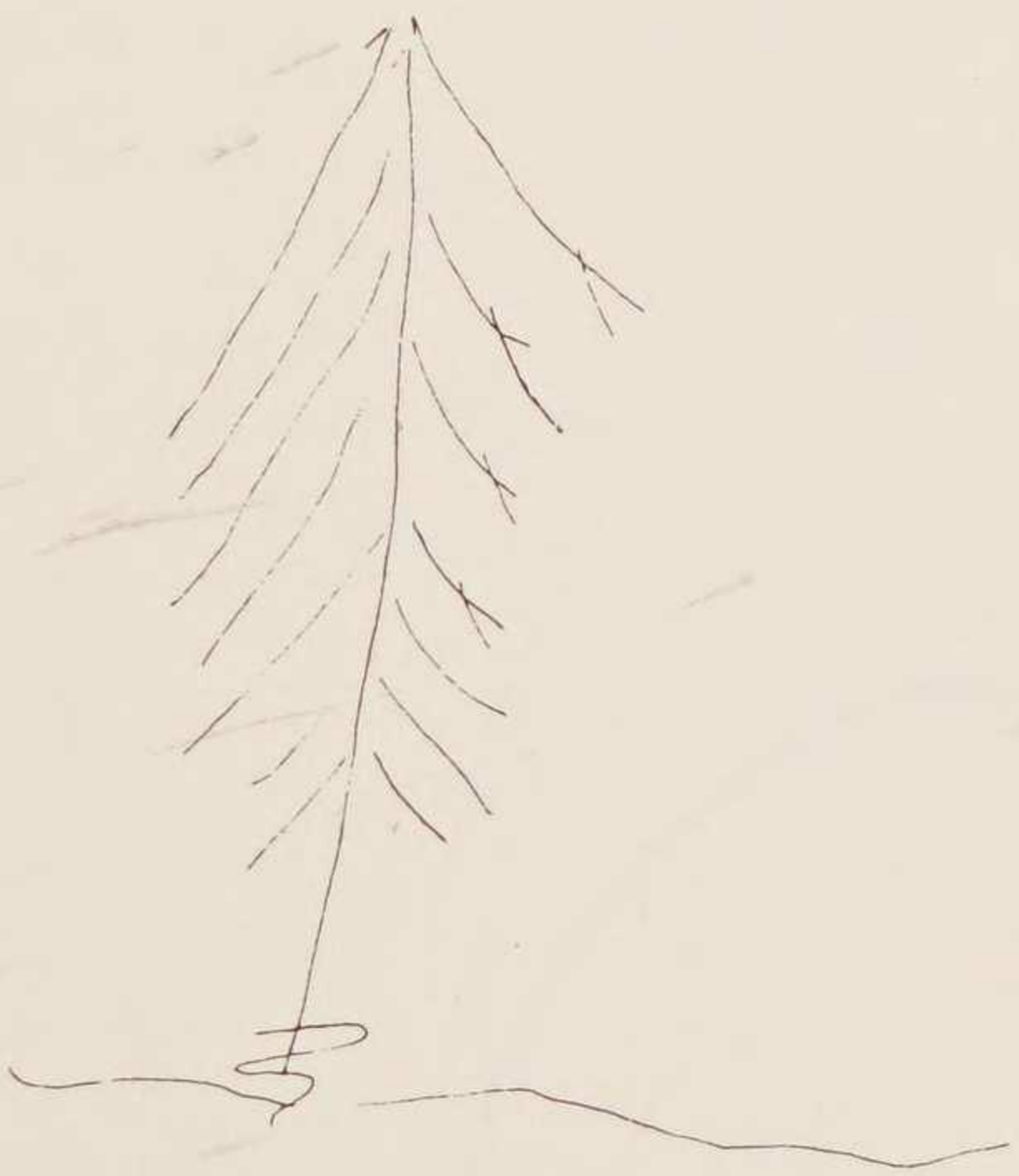


Illustration 60

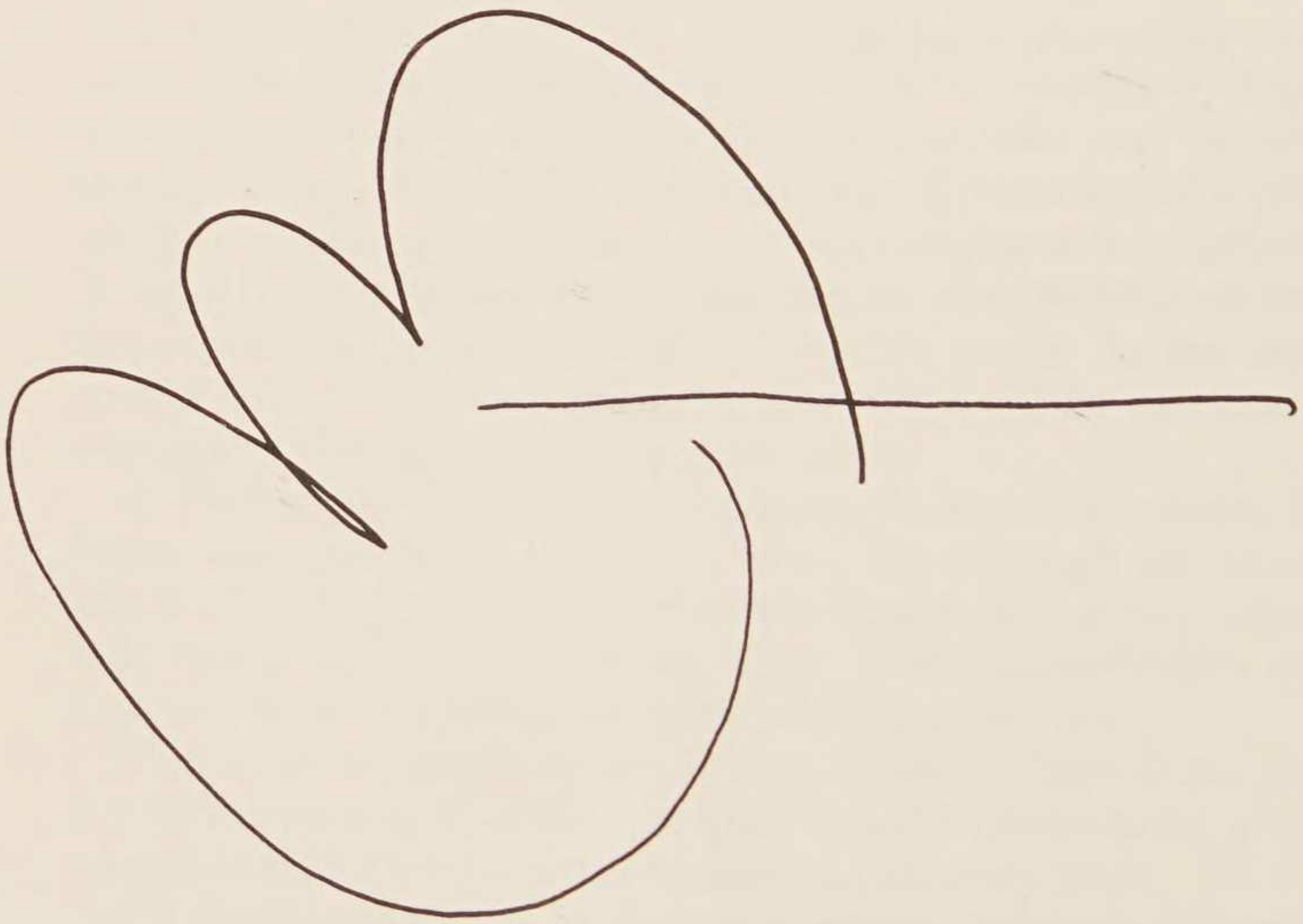




Illustration 62

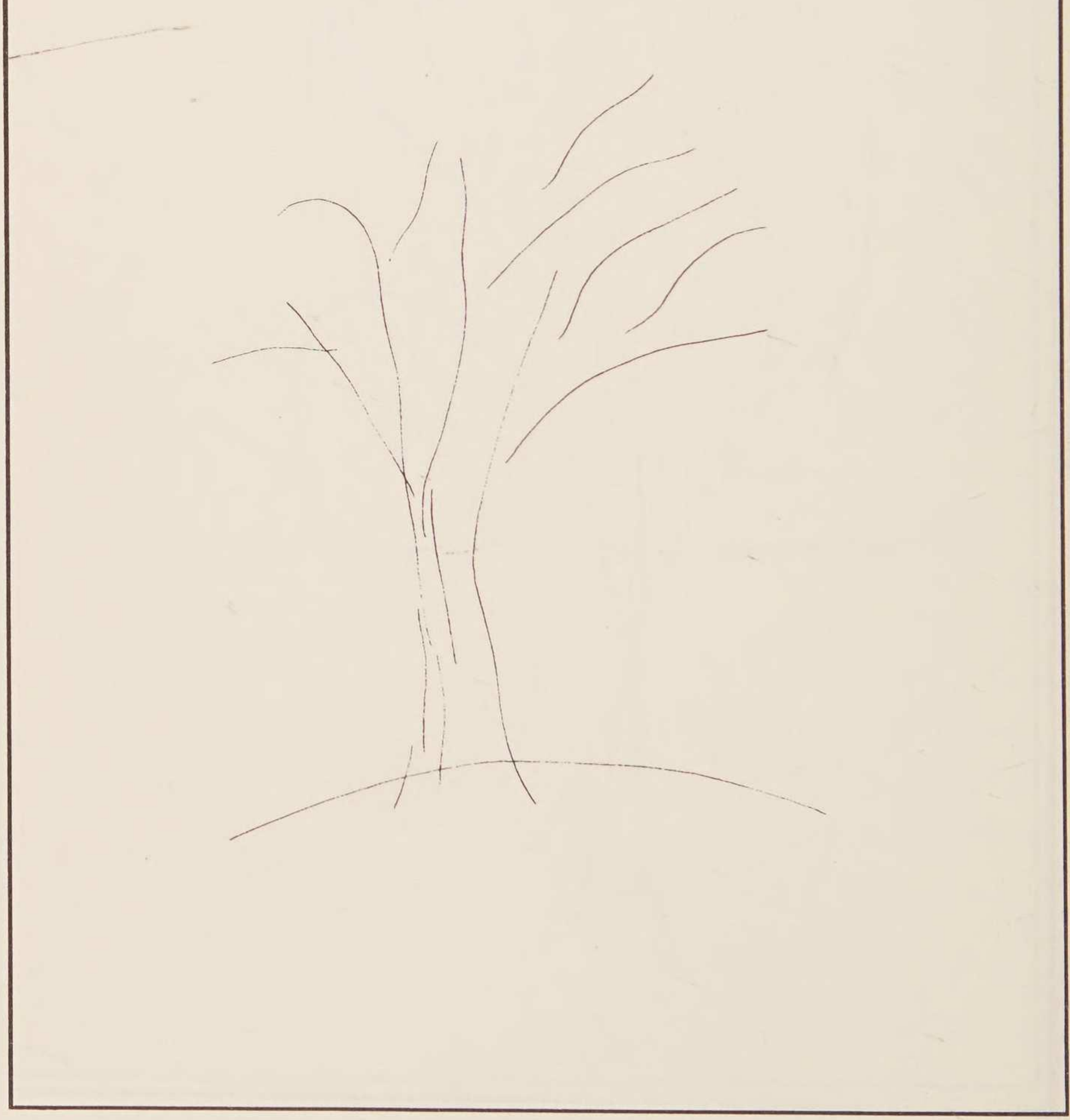


Illustration 63

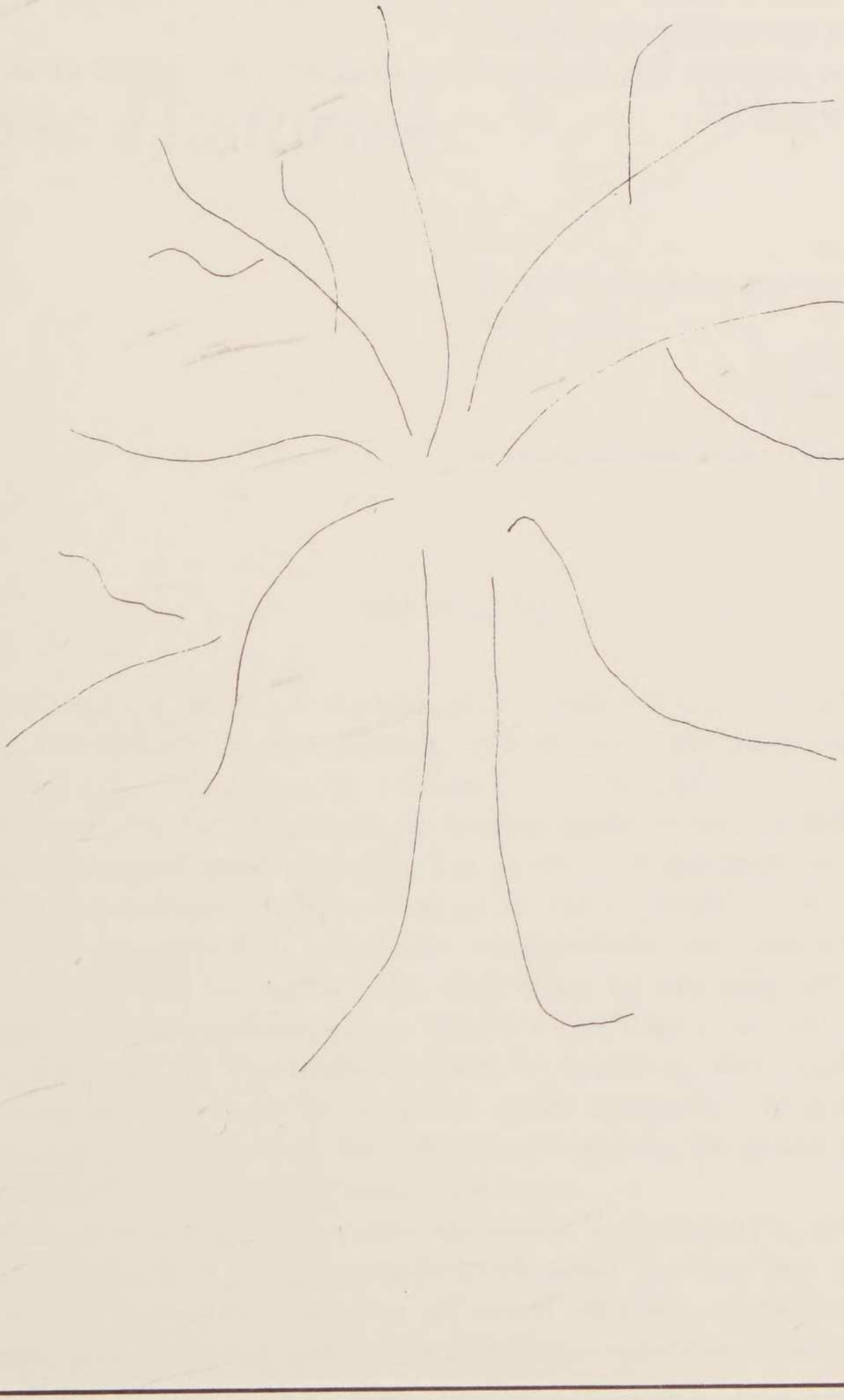


Illustration 64

We could easily produce from our own collection at least twenty others of equally "primitive quality," drawn by equally gifted individuals, as well as another 200 or so exceedingly simple renderings by persons of known superior intelligence. Could it not thus be "demonstrated" that simple, single-stroke, or scribbled trees are a sign of genius? Perhaps they are. But we prefer to stay with our claim that the frequency with which we encounter these abstract renderings among highly intelligent adults is unrelated to the intelligence factor.

To further augment this statement, we shall treat the subject of abstract rendering in part IV.

14

Case Histories

Knowledge without practice makes but half an artist.

Thomas Fuller,
Gnomologia, 1732

CASE HISTORY 1

THE SUBJECT, N. G., is a white male American who was fifty years of age at the time of the first meeting, which concerned discussions of marriage and family problems in relation to constant difficulties with respect to his career. N. G.'s IQ scores on several kinds of tests at different periods have ranged from 154–160. His highest educational degree is the Ph.D. in mathematics, obtained after an earlier career in engineering.

N.G.'s background is extremely complicated. He lost his father in early infancy and his mother also died when he was only four years old. He was raised subsequent to his mother's death by a bachelor uncle who was quite wealthy. He received Catholic schooling and strong religious influences characterized his early life. After completing his basic studies, he became a novitiate with the intention of entering the priesthood, but he abandoned this plan before being ordained.

Although at this time his conscious stance with respect to religious matters is eclectic and fundamentally intellectual (he has left the Catholic church and is now interested in all world religions, as well as nonorthodox mystical traditions and ancient religious practices), there are some suggestions of unconscious guilt feelings springing from Catholic doctrine. These would appear to be focused on the failure of several marriages and resulting complications with the raising of his children.

