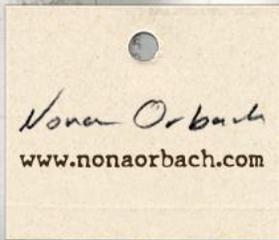


On Materials in Art & Art Therapy

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Materials of the creator

The field Art Therapy constantly fluctuates between the material and the spiritual domains. It is an Alchemy in which the material represents the spiritual and vice versa, simultaneously. Nevertheless, little has been written about the spiritual facet of materials used in therapy or otherwise. Materials are rarely mentioned in their own right, for their own inherent qualities, except in the context of individual case studies. Of course, writing on this matter is no simple task. Writing about completed artworks in terms of composition, colors or contents, is far more straightforward than focusing on the raw materials from which they were created.

After all, what is there to write about a globule of oil paint, besides the way it depicts the glistening light on the dress of a woman running down a hill, her parasol in hand? [1] The image of the woman engulfed in light is much more enticing than discussing the actual illusion behind it, created by mere oil stains. How did Monet manage to transform an opaque & oily paste into vivid images of transparency, light and even breeze, wrapping a woman's dress around her legs? What did he actually do to create glistening light out of dense paste? That magic, created with the stroke of a brush soaked in matter, is what fascinates me so.

Observing the creative process of artists, students, clients and myself, I have learned that materials wordlessly succeed in revealing much of one's soul. This essay was born from a lack of texts that focus on the spiritual and mental essence of matter. I will present a tool I've developed, called "The Tree Metaphor", which enables introspection into the entire creative process – beginning with material in its rawest state, through its selection and unique utilization, and finally to its culmination into meaningful structure and content. The case examples presented throughout this work are illustrations of clients, students and skilled artists. The term "creator" is used for anyone working with materials, whether they are children or accomplished artists, clients or students. As will be shown, the deeply spiritual essence of materials greatly affects all creators, regardless of how skilled they are.

What substance am I now?

As artist, teacher and art therapist, I find that focusing on which material would best express the creator's most prominent feeling, gratifies a profound need and paves the path for a creative process that had hitherto been blocked or stifled.

Pondering this issue at a time of crisis led me wandering along stretches of beach with my camera. I was unconsciously compelled to photograph holes and burrows in the sand, dug out by children. Studying that matter with a camera lens resulted in hundreds of slides showing sand-dug pits. I hadn't considered it art. I was merely listening to the art-therapist in me. "Trust the body, be attuned to the hands - when and what they choose to photograph". This gave rise to the exhibit called "Pit of Memory & Oblivion", www.nonaorbach.com shown in the early 1990s. Three projectors were hung on the Museum's ceiling, projecting images of the photographed pits onto the floor. Some of the snapshots were augmented with sketching of animal-like images, herds or organic relics. They interchanged to the beat of the humming projectors. The audience was ushered into

the darkened hall and toured along the projected display of dugouts, in a visceral reenactment of a walk along a sandcastle-strewn beach. Perhaps they were recalling their own memories of playing in the sand. The pit as a metaphor for beginnings and endings, the rhythm of ocean waves in the beat of projectors and lights - all this depicted my emotional, mental framework on separation, death and metamorphosis.

This artwork is imbued with multitudinous layers of meanings, and I am continuously learning about myself through it. In the process of having a vague notion to photograph without a premeditated plan, I learned that the question “what matter presently suits me best?” or “which materials do I feel like using now?” is like a magic key. I had hit upon an accurate working tool. From then on I noticed more sharply how true this was for my clients as well: whenever the creator trusted his choice of material, something meaningful occurred. It does seem that Matter metaphorically reflects an inner, impartial truth.

Ever since then I keep returning to the issue of Materials as a starting point. One can safely ascertain that the choice of Matter is never coincidental. Why is a specific material selected? Why is it chosen at that particular time? How does its utilization reflect the creator’s inner world? The answers to these questions tend to shed light on the creator’s deepest emotional, mental realms. Even in cases where my client hadn’t dabbled in art since early childhood, or when we are still fairly new to each other, we are still able to jointly discover, at least after-fact, how accurately his materials express his emotions and state-of-mind. It seems that the selection of materials is often governed by unconscious processes rather than logic or conscious knowledge, and is therefore a real, impartial choice. Thus, no prior knowledge or experience in art is necessary; no matter how unaccustomed to artistic endeavors, the creator will always choose the best-suited Materials that reflect his innermost feelings and desires.

Moreover, even seasoned artists’ selection of materials is only partially conscious, reflecting their inner essence beyond style or intellectual processes. For example, Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), a German artist whose medical studies were curtailed by mandated military service, was severely wounded in WWII when his plane was shot down over Russia. Nearly frozen to death, he was found by villagers who nursed him back to life by wrapping him in oil-soaked blankets of felt. This experience profoundly affected the course of his life, as he consistently utilized those materials - oil and felt - throughout all his years of artistic creation. As I see it, Beuys’ choice of materials, even as an accomplished artist, is related first and foremost to his salvation by their means. They seemed to be, essentially, his “Life Substance”.

“Materials are at the very core of art; they facilitate the processes and their manipulation invokes all images and content.” (Orbach & Galkin, 1977). Materials tell us so much, even prior to composition, form or texture. Thus, if we attune ourselves to materials in their rawest state, we can enrich our participation and observation of the creative process itself and as such, of our clients’ very essence.

Art Therapy & the Studio

“The studio is a space that is organized in a convenient and modular fashion, enabling processes of creativity and growth...the studio possesses physical boundaries, inherently and consistently mapped. These boundaries award a sense of security for those working in their midst.” (Orbach & Galkin, 1977, p.25).

The starting point of the Art Therapy studio is the material environment: work tables,

easels, wall-space for hanging works, lighting, sinks, tools and materials. Anyone entering a studio can easily grasp how to work through the location and organization of materials, the positioning of the work space, the method for storage of completed works, etc. The art therapist conveys his own framework through the organization of objects and materials within a confined space. The studio's interior design and the way in which materials are stored and accessed, cultivate an invitation to engage in creative enactment. The process of preparing for artwork should be relatively simple, since a highly accessible studio environment resolves orientation difficulties and alleviates the client's anxiety. Initial activities are already spawned from personal choice: the client can choose to work in a standing or sitting position; at a large table in the center or far off in a corner. She can do as she pleases with all accessible materials and objects, as long as she doesn't harm herself, her surroundings or others in the process. The client is invited to paint, sculpt, mold, tear, cut and paste in an uninhibited atmosphere, unconditioned and free of directives. The dialogue between the client and her materials, the transformation that she affects in them and vice versa, witnessed by the therapist - this whole constellation goes underway. The process of artistic creation materially mirrors the mental, emotional process. However fundamentally different they are, both processes are reflected in each other.

