As I set out to write this paper, my sole intent was to demonstrate that there indeed does exist a common visual language, as seen in art. I began to prove this theory by compiling some sketches of different emotions from Betty Edwards' book, Drawing on the Artist Within, along with adding a few of my own drawings of feelings to the collection. I then had several people write down what each hieroglyphic meant or represented to them as an individual. I did indeed prove my point--many of the pictures were interpreted as having similar meanings by individuals who had diverse backgrounds, with either little or no "formal" art experience, such as classes or lessons.

Yet, after seeing that the hypothesis was correct, I noticed another facet of the experiment. From one person's interpretation of one of my own drawings, I realized that the lines I had drawn said so much about me--not just surface information, but rather things about my true inner personality. Realistic and true-to-life information was transferred via pencil, paper, and lines to others so readily. My experiment had subtly and beyond doubt taught me two important points pertaining to art: one, that a visual language does exist among the general population, and two, that simple drawings of one's emotions are astoundingly accurate and real.

The people involved in the so-called "experiment" expressed doubt and uncertainty when attempting to interpret art, especially since they were uneasy about their lack of knowledge about art. Yet, they all plunged ahead. As Betty Edwards states "... there might be a 'deep structure' of visual form underlying human art that is wired into the human brain ..." (76). Despite the hesitancy of my subjects about participating, they showed me that they all, whether they knew it or not, shared a certain range of knowledge in the realm of visual language, and were able to perform adeptly in the experiment.

The commonness of this language is demonstrated through the participants' explanation of someone's idea of the emotion "tranquility" or "peacefulness". The majority of those being tested used the word "calm" in describing it. In another instance, the subjects agreed upon a general meaning for a drawing depicting "joy." Words such as brightness, hope, and glory were used. One person even went on to analyze the lines, saying that they reached up and outward, giving her the idea of happiness. In seventy-five percent of the cases, the
general thoughts were along the same line, disproving the notion that perhaps the similarities between the thoughts might just be isolated coincidences. There is a common interpretation of lines, or rather there is a functioning visual language among people, whether they consciously realize it or not.

(5) The second part of my discovery about visual language is more personal than the first, and this discovery adds greater relevance to my experiment. One of the drawings which I had added to the collection was my own, which depicted anger, although no one knew where I had gotten the drawing, or even that it was my own. The picture consisted of dark, heavy pencil lines going every which way in a confined spot in the center of the designated space. Everyone who saw it said it depicted either anger or anxiety. One person wrote that it displayed anger "tightly controlled within a person." She also went on to say that the lines were within a restricted area, almost an invisible circle, leading her to believe that the artist was afraid to let emotions, especially anger show. These statements had quite an effect on me, because I am one who tends to hold extreme emotions in and under control. Rarely does anyone ever see me fly into an uncontrollable rage, or at the other end, shed a single tear. The person who so correctly identified my sketch knew nothing about the drawing, save what she saw, nor its relationship to me, and yet, she allowed me literally to see a facet of myself. What would normally appear to be a child's scribble had turned out to be a surprising source of self-revelation through art.

(6) Although I had chosen the topic of this paper, little did I realize the extent of ideas involved. Not only had I proved that people visually interpret things in similar ways, despite a lack of artistic knowledge, but also that the interpretations themselves can indeed be meaningful and relevant to the viewer as well as the creator. True human emotion can be transmitted to many people through relatively few lines, thus displaying the powerful "voice" of art.