The ups and downs of N. G.'s professional life have been closely

related to his marriage problems. He married his first wife, with whom he had three children, while still an undergraduate student—supporting himself and his family with part-time jobs. Toward the end of his studies he began drinking with considerable regularity, attributing this to a combination of severe financial pressures and the deterioration of sexual and emotional ties with his wife. When the United States entered World War II, he joined the air force and became a test pilot. During this period his strong sense of responsibility and the need to maintain alert body responses kept him from drinking. As soon as he returned to civilian life, however, his wife divorced him, and he rapidly became seriously alcoholic. His personal habits deteriorated considerably, culminating in hospitalization with delirium tremens. After this traumatic shock he joined Alcoholics Anonymous and has since stayed completely away from drinking.

He then began studies for the Ph.D. in mathematics, again supporting himself with part-time work. Once again he married while in school and had four children by his second wife in a period of four years. After the completion of his degree, he was finally able to obtain an excellent position with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. This job entailed a great deal of responsibility and also required that he do considerable traveling far from home. His second wife did not tolerate his being gone so much of the time and eventually left him on the grounds that he was not home often enough to fulfill the role of either husband or father. Although he was very disturbed by this second divorce, he remained at his job for a time, but he became extremely upset emotionally when two test pilots died on the test flight of some equipment on which he had been working. There was no question of his being in any way responsible for the accident, but this incident seemed to trigger the onset of a state of generalized anxiety which was quite severe. He left his job voluntarily, and there was a period when he worked as a simple draftsman, unsure whether he could stand up under the pressures of a position of serious responsibility. He shortly met and married his third wife, and then organized a private school of which he became headmaster. He had five children with his third wife (bringing the number of his children to twelve!) which he claims were all "accidents."

At the time of his first visit N. G. was working in industry as a research director, with good prospects of becoming an executive of the company employing him. His principal complaint was his fear of repeating his "failure syndrome." He stated that exactly at the times when he seemed to be moving in the direction of professional success, his intimate life tended to break down and become a constant source of strain. At the time he was earning a good salary, but his wife was not satisfied with his ability to provide for *her* children (although she was well aware when she married him of his obligations to support in part his children from the previous

marriages). He said that his wife was ambitious for him professionally, but at the same time was constantly complaining about the amount of time and energy which he had to devote to his work. This reminded him all too much of the earlier pattern. He further complained that he felt he was making many sacrifices to please his wife and take care of his family —sacrifices of his own real interests—and that it was very painful to have these met with dissatisfaction and further demands, rather than some kind of appreciation.

It was suggested to the client that if his intention was to work seriously toward saving his marriage, it would be fruitful and perhaps necessary for his wife to participate in marriage counseling. He readily agreed and promised to try and persuade her, but expressed some doubts about her willingness. As it turned out, we were not able to see the wife, and N. G.'s own sessions took on more the nature of intermittent personal therapy.

The first drawing, shown here as illustration 65, was made at the end of the first session, after the history had been taken. Further observations were that N. G. was most charming in his personal mannerisms, fluent and articulate in verbal expression, and cheerful in attitude even when speaking of his problems. He seemed anxious to make a good impression. On the negative side, there was a slightly petulant or whining tone to his voice and an impression conveyed that he would like, in some almost magic way, to be rescued from the binding circumstances of his extremely complicated personal life by an external agent. An attempt was made to suspend judgment about these observations, as well as the client's statements about himself, until after preliminary analysis of the tree drawing had been made. This was done before the next session, which took place two weeks later.

Preliminary observations

1. Size: Tree large, fills the page completely, but does not extend beyond the margins. (Basically optimistic, aware at least potentially of self-stature.)
2. Shape of the crown: Somewhat flattened. (Feels oppressed by circumstances, and generally frustrated.)
3. Position: Trunk and root area placed to the left of center, but crown shows equal emphasis on left and right sides. (Father's death. Very early closeness to mother. Easily forms strong emotional relationships with women.)
4. Strokes: All made very rapidly. Consistent in general style throughout whole drawing. Discontinuous, broken lines with lightly scribbled and discontinuous strokes making up the crown. Light touch. (Nervousness, sense of vulnerability and generalized anxiety. Unusual combination of expansiveness and concern with detail. Marked sensitivity.)
5. Crown outline: Attempt to contain the self by drawing a partial outline around the scribbled crown. (Adds a sense of organization. However, the many breaks show that the subject takes in a great deal, is highly receptive to ideas and mental influences. Also mental energy is dispersed in many directions. At-

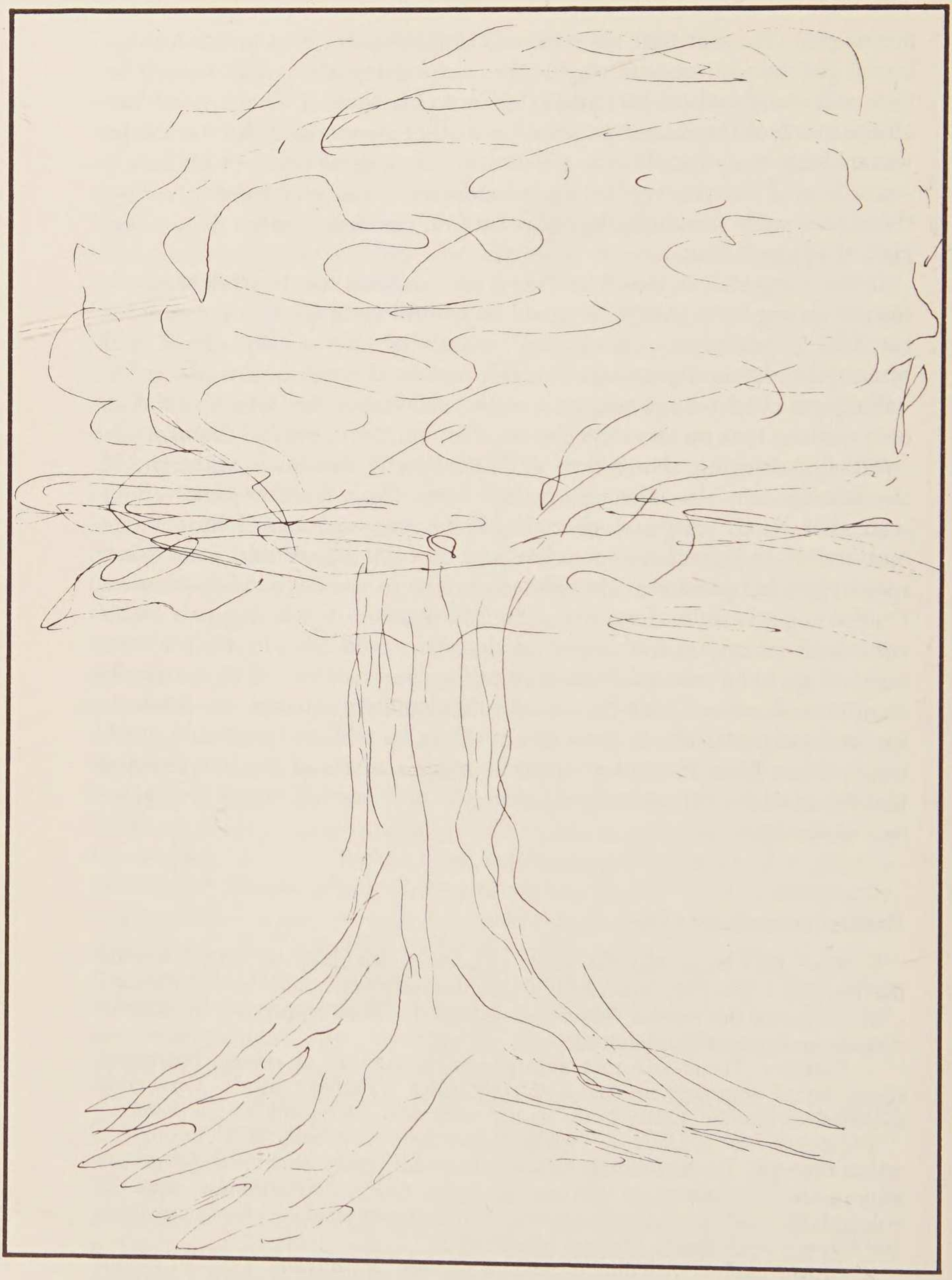


Illustration 65: Case History 1, October 1965

tempts to absorb as much as he can, but is not sure what to do with either his own ideas or those he has acquired.)

6. General impression conveyed: Whole tree is like a "balance." The roots are large and spread to either side, without defined ground. (Subject a former alcoholic, feels need to balance himself at the base.) The crown is made up principally of horizontal lines, especially in its lower part, which appears almost like two spreading wings below the upper part of the crown. (Relationship experiences also have to be kept in a kind of emotional balance, and are somewhat separated from pure mental activity.) Upper part of the crown is full of subtle, complex forms in its interior. (Suggests rich imagination and multiple talents, but there is little sense of order Fleeting ideas.) The crown actually seems to be dominated by its lower section, where continuous horizontal lines are rapidly scribbled back and forth from left to right. (Relationship problems absorb a great deal of mental energy. Supports personal impression that the subject is overinclined to worry. Feeling responses are somewhat ambivalent.)

7. Trunk: Broad and straight. Discontinuous outline, with breaks low on either side. (Still feels the deprivation of parents' early deaths.) Discontinuous, vertical shading lines on the trunk. (Subject knows he is vulnerable emotionally and wants to protect himself, but does not have successful defenses. Also points to an "Achilles heel." May possibly have something to do with any suggestion that he is not a "responsible person." Also affronts to his dignity. Subject regards himself as a gentleman and has rather "old-fashioned" social values—perhaps related to southern background with British influences.) Trunk extends into the crown area on both sides, but is cut through by horizontal cross-lines. (General impression is that N. G. is a highly emotional person who wants to control his feeling responses. Not very successful at *repressing* feeling responses, but some practice in *rationalizing* them. Probably persuades himself that he is being intellectually objective when actually in the grip of semi-conscious emotions.)

8. Roots: Root-trunk transition open, with vertical lines contributing channeling. No ground line. Roots spread out to form partial ground. (Does not feel nourished by environment. Very strong effort to keep himself balanced. Feels that he must be his own source of strength.) Roots are large, with the left root dominant. Dichotomous root. Strong flow into the trunk. (Powerful unconscious currents and strong connection with instincts. The dominance of the left root may have something to do with propagation.)

9. Special signs: Marks on the trunk have already been mentioned. There are many subtle signs in the crown, but the most notable is a clear bird's head in the upper left section of the crown. This is different from the schematized "flying birds" often appearing as accidental special signs, but also different from a deliberately drawn bird in the tree. (Here, looking inward, and falling near the breaks in the outline of the upper left portion of the crown, suggests that the subject may have psychic abilities, or is, at least, highly intuitive.)

Synthesis

In basic type N. G. is expansive and open in his approach to experience. He is friendly in his attitude toward others, although nervous and somewhat uncertain about close relationships, with men as well as with women and relatives. He is receptive without being gullible and will have conscious intentions to exercise caution in his approach to new interpre-

sonal situations, but as soon as he ceases to focus his attention on the need to be guarded he is likely to reveal his deeper nature, which is fundamentally trusting. At the same time, since he has been deeply hurt by repeated emotional losses or betrayals and knows himself to be vulnerable, there is a basic conflict between his desire for open and trusting contacts with others and fear of new emotional pain, which he experiences as a constant source of strain.

A second major difficulty is the internal struggle to maintain his balance. Both the spreading of the roots and the horizontal strokes across the crown indicate that much of his energy is expended just to keep himself steady. Although he has successfully abstained from drinking for many years, and it is unlikely that he would again turn to alcohol, there is some suggestion that he is afraid of falling into some other self-destructive behavioral pattern.

While the crown is fully developed and the proportions of the tree are good, both feelings and unconscious currents are prominent in the drawing. It is our opinion that N. G. is much more emotional than he cares to admit. He tends to rationalize his emotions and thinks it desirable to try to separate his feeling responses from his mental life. He presents himself as an intellectual who is both analytical (mathematician) and practical (engineer, manager, business organizer) in his approach to ideas. He may indeed be capable of excellence in both analytical and applied thinking, but the tree suggests that he is more a feeling than a thinking type. In addition, there are many indications of intuition and sudden inspiration as a source of ideas. Further, the crown lacks the ordered quality of a genuinely practical person. Since he tends to deny the extent to which his mental processes are affected by feeling states, he may be rather strongly inclined to project his emotions onto his partners and associates. It may also be suspected that his own emphasis on assuming responsible social roles and using his mental gifts in applied sciences or concrete business pursuits is more a reflection of social imprinting than of inborn inclinations.

There are no signs of hostility or aggressive behavior in the tree. Negative emotions are mostly internalized, and even his defenses are not in any way threatening to others. In relations with others, N. G. will be for the most part receptive, sociable, and adaptable. (In fact, he is too mutable, and some of his problems would seem to stem from efforts to please everyone, often at his own expense.) He may at times attempt to remain detached, but this is more a studied reaction than an expression of natural introversion. He should be capable of spending a good deal of time alone when pursuing intellectual matters, for he has plenty of internal resources. Nevertheless, in general, he feels strongly the need for companionship and wants to share his ideas as well as his feelings with others.

Since the tree is not branched, it is somewhat difficult to pinpoint

exactly where his principal talents lie. We know already that he is highly intelligent and that he is specifically interested in mathematics, applied sciences, parapsychology, and some aspects of business. From the rich patterns in the crown we may infer a wealth of imaginative ideas, as well as the ability to absorb ideas from others. The flattening of the crown is expressive of mental frustration, and the type of strokes suggest diffuse, expansive mental processes. From all of this we begin to suspect that N. G. is not as ambitious (in the worldy sense) as he claims to be. He may have been able to apply his intelligence to "ascending the ladder" of professional success, and it may be true that the timing of his marriage problems has been such as to abort those efforts just when he seemed to be on the verge of achieving success, but we also suspect that N. G. does not really know what he wants to do with himself. The tree suggests some passive-receptive qualities with respect to women and the world of the feminine, and the manner of drawing the crown indicates a diffuse, speculative, creative, but rather undirected mental life. Perhaps N. G. rejects, at an unconscious level, the male role which he willingly accepts at the conscious level: that of provider and responsible husband-father. It is possible that his wives have sensed intuitively his unconscious resistance to goal-oriented activity, and have thus had some kind of basis for their accusations that he is not a responsible husband and father, even though externally he has made valiant efforts to fulfill the demands of these roles. One gets the impression that N. G. would at some level, like to be provided for, so he could indulge in thinking and creative activity which has no direct application or practical value. The crown suggests that he is very expansive and widely interested in ideas and experience but is not ambitious in the sense of having specific goals.

There is one further aspect of the tree drawing which seems to belie N. G.'s own account. He claims that his last five children, and one or two from the previous marriage as well, were "accidents." Since it is most unusual in these times for anyone who does not forswear contraceptives to father twelve children, this struck us as slightly suspect even before seeing the tree drawing. The delineation of the roots reinforced our suspicion that N. G. might have a sort of compulsion to reproduce himself. The root to the left is very large and opens with a free flow into the trunk. This side of the root is related to the instinct for propagation, as well as to the feminine aspects of the unconscious and the collective unconscious. N. G. is an intelligent man who is apparently gifted with a wealth of ideas which he cannot bring to fruition. It would seem, therefore, that there is some logic in the interpretive claim that he keeps producing all these children in the hope that his own creativity will be fulfilled in them, should he continue to "fail." The number of his dependents, of course, creates a double-bind situation with respect to his daily life, for he cannot possibly indulge himself in the leisure of creative activities which are unlikely to

lead to financial gains unless he abandons his sense of responsibility, which he is unlikely to do. Nevertheless, we believe that at unconscious levels the production of numerous offspring may be seen as a substitute for creative fulfillment in the mental and spiritual domain.

In summary, the tree drawing has supported the history and personal impressions of the first interview in some respects: It shows N. G. to be friendly and receptive, but sensitive and easily hurt; expansive and charming; quick in his responses and rather nervous. It partially contradicts N. G.'s statements about himself in suggesting that he creates his own double-bind circumstances to a large extent, and that he is less goal directed than he claims. The general impression is that much of his psychic energy is absorbed in the struggle to maintain emotional stability, and, in addition, a great deal of mental energy is dissipated in diverse pursuits and wide-ranging interests. Given N. G.'s extremely high level of intelligence and his creative gifts, this last factor could very well result in a state of dissatisfaction and creative frustration, even were he not beset by so many practical life problems. He seems to lack a clear sense of purpose and, at least at this time, the discipline needed to bring his ideas to fruition. When working in team efforts he is able to succeed (since the goals are defined and the planning at least partially structured by others) as long as his personal life remains fairly even. When emotionally disturbed, however, he looses both the motivation and the necessary concentration to continue in a responsible position.

N. G. was seen for nine sessions at very irregular intervals (since he was again traveling in connection with his work). Some of our insights were immediately confirmed in the second session. When asked about the extent of his mental interests, it turned out that he is an inventor, is interested in the theory of numbers in relation to complex problems of philosophy, has written lengthy (but unfinished) manuscripts on problems of time, unorthodox anthropological theory, unusual archaeological finds, theories of life origin, cosmology, and so on. He did not readily admit that he lacked an inborn practical bent, but easily confessed that he has fantasies about receiving unlimited quantities of money so that he might pursue his theoretical and creative interests without neglecting his responsibilities. He became rather disturbed when considering the suggestion that, even if given every opportunity, he might lack the focused discipline to bring his ideas to completion or concrete realization. After many protests about the impossible pressures of his life and considerable rationalization alternating with emotional reactions, he finally stated, on the point of tears, that he was afraid he was fundamentally incapable of finishing anything, and that he felt he could die in some measure of happiness if only he could complete a single one of the many projects on which he had embarked.