Senses & Matter

The term "Matter" pertains to the material world that surrounds us; a world that is perceived via our senses - tactile, visual, auditory, olfactory & taste. The materials of the artist, art teacher & art therapist are tangible. So are, for example, water-paints, acrylics, oil-paints, dyes, glues, charcoal powders, clay, stones & wood. All these - oils, liquids, pastes, powders & chunks - are perceived through our senses. Every material found in the art studio is malleable by specific tools that change it. Wet paints are applied by brushes, hands, rags, sponges etc. Clay is sculpted with the aid of engraving and cutting tools. Every matter has its own unique physical and chemical traits. According to Alchemy and the concrete experience of artists, every material reflects its own unique spirituality. Thus, it follows that knowing each material individually, highlights its unique "personality" and deepens our therapeutic understanding. It is therefore important to discover, for example, what is unique about each of the materials found in the studio? What spiritual qualities are embodied in acrylics, or charcoal? How is working with water-based red paint different than working with an oil-based shade of red? What is unique about a pencil line, compared to a line drawn with a quill? One can also study the principles of the therapy studio's organization. How does the art therapist classify and arrange the abundance of materials at her disposal? What does she place where, and why? Which materials will she prefer to offer? And what meaning does the same material hold within different sessions?

In light of all this it seems difficult to differentiate between the material itself and its usage. What is significant about poster-paint in a jar, before the creator has embedded it with his own emotional, cultural baggage? It certainly exists in its pasty materiality, its shine, wetness and hue. But until used, its potentials remain dormant. The assignment of meaning beyond its rawness is thus only activated with the selections and actions of the creator. One should therefore preemptively ask: What is the spiritual significance of the various actions imposed on the matter? What psychic or emotional meaning is imbued in

actions such as kneading, cutting, sketching, smearing, hurling, engraving, etc.? What, for instance, is the difference between tearing paper and cutting it? What is distinctive about my way of tearing, compared to yours?

It is difficult to distinguish between the artwork and its materials, because prior to the work itself, material has only potentialities. On one hand, it embodies endless possibilities, but on the other hand, none of them are actualized. In this state one can only refer to material in terms of its chemical, physical and sensual qualities. Another reason for this difficulty lies in the meeting of material and action; once the action is carried out, it depicts a certain person at a certain point in time. The enormous potential inherent in the material becomes reduced to one specific manifestation. How, then, is it possible to bridge between both extremes (all possibilities versus one possibility), generalizing about the material in its entirety based on one private example? Reviewing a range of possibilities may be preferable to generalization, as it would encompass the diverse facets of the material in terms of its manipulation and therefore in terms of associated feelings and sensations. A phenomenological [2] account of all actions [3] performed on a material will undoubtedly reveal something about the artist's internal world at that point in time. The following case examples illustrate how materials are never chosen by coincidence but rather reflect a profound emotional choice. In the first example, a four year old girl uses poster paint in an unconscious emotional exploration. The second example pertains to Claude Monet, an accomplished, skillful, highly self-aware artist. Despite the obvious disparity between them, both examples illustrate the creator's intuitive & precise choice of materials according to his needs at that time. The young girl's work was documented by her art therapist, while Monet's creative process was analyzed after-the-fact by art historian James Elkins.

Case Example:

A four year old girl was referred to art therapy as she was not yet toilet-trained. This is our second session, so she is already familiar with the studio environment. She requests poster-paint. To her right is a side-table with paint-filled egg cartons, rags and a water-jar for cleaning brushes. She **chooses** a thick paintbrush, **loads** a huge glob of paint on it, and **hurls** several slabs onto a hanging canvas. Afterwards she **dips** the brush into another color, **without cleaning** it as she would in kindergarten. She **tries to pack** as much paint as possible onto the brush, which begins dripping on the floor. She **looks** at me. After a few paint-dips she **forcefully rinses** the brush, **clattering** it around in the water-jar, **jumping** up and down and **chanting** "What disgusting water! Poopy! Gross!" She **glances** at me. A bit of water spills on the floor. Once again, she **scans** my facial reaction. She lays the brush down, **scoops up** the water-jar with both hands and **tries to pour** its contents into the egg carton. She **glances** at me. She **releases** the jar. She **hits** the canvas with the paintbrush, **singing** and **dancing** around. The water in the jar is a murky brown color. I bring another, with fresh water, saying "Now you have brown water and clear water as well". She **holds** the fresh jar with both hands, **pours** some of it into the brown water and **announces**: "I'm mixing".

The highlighted verbs illustrate this child's story, her relation to primary substances and the intensive process of release that she undergoes: She combines "brown water" with "clear water", testing the boundaries of filth and cleanliness, figuring out where to put what, and enjoying primal self expression in safe surroundings. She monitors my reaction with her glances, perceiving that she is entitled to smear her hands and canvas, to mix

around and use “dirty” words without being reprimanded.

While at first it seemed like she would paint a picture, it soon became apparent that once she felt entitled to express herself freely, she moved into working with the paint in its primeval state. The material’s formless state and the way she used it, indicate that the child needs to further explore her boundaries, sense of control and guilt. She uses the emotional therapeutic space to explore the most primary substances of life, which she hadn’t yet exhausted. The presenting issue, of not relieving oneself in the designated area, is closely related - in substance (brown wet paste) and in form (an uncontrollable, dirtying action) - to the process of therapy within the studio. There is little difference between the action carried out in daily life and its emotional metaphor. The child thus begins a process of self investigation, socialization and sublimation.

Case Example:

In this example the artist Monet is considered from the perspective of art history scholar James Elkins (1999, p.17). Elkins’ book contains several colored snapshots of miniscule fragments from masterpieces – one of them being Monet’s, through which he studies the use of oil-paint, in the brush-strokes frozen on canvas, in the kinds of brushes used, in the layers of paint and in what emerges from them. Elkins notes that Monet’s work seems pretty straightforward to many, as though his forte was simply depicting specific moods and painting light. However Elkins, who had painted himself, set out to discover Monet by tracking his visceral act of painting rather than observing merely the end result. He identifies Monet’s need to create a canvas that in some sense emulates nature. His brush strokes are not aligned in one direction, but rather are like nature in that they’re multi-directional.

“The study of gestures reveals a Monet that I would not have suspected: to make paintings the way he made them, it is necessary to work roughly, with unexpected violence and then with sudden gentleness, and to keep turning the body against itself, so it never does quite what it wants to do – so it never falls into the routine of oval marks, all pelting down in one direction. The gestures tell the story of a certain dissatisfaction, and itchy chafing of the body against itself, of a hand that is impatient and deliberately a little out of control“ (p.17). It is interesting that even an erudite art historian such as Elkins, needed to actually use his own hands in order to fully comprehend Monet’s work. The process that he describes may be better grasped with the use of the Tree Metaphor.

The Tree Metaphor & the Therapeutic Process

The therapeutic process in the studio, with its various phases and complexity, can be likened to a tree. The roots, trunk and branches symbolize three states of material, paralleling three states of the creator’s being. The imagery of a tree will help us discuss the position and meaning of material throughout the process of artistic creation.

The Root

This is the condition in which material is in its raw state, before anything has been done to it. Pastes, clay and powders lay in their packaging. They are supposedly in a primeval state. [4] The creator is compelled to create something, but is yet unsure of what to make; there is a sense of vagueness, however deliberations are strewn with diminutive choices: the work space is chosen, the body’s positioning – standing, sitting; the hand reaches out, presumably by chance, towards a certain kind of paper, a box of acrylics or a chunk of clay. The platform is positioned on a particular side or angle; wide or narrow brushes –

soft or rough. A certain box of chalks is opened and a particular shade of color is used to make the first markings on paper. A specific action and intensity commence: smearing, engraving, marking.

It should be noted that the creator's choices to which I refer, aren't derived from premeditated thought or cognition. On the contrary; the vitality of the root phase stems from instinctual energy and non-verbal somatic knowledge, which obscurely propels one's interaction with the material. The root phase relates to the femininity within our souls, in uterus, in motherliness. Just as caring for a tiny vulnerable baby entails using emotions, sensuality, intuition, empathy and an effort to understand through non-verbal communication of gestures and sounds, so does working with materials.

The essence of the root phase is filled with femininity and maternity. It involves deeply identifying with the selected material, immersing oneself in it, much like the baby who reacts to everything happening around and inside of him, using his entire body and senses. Tactility is intensified. It is an all-encompassing, intuitive way of being, which focuses on somatic perceptions and sensations. The creator joins the rhythm of the material, entering into a dialogue with it. Gradually an image or structure begins to emerge. The material becomes uniquely imprinted with the creator's mark. At the root phase, the creator's senses are acute and active to their utmost, as he becomes in touch with his own authentic, primordial parts. It is where our earliest memories and innermost, wordless pain is stored. That may explain why the choice of material and method, at this phase, so remarkably captures one's essence at that time. Material, memories, and vague, primeval somatic sensations fertilize each other, moving the creative process forward.

The Trunk

From the roots buried within the depths of the earth, the trunk thrusts upward. The second phase or state in our metaphor represents the creator's observation of her creation. She ceases her work, rises or stands back to gaze at the easel. Observing one's work from a distance denotes a certain emotional distancing. It is sometimes experienced as the pain of separation and severance from the root phase. The creative process continues in the cognitive, conceptual domain, through thoughts, formulations and discourse with the artwork. This dialogue ensues within the creator's soul, as well as between art-therapist and client. The holistic unison of "man-material" is abandoned, as the creator becomes an observer of her own work.

This state relates to the masculine aspect of our essence, to thought and language. The obscure and chaotic act of rooting becomes translated into words and concepts: we name actions, verbally identify the artistic elements of the work as composition, line, color and form. This discourse widens our scope, offering another angle to the event of the root phase. It endows sensations with descriptive words. Markings that were obscure at the start, repetitions that were supposedly random, suddenly reorganize into recognizable imagery. The creator can assign names and meaning to structure and form, much like the first biblical Man who named the wildlife around him, thereby engaging in conscious co-creation. Merging with memory, the work of art in the Trunk phase is interwoven with meaning.

The Branches

Creating a work of art can take a few hours and sometimes much longer than that. Within that creative process, the Tree Branches are a metaphor for its expansive and integrative expression. The Tree's branches, leaves and fruit bustle with a wealth of emotional, spiritual and mental meaning of that creation that commenced at the root. At this stage of observation of the artwork, one undergoes a profound emotional experience of wonderment- reverberating from root to treetop and back again - and often accompanied by deep breaths and dilated pupils in sheer amazement at how accurately the artwork depicts one's inner essence. This is where a client will often incredulously exclaim that several supposedly random strokes created by his hands, managed to precisely express what words might not have conveyed. The creator experiences a sense of oneness with the work of art, which reflects a state of consciousness and emotional being. This process tends to surface several important insights into one's life.

Thus, schematically one can observe that the creative process of art is comprised of three elemental states, which are perpetually intertwined with one another. Sometimes they are sequenced chronologically, while at other times they coincide and overlap. In any case, changes in one state immediately reverberate through the others: roots to branches, branches to trunk and all the way back through the roots again.

The Therapist & the Tree Metaphor

In each of the three states, the therapist's role is differently accentuated. In the Root phase, the therapist's function is akin to mothering: her involvement is often manifested in lots of physical activity. She is up and about, suggesting and offering materials, handing the client tools, approaching and retreating with protective, unspoken sensitivity. In the Trunk phase, the therapist wordlessly observes the artwork together with the client. She carefully listens to the client's feelings and perceptions, sometimes offering alternative ways of looking at things. The phase of the Branches is usually very dramatic, a culmination of the therapeutic process: it is laden with the expression of pride and joy, along with an intensified intimacy between client and therapist who has witnessed his process. This phase is typified by insight and understanding about one's life, much like the view that is seen from a treetop.

The Tree Metaphor allows us, the therapists, to map out the integrative wholeness of the creative process. It explains how a primordial archaic process, free of words and concepts, transpiring at the sensory-motor level (Root), affects one's spiritual, mental undertakings (Branches, fruit and treetop). This metaphor is also a diagnostic, therapeutic tool. Some clients will linger in the Root phase; others will approach it with trepidation and anxiety, preferring to talk about their artwork and thus avoid an encounter with materials. Any such diagnosis, which borrows from the Tree Metaphor, can be helpful in understanding the inner world of the client.

Non-verbal Intelligence: what is it?