Brought to a point of recognizing the internal side of his frustration

feelings, he then said that what he had hoped for from his wives was inspiration and moral support for his creative ideas, but that none of them had been able to give this. By his account, his present wife's idea of moral support amounted to pushing him toward material success. Since he is strongly motivated by the desire to please, as well as feeling of responsibility toward his children, his claim that he desires worldly success, but does not place it very high on his scale of deeper values, would appear to be genuine. In elaborating on the marriage problem, he further stated that his wife's earlier supportive encouragement had by now deteriorated to constant nagging, and that she seemed unwilling to give him even minor signs that she was appreciative of his present efforts.

We felt at this point (after six sessions) that it would be necessary to see N. G.'s wife if any real work was to be done toward saving the marriage, particularly as by now N. G. was willing to recognize some of his projections and had become aware of his failure to communicate his deeper needs to his wife. However, his efforts to persuade her to come in for counseling sessions failed. She seemed already to have written the marriage off as a failure, and two weeks later she filed for divorce.

It should be mentioned that during the course of the sessions considerable time was taken up with the communication of ideas largely unrelated to personal life problems. This seemed to be important to N. G., and he expressed repeatedly his pleasure in finding someone who was responsive to the abstract and philosophical sides of his thinking. He stated that he had one close male friend with whom he could discuss pure ideas. This relationship was very meaningful to him, but he said that he had always felt the need to establish a similar exchange with a woman. Without having met his wife, we would not, of course, have come to any judgments about her behavior in the marriage on the basis of his account alone. On the other hand, we felt that there were two things about his wife which could be taken as facts without coming into direct contact with her. The first is that she was much less intelligent than he (not unlikely, since his intelligence gifts were so remarkable); the second, that her basic life values were very different from his own. In view of his expressed need to establish a relationship based on mental and spiritual companionship with a woman, we felt that the best which could be expected for a continuing marriage would be compromise solutions and some alleviation of the negative stance taken at this time by both of the partners. Since his wife did not appear to be in any way interested in working at the marriage, and since N. G. had a tendency to compromise himself in the interest of adapting to others, we did not press him to attempt a reconciliation. We were aware that he was deeply hurt and upset by this most recent betrayal, but it did not seem as though his own pain would be eased by a reconciliation, if this could be accomplished only through further affronts to his pride.

His immediate reaction was an increase in anxiety, sleeplessness, and depression. However, he still seemed to be highly interested in his work and was taking care of his affairs efficiently. We agreed to his request to continue our sessions when he was in town. We did, however, ask him to visit a medical colleague for consultation about the possible need for chemotherapy or sleeping medication. He did this, but it was finally decided that he would not make any use of drugs, since his background as an alcoholic made him fearful of any kind of drug dependence.

For about six weeks N. G. plunged into his work, declaring that he was not going to let the breakup of this last marriage interfere with his career this time. He was obliged to travel quite a bit during this period, and occasionally called long-distance, complaining of loneliness and depression. Then, while in a distant city, he suffered a sudden psychotic episode (uncertain diagnosis: schizophrenic reaction) and was hospitalized for a six-month period beginning March 1967. Once again his career was abruptly terminated, and after his recovery he began "at the bottom" once more. It is to be noted that in spite of the "failure syndrome" N. G. has considerable resilience, and is able to regain his basic optimism after each serious crisis. He lacks persistence in relation to specific goals, but he is not without courage and determination in his general approach to life.

During the period 1968 to early 1970, we were in another city and lost contact with N. G. Subsequently, however, we saw him again on a social basis, and obtained the tree shown as illustration 66. In the interval, after considerable struggle, he had met and married his fourth wife, a widow with two children of her own, who has an active teaching career as well as some money from her husband's estate. This marriage is not without its difficulties (there are now fifteen children in all, counting the stepchildren and a newborn daughter!), but it seems to be fulfilling for N. G. with respect to the mental and spiritual needs which he expressed earlier. His present wife is a highly intelligent and creative woman with advanced degrees in English literature who seems genuinely appreciative of N. G.'s mental gifts. At the same time she is steady and rather practical herself, and has been able to help him to concentrate his energies on one major effort.

At the present time N. G. is running his own business, manufacturing one of his own inventions. The product is both novel and very much in demand, and he is now negotiating to sell his corporation for a large sum of money, hoping thus to free himself of the seven-days-a-week time demands imposed by the business, while retaining a continuing source of income. All signs are that he will succeed in this, but it has been preceded by eighteen months of absolutely concentrated efforts, including numerous setbacks which would probably have caused him, in the past, to abandon the attempt midway.

We do not mean to imply that N. G.'s wife is responsible for the success

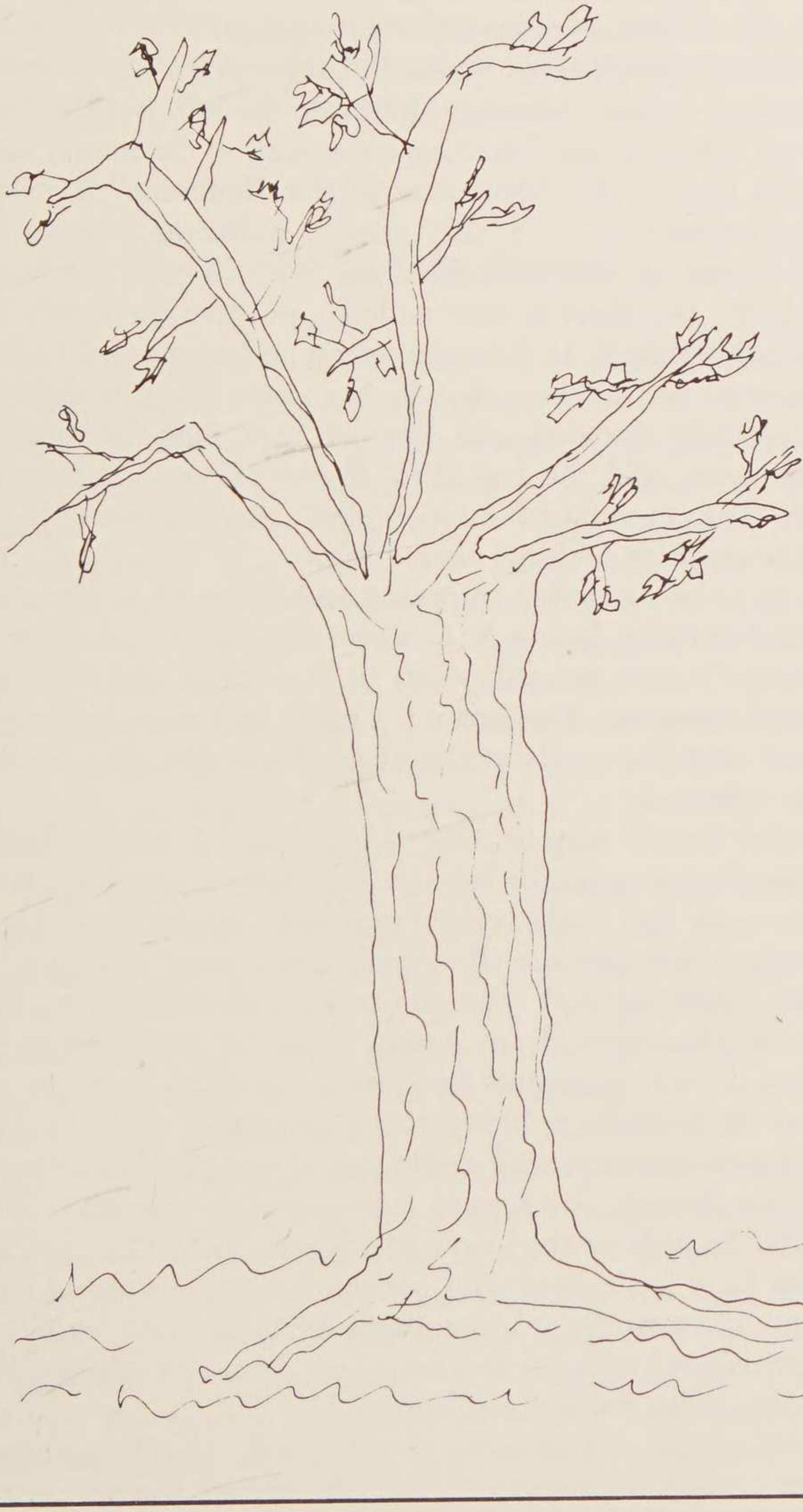


Illustration 66: Case History 1, November 1970

of this enterprise. He invented and perfected the product and he has done all of the work himself. However, in view of his admitted need for a woman who could inspire him and give him moral support and mental companionship, we doubt whether he would have carried this project to its present stage in the conditions of his earlier marriages.

Looking at the second tree, we see marked changes from the original one. The whole drawing is more definitely shifted to the left, but the earlier dominance of the left roots has disappeared, as well as the breaks low on both sides of the trunk. The dominance of the "feminine" is more clearly implied, but unconscious and early growth problems relating to the parents would appear to have been resolved. We still have the horizontally balanced roots, but there is now added a positive three-dimensional ground, indicating that N. G. feels nourished and supported by his immediate environment, and believes that he has some place in society. The trunk is still partially shielded with lines of bark, but the outline stroke is now continuous, and the transition to the crown is basically open. He no longer feels so vulnerable emotionally and is more able to integrate his feeling responses with his mental life.

The crown appears to be somewhat truncated and awkward in comparison with the original drawing, but in N. G.'s case this may be taken as a positive (or "corrective") sign, since it points to channeling and limiting of his diffused mental energies. (Presumably, a fuller and more balanced crown may reappear once the need for almost total concentration on his business has been lessened.)

The highest, central branch may be said to stand for his current business effort, which has its source on the left side (invention, creative activity), but bends toward the right side (practical application, high finance). The secondary branches are all closed at their point of origin in the main branches, suggesting that even the minor ramifications of his activities must not be allowed to divert energy from the main channels. The strong branch to the left represents those interests which he hopes to pursue if the sale of his business is brought to a successful close. In this drawing his mental preoccupation with semimystical and psychic matters is more clearly shown. Finally, one sign of overt hostility appears in the downturning, pointed branch on the lower left. Again, in N. G.'s case, in view of the fact that he is basically a mild person, the appearance of this sign, which refers mainly to anger at his mother's "abandonment," is to be regarded as an improvement over the less conscious signs of vulnerability shown on the first tree in the lower trunk outline.

On the whole, this second tree drawing is not exactly ideally positive, as can be seen from a quick impression. In fact, the earlier drawing gives a fuller and more balanced general impression. Nevertheless, in view of the nature of N. G.'s repeated problems, and our assessment that some of these troubles were at least indirectly related to his difficulty in concen-

trating on specific goals, we regard this second drawing as representative of a positive "corrective" stage. The rendering of the root, the ground, and the trunk all clearly point to healing of old emotional wounds and greater ease vis-à-vis the environment. It is quite possible, as we have already suggested, that once "success" is certain, the next drawing will show a crown which is both ordered and richly ramified.*

CASE HISTORY 2

The approach to this case history will be quite different from that of N. G. for two reasons. First, the subject was not a client or patient in a formal consulting setting, but a graduate student working under the supervision of a close colleague. Second, what is of primary interest in this case is comparison of the five trees (drawn over a period of four years) in the accompanying illustrations. The reader will note on merely glancing superficially at the five trees (illustrations 67–71) that they are remarkably similar in general type and structure, whereas the expression of details varies considerably. It is hoped that this series of trees drawn by the same subject may serve to clarify the distinction between elements of form which refer to innate characteristics or express fundamental developmental processes, and those which refer to either the current stage of development or the present state of mind.

The subject, M. P., is a white American male of Italian background who was twenty-eight years old when the first drawing (illustration 67) was made (1966). He had been married for four years and had two children. He had a full-time job in the aerospace industry (supervisor of a microbiology laboratory) and was attending evening classes, at that time in the final stages of study for his M.S. degree in marine sciences. He has one younger brother and no sisters. From all accounts it would appear that his family background was fairly typical for immigrant Italians, with a great deal of open expression of both positive and negative emotions on the part of all members of the family. The parents were both very strict about matters such as the hours at which the boys returned home. The father had a strong Latin temper and used physical punishment to express his disapproval about M. P.'s social habits even after his son was of age. The mother would appear to have been basically supportive and very ambitious for her son, but inclined to express a good deal of hurt whenever he disappointed her, which was apparently quite frequently. M.

* N. G. died suddenly of a heart attack while this book was being written, before he was able to finalize the sale of his business.

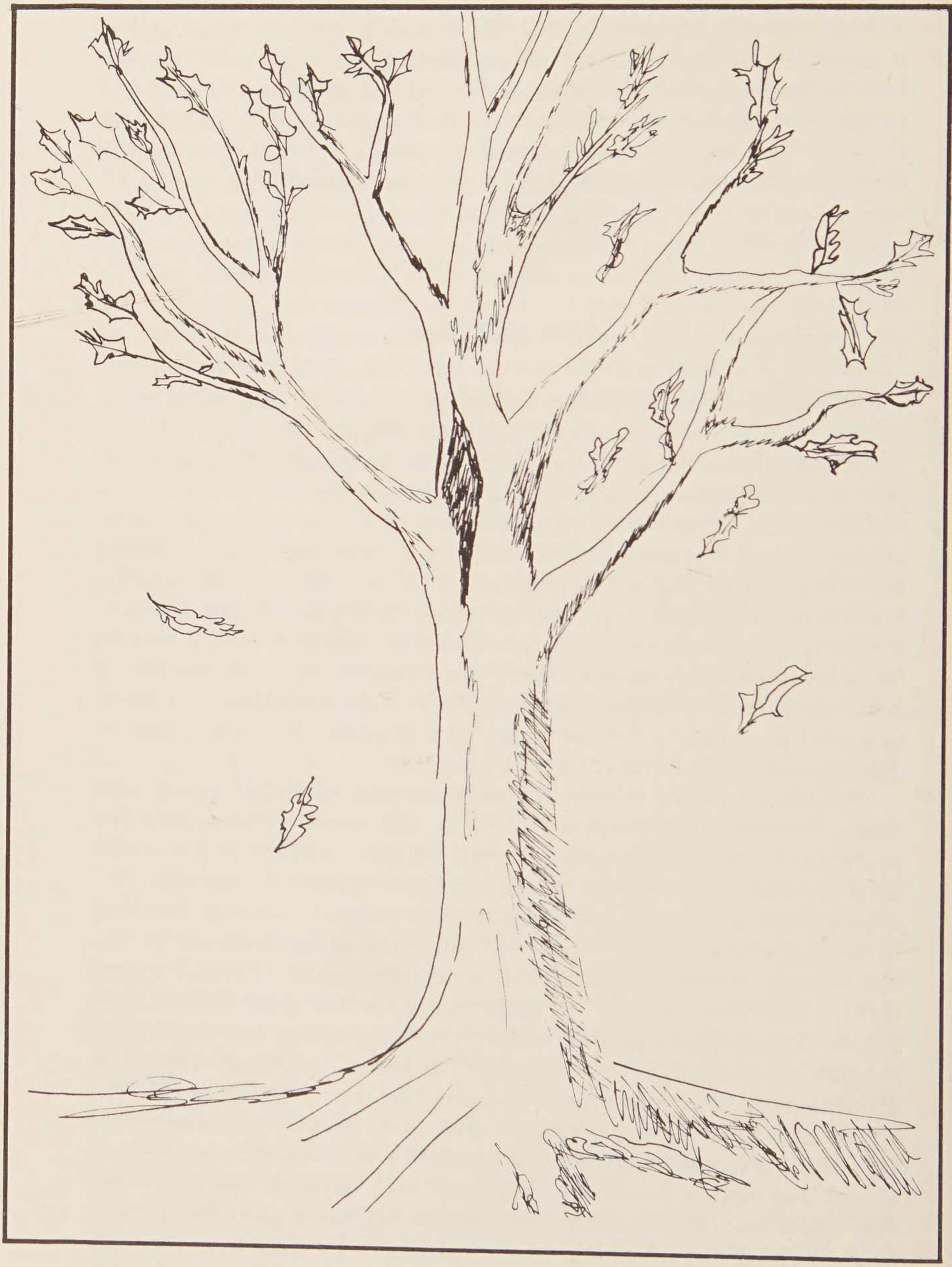


Illustration 67: Case History 2, October 1966

P. was not a particularly good student up through his B.S. degree and is not a natural intellectual, but he has a WAIS IQ of 130, and once he had enough working experience to recognize the material and social value of advanced degrees, he became quite diligent in his scholastic efforts. On the job he performs his work rapidly and with reasonable accuracy, but his initial enthusiasm quickly wanes and he becomes very bored with details or lengthy projects requiring discipline.

Preliminary observations

1. Position: Well centered on page. Upper core of the trunk tends to the right, but goes off the page. (Inclination toward development in rational, male directions, but undefined.)