Art history, philosophy and case studies in art therapy barely mention the Root phase at all. I would like to explore it now, in terms of the knowledge we've accumulated on this phase and its uniqueness. From infancy, Man's development is contingent upon his perception of the world through his senses, vestibular system and sensory-motor processes, which takes place prior to his acquisition of language. This process is in fact the foundation that underlies the world of words and concepts. Thus, it is during those

first years of life, as the core personality is rooted, that non-verbal intelligence is largely acquired. “In a sense, we learn the grammar of our being before we grasp the rules of our language “ (Bolas, 1987, p.36).

Most art therapists whom I’ve interviewed speak of vivid childhood memories stirred by encounters with materials. Artists and art therapists are naturally drawn to touching materials and altering them. They are acutely receptive to the wisdom accumulated in their skin sensors, hands, and muscles, olfactory and auditory senses. Their personal experience informs their empathic observation and deep understanding of other’s creative processes, as they recognize that the encounter with materials can provoke profound insight with great intensity. Artists and therapists know that raw materials represent the primeval inner world filled with memories, images, feelings, dreams and space, which exists long before it takes form within the creative process.

Art therapists recognize the significance of their clients’ physical behavior: the body’s positioning with regard to the artwork, preference for standing or sitting, the movement of hands on clay in an attempt to express the illusively obscure, by throwing, kneading and building until a sculpture or statue is formed. Therapists and artists, who have experienced stagnation in their own artwork, know that the creative process is by no means straightforward. Thus, they will try to help their clients release those blockages that have an emotional aspect as well. A creator usually has no idea where the process will take him. But prior experience informs him that lingering a little longer with the material will yield something momentous. If he keeps sketching with the pencil, following his own etchings, something will transpire.

The art therapist knows to let the hands and senses lead the way in dealing with inhibitions at the beginning Root phase of the creative process. The experienced creator is accustomed to the winding paths that don’t always lead directly to the end result; to those side-roads that become significant only after-fact. Years of practice develop a respectful attitude towards those winding paths, and the anxiety diminishes greatly. An experienced creator already knows that there’s a door waiting to be opened beyond that ‘unknown’, so he doesn’t worry about taking his time at the Root phase.

At the Trunk phase the creator observes his own work and imagines all the potential possibilities inherent in his creation, looking at it up close and from a distance and inviting someone else to discuss it with him. And even though he may not know how to proceed, he remains close to the studio surroundings. Artist Heddy Kendel admits that she enters her studio every day, holding her brushes, because it’s the only way she can wait for her Muse and enjoy it, if it chooses to grace her. When a block lingers on, artists make use of their tools. They take out their brushes and clean them (a pleasurable sensation from brush hairs can provoke the desire to paint), stretch out a new canvas, organize their art books or skim through previous works that they hadn’t looked at for a while. These seemingly technical measures actually serve to conjure up forgotten or fragmented ideas, refreshing them with new meaning and context.

Case Example:

A woman in therapy remembered the crayons that she played with in Kindergarten, back in the 1950s. They were very thick, and would always spill out of their wooden box. Their thickness made them pleasant to grasp in her tiny hands, but the color they created was faded and pale compared to their packaging. This had always upset her, as she never

actually managed to produce the queen's deep crimson dress that she had imagined. If she pressed hard on her paper with those crayons, the paper would tear and she'd end up trashing draft after draft of her regal drawings. In therapy she adored working with the compressed and saturated oil crayons, ardently creating dozens of pictures. Could this be her compensation for the lack of color that she felt in her childhood?

Case Example:

A thirty year old attorney enters the art therapist's studio, and walks around looking at everything. After a short while he chooses to work with plasticine. With a mischievous smile, he admits that the chance to be a pre-schooler again, to play with the plasticine – making figures and objects, really thrills him. Even so, it is effortful for him to silence his inner voice that reprimands him for being so childish, but he ultimately chooses to express himself through the plasticine, which symbolizes youth, colorfulness, fun & joy – a world filled with beauty and wonder. In a way, he is checking out the therapist's reaction to his choice: would she mock him?

Gaston Bachelard, the French philosopher, also relates to the significance of materials in their primordial state: "The hold which water has on matter cannot be fully understood if one is satisfied with visual observation. Tactile observation must be added to it. . . . The hand also has its dreams and its hypotheses. It helps us to understand matter in its inmost being. Therefore it helps us to dream of it. . . . In molding there is no more geometry, no more sharp edges, no more breaks. It is a continuing dream. It is work that can be done with one's eyes closed. Therefore it is an intimate reverie. And furthermore it is rhythmic, with a heavy rhythm, that takes hold of the whole body" (Bachelard, 1938, p.107).

Bachelard is referring here to specific matter (water & earth), wherein every medium entails its own unique qualities. Every substance has its own entire language. When one delves into materials, possessing a soul that desires material self-expression, the senses seem to intensify: palpation turns to throbbing, hands seem to "see", the scent of glue fills the nostrils and the sound of the brushes stirred in water is amplified. Time seems to stop. The experience of being immersed in one's artwork induces a sense of being in the eternal present, where the creator becomes one with the universe.

It is said that when Henry Moore was a child, he used to massage his mother's aching back with oil. One can thus surmise how his monumental image of "woman" came into being. While his sculptures aren't necessarily enormous, they certainly convey a small boy's momentous tactile experience of his mother's massive, matronly body.

Since working with materials can cause a flooding of residues from the past, the intimate work of client and art therapist can access trauma that is otherwise inaccessible except perhaps through dreams. This medium also enables them to communicate through the artwork itself. The therapeutic tools of art offer a rare opportunity to recreate the past - in a sense, to observe what happened at the time and to revisit the critical moment that continues to reverberate throughout life thereafter. Since working with materials involves somatic memory, it enables the client to recount himself from his earliest, non-verbal memories. As such, this process commences a corrective experience, beginning with the primeval traumatic source and culminating in active, healing recreation.

The Tree Metaphor & writing about materials

Research on art therapy rarely deals with the mental, spiritual aspects of materials or with

their metamorphosis as such. To date, there is no mention in the literature regarding correlations between the selection of materials and emotional problems, nor does it refer to the significance of switching from one material with another. However, the experience of art therapists indicates a profound significance in the choice of materials; otherwise, they would not be succeeding in their therapeutic endeavors. Why, then, hasn't this accumulated knowledge and experience been delineated in the professional literature? In my search for an answer to this conundrum, I came across the writing of art historian James Elkins, who writes: "According to the Library of Congress there are over 7400 books on the history and criticism of painting, enough for several lifetimes of reading. Another 1.500 books cover painters' techniques - most of them popular artists' manuals describing how color wheels work, or how to paint birds and flowers. In all of that torrent of words I have found less than a half dozen books that address paint itself, and try to explain why it has such a powerful attraction before it is trained to mimic some object, before the painting is framed, hung, sold, exhibited, and interpreted. But I know how strong the attraction of paint can be, and how wrong people are who assume painters merely put up with paint as a way to make pictures. I was a painter before I trained to be an art historian, and I know from experience how utterly hypnotic the act of painting can be, and how completely it can overwhelm the mind with its smells and colors, and by the rhythmic motions of the brush. Having felt that, I knew something was wrong with the delicate erudition of art history, but for several years I wasn't sure how to fit words to those memories." (Elkins, 1999, p.6).

Similar notions are found in Bachelard's writing: "When I began meditating on the concept of the beauty of matter, I was immediately struck by the neglect of the material cause in aesthetic philosophy. In particular it seemed to me that the individualizing power of matter has been underestimated. Why does everyone always associate the notion of the individual with form?" (Bachelard, 1983, p.2).

I, too, believe that the lack of literature on this subject is far from coincidental, and with good reason. However, the Tree Metaphor may be helpful in pursuing some sort of discourse on the subject of materials. Every art therapist harbors a sense of discrepancy between his professional, practical expertise and the capacity or lack thereof, to articulate his knowledge. This may be explained by a few obstacles that the art therapist encounters: Firstly, there is the problem of converting chaos into coherency. How can one transform formless, material chaos into formulated words and structured sentences? How can one elucidate the connection between paint smudged on paper and an emotional state of being?

The second hindrance pertains to the adult outlook on life. As we mature, we seem to lose our ability to delve into imagery, matter & object with total abandon. For instance, when we look at a blue glass water bottle perched on a table, the first concept that comes to mind is descriptive of the object - "bottle". Of course we might also note that it's made of glass, but its functionality is always at the forefront of consciousness. We don't pause to reminisce about the coldness of the glass, the touch of it on our lips or hands, or its weight. From our standpoint, all that knowledge is tangential. While that process of mental selectivity is important in daily living, it certainly hinders the artistic state of mind. We've simply forgotten. Thus, it is only with great effort that we're able to reconstruct, in adulthood, that process of sensual perception & information gathering. Otherwise, we remain distanced from that primary experience imbued with simplicity and

innocence, which is so essential to the creative process, especially at the root phase. Thus, instead of awakening our senses to explore the material's basic concrete state, we search for and grasp at the end-result. And when taking in a work of art, we first jump to symbolism & simile (Trunk), and then perhaps note composition & form. Only lastly, if then, do we attend to the materials of choice. The sense is that there's not much to say about matter; that it's taken for granted - merely a "matter of fact"...

Even Mala Betansky, founder of the Phenomenological approach in art therapy, barely mentions the aspect of materials and sensory-motor, tactile processes. Her profound approach to art appreciation focuses on pausing to observe artwork without prejudice, but still within a framework of symbolic conceptualization. She concentrates on forms, lines and areas, rarely noting the sensual-sensory, abstract & elusive dimension. In terms of the Tree Metaphor, Betansky views artwork primarily from the "Trunk" and up.

A third obstacle has to do with the complexity of the therapeutic process itself: the art therapist works simultaneously on all levels of the "Tree"- from the roots upwards, and from the treetop downwards. A lot of itinerancy and overlapping exists in this complex, multi-faceted process. How can one construe such diversity and complexity into an organic, cohesive whole? What kind of writing and concepts could be utilized? How can one articulate the culmination of sensory-motor activity in the studio, which concomitantly represents a complex mental system, the client-therapist relationship in the "here and now", and the profound significance of the choice of materials?

Case Example:

A seven year old boy sharpens the pencils in studio again and again, loudly debating how to organize them- whether by color, length, or manufacturer. He keeps sharpening and reorganizing them, while the paper on which he has chosen to draw soldiers remains blank. One can analyze this behavior psychologically, looking at defensive sublimation mechanisms and their reasons, the parental relationship etc. Another way of looking at it would be through the lens of an art therapist, counseling a boy through his creative process: the waste of material, the behavior for no apparent purpose. In terms of movement, one can wonder what is significant about making the object smaller and smaller (through continuous sharpening) and organizing it over and over again. And why is he choosing this activity on this particular day? How is it that a usually-mundane action becomes the forefront of activity? What is this child somatically conveying about his internal world? What is he trying to tell the therapist? Of all the ways in which he can leave his mark within the studio, why is he choosing disintegration – the emptying of an object's (the pencil) physical form?

As it happens, the process is not at all simple or straightforward. However this complexity, the multitude of levels that occur simultaneously in the concrete, the abstract, the emotional and pragmatic, within both client and therapist, encompasses all that is powerful and unique about art therapy. Art therapy has the potential to bridge between the various and polarized aspects of our personalities. This form of therapy can link between past, present and future, between matter and spirit, between vague states of mind and linear thought, integrating all the various parts that truly need each other.

The Tree Metaphor & Bolas' Concepts

In addition to the Tree Metaphor, another resource that I find of great value is the Inter-

Subjective approach - particularly as it is described in the work of Christopher Bolas (1987). In general, this approach focuses on the relationship that is formed between the client and the therapist, wherein the latter is anything but the anonymous, "tabula rasa" that typifies the more traditional psychotherapeutic methods. In this approach, the client-therapist relationship is carefully scrutinized in service of the client's therapeutic process. Among the Inter-subjectivists, Bolas is unique in that his writing is almost tactile. He articulates feelings and sensations that, in my opinion, had never been so successfully worded. Thus, for us art therapists, Bolas' work might provide the link to the conceptual world of psychology, enabling us to articulate what it is that we do. Some of his concepts profoundly describe the experience of being at the Root phase, and readily correspond to the work of the art therapist, particularly at that stage.

The Mother as Facilitator of Transformation:

According to Bolas, the mother figure is the source of transformation in the life of the infant. The infant does not recognize her in her own right, but rather she "...assumes the function of the transformational object, for she constantly alters the infant's environment to meet his needs" (Bolas, 1987, p.15). The mother thus functions as mediator in the process of language acquisition and is ever-present in the infant's environment throughout all his self-learning processes: movement, perception, and categorization - these, too, alter the inner world of the infant. "It is not surprising that the infant identifies these ego achievements with the presence of an object, as the failure of the mother to maintain provision of the facilitating environment, through prolonged absence or bad handling, can evoke ego collapse and precipitate psychic pain" (pp. 15). The mother "...transmits to the infant, through her own particular idiom of mothering, an aesthetic of being that becomes a feature of the infant's self. The mother's way of holding the infant, of responding to his gestures, of selecting objects, and of perceiving the infant's internal needs, constitutes her contribution to the infant-mother culture. In a private discourse that can only be developed by mother and child, the language of this relation is the idiom of gesture, gaze and inter-subjective utterance" (pp. 13).