2. Proportion: Normal.

3. Size: Very large tree. Whole page is filled from bottom to top, with upper branches continuing beyond the upper margin. (Expansive, optimistic, and ambitious, but without a defined goal. Some suggestion of vanity.)

4. Tree type (generic): Leafy deciduous.

5. Tree type (quality): Open structure with limited number of filtering leaves. (Extrovert, curious, adventurous, but exercises some caution with regard to influences. Some degree of naiveté, especially with regard to conceptual thinking.) Consistant technique, tree is rather well drawn. General impression of strength, size, virility. (Subject is fundamentally aware of a rather primitive strength, in spite of other indications of uncertainty. Impression is conveyed that power is important—both expressing power and striving for it.)

6. Strokes: Rapidly executed for the most part, but combined with some precise delineation, especially in the leaves. (Subject is quick and somewhat impatient, but can also be careful, or perhaps slightly calculating.) Although the lines are not heavy, there is a general impression of strong ego. (Self-concept is, however, uncertain.) Majority of the main lines are continuous, but there are some contiguous lines and several obvious broken lines. (Some anxiety and fear of having weaknesses exposed. Specific areas of vulnerability.) Form of the lines is mostly straight. (Confronts situations directly.)

7. Shape of the crown: Indeterminate, since the tree extends beyond the top margin.

8. Foliage: Limited number of clearly delineated leaves. (Adds a guarded quality to rather bouyant, extrovert impression. Also shows curiosity; desire for extensive contacts with others and wide experience.) Falling leaves. (Throws off disappointments or ideas or projects easily. May be slightly superficial in relationships. Discards past and forgets it—bears no grudges.)

9. Branches (general comments): All branches are basically parallel double lines, with tapering off at end points. All end points covered by leaves. (Energy flow from self outward is relatively free, but there is some caution about in-flowing energies. Leaves may also symbolize effort to soften aggressive tendencies. Desire to explore without becoming too vulnerable.)

10. Branch origins: Most secondary branches are dichotomous. (In this case probably stands for duality and ambivalance.) Free flow from main to secondary branches. (Even though other signs suggest he is not too sure of himself or certain about the direction of his life, energy flows freely.)

11. Branch patterns: Noncrossing. (Normal.)

12. Branch arrangement: Hierarchical. (Normal, although best development is to the left, while the crown is tending to the right.)

13. Crown-trunk transition: Strong, open flow. (Emotional and mental energies freely exchanged. He is not embarrassed in general to acknowledge the emotional side of his nature.)

14. Trunk: Straight, powerful, parallel, with slight funneling at top and bottom. Open to the roots. Normal proportions. (Emotions are strong, feeling reactions given full rein. Basic flow of energy is powerful. Impression of considerable physical strength.) Marks on the trunk: discontinuous lines combined with shading on the right side. (Both shielding against the father and aggressive feelings toward him expressed in looped horizontal shading technique. Discontinuous outline covered with shading also refers to numerous sexual affairs, which he wants at least partially to hide.) Break in outline on the left, with parallel line inside the trunk. (Vulnerable to responses of the mother. Feels some guilt toward her. But sets up secondary defenses to lessen this vulnerability.) Large diamond-shaped knothole high on the trunk. (Suggests some severe trauma at about age seventeen.) *

15. Roots: On the left, parallel delineation with open endings. Completely shaded on the right side. (Strong connection with instincts, but some kind of problem with respect to male ego and sexual confidence. Power of the flow from root through trunk underlines strong sexual drive, and certainly there is unlikely to be any problem with impotence, but perhaps he needs to prove his virility with repeated conquests? Father may have served as a rather poor model, or subject feels he has to react against strict upbringing.) The rather peculiar root in the center seems to have some connection to the high knothole. (This begins to look like a sexual trauma of heterosexual nature, in spite of relative infrequency of this meaning in trees of male subjects. Try to get some feedback from subject about this.)

16. Ground: Scribbled on the left, continuous on the right. (In spite of resistance to the influence of the father, subject feels much more at home in the male world.)

17. Fine details in the crown: Although the upper part of the crown tends to the right, the most highly developed branch is the principal left branch. (Subject might have artistic interests. It turns out that he has worked as a draftsman, and that this has partly caused him to lose interest in art on account of being forced to do detailed drafting work for a long period. More important, probably, is the fact that his wife is an art student. Since he is a competitive type, he may feel inhibited about developing this interest if she is more advanced or more talented than he. In effect, however, even though he is ambitious and there are signs that he would like to make money and "belong" to the male world, the branch development is more typical of someone who is involved in art than in sciences.) The principal upper branch is almost centered on the page, but since it is not shown in developed form, it must be seen as standing for a general attitude of expectation rather than a specific ambition. The small branch to the right of the central branch may have something to do with his studies in science. Several leaves on the small branch

* Calculations for the age of subject at time of trauma: 154 mm (height of scar) $\times$ 28 (subject's present age) divided by 254 mm (total height of tree) = 16.9 years. After having received confirmation of the age, Lyons' correlation was calculated, as:

$$\frac{\text{height of scar}}{\text{tree height}} = \frac{\text{age at trauma}}{\text{subject's present age}}, \quad \frac{154}{254} = 0.6, \quad \frac{17}{28} = 0.6, \text{ 100\% agreement}$$

suggest a receptive mind, able to make use of what he learns from others, but not particularly strong himself in analytical thinking. The first branch on the right would seem to represent his present marriage, although as it splits into a dichotomous ending, there may be some other involvement. (In general, subject seems to need to be married, but his feelings are highly ambivalent. Perhaps marriage is a stabilizing factor and has social value for him. Nevertheless, there are so many suggestions of adventurousness and the need for proving his virility, it would seem unlikely that he is completely committed to his wife in a deep emotional way.) All of the branches in the crown are shaded in some fashion, rather inconsistently. (Belies the general impression of self-confidence given by the size and structure of the tree. A great deal of uncertainty about how he should distribute his energies. Many self-doubts and subtle blocks.) The shading also suggests quite a bit of aggression, which is countered by the addition of leaves, and the falling leaves, which show a type who can throw off anger as well as hurt. (A general kind of "I don't care" attitude is conveyed.)

Synthesis

M. P. is basically a person who is much governed by enthusiasm and who has a tremendous amount of physical energy. He is curious and adventurous and is confident that he is going somewhere, although he does not know exactly where. He is both optimistic and ambitious, but in spite of his general sense of expectation and an attitude which is slightly self-important, he has numerous self-doubts. He projects confidence in superficial situations easily, but there are many areas where he is blocked and unsure of himself. There is a great deal of emotional resilience expressed in the drawing, but there are also some suggestions that he prefers superficial involvements to deep commitments, because these are easier to "throw off." He is aware of his deeper vulnerability, but unwilling to be exposed. He therefore has a rather complicated set of defenses operating in all spheres. He can be aggressive, but most of the time he keeps his aggressive tendencies under control, and will impress others as a person who is friendly and open, but perhaps not to be "tangled with."

Although M. P. is twenty-eight years old and has children of his own, he is still struggling with unresolved problems vis-à-vis both of his parents. He feels rather guilty toward his mother, but sets up a secondary resistance to any inroads she may make on his feelings. Relations with his father are difficult. He is resentful and angry with the father, yet for the most part his actual relations with him are probably defensive rather than actively aggressive. One gets the impression that the father's temperamental dominance and practice of physical punishments up through the adult years may be related to M. P.'s sexual promiscuity. He feels very strongly the need to prove himself a man and at the same time to punish his father, so there may be a strong unconscious element of "Let's show father" in M. P.'s sexual adventures.

Quite aside from his relations with his father, there are other indica-

tions of a sexual problem in the drawing. The very large scar, together with the hiding of the right side of the root structure, may be taken at least as clues. We do not yet know to what the scar corresponds, but since it may be dated at about age seventeen, and since there are indications of earlier sexual experiences on the right side of the trunk, it is unlikely that it represents an *initial* sexual trauma. On the other hand, there is nothing to support the likelihood of a homosexual experience either. Furthermore, the tone of the tree and the open flow from the roots through the trunk gives a general impression of virility, so impotence or fear of impotence is not too likely. We suspect a sort of Don Juan complex, which may have roots in unconscious doubts about his sexual prowess, but which M. P. does not recognize consciously as being problematic.

M. P.'s mental life is somewhat difficult to assess. He is clearly ambitious, but he does not seem to have defined goals. On the other hand, he is capable of directing his energies toward achievement once he has chosen a goal. Perhaps his professional choice will be dictated more by circumstances than by the direction of his mental interests, for his strongest talents would appear to lie in impractical, artistic pursuits, but following this natural bent would not be likely to lead to the financial success and status which he undoubtedly desires. The drawing suggests that he is capable of concentrated efforts if there is an immediate reward in sight, but that he functions largely on enthusiasm and a powerful basic drive which expresses itself as a great deal of available energy. He does not have much discipline or capacity for continuity of effort where the tasks are long and difficult, and it is therefore likely that he will tend, to a certain extent at least, to take "easy paths." On the other hand, he will not be satisfied with minor rewards or a secondary place in society, since he has a rather exalted self-image. Thus he may work hard when he can perceive a direct goal which will lead to immediate recognition or success, but is unlikely to devote himself to any special strivings related to internal values. Furthermore, although he is intelligent and capable of retaining information gained from others, he is not an intellectual type, and his mind does not have either a marked analytical or a synthesizing bent. In view of all of this, it may be supposed that his interest in pursuing advanced degrees in science is somewhat arbitrary—or at least that he does not have an inner sense of "vocation" with respect to science. He may very well have administrative gifts, for even though his relations with others tend to remain somewhat superficial, he expresses himself well and is able to deal with people in a relatively pleasant, if slightly high-handed, manner. Thus it may very well be that he will use his scientific studies as the basis for a career as an administrator in a scientific field, rather than as either a teacher or a pure researcher. This is all quite speculative, since at this point he is still rather unsure of himself intellectually as well as emotionally, and it is not at all certain that he will have the patience to complete

his studies. Nevertheless, the elements of ambition, ego drive, and surface confidence are so strong in the tree that it would seem likely that they will carry him through to some sort of success, in spite of his underlying self-doubts and relative lack of patience.

In summary, it may be said that M. P. is a person with strong libidinal drives, plenty of energy, and confident expectations from life. He is quite extroverted in his behavior, but he is stubborn emotionally and only adapts on his own terms. Mentally, on the other hand, he can adapt to the demands of immediate situations and channel his energies toward achievement, even though he does not have clear goals related to special talents or compelling internal values. Fundamentally it might be said that M. P. lives out of the *persona*. He is enthusiastic and thinks of himself as sincere, but he prefers to keep all his relationships at a certain distance. Furthermore, he himself does not recognize the complexities of his internal life, particularly the emotional ambivalence and sexual difficulties. He is more aware of self-doubt in intellectual matters. Nevertheless, there is a general forward thrust to his life which is governed by the certainty that he is going somewhere, though he is not quite sure where, and confidence that he will be recognized and rewarded by society, although he is not entirely sure who he is.

In discussions with the subject, further information about his marriage and about the event associated with the scar clarified some aspects of the original drawing, as well as the migration of the scar in the later drawings.

At the time of the first drawing, M. P.'s wife and children had moved to Connecticut, where he had expected to take a job. However, the position did not come through, and since he was able to get an excellent job on Long Island, he lived in the home of one of his professors during the week, driving to Connecticut each weekend and looking for work there. Earlier there had already been some difficulties in the marriage, but during this long enforced separation the partners drifted apart, and they eventually divorced just before the drawing of the second tree.

When asked if he had had any traumatic experience around the age of seventeen, M. P. readily admitted that he had been "seduced" by an older woman and had been rather shaken by the experience, because he was unsure whether "he was up to it." This was not, indeed, his first sexual experience, but it apparently affected him as a rather profound shock because it brought him to direct confrontation with his self-doubts regarding male sexual behavior.

Since the subject was not seen as a client in a formal counseling setting, this matter was not discussed in detail; but the treatment of the scar in the later trees may be analyzed in the context of this identification of the trauma and in relation to what is known of the further life history.

The second tree, illustration 68, was drawn one year after the first. At this time M. P. had just been divorced from his wife, and was still living in the home of the professor. Looking at the second drawing, one can see immediately that the tone and general effect are quite different, although the basic structure and direction of the tree are very similar to the original drawing. He is much less defensive at this time (almost all of the shading has disappeared), and his uncertainty is more overtly expressed (the outlines of trunk and branches are full of discontinuities and are broken in places). Here the roots are free of the shading "cover," but they are merely suggested, as though he had lost some of the basic connection with his strong libidinal drive. Where the branches split into secondaries there are marked broadenings, and there are bulges in some of the branches even where they are not dividing. On the whole, this drawing has a much more hesitant and rather depleted quality.

At the time of the drawing M. P. was acting his usual cheerful and optimistic role, but he was definitely shocked and upset by the divorce. While the position and structure of the tree still point to a fundamental attitude of positive expectation, the impression of strong self-assertion is missing. The main defense in this tree lies in the falling leaves, which are like a statement of his certainty that nothing matters too much, that all can be thrown off and a fresh start made. Nevertheless, the awkwardness of the tree and the energy blocks expressed in the branches, together with the thin, rather uncertain endings of the secondaries, point to a mood of at least temporary defeat. In this drawing the scar stands out more clearly on the bare trunk, but it is almost in the "correct" age position in relation to his current age, measuring about 16.4 years as the trauma date.

By the time the third drawing (illustration 69) was made, only six months later, a curious change had taken place in the positioning of the scar. It had migrated so far down on the trunk that it would be dated at 9.9 years in relation to the height of the tree and his age if we continued to use the "external date of event" approach. It is therefore necessary to view the position in terms of unconscious emotional reactions. By this time he had become involved with another woman, who had a successful career and an independent income as well. Although she was his age peer, it may be presumed that there was something about her position in relation to his own which resembled that of the "older woman" associated with the earlier sexual trauma. Furthermore, she had problems of her own, and although she was a willing sexual partner, he was unable completely to satisfy her. This apparently caused him to suffer fresh unconscious emotional reactions which activated the affect associated with the original trauma.

In other respects, this new tree represents a clear reassertion of ego power and the confident *persona*. In fact, its extremely large size, extending beyond the margins on three sides of the page, suggests a slightly



Illustration 68: Case History 2, October 1967



Illustration 69: Case History 2, February 1968

egomaniacal stance. Since M. P. has a lot of charm and is rather boyishly agreeable most of the time, this stance was not expressed in offensive overt behavior, but his attitude took on a tone of "Look at me! I've recovered already and I'm on my way up again." Indeed, he did seem to have recovered in the sense that he was again full of energy and enthusiasm. He had also regained some of his earlier defenses. However, the lower parts of the tree show genuine gains in maturity and resolution of some of his problems regarding his parents and his early background. The breaks on both sides of the trunk have disappeared and the tree is now firmly planted in its own ground, with well-delineated roots. There is a powerful energy channel from the roots all the way to the top of the tree, and the sense of basic power expressed in the first tree is even more strongly evident here.

The crown, on the other hand, although it is drawn with much less awkwardness and hesitation than that of the previous tree, is somewhat suspect. First there is its size, which goes beyond optimism and high expectations and begins to look like an overstated claim. Second, the leaves are somewhat stereotyped, and attached as they are to the sides as well as the ends of the branches, they suggest a further extension of the self, more than a control mechanism. One has the impression that the crown is running away with the tree, and that in some respects, although he clearly feels much better than at the time of the last drawing, M. P. may be overreaching himself. There are plenty of signs of vulnerability and ambivalence in the shading technique and the branch structures which, together with the downward migration of the scar, support the impression that M. P. may be deceiving himself by relying on a mood of confidence, rather than really working through his underlying self-doubts.