In this context rituals and connections are forged into behaviors, which ultimately become internal patterns that are sustained throughout the infant's life. For example, the way we soothe ourselves is directly related to the way we were pacified in childhood; this is a primal pattern. "The idiom pattern is the anthology of potentials with which one is born, as well as the means by which they were conditioned in the real world" (from Hebrew introduction by Nitza Yarom, in Bolas, 2000).

Recognizing the client's idiom, the art therapist can know exactly when to hand him the paintbrush, mix colors, assist in cutting or offer another kind of material. The myriad of non-verbal contacts, related to working with materials and objects, may revivify the client's earliest experiences with his own transformational object. Such experiences are particularly typical of the Root phase.

The studio as a complex therapeutic entity can certainly provoke what Bolas describes as the adult's search for transformational situations and objects, such as faith or art, which are essentially an attempt to reconstruct that transformational experience with the Mother /primary caregiver. "...it is an object-seeking that recurrently enacts a pre-verbal ego memory. It is usually on the occasion of the aesthetic moment...that an individual feels a deep subjective rapport with an object (a painting, a poem, an aria or symphony, or a natural landscape) and experiences an uncanny fusion with the object, an event that re-

evokes an ego state that prevailed during early psychic life...Such aesthetic moments do not sponsor memories of a specific event or relationship, but evoke a psychosomatic sense of fusion that is the subject's recollection of the transformational object..." (Bolas, 1987, p. 16).

"A form of *deja' vu*, it is an existential memory: a non-representational recollection conveyed through a sense of the uncanny. Such moments feel familiar, sacred, reverential, but are fundamentally outside cognitive coherence. They are registered through an experience in being, rather than mind, because they express part of us where the experience of rapport with the other was the essence of life before words existed...The aesthetic moment constitutes part of the unthought known" (pp. 32). The "unthought known" describes those primordial sensations that are taken for granted, nameless and an inseparable part of us. "This unthought known is not determined by abstract representations. It is established through countless meetings between the infant subject and his object world, sometimes in tranquility, often in intense conflict. Through these meetings the infant's needs or wishes negotiate with the parental system and a compromise emerges. Ego-structure records the basic laws which emerge from these meetings and its knowledge is part of the unthought known" (pp. 52).

A considerable portion of the therapeutic session is carried out in silence, while the client is engaged in creation. A dialogue ensues between him and his materials. The body knows what to do; one thing unthoughtfully leads to another. The body's wisdom and its inherent memories navigate through the process. The therapist witnesses concrete expression through color, shape and volume, which represent the mental system. The client gradually "delves in", deeper and deeper. He forgets about the therapist. As I watch my client work, and when I know him well enough, I find that I can empathically guess what he will do next - what color he will choose or when he will feel that the work is complete. I begin to recognize the internal rhythm and ritual. An intimate, nameless experience - perhaps an ambiance, slight sensations that quickly dissipate, expressed in the movement of eyelashes, blushing, quickened breathing or a slowing of the hand movements, sharp and focused glances and a multitude of indescribable gestures - and yet a distinctly familiar experience that I feel with that particular client. Every client harbors a unique ambiance.

Using Bolas' terms, I begin to identify the client's infant-mother patterns and other parts of his "unthought known". In terms of the Tree Metaphor, this constitutes the Root phase. Art therapy in particular, where the client is engrossed in doing more than in talking, affords us an opportunity to clearly encounter what Bolas coined as the "unthought known", or the hidden Roots of the Tree. Much of the "unthought known" is apparent if one reads between the lines of the creative process in the studio. It is manifested, for example, in the client's preparation for his artwork.

Case Example:

A young boy announces his intention to draw a horse with poster-paint. He is already familiar with the studio setting: hanging the paper, mixing the colors, etc. All he has to do now is choose a paintbrush, dip it in color and begin his endeavor. However what ensues is a choreographed set of actions that have little to do with applying the first dab of paint or with the declared subject, i.e. the horse. I witness the physical embodiment of an internal preparatory ritual that precedes artistic expression: roaming around the room,

supposedly casual rummaging through drawers, leafing through an old newspaper, handling various objects, treading and lingering...all prior to what seems to me as the essence of the work that the boy claimed to aspire to, before the day's end. The boy's behavior discloses much information about his feelings, his ways of coping and his "unthought known". It obviates how difficult it is for him to get started and how many roundabout rituals he requires in order to approach his "horse".

When the horse finally takes form on paper, it is observable not necessarily through the main imagery but rather in terms of what transpires around it. The horse's surroundings are compelling: some parts are laden with slabs and spots of paint, some with several layers, while other parts are blank. One might therefore ask: what do they contain? In terms of the background - how does it resemble or differ from attending to the main subject? What is the meaning of the paint droplets dripping off the canvas? Is it coincidental or significant in any way? So much "unthought known" underlies the attendance to the background of the horse, to the work area of the paint-filled wall, the droplets on the floor, "slips of the tongue" - areas that are casually painted because they are regarded as unimportant; those segments that are painted absent-mindedly, unintentionally, the parts that "didn't come out right" - that are covered up. In them one observes the material expression of parts of the psyche that are unconscious, automatic parts, young and unrefined, embodied in studio work that is regarded as trivial and secondary to the "horse" itself. How is the choreography of preparation related to the artistic creation? Is there a resemblance? If so, how is it similar? And why does the sight of the boy beside his horse fill me, the therapist, with unease? Why is it difficult for me to restrain myself from encouraging him to focus on the "essence"? What deep roots of the therapist's "unthought known" are hidden here?

Case Example:

In another case example, I am with a client who is standing beside a huge hunk of clay positioned on a sculpting stand. He sculpts a head. The brown mass takes form and becomes formless. The boy hurls, caresses, pulls, augments, approaches, retreats, ponders. The space between him and his creation constantly fluctuates. Focusing on that space between client and sculpture, we can see that the changes in it are derived from an emotional process. What story does that "formation" of space tell us? When does it expand and when does it contract? Is its circumference circular or angular? Does it indeed fluctuate according to some internal rhythm?

I watch as the air becomes permeated with shapes of all sorts: soft, sharp, round, ever-changing. That supposedly empty space acquires a meaning unique to that specific client! It may contain information about the "unthought known". The creative process naturally draws us into pre-verbal realms, childlike & primordial, which emerge through the tactile & sensory-motor processes. Within them, the "unthought known" states are highly detectable in concrete form, where they are rich and very complex. Those states are manifested in the meeting between client and materials or objects. They are evident in rituals of preparation for artwork, as well as in the relationship between art therapist and client. They dwell in the periphery of knowing and distinction. They are buried in the dark, under-ground, in the roots. But if we are aware of their presence, they may even reveal what Bolas (1987) calls the "infant-mother culture" of the client (p.13). It is that non-verbal culture of the utmost intimacy, forged out of physical closeness, love, empathy, and motherly responsibility; a closeness that encompasses endless bodily

gestures and preverbal sounds.

The client's maneuverings within the studio, particularly those that are conscious and presumably casual, echo the quality of that client's relation to his earliest surroundings, to his mother-figure. All those intricacies, gestures and slips-of-the-tongue, constitute the culture that is formed at the Root phase. The way a client organizes and prepares for artwork, his use of different objects and tools, the tactility of the materials he chooses and the way he relates to the therapist as part of the studio – all these echo, sometimes more lucidly than others, the memory/essence/primordial being that is branded in his soul like primary images. The studio, with all its objects, materials and rituals in a sense constitutes the “containing environment”, much like the primordial mother. The studio and the art therapist working in it, facilitate a reenactment of transformational experiences.

However now the client is grown-up, and having internalized parts of the mother-object, he presents us with the relational patterns that were ingrained in his being. We become accomplices to that internal play, as a witnessing audience and as parts of the client's internal representations. Much like the therapeutic situations described by Bolas, where the client imposes the reenactment of his childhood existence, the studio summons such reenactments all the more so. The unique management of art therapy, requiring movement, objects and materials, is akin to and reconstructs the way life used to be. The studio compels one to “create” something rather than “talking about” it. It does not entail going back to what was, but rather metaphorically reconstructs the experience of how it used to be.

“Patients create environments. Each environment is idiomatic and therefore unique... For a very long period of time, and perhaps it never ends, we are being taken into the patient's environmental idiom, and for considerable stretches of time we do not know who we are, what function we are meant to fulfill, or our fate as his object.” (Bolas, 1987, p. 202). The next case exemplifies becoming almost lost in the depths of the client's evolving inner world.

Case Example:

A young teenaged boy, who'd been seeing the art therapist for a few months, now seemed withdrawn and reclusive. After a very creative period filled with rich expression, he had become sluggish over the past few weeks and didn't feel like doing anything. Although he did attend sessions regularly, his therapist had difficulty reaching him or getting him to express himself at all.

He now sat heavily in his seat. Immersed in the heaviness that engulfed them both, the therapist suggests something that they hadn't done before: they could both get up and paint side by side, “like two artists”. She hangs two canvases. He rises sluggishly from his seat and requests that she paint on his canvas. Sensing his depleted strength, his depression and intense need for physical containment to the point of not being able to paint on separate canvases, the therapist complies with his request. The boy, who had a great talent for drawing and was skillful at working with paints, begins carelessly and impatiently mixing colors, slapping muddy shades of brown and gray on the canvas. His faint colors are heavily diluted with water. He absentmindedly smears diluted color stains with a thin brush, without washing the brush in between shades. His hands become dirty in the process, as he neglects to wipe the brush between strokes. He is visibly uneasy, as he awaits the therapist's reaction. He chooses material in its rawest state – almost non-

material. The marks on his canvas stem from indistinguishable, gross motor movements – from shades that seem to have been chosen at random. He “speaks materially”, exposing his soul through his bodily movements and choices. The therapist selects similar shades, but makes them thicker and richer, spreading them by his side.

Little by little, over about an hour, the boy and his therapist create a shared painting. She notices that he gradually dilutes his colors less and less. Once in a while he dips his brush in her color plate, making his shades more distinguishable. Each step that he takes towards further color distinction and density is reciprocated by the therapist’s further enhancement. In a very tangible metaphoric way - literally using her materials - the boy draws strength that enables him to rise up from his depressive state and create his own paste that is more materially present and distinguishable as it takes form in the center of the canvas. The water-diluted liquefied material becomes thicker and denser, on its way to solidity. The opaque and muddy shades become distinguishable browns and grays, and the formless becomes formed.

The therapist’s metaphoric embrace, her determination to get him up on his feet to paint, her constant reciprocity, the dialogue across the shared canvas, the nurturing in miniscule dosage that could contain each and every phase – all this facilitates emotional movement. Subsequently, the therapist joined the boy’s internal setting and painted alongside him, sharing his canvas, for several weeks. After that he began working on his own again.

Case Example:

In the early 1950s Jackson Pollack conceded to filming a documentary about his work at the studio, by photographer Hans Niemouth. The film chronicles two artworks: a huge canvas painting poised on the floor, and a second painting on an elevated sheet of glass. Niemouth filmed the creation of the second piece from underneath the glass, while Pollack’s voice narrated the description of his work: “My art is direct. I usually paint on the floor. I enjoy working on a large canvas. I’m more at ease and uninhibited when working with an expansive surface. With the canvas on the floor, I feel closer to the painting, as though I were a part of it. I want to express my feelings, not illustrate them”. By observing Pollack’s body language, the following movements are noted: he moves swiftly, sometimes crossing his legs around the four corners of the large canvas. He spews paint, alternating between brushes, sticks and syringes, across the entire surface. He seems to hurl the paint evenly. His movement seems like an internal, repetitive rhythm. He looks extremely focused on his work, rarely lingering over any particular section. At times he kneels, leaning on one knee. He bends over, straightens back up, rising and crouching at regular intervals (like a choreographed plan). He uses his whole body with large, swift and determined motions. Within this extensive movement, he produces delicate intricate motions from his wrists. Clearly, his hand movements are enabled by the strong, steady and flexible positioning of his legs. He holds a canister in his left hand and a brush or stick in his right, alternating between them once in a while. He dabs, sprays, hurls, pours and trickles. The movement of his hands and wrists are well-rounded and skillful. He seems to know exactly what kind of mark each movement will produce. He doesn’t hesitate to get covered in paint or to step in it.

The whole process is seemingly random, but with closer observation a meticulous choreography emerges, where the body moves in space and time, with precision refinement and grace. There is great strength in his legs that support all that bending and rising, hurling paint from varying heights to produce the different effects on canvas. This

rich process yields an internally ordered colorful painting that is lucid and clean. It has an internal abstract rhythm and ornamentation.