The fourth tree in the series, illustration 70 was drawn six months later. By this time a new relationship had been started, in this case with a girl to whom M. P. was very attracted but who did not yield to his seductive charm, no matter in how many different ways he tried to approach her. The differences in the details of this drawing are startling. We still have the same basic type of tree, drawn with a powerful trunk and branches extending beyond the margins. Here, however, there are no roots shown, the foliage has completely disappeared, the scar is huge and stands out on a bare trunk, and the branches are completely barren, except for shading from below. There are no breaks in the outline, so one may assume that his overt behavior was not so obviously unsure as at the time of the second drawing; but internally M. P. feels even more defeated at this point. His basic assertion of virility and resilience has deserted him. He finds himself in a situation where he is more emotionally involved than is his wont, and with a woman who is not interested in his sexual prowess. The shading is all underneath the branches, as though he tried to fend off from consciousness the influx of his own emotions, his own unconscious

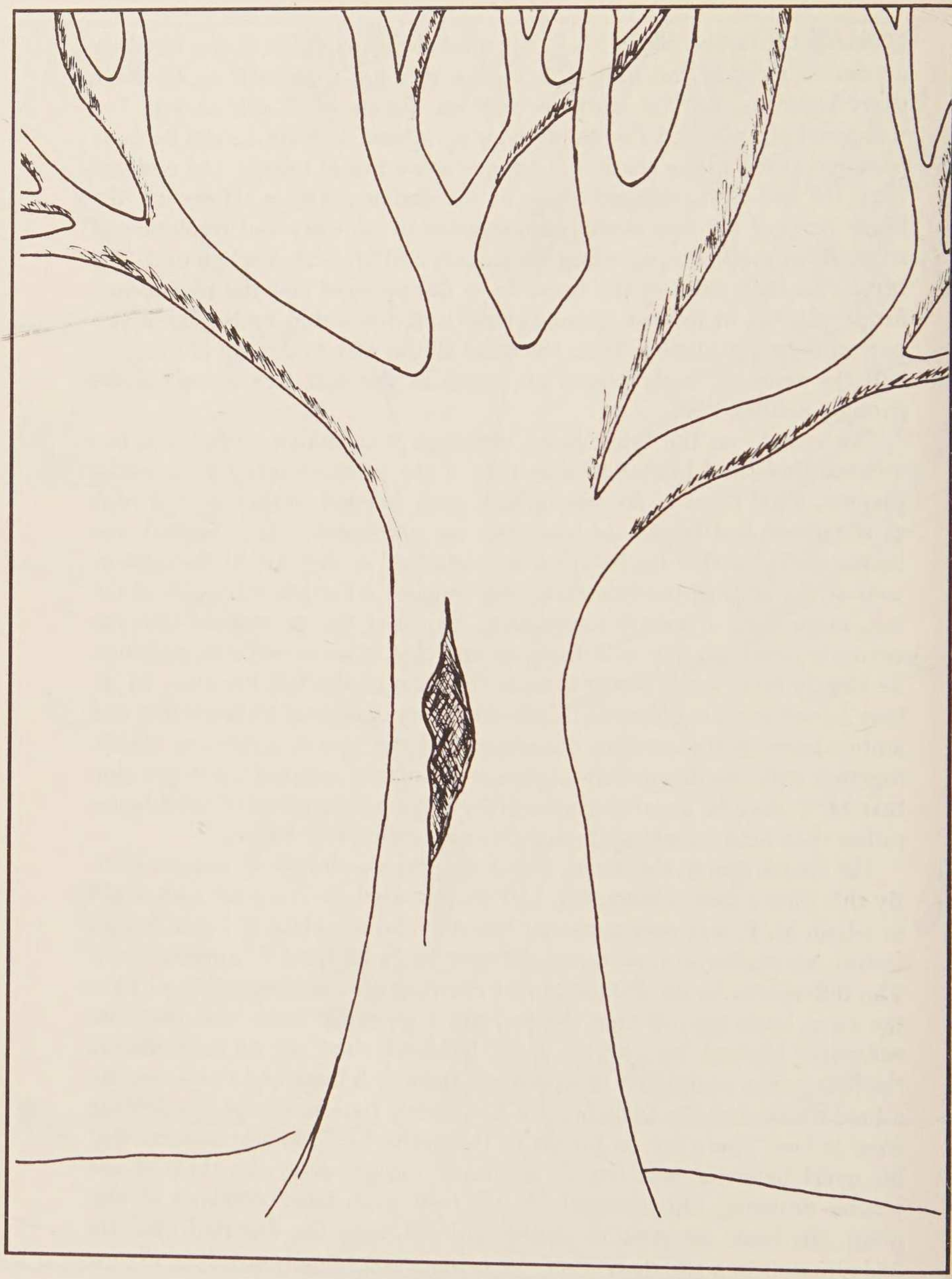


Illustration 70: Case History 2, August 1968

reactions, and even his own sexual drives. The sun is apparently overhead and the tree still strives upward, so one may assume that he maintains his basic faith in the future; but the absence of leaves is highly significant here, because it suggests that he will have to move toward that future without the characteristic attitude which can so easily discard whatever is unpleasant or is not working out. In general this is the only one of M. P.'s drawings which suggests that he is experiencing his suffering more or less directly. In the others, whatever the problems expressed, there are indications in one form or another that he believes he can find comfortable solutions which will not be too costly to him emotionally. At this time one has the sense that M. P. has come to a point where his typical behavior is inappropriate and his usual compensations for internal doubts are simply not effective. There is some suggestion of a positive turning point in this drawing, however, for the upper right branches are becoming stronger. While M. P. certainly did not enjoy the affront to his vanity and the personal frustrations represented by this period, he became more serious about his studies and directed his ambitious more definitely toward obtaining his Ph. D.

Almost two years elapsed between the fourth and the fifth drawing, illustration 71. By this time, after a broken engagement with the "unwilling" girlfriend and a series of minor sexual adventures with little emotional attachment, M. P. had met and married his second wife. The drawing was made on the night when he received his diploma for the Ph.D. in microbiology. He was in a mood of triumph, and his recent marriage added to his general feelings of well-being. The tree was drawn with rapid, sure strokes, with no noticeable breaks or discontinuities. There is, however, a rather disproportionate turning in of the trunk outline near the scar, implying that the complications of his relations with women have taken a certain emotional toll. The scar is still prominent and rather low, but it has now shifted to the right, suggesting that he can at least integrate its content with his sexual and emotional experience as a male, even though he has not completely assimilated its meaning into his conscious experience.

In this drawing the roots are extremely prominent. His assertion of male virility and basic contact with "source" energies reappears, apparently supported by his recent marriage. The tree stands on a small hill and is definitely seen from below, with the upper crown almost completely off the page. Like the third tree, this drawing seems to be expressing a strong ego stance, and vanity is a clear motif. Considering the nature of the occasion, however, this is more or less to be expected from one of M. P.'s general personality type. This tree differs strongly from the third drawing, however, in that here the emotional nature is emphasized in the powerful trunk, which continues almost to the top of the page, whereas the earlier drawing was dominated by the crown. The emphasis

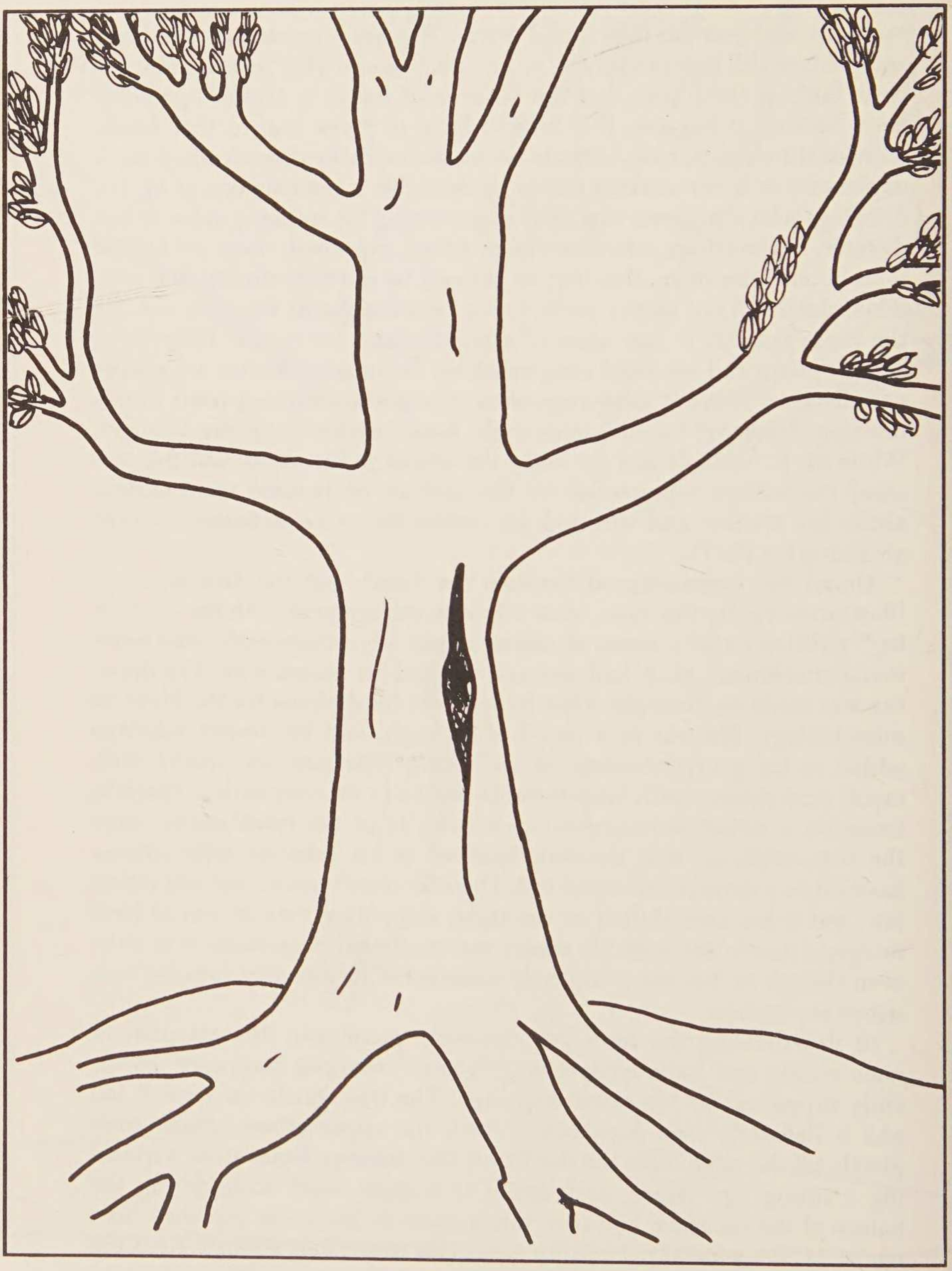


Illustration 71: Case History 2, July 1970

on roots and trunk may be partly an expression of mood, but it again reminds us that M. P. is more a sensation than a thinking type, and that even on the occasion of completing his doctorate his self-statement seems to be a rather boyish and adventuresome "Now I have done it! We can go on—somewhere—from here."

CASE HISTORY 3

The following is not really a case history in the true sense of the word, but rather an attempt to show how much can be obtained from a "blind" interpretation, where only the subject's vital statistics are known. Needless to say, "blind" analysis is not to be recommended when the interpretation is to be directly communicated to the subject. We do believe, however, that this approach has independent value beyond that of impressing or persuading colleagues of the usefulness of tree-drawing analysis. It would seem to be particularly helpful as a consultation adjunct to the therapist who has already been working for some time with his patient. The vast battery of psychological tests in current use in the United States are applied principally in the initial stages of therapeutic work; but most psychotherapists would readily admit that there are later stages when their view of the patient's problems and progress becomes obscured by their own involvement with the therapeutic process. At such periods the analysis of a tree drawing, performed without prior comments from the subject's therapist, would appear to be a useful tool for establishing a fresh objective view of the patient's problems. This type of analysis must, of course, be highly tentative, but this is sometimes preferable to beginning the study of the tree with a preconceived notion of what one is looking for.

The subject whose tree drawing is shown here as illustration 72 is a white, male American who is unmarried and twenty-five years old, and will be referred to as L. N.

Preliminary observations

1. Use of the spaces of the page: While the core of the tree is definitely shifted to the left, this is not a clear case of domination from feminine influences, because the fallen right branches are extremely long and reach all the way to the far right side of the page. In general, the left zone is strongly emphasized, but the use of the entire horizontal space in the emotional sphere of the page shows some attempt to balance the natural emphasis on the feminine zone, at least in that sphere. The largest part of the root and crown, however, are placed to the left of center, as well as the core of the trunk. (In early family background, although the mother dominates, there would ap-



Illustration 72: Case History 3, July 1970

pear to be some kind of severe problem with both parents. Picture is somewhat obscure.) The tree is placed quite high on the page, but does not extend beyond the margin at the top. In general, the central core is striving upward. (Subject is ambitious, and does not yield passively to mother domination, but tries to make something out of it.) Although the core of the crown strives upward, the heavy broken branches also exert a downward pull. In terms of the *parts of the tree*, it is clearly crown dominated, but in terms of the *parts of the page*, the emotional sphere is emphasized. (Subject is basically a mental type, but much of his mental energy is, at least at the present time, invested in emotional matters.)

2. Type of tree (generic): Cannot be determined because of inconsistency in the rendering of the foliage. Foliage in the upper part of the crown looks like some variety of conifer, but on the fallen branches, especially those to the right, deciduous leaves are shown. The shape of the tree is also quite unnatural, or would be so if the lower branches were growing upward instead of on the ground. (Perhaps the subject cannot identify himself as a certain personality type. He seems to have a sense of direction, but there have been a great many radical changes in the direction of the individual branches. This "mixture" has some of the ambivalent connotations of the drawing of two trees of different types. The upper and lower parts of the crown look more and more disparate as one studies the tree. The lower crown seems to represent reaction *against* something, the upper part striving *toward* something, but both have about equal weight. Much energy and attention are apparently still absorbed by ambivalent feelings toward the parental figures.)

3. Tree type (quality): The basic structure is semiclosed, but the tree has a rather rigid feeling. (He is not inflexible; in fact, the frequent changes in direction indicate that he is constantly adapting, but this "changing" is for the purpose of rather doggedly continuing his efforts, finding a new direction for them as soon as an earlier one ceases to be feasible.) All the changes are made with angular turning points. Although there is no shading, the foliage on the top is rather "brushlike" and suggests that the subject is somewhat difficult to approach in the mental sphere. Approach to the trunk, on the other hand, is hampered by the broken branches. (Does he use his "suffering" as a protection against emotional involvement?) There is something rather unpleasant in the tone of the whole drawing which is difficult to define, for it does not seem to spring from the slight indications of hostility in some of the branch endings, nor from the defensiveness of the upper foliage. It is perhaps an element of self-dramatization—not of ego power, but of weakness—as though the subject wanted to call attention to his life problems and was slightly proud of them. This is a subjective statement, but it derives again from the awkward disparity between the upper part of the crown, which is rather proud, and the lower branches, which are so seriously beaten down. Admittedly, also, this may be partly a reaction on our part to the fact that our initial impression of the drawing was "This must be a very strong and courageous young man, to be still striving upward after so much suffering," whereas, on closer inspection, it seemed that the subject might be exaggerating his suffering somewhat.

4. Strokes: Mostly continuous, but an unusual number of partial discontinuities which make the bent branches look like the joints of bones. (The basic energy release would seem to be rather irregular and jerky. Neither typically nervous nor fiery, but some combination of the two.) The lines are mostly straight and angular, and all the curving forms are associated with "bulges." (The subject is basically direct, despite some reserve and defensive lack of receptivity.)

5. Shape of the crown: May be seen in several terms. The whole tree constitutes a definite triangle shape, and partakes of some of the qualities of the pine and poplar types, since it definitely points upward. However, the upward motion is neither smooth nor steplike, and in this case the base of the triangle constitutes an opposing pull to the top, rather than a firm support for it. From another point of view, the crown may be associated with the irregular shapes, for it could be said that part of it is missing. (The subject is clearly ambitious and probably quite intellectual, but his mental energies are split in two principal directions. He would appear to be "stuck" in emotional problems. But he manages to separate these from the core of the crown, so they may not prevent him from going forward in the development of his mental life. He feels partially cheated, however, since only one section of the crown is growing upward.) If the broken branches were growing upward, they would create a very disproportionate crown, with the right branch much longer and higher than any of the others. (Would the subject "lean" toward the father if he could? Or did he have ambitions in the male zone of activities which he feels were shattered by "winds of fate"?) It must also be said that although this crown is not like any of those we have shown as windblown, it has something in common with them, since the "damage" to the lower part of the tree looks more like wind damage than that caused by lightning. The pressure of wind in this case would not be associated with influences from one of the two zones, but rather from the environment in general. Suggestion of a huge storm, which may have been hurtful to the subject's family. (Have there been some sort of destructive forces acting on the family? Again, this does not make too much sense, because the fallen branches are living. Does not look like the tree of a person who has lost the parents through tragedy.)

6. Foliage: Mixed, inconsistent. Foliage in the upper crown is made with rapid looped strokes, more like shading. (Subject is somewhat defensive in the mental sphere and can also be mentally aggressive.) The lower leaves look more like oak leaves, especially those shown on the right side. (Still desires contact with the father or with a father surrogate.)

7. Roots: Long and pointed. No ground. Thorough "digging in," with some clawlike endings. Roots have the same angular, bony quality as the branches. (Subject does not feel his environment to be nourishing, but he wants badly to establish a role or place for himself.) Transition to the trunk is open. (Subject is much more open internally than he is in his relations with others.) The side roots are spreading in place of ground line. (Strong internal balancing effort.)

8. Trunk: In general, the trunk is inadequate to support the crown. This seems like an important clue to the broken branches. Perhaps they are not storm damaged at all, but have broken off merely because the weight of the crown was too great for the trunk to support. (Subject is rather underdeveloped emotionally, and may have substituted mental development for the feeling function to the point where some of the crown material had to be sacrificed to the emotional sphere.) Bulges on the right root and the right base of the trunk. (Was the father an early hero who sharply disappointed the subject?) Trunk narrows and bulges again below the crown. (Subject overreacted to early relationship problems. Keeps the trunk channel open, but restricts his emotional flow.)

9. Branch types: Some parallel, but mostly either angular or bulging. (Constant changes in direction. Some are felt by the subject as imposed and others are voluntary.) In the upper crown, expressions of dogged determination to keep the energy of the branches going somewhere, even if repeated changes

have to be made. Except for two small branches on the left side, the down-turning branches are all alive, thus much of the basic energy is lost in slightly regressive materials. On the left, especially, the branch channel becomes vague and energy is dissipated. On the right there still seems to be more purpose in the quality of the broken branches. (These may have to do with energy connected with nonfamily relationships, as well as the father. Resolution of problems in that zone is still pertinent. On the maternal side, there are more dead limbs and the branches look rather futile.) In the upper crown there are a large number of scars on small branches. (These would appear to represent mental shocks and partial defeats. Subject may be oversensitive to criticism and easily hurt in the mental domain.)

10. Branch endings: Mostly pointed or cut off sharply, where they are not covered with foliage. (Irregular release of energy. Some "sharpness" in responses. Dammed-up mental energy in the top of the tree.) Branch endings with foliage are more sensitive, but those which are "bristly" do not exactly invite approach.

11. Branch origins: All but one or two branches are open from the point of origin. (Mental life is not too inhibited by the problems expressed in the tree.) Some definite three-dimensional effects expressed in the branch relationships. (Creativity and subtle perceptions.)

12. Branch patterns: Many major branches, few secondaries. (Subject is interested in many different pursuits, but the distribution of energy is not equal. Definite emphasis on the center branch, which is almost as wide as parts of the trunk.) Trunk-crown transition is open with a widening at the bottom of the crown. (Area of pause. Cautious feeling responses.) Centrifugal pattern results from the fallen branches. (Subject is somewhat "cold," although he may have strong feelings of pity for the downtrodden, including himself. Abstract or intellectual concern with problems of humanity, but without much true compassion.)

13. Direction and location of the main branches: Central branch is clearly striving upward, specifically in directions associated with literature, religion, mythology. It is very broad near the trunk, narrows suddenly at the "scar" point, and continues on to a barren ending which is partially "sawed off," but also resembles an erect penis. (This may refer to partial sublimation of sexual energies in relation to literary efforts, studies, mental pursuits; it may even suggest a current romance which is in some way closely connected with the subject's ambitions.) The branch to the left of the main branch in the upper crown is heavily scarred near the top and has undergone three major changes in direction. (This branch probably refers to the subject's inner world of fantasy and to his ideals, though it might also have some relation to earlier interests in music and the creative arts.) The first change in direction (toward the right) corresponds to the terminal splitting of a smaller branch on the right side of the tree. The second change (back to the left) corresponds to the scar on the central branch. (Both of these directional changes thus probably have a relation to disappointments about external events, especially early romantic experiences. At the first bend, about age fourteen, the subject turns away from his internal, idealized world and tries to apply the energy of the branch in a right-tending direction. At the second bend, about age sixteen and a half, the opposite motion is seen. The third bend, which is associated with a scar on the branch itself, would appear to have something to do with a general shattering of the subject's ideals.) The branch which cuts under the one just discussed, ending in a kind of "bird in flight" motif, has probably something to do with intuition and an interest in mysticism. Its pointed ending is not too

positive for receptivity, however. On the other hand, it has a "flame" shape, which may refer to "burning enthusiasm" about mystical or nonrational ideas.

Among the lower branches, the small dead branch on the left of the trunk is associated with two clear scars, which have defensive connotations and may be associated with a subjective trauma. It falls at about the age of ten, using the proportional measurements, and clearly has something to do with the mother. (Could be anything from the birth of a sibling to accidental discovery that mother has a lover.) The second fallen branch on the left, which is closed at its point of origin, corresponds exactly to the sharp downturning of the first branch on the right. Here we have possibly to do with lost, rather than reoriented, ideals (at about age twelve, onset of puberty), associated with disappointment in father (right branch). Both of these branches are still alive, however, so they probably do not represent objective losses. The second fallen branch on the right is low enough to belong to early adolescence, and it is thus more likely to have to do with male peers than with a romance. (Perhaps the subject sought and failed to win the approval of his peers, and hence felt obliged to "break off from them." He is still somewhat hopeful of receiving this kind of approval, however, as the broad "living" leaves, lying where the right ground line should be, imply.)

The last branch to be considered is the third right branch. This probably has to do with a first heterosexual romance, which ended abruptly with ambivalent reactions. The "loss" secondary is foliated, whereas the "gain" secondary is twisted and barren. (The subject tried to sublimate the failure, but actually finds remembrance of the loss more pleasureable.) A diagonal line from the dichotomous ending of this branch leads straight through the trunk scars on the left, suggesting that the subject associates the sudden termination of this experience at least partially to his "mother trauma."

14. Special signs: Most of these have already been mentioned in connection with the branches, with the exception of the most prominent trauma mark, the knothole high on the central branch of the crown. This can be measured as corresponding to about age sixteen and a half, and very likely has reference to an experience giving rise to castration fears or defined sexual guilt, especially as the same branch suddenly narrows after the scar point, and comes to an end at the very top of the tree in a rather triumphant "erect penis" form.

Synthesis

Without any actual contact or detailed information about the subject, these comments must remain somewhat speculative. Nevertheless, even given many unknowns regarding the background and present pursuits of the subject, some generalizations can be made with reasonable confidence.

L. N. would appear to be a young man who values mental and spiritual development highly, perhaps at the expense of other areas of life. He is probably a thinking type with an intuitive bent. His basic pattern of responses will be those of an introvert, and he will impress others as somewhat reserved or even "cold," although he is neither shy nor withdrawn. In fact, he may very well have a well-developed extrovert *persona*, for one of his marked needs seems to be winning the approval of others. His internal values are highly idealistic, and he reacts strongly when other

persons or his observations about society disturb his confidence in these values. At the same time, he needs desperately to "belong," to establish a place for himself in society and to win the approval of his peers. Thus, he may often compromise his own values, or experience internal conflict between his rather detached conscious stance and his emotional needs, which he underrates, even though he is intellectually aware of them.

L. N. is ambitious and is capable of concentrated efforts directed toward his goals. His control of his own energies is rather sporadic, however, and he will tend to work in spurts rather than with a steady progression. His specific ambitions are not particularly worldly, but suggest the desire to excel in one of the humanistic intellectual endeavors, perhaps literature or philosophy.

The first impression conveyed by the drawings is that of a person who has undergone many painful experiences in his interactions with both the family and the larger environment. Closer inspection, however, suggests that the suffering expressed in the tree is less a matter of objectively tragic experiences than of the subjective evaluations of a young man of hypersensitive mentality with rather underdeveloped emotional responses. L. N. has, indeed, suffered deep disappointments in relations with both of his parents, and it is quite probable that the rather poor development of the feeling function is as much a matter of unfulfilled needs for warmth and support in his early family experience as it is a reflection of inborn type emphasis. Nevertheless, after our initial impression from the "storm-ravaged" quality of the tree that the whole family might have suffered some unavoidable tragedy, we are inclined to revise that view and speculate a rather comfortable middle-class background in which the main problem was one of destructive or unfulfilling feeling relationships.

L. N.'s mother exerted a much more powerful influence on him than did the father, and his disappointment with her is also much stronger, amounting almost to a sense of betrayal. Whatever the actual nature of his interchange with his parents, however, the living quality of the fallen branches suggests that he cannot resolve his early relationship problems simply by turning away from them. There are signs that he is still basically ready to forgive his parents and still desires their approval, although he probably would not admit this. At the present time much of his mental energy is absorbed by the pull of the past. This may be a completely unconscious, regressive process, or it may be an expression of a more conscious, deliberate effort to assess the meaning of the past through self-analysis or psychoanalysis. With respect to the analytic processes, a cautionary note must be raised, for L. N. will easily fall into patterns of rationalization—both in terms of self-pity or self-dramatization and in terms of clever "explaining away" of the real issues. Both of these could be ways of avoiding the central life problem expressed in the tree—i.e., the internal weakness in the emotional sphere.

The sexual drives are not pictured as particularly dominant, although

they are recognized and accepted. There are some suggestions of homosexual approach or even homosexual contact, but these would not appear to be of any great importance even if they have a reality reference. L. N. seems to have suffered some kind of trauma in an earlier heterosexual episode, perhaps being "caught" by disapproving elders or becoming involved with a "castrating" partner. The present picture, however, is of positive feelings toward heterosexual relations. If L. N. is slightly immature in his sexual behavior, this is probably more a reflection of his emotional immaturity than the expression of a sexual problem per se.

In summary, it may be said that L. N. is an intellectual type who tends to "feel with his head" and probably does not recognize the extent to which he backs off from deep feeling contacts or restricts the scope of his own emotional responses. He is consciously desirous of wide contacts with others, and is interested in human problems; but he is rather difficult to approach and does not give of himself spontaneously or freely. He is quite proud and is both ambitious and rather confident in the mental sphere. On the other hand, his pride does not prevent him from displaying his "problems" in the interest of drawing responses from others. In terms of external situations, he needs to excel intellectually and to establish a place for himself in the social milieu. His internal problems are such that they will probably not be solved simply through wider relations with peers or with women, for it is unlikely that he will be able to yield to deep levels of feeling commitment unless he can first confront himself honestly and work directly on his insecurities in the feeling domain. In a psychotherapeutic relationship L. N. would probably respond well to a gradual supportive development of complete trust in working with the underdeveloped feeling function, combined with a rather "tough" attitude toward rationalization and other avoidance techniques. He should also be receptive to "dream work" and other forms of symbolic structuring, since his thinking is not strictly analytical in the scientific sense, but is literary, mythic, and rather intuitive.

PART IV

Discussion

We usually spend long hours in talking
But the day suffices not for our dis-
course.

Publius Ovidius,
Tristia V, circa A.D. 8

15

Influences on the Drawing

The answer, to be adequate, would have to be long; but perhaps we may indicate the spirit in which it ought to be conceived.

George Santayana,
Interpretations of Poetry and Religion,
1957

SEASONAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCES ON THE CHOICE OF TREE TYPE

SINCE we have placed considerable emphasis on the symbolic meaning of the subject's preference for drawing a particular type of tree, it is natural that questions should be raised as to whether the season of the year has an influence on the drawing of winter trees versus foliated trees, or whether other seasonal associations—such as falling leaves with autumn and the Christmas tree with the period of the winter holidays—can be said to affect the rendering. We have proceeded on the assumption that no such influence exists with adult subjects, since we regularly see leafy trees drawn in the winter months and barren trees in the summer.

However, two simple investigations have been carried out, purporting to show that the season of the year *does* influence, to some extent, the production of winter trees of adult subjects. Judson and MacCasland (1960) studied drawings of institutionalized patients, selecting them from the files of the most recent admissions for each month (ten males and ten females), without any reference to randomization of the selection.

They claim to have demonstrated that for the women, seasonal influence was statistically significant, whereas for the males only a *tendency* to

draw more leafless trees in winter could be shown. There are several points, however, which are problematic in this paper: (1) no breakdown of psychiatric diagnoses was considered; thus one does not know what kind of patients drew winter trees, regardless of the season; (2) the statistical evaluations of the authors seem rather peculiar, since they failed to correct for continuity in the female series; (3) under any conditions, the claim of "$p < .01$" in the female series is not supported by their figures.

A further attempt to prove that seasonal influences show up in tree drawings of *males* was undertaken by Moll (1962), reported in remarkably condensed fashion (twenty-nine journal lines). Different groups of male college students were administered the H-T-P, at two seasons of two different school years, and the pooled tree drawings were analyzed for the presence of foliage. During the fall period (last week of September, when foliage is still full on the deciduous trees of the area), 130 out of 150 drawings (86.6 percent) showed leaves, whereas in early January 89 out of 119 drawings (74.8 percent) were leafy. Aside from the minimal difference in renderings of the drawings from September and those from January, the pooling of the samples completely invalidates the supposedly significant results, as there is no way of determining the proportion in one fall group relative to another fall group, and similarly for the two winter groups.

Since the drawings in our present collection are dated, it was fairly easy to group the deciduous trees according to seasonal indications in the drawings themselves and compare these with the dates when they were produced. It was found that there was no significance in the time of year at which the drawing was made, leafless trees appearing as often during the summer months as in the winter, and fully foliated or fruited trees drawn with the same frequency in winter months as in spring or summer. The inclusion of falling leaves seems definitely to be expressive of a personality trait rather than being inspired by the fall season. (Note that in the five drawings illustrating case history 2 (chapter 14), the only barren tree was drawn during the month of August, and one showing falling leaves was made in February.) The drawings of conifers were also distributed almost evenly through all months of the year, including those representing Christmas trees rendered by adults. In the collection of children's drawings, however, there does seem to be a slight increase in the number of Christmas trees produced around the holiday season.

The question of whether the choice of generic tree type is influenced by the climate or geographical background in which the subject lives is one which we cannot answer with certainty on the basis of our collection, for although we have a limited number of drawings from persons who live in extreme climates, the majority of our subjects come from the temperate and northern regions of the United States or Europe. We personally suspect that there is some environmental influence on the choice of generic trees, at least among individuals who have lived most of their

lives in one locale. This need not invalidate the notion that the tree type is related to personality traits, however, for there is some evidence that climatic differences affect behavior—at least on a broad demographic scale. Thus, if flowering trees are more often drawn by persons from southern or Mediterranean climates, it may also be true that the gaiety and sense of positive expectation we associate with this kind of tree will be characteristic of larger numbers of such populations than of people from northern climates. This is a question which could be pursued by collecting and analyzing tree drawings in areas where the dominant tree species differ from those of the temperate regions. Our own experience suggests that when a subject chooses a generic tree from which is not typical for his geographical surroundings—as when, for example, a resident of Maine or Minnesota draws a palm tree—the personality traits associated with the type of tree involved may be given considerably more weight in the total interpretation.

STABILITY OF RENDERING

In discussing the issue of how stable are drawings of the same individual, one has to start with the question of what is understood by the phrase "stability of drawings." If all drawing renderings of one subject taken consecutively in a period of time were identical, down to minor details, the problem would not emerge. On the other hand, although there may be considerable differences among the trees drawn by the same individual over a span of time, some basic form elements are usually present in all, permitting the identification of one person's tree renderings even by lay judges. One may enumerate a few formal factors which tend to be stable: general placement on the page, size in relation to the size of the paper, proportions among the parts of the tree, directional inclination of the crown and/or of the major branches, details on the trunk, line quality, and general tonality.

Landisberg (1953), assuming that the theme "tree" taps basic, long-standing feelings and attitudes, thought that its rendering is extremely resistant to alteration. Hammer was of the same opinion, with the additional qualifying statement: "Drawings in general tend to be stable, or *in developmental periods* and *during therapy* provide a permanent graphic record of the nature of change" (Hammer, 1958b, p. 606; emphasis added). There are two further exceptions to be noted: (1) the person who will provide quite dissimilar drawings, which at first sight are difficult to reconcile with each other, under the influence of external stressful conditions; and (2) the individual with an exceedingly "plastic *persona*," not identified with any particular generic tree type, who, with-

out being asked to do so, spontaneously draws trees of different kinds.

In the following we wish to elaborate briefly on four points: the longitudinal stability of the tree drawing; the degree of stability in forced changed situations, including hypnotic states; greatly variant trees as expressions of temporary states of mind and/or moods; and apparently variant trees of "plastic personalities."

Since the tree rendering matures with the individual, although its basic Gestalt becomes manifest at a relatively tender age, its elaboration may undergo changes reflecting the subject's maturational status at any one particular time. The five drawings included in case history 2 (chapter 14) are a prime example of the stability of placement, size, tonality, and so on, and yet they show a clear progression toward emotional growth in the rendering of the trunk outline. In Suchenwirth's 1969 published series, where it is demonstrated that Gestalt disintegration and reintegration take place at the beginning and in the recovery phase of the schizophrenic episode of his patient, the permanency of the major features of the drawings—such as placement, tonality, proportions—is still apparent. Only in the acute phase of the illness do these features disappear.

Tolor (1957) attempted to induce his subjects to draw a second tree which would be as different from the first one as they could make it. Although it was not his purpose to do so, basically he confirmed the claim for drawing stability. He rated fourteen dimensions for change on a scale of 0 to 3, and found a median change of only twelve out of a possible thirty-six. Even less change was noted in specified formal elements by Konttinen and Karila (1969), who gave instructions to their subjects to draw trees which would be open-reserved, tense-relaxed, masculine-feminine, quick-slow, and aggressive-conciliatory. In connection with the five form elements analyzed, they stated: "It may be said that excluding the angularity, the individual differences in formal traits are relatively stable. . . . The stability of the traits is also indicated by the fact that the factor structure of the formal traits would presumably remain the same in different tree drawings and in the spontaneous drawing. . . . The most stable is pressure. Next are size, form level and shading" (Konttinen and Karila, 1969, p. 135). Expanding and partially repeating their experiments, Bernet (1971) came to the same basic conclusion.