The result of this dance-painting-sketching is that Pollack's work encompasses both space and sound: there's a sense that this two-dimensional creation captures the entire space around it, vibrating. I have comfortably gazed at his large artworks from a distance of 3 meters, feeling that if I got any closer I would invade the physical boundaries of the painting itself. And indeed, when I approached to inspect the textures from up close, I felt as though I was drowning. From up close I could literally hear the hurling of the paint, sometimes light and delicate and sometimes thicker and denser, with a wider sound.

How does all this relate to the "unthought known" and the "roots"? This is an artist who is highly aware of his need to move while he works, to create within an expansive area, to use liquefied colors, to produce authentic expression, as he puts it: "My painting is direct. I want to express my feelings, not illustrate them". From the perspective of an art therapist, I gather that a person who chooses to work in that way is conveying a strong need for bodily movement, rhythm, style. Spraying and hurling often reflects anger, frustration and a need for emotional release, which ultimately lead to a calming, quiet after the storm. I also note that the intensive motions compelled by the hurling of liquefied paint, necessitate a solid grounding and a steady posture. Perhaps this is the only way he feels safe, since he essentially requires the largest possible "canvas" - the ground itself.

I sense that he not only wishes to express his feelings, but also wants to live them fully over and over again, through his artwork. Pollack essentially recreates the act of transformation. I don't know how Pollack would articulate it, but in Bolas' terms, he construes situations that reenact the aesthetic experience - the experience of the "unthought known". I would hypothesize that his biography is interwoven with his art - strewn with physical, expansive bodily experience that left a deep mark and longing in him. His creative processes are comprised of personal rituals with which he recreates transformational moments, coming face to face with his emotional roots.

Jackson Pollack was the fifth son of a hard-working family, which migrated from ranch to ranch for its livelihood. His father was a map sketcher, and Pollack used to accompany him on his jobs from time to time. On one occasion he joined his father for the mapping of the Grand Canyon. Subsequently, during his art studies, he traveled with a friend across the United States and was deeply impressed by Native American sand-drawings and complementary rituals. As an art therapist I gather that his theory and method of work is profoundly influenced by the impressions and experiences he accrued throughout his childhood and adult life. Beyond his theory that a modern artist always finds new ways of expressing new things (like space travel or the atom bomb), there is also a young boy who intimately traveled with his father, across expansive, breathtaking regions. That is, essentially, the original "blueprint" of his creations.

It is therefore no surprise that Pollack doesn't paint on diminutive canvases. His sizeable surfaces are a personal expression rooted in the early periods of his life. His movements and gestures are not unlike a ritual dance around a Totem pole in a wide open plane, something of a primordial ceremony of worship that all ancient cultures espouse; like a continuous search for answers to ponderings, for peace, for meaning, for paternity - for spirituality.

Pollack is considered a rebel artist, who discards the Western format in favor of Eastern

methodology. He uses the paintbrush like a stick. Applying his own social-artistic approach, he explores the very ends of continuums - sometimes at a high emotional cost. He has rebelled against the paternal-artistic imagery of Western art, taking a risk in trying to expand the consensual boundaries. Besides defying paternal imagery and creating a new internal Totem, Pollack also searched for ways to organically integrate expanses, movement, rhythm, chaos and order – all in one. As I see it, Pollack’s work stems from his deepest personal roots. With his use of materials, he manages to formulate profoundly sweeping statements that encapsulate the existential experience of many Human Beings in the 20th century. His intimate exploration of his own internal chaos resonates deeply and closely with many others’ internal processes. Perhaps that is what distinguishes him as an exceptionally great artist.

Summary

This aim of this essay is to begin contending with the lack of conceptualization of the practical knowledge accumulated by art therapists. The Tree Metaphor is utilized to observe the Root phase, which has virtually never been written about. It focuses on body language, trying to gather information beyond that which is deduced from cognitive processes. It seems that the Tree Metaphor is particularly useful in helping art therapists deepen their understanding of materials as parallels to the unconscious, universal archetypes and concepts of Bolas (1987). Mapping the creative process according to the Tree Metaphor assists us in locating the areas of difficulty experienced by our clients, and in elucidating our work in the studio for those who are inexperienced in using materials.

However, we are only at the beginning. The matter-of-fact way in which we relate to matter along with the lack of research & verbal exploration into the various materials, indicate that even though we know how to use them, we are still rather unskilled at articulating our work. If we use the Tree Metaphor as a tool for observing our professional development, we will find that in terms of literary expression, we are predominantly at the Root phase. Our professional awareness, from a literary standpoint, still lingers in the “unthought known”.

Perhaps the next step is to employ the Tree Metaphor to decipher the universal meaning and uniqueness inherent in each and every material. I hope that this essay sheds some light on the obscurity and vagueness in this field, and provides a useful supplement to anyone who is interested in materials or already working with them. It is my heart-felt hope that a deeper awareness will be aroused regarding the significance and meaning of materials; that we can learn to listen to them more carefully, attentively, and give them a voice.

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Footnotes:

[1] Claude Monet (1840-1926); Woman with Parasol; 85*100, 1875; oil on canvas; National Gallery, Washington.

[2] Phenomenology - the Study of Phenomena. Combining art with the Phenomenological school of philosophy, Art Therapy pioneer 龔宇*整 Mala Betansky developed an essential tool for observing and understanding clients' artwork.

[3] Verbs listing: an art therapy tool that I developed, where I thoroughly list all the verbs that describe the creation of the artwork. I find that the objective documentation of the verbs greatly elucidates the client's emotional and mental state at that point in time.

[4] Comment on the state of materials in the Modern world: to simplify the Tree Metaphor, we posit that the materials at our disposal in the art studio are in the Root state. However, one must keep in mind that most studio materials are highly industrialized, to varying degrees. This process of industrialization can also be viewed in terms of the Tree Metaphor. Some materials are closer to their natural state, such as paint powders and sculpting clay. The more any material is industrialized, the farther away it is from its Root state,

Cenini (1960) depicts a reliable account of the artist's craft in the 17th century, when artists were predominantly craftsmen who were experts on the materials with which they worked. Nowadays, very few artists are erudite on the manufacturing processes of their materials. With an abundance of art materials at our disposal, produced and manufactured with highly sophisticated technologies, it is nevertheless essential to be able to discern between industrialized and natural-state materials.

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