In Koch's revised edition of *Der Baumtest* (1957), where hypnotic experiments are discussed and the drawings of one of his "age-regressed" subjects are presented, one can discern—with the exception of the infantile scribblings—that the form elements of the tree drawings typical for the subject are all similar in the various suggested ages. Schneck and Kline (1951) also performed hypnotic experiments, using the H-T-P and hoping to obtain richer expressions of unconscious materials in the drawings made under hypnosis. When they compared the prehypnotic renderings with the hypnotic drawings of the same subjects, they found that: ". . . despite the graphic differences, there appear to be marked similarities in

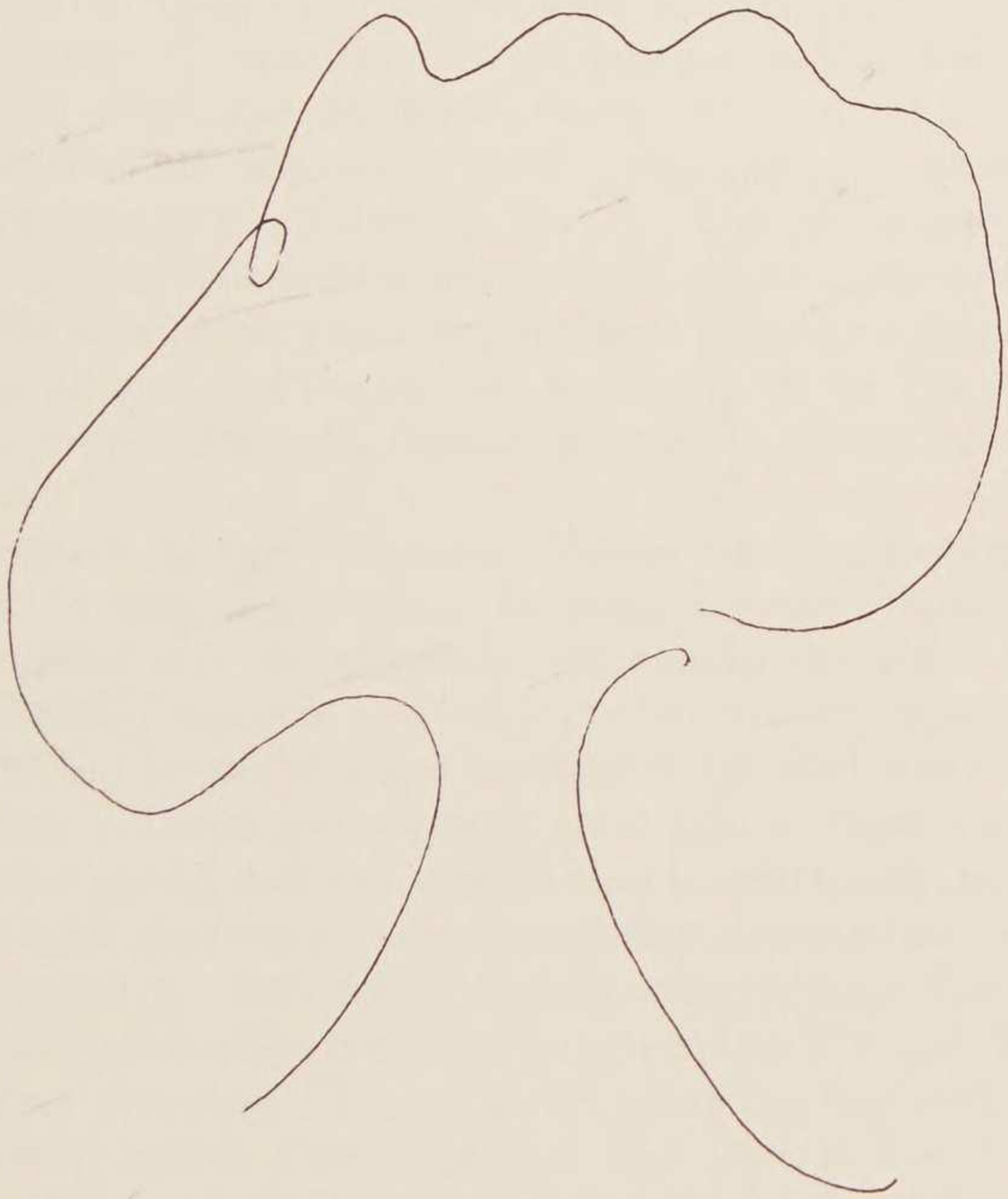


Illustration 73

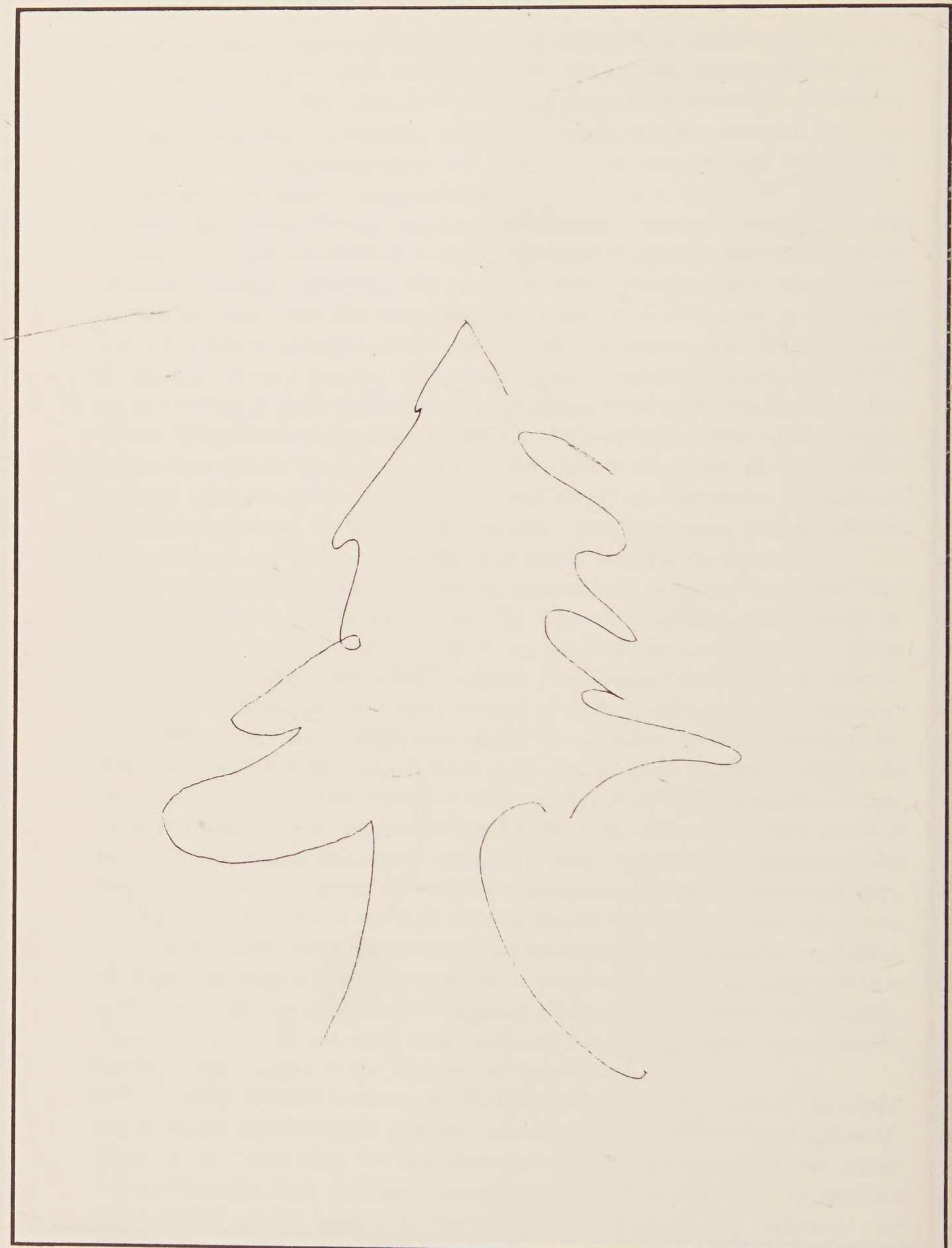


Illustration 74

regard to perspective, location on the page, linearity, the use of shading, as well as the qualities of synthesis. . . . The psychodynamic content of the drawings do not differ significantly" (Schneck and Kline, 1951, p. 11). It thus appears that both in the waking state and in hypnosis, when forced attempts to change the drawings are made, fundamental characteristics of the personality which are expressed in the renderings remain stable.

It has already been mentioned that according to Harsányi and Donáth (1962), if two drawings obtained in close succession show marked discrepancies as to placement, size, and type, the indication is of extreme tension or unresolved conflicts. With resolution of the problems through therapy or growth, these discrepancies seem to disappear. One may add that temporary states of mind or even extreme moods may find expression in the rendering which give an impression of rather notable differences, although these may not necessarily be alterations of placement or size or type. A comparison of illustration 14 (p. 143) and 19 (p. 155) provides an excellent example. The second drawing was made under highly stressful external life conditions. However, we have many tree drawings from this particular subject, and the stylistic rendering of the first illustration, to which he returned when the difficult circumstances were overcome, is typical for him.

Finally, there are the persons who spontaneously draw trees of different generic types. In such cases it may be more difficult for the untrained judge to recognize that the drawings come from the same individual. These are generally mutable and very pliable subjects whose adaptive modes are affected by the slightest external or internal influences. However, even when different generic trees are involved, there are basic elements which are stable, and also certain details which may be discerned as present in both renderings. In order to demonstrate this, we include illustrations 73 and 74, both drawings originating from a thirty-year-old male, the abstract deciduous tree having been drawn first and the abstract pine on another occasion. The similarity of size, placement, and line quality are easily noted. The absence of the ground line, the funnel-shaped trunk, the opening of the trunk-crown transition on the right side, the loop in the crown on the upper left, and the bulge in the lower left part of the crown are typical details which may also be discerned without too much further analysis. The only major difference among obvious details in the two tree types is the break in the upper right section of the pine, which may have been an expression of a momentary openness to the influence of a male peer.

In summary, it seems that both in experimental conditions and in spontaneous drawings the stability of tree renderings is such that they can be confidently used either to follow developmental and/or pathological processes or to gain an understanding of the individual's fundamental personality structure.

16

Elements in Rendering Style

Opinion is ultimately determined by the feelings, and not by the intellect.
Herbert Spencer,
Principles of Biology, 1872

APPROACH TO ATYPICAL TREES

The difficulty of interpreting a drawing in which the tree shows inconsistencies of type has already been seen in connection with case history 3 (chapter 14). Since several colleagues who are attempting to apply our method have brought us drawings which they found especially puzzling, it seemed worthwhile to reproduce here two atypical renderings, with some brief remarks as to how they may be approached.

Illustration 75 was drawn by a twenty-year-old female college student. It was one of a group of drawings collected by an English teacher who knew the subjects through classroom contact, but had obtained only their names and ages as a means of identifying the drawings. He described the girl as attractive and rather vivacious, and said that she was erratic about attending classes, but wrote good papers and obtained reasonably high grades on examinations. He was completely puzzled by the tree, since the meticulously drawn leaves seemed to have nothing to do with the core of the tree.

The drawing is indeed unusual, for the core of the tree is essentially dead, with a crown of unattached leaves superimposed over it. In this case, the crown of leaves must be regarded as the "functioning" part of

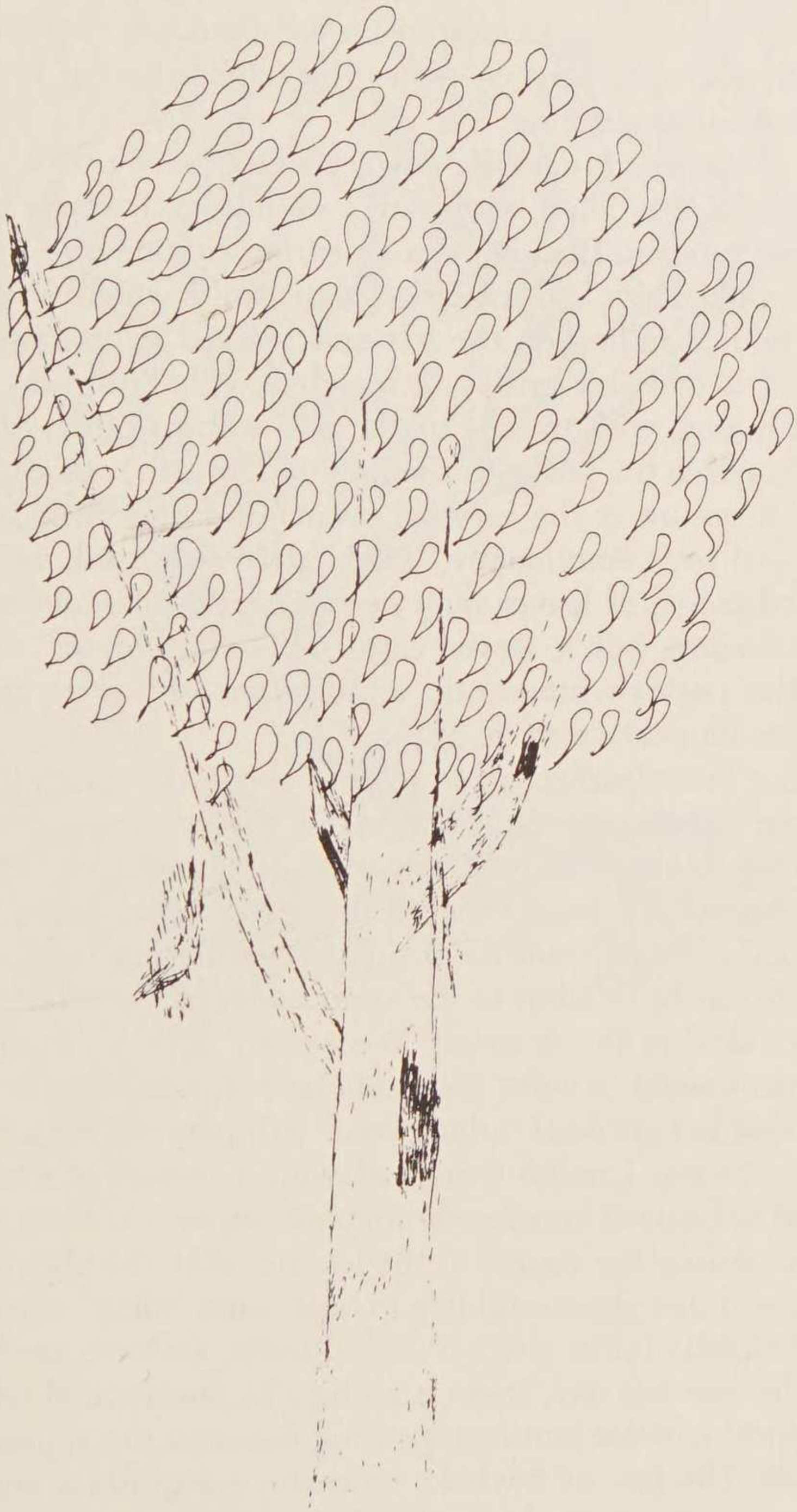


Illustration 75

the personality, which is essentially a mask, having no connection to the rest of the tree. Nevertheless, the careful, obsessive rendering of the numerous leaves can probably be taken as an indication that the "false personality" is convincing, at least as far as others are concerned, for it is built up with elaborate care. Whether the subject herself believes in her pose is more open to question.

The core of the tree is actually dead, standing alone with neither roots nor ground, and it is filled with marks of loss and severe shock. On a blind basis we inferred that, besides an earlier trauma of a sexual nature, the subject might have had an illegitimate child which was taken from her ("loss" branch falling on the left and marked in its lower part with clear signs of a complex crisis), associated with bitterness toward her lover (right branch with trauma mark) and toward other women (small sawed-off branch to the left with shading underneath). In any case, whatever the exact nature of the external events, it seems clear from the tree that the subject feels emotionally "dead," defeated, used, and alone. The superimposed crown of leaves may permit her to maintain a pretense of normal functioning, but it serves essentially as a "mask," and does not even have the positive prognostic implications of leaves growing on a dead tree (see illustration 52, p. 274).

The teacher later learned some details about the girl which partially confirmed our inferences. She discovered that she was pregnant after having already broken off relations with her boyfriend, and the pregnancy was aborted. Of more value to the teacher than these biographical confirmations, however, were the insights regarding the superficial nature of her adjustment in relation to the seriousness of the internal emotional problems pictured in the drawing. We concur with his opinion that she should be encouraged to enter psychotherapy if possible, since it does not seem likely that her artificial "adjustment" will promote natural healing.

Illustration 76 was handed to us, following a lecture in which the topic of tree-drawing analysis was briefly touched on, by a woman who said she had drawn it during the course of the lecture, that she always drew trees of this type, and that she would like to hear some "blind" comments about it. We were slightly taken aback as, admittedly, we have never seen a tree drawing quite like this one; there is nothing in our method which touches on the repeated circular motifs appearing *between* the separate branches and the roots. The tree as a whole, however, resembles a chalice, and in spite of the enormously problematic rendering of all three parts, its high position, and its general structure suggest tremendous and rather solitary efforts to contain the life problems, and to create special areas which might be seen as "protected locales" in both the instinctual and the mental domains. When these comments were communicated to the woman, she said she felt this was an accurate general description of her life attitude. She explained that although she was aware of numerous

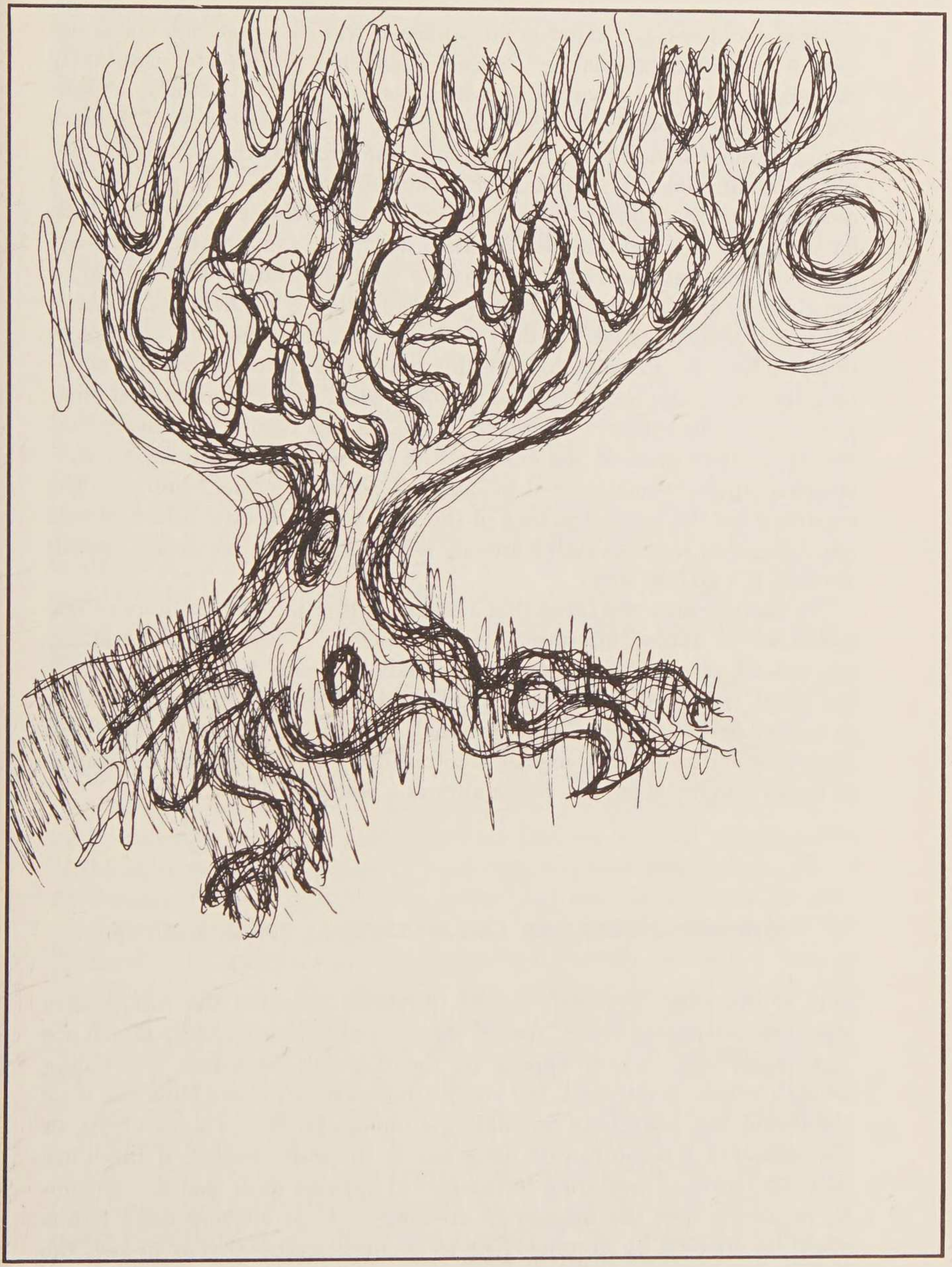


Illustration 76

internal problems, her external life situation was such that she could not deal with either external or internal difficulties unless she constantly thought of herself as a "vessel" in which both peaceful and stormy experiences could be contained. The subject is a thirty-year-old woman with two children, married to a schizophrenic. She supports the family by running a small bookstore. She said that she felt both love and pity for her husband, but that during the periods of overt psychotic episodes, which have occurred several times during their marriage, she feels tremendously pressured from all directions. She has to play both father and mother to the children and be very observant of his relations with them (when he is not in a hospital), as well as deal with her own emotions and attempt to relate to him. It can be seen, from this basic description of the life situation, how even atypical trees, which would seem to defy methodical analysis, express the subject's approach to life. In this case it is unlikely that we would have guessed the exact nature of the external situation corresponding to the woman's need to "make of herself a vessel," but once the reference for the basic structure of the tree had been established, it was not difficult to proceed systematically with analysis of the details, which we shall not go into here.

We have already remarked that a certain gift of intuition is more or less necessary for skilled interpretation of drawings. These two illustrations are, indeed, puzzling if approached immediately with the rational, analytical mind, with textbook in hand. On the other hand, when the drawing is permitted first to impact the nonrational, intuitive faculty, precisely those aspects which seem least amenable to rational analysis may be the source of broad insights about the personality as a whole.

THE USE OF DETAILED AND ACCIDENTAL SPECIAL SIGNS

One of the most frequently raised questions concerns the interpretive meanings attributed to the "special signs," particularly to those which are "accidental"—i.e., which appear in the drawing as forms resembling objects, letters, or numbers, but are not deliberately drawn. How can it be significant that something resembling a human profile, or a sex organ, or the initials of a name can be discerned in the end product, if these are only the results of rendering technique? It appears to us that this is similar to asking how the manner of crossing a "t" or spacing one's letters could be claimed by graphologists to be meaningful—that is to say, the "how can it be" aspect of the question is probably unanswerable. Interestingly, colleagues who have gone further in exploring our technique and attempted to apply the interpretive suggestions (part II of this book) to

the drawings of their own subjects have reported that they have found it fruitful to pay attention to the accidental signs, and are no longer focused on their earlier skepticism.

Beyond the issue of whether the meanings attributed to special signs can be explained, a few words should be said about the circumstances in which they are useful or under which it is appropriate to examine them. (Here we refer to both deliberately and accidentally drawn forms.) For this purpose we will consider three examples involving three different kinds of examiner and client situations.

To a vocational counselor using the tree drawing either for job selection or advice to the client, it is unlikely that the majority of the special signs will be of concern. What one will be looking for in the drawing are indications of mental interests, concentration capacities, and so on, in order to relate these to information which has been gleaned from vocational, aptitude, or achievement tests, and other assessment or interview methods. If one finds suggestions in the tree of a male subject of fascination with the female breast or tendencies toward "Don Juanism," these should not be of concern, unless they are combined with propensities to a general lack of stability. Such would then interfere with the ability of the individual to carry out the kinds of work for which he is preparing or being considered. Otherwise, the sex life of the client is not pertinent to vocational counseling.

For the marriage counselor, on the other hand, the situation is exactly the opposite. If a couple seeks consultation for the purpose of trying to put back together a fragmented relationship, the presence of several accidental signs in the drawing of the wife which look like "nonerect penises" may be important to understanding the nature of the central problem. As every marriage counselor knows, endless sessions devoted to discussions of the management of money or disagreements over child raising can be ineffectual, if these are superficial rather than core problems in the partnership. On the other hand, if one has a clue that the woman feels her husband to be impotent (even though he is literally not so), it may be possible to direct the discussions in such a manner that the deterioration of sexual relations between the partners is brought into the open and worked through. Naturally, how this is managed will depend upon the therapeutic skill and wisdom of the counselor, but such a discovery gained from the drawing would at least give him points for orientation.

In a third example, a young unmarried female student who has an excellent academic record suddenly begins to slip in her classwork, and becomes withdrawn and noticeably depressed. She is referred to the student counseling bureau, where she is given a number of tests which show that she is "depressed and withdrawn," but none of them indicate any prepsychotic condition. She is referred to a therapist, but since she divulges little, the cause of the sudden depression remains unknown. In such a

case, if the tree drawing has a number of special signs suggesting that she has undergone a recent trauma, quite possibly an abortion, even if this inference cannot be said to be a certainty, it may provide the therapist with the "clinical hunch" he needs to induce the girl eventually to open up and tell her story.

In general, one may say that the meanings attributed to the majority of the special signs, like those discussed in connection with the various branches of the tree, belong to that opaque world of signs and symbols which are very difficult to submit to any form of experimental testing. They should be used tentatively and with caution, but we do believe that they can be of practical clinical value, and it is for this reason that we have devoted so much space to them. In the special signs one is most likely to find just that kind of material which the early enthusiasts of projectives thought would be revealed by all of the projective techniques —that is, events or attitudes which the subject otherwise would not or could not tell about himself.

ABSTRACTION

The phenomenon of abstract productions rendered by normal adults may be at least partially elucidated through considering recognitions reached in the study of phylogenetics. In geological time, groups of organisms usually appear first as primitive. As the group matures, a few species may retain their primitive form, but most will acquire more complex structural features, and divergence among those belonging to the original group will take place. Once the stage of complexity has been reached, there are three fundamental possibilities regarding the next developmental step (naturally, over very long periods of historical time). (1) The complex forms are well enough adapted to their environment for survival. (2) Some complex forms become overspecialized, are ill adapted to their environment, and eventually die out altogether. (3) As complex forms, certain organisms are ill adapted to their environment, but rather than dying out they undergo further processes of change which lead to "secondarily simplified forms," which are then able to survive. These will bear a superficial resemblance to the original "primitive forms" of the group, but are *by no means* identical with them. In fact, from the standpoint of phylogenetic theory, the secondarily simplified organisms are "more advanced" than those "complex organisms" which are still able to survive.

In highly oversimplified terms, one may say that at any one time in history, four "kinds" of species will be found: forms which have retained

their original primitive nature; complex forms which are well adapted to their present environment; complex forms which may still be found in nature, but are probably on their way to extinction, since they are ill adapted to their environment; and forms which have already undergone the process of secondary simplification.

Since the time of Haeckel's dictum that ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis, controversy has raged over whether or not this is the case; but as the argument has never been settled, we may utilize parallels with the developments in phylogenetics just described, in connection with graphic expressions of Gestalt forms produced by adults.

Let us suppose that those exceedingly simple renderings of the concept "tree" which Koch describes in terms of "early forms," and which Buck would "score" in his quantitative system for determining approximate intelligence as *well below normal,* are indeed *sometimes* indicative of mental retardation. Such graphic expressions might be equated with those "primitive" organisms which survive in their environment without acquiring complex structural features. The adult retardate remains in many respects a child mentally, and, depending on the degree of limitation of intelligence, might indeed render a tree drawing which could be said to be similar to that produced by a child of age three, or six, or eight. More or less realistic drawings of trees might be typical for persons whose Gestalt expressions are like those of the complex organisms which are highly differentiated, but are still well adapted to their environment. The gradually disintegrating drawing Gestalt, described by Suchenwirth (1969) as typical in certain kinds of psychotic disease processes, would be parallel to those complex forms which still survive in nature, but are ill adapted to their environment and may be in danger of "extinction." (It is interesting to note that the tree drawings of acute schizophrenics which we have either seen reproduced in print or have collected ourselves do not usually look nearly so "primitive" as do those of severely retarded adults, deteriorated psychotics, or those suffering from advanced or severe organic brain damage. They may be less differentiated than the premorbid or postpsychotic drawings of the same individual, but they are not necessarily "childish," even in general appearance.) Finally, what we have described as the abstract renderings of intelligent adults who are *not* mentally ill might be expressive of mental processes reflecting simplification of Gestalt expression, parallel to the adaptive processes of those organisms in nature which have undergone changes leading to secondary simplification, "by no means identical with their primitive ancestors."

In effect, one should perhaps add a fifth category both to the Gestalt expressions and to the phylogenetic developmental argument. We have in our collection an exceedingly large proportion of tree drawings which we would not classify as strictly "abstract," but which show abstracting tendencies. These are mainly two-dimensional drawings in which the roots (if

present at all) are often shown below the ground line. (As mentioned earlier, this manner of drawing roots, regarded by many others as a sign pathognomonic of mental disease, approximately equivalent to the peculiar drawings of persons in which the internal organs are shown "inside" of an outlined figure drawing, is so common among our subjects that we must reject it as having anything to do with the kind of "transparency" indicative of mental disorder. Very few such drawings are included among the illustrations in this book, but illustration 33 [p. 191] should be examined for a combination of *suggested* three-dimensionality in the intertwining branches and roots shown below a ground line. Of all the drawings here included, only illustration 58 [p. 323] contains what we might term "transparent roots," the significance of which was briefly discussed in connection with the drawing.) These semiabstract drawings may represent Gestalt conceptions which could be said to correspond to forms in nature which are overspecialized, but which, rather than being destined for extinction, will very likely undergo the process of secondary simplification at some time in the future in order to achieve a better adaptation to the environment.

We return to the view that abstraction in the manner of drawing a Gestalt is expressive of neither limited intellectual gifts nor mental pathology, but is rather a special form of adaptation which is not necessarily superior to realistic drawing, but may be typical for certain kinds of personalities. It seems to have nothing to do with other indicators of "abstracting abilities"—such as those which may be shown on subsets of intelligence or vocational aptitude tests. To date, we have not been able to establish any correlation with profession or with interests either, finding equally as many artists or literary persons who render abstract trees as we do scientists or engineers.

One last matter which must be mentioned in this connection bears on "blind" interpretation. It might be thought that where simple renderings are those of intelligent adults rather than of the mentally retarded, a distinction could be clearly established on the basis of the harmonic appearance of the drawing. However, if the reader will peruse all of the illustrations in the text which may be regarded as abstract renderings (illustrations 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 28, 37, 49, 51, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 64; pp. 126, 133, 138, 141, 143, 184, 205, 254, 273, 341, 342, 343, 344, and 345), it will be seen that the matter is not all that simple. Drawings such as those represented by illustrations 13, 51, and 64 might presumably be eliminated from the "retarded adult" category by reason of their relatively original or harmonic appearance, but there would be no way of determining, on the basis of artistic quality, whether illustrations 9, 14, 60, 61, 62, and 63 were by brilliant "abstractors" or persons of very limited mental capacity. We would therefore warn that whenever abstraction is in question, it is wise to have an idea of the general achievement and intelligence potential

levels of the individual before embarking on any attempts at interpretation.

Perhaps more could be said in a speculative vein as to the possible *why* of abstraction of the Gestalt on the part of many intelligent adults; but since we have not yet discovered any significant correlations between the tendency toward abstraction in the rendering of the tree drawing and other factors in the personality, the psychological outlook, or thought processes which could be established as objectively "measurable," we prefer to rest our argument with the general claim that simplification of the rendering is a form of adaptation which is neither primitive ("retarded") nor sick ("regressive").

Epilogue

IT HAS BEEN our purpose to set forth, as systematically as possible, a method for the analysis of tree drawings in relation to assessment of personality type, the subject's biographical experience, and his current state of mind. In the interest of making this book of practical use to those who wish to learn the method, we have attempted to create a kind of psychological "taxonomy" of tree forms as they appear in drawings. We do not pretend, of course, to have included everything, for the forms which may be encountered are practically infinite, and everyday we come upon some new and unexpected manner of rendering a particular part of the tree. Even less do we claim to have pronounced the last word on the forms which we have discussed, for, as we have repeatedly emphasized, there is no final or definitive meaning for any form or symbol. We have had to simplify in the interest of clarity and economy of expression, but since our fundamental purpose is the search for meaningful insights about individual persons, any suggestions of dogma should be overlooked or regarded as an unintentional result of simplification.

Although we place great emphasis on the synthesis of insights derived from examination of details and on the importance of intuition in arriving at a picture of the whole, we have made an effort to structure the material in such a way as to lend the whole system a kind of internal logic. In the treatment of details there is a good deal of repetition which undoubtedly limits the readability of the text to some extent; but we felt that the underlying principles of approach to the drawings would best emerge through the repeated application of a coherent group of ideas, even if this meant the inclusion of reiterations. If the student of this method once grasps these underlying principles, he will then not be confined to accepting or rejecting our attributions of meaning to any one form, for his own interpretive insights should emerge naturally from experience as he applies these principles.

Memorization of the discussions on various forms found in the drawings and strict adherence to the limitations of our schemata will not make anyone into a skilled interpreter of tree drawings. In addition to intuitive gifts, the interpreter needs to have a basic understanding of the human experience which will establish a perspective for his insights and aid him to express them in a manner appropriate to the mentality of the particular client. The figures and schemata, the definitions and commentaries, are at best clues and signposts; for the mysteries of the human mind, the

infinite diversity of the forms of humanness, and the uncharted dimensions of consciousness which transcend personality cannot be described or contained in any system.

We may perhaps be guilty of arrogance, for we have at times implied that our method is superior to other methods. We may also be accused of flippancy or even heresy, for we have dared to question the value of approaches to knowledge at the present held to be almost sacred. But let us make one thing clear: Although we claim to derive from the application of this method certain kinds of knowledge, we humbly submit that "personality assessment" is not an end, but a beginning. If the distant shore is some truly profound understanding of the human soul, then this method must be seen as a mere raft. Alone, it is surely too frail to carry us the distance to that dim shore; but when cast on a sea of ignorance, fear, and misinformation, we have found it sturdy enough to keep us afloat and to point us in the direction of the waiting other.

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KAREN BOLANDER, formerly Research Psychologist with the Houston Polydrug Abuse Program of the Institute of Clinical Toxicology in Houston, Texas, is now in private practice.

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