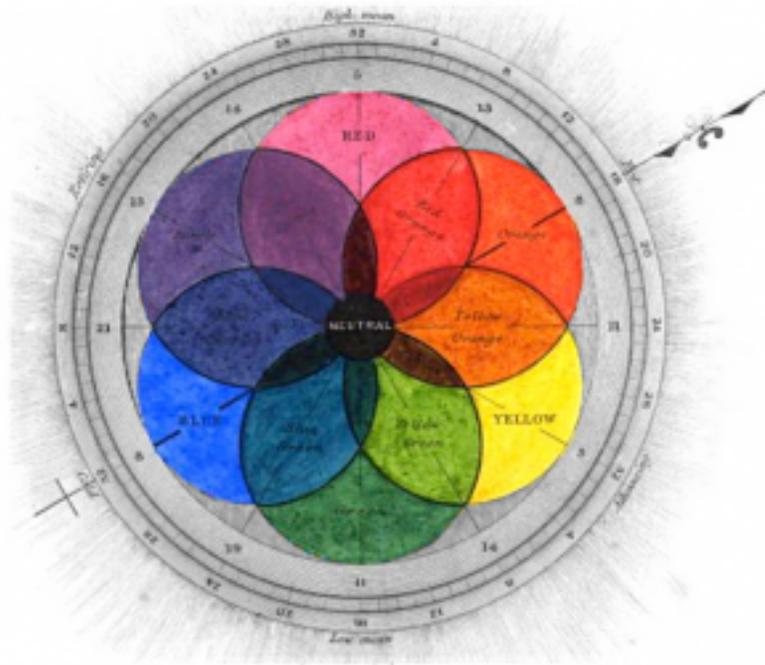


# Visual Arts Extended Essay: Investigation into Art Therapy

How might color therapy help heal the minds  
of disturbed children?



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Examination Session: May 2014

Word Count: 3942 words

*Figure 0. Colors (Art Therapy, 2013)*

## **Abstract**

In the era of diverse alternative treatments prospering, I have faith in art as a method to relieve ourselves as it has done for me. Viewing art as a way of communication and expressing identity, and color an important element of art, I felt passionate to explore the question “*How might color therapy help heal the minds of disturbed children?*”

To answer this inquiry, I used both primary and secondary sources. Firstly, I researched the history and concepts of art and color therapies online. However, for further analysis about color therapy and its impacts on disturbed children, I examined books, journal articles, personal commentaries and even had an interview with a specialist. Hence, I organized my research by firstly specifying what art therapy is and its potential significance in today’s society where many children are in the need of help. Then I explained about the concept of color therapy, meanings behind colors, effects of colors on us, especially the disturbed children, and applications of color therapy. With weighty background knowledge, I responded to my question by exploring case studies of color therapy on children and its limitations.

Through this investigation, I learned the strengths of art and color as therapies, especially for the disturbed children. But I also discovered the weakness of art therapies that needs adjustments. I tried to be objective in discussing the two sides on art and color therapy since I desired to acquire unbiased evaluation of the field. That being so, I concluded art and color therapies both significant potential remedies for children with difficulties within themselves and against their surroundings. However, these therapies should not be considered a panacea nor used as sole source of assessment of children since there is a need for more in-depth and justified research to be undertaken.

Word Count: 298

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## *An investigation into how color therapy works to support or be ineffective in helping disturbed children.*

### **Introduction**

First emerged in the Western society during the mid-20th century, art therapy is a high-potential therapy. As a self-expressive therapy, art therapy enhances individual's physical, mental, and emotional state by the creative process of art (Malchiodi, 2013). The aims of art therapy consists in self-expression, self-exploration, self-realization and self-unity. Art therapy centers one's attentions onto inner self's feelings, awareness, and creativity through diverse medium of art including drawing, painting, sculpture and others. By articulating one's inner world and relaxing one's emotion and stress through creation, oneself can communicate thoughts and sentiments one felt difficultly expressing in words. Such communication can stimulate one's ego to reflect and relieve the traumatic thoughts or health challenges and ultimately find self-development.

Targets of art therapy are not constrained to any age nor social groups as art can be a beneficial medium of communication to any. However, I believe it can be an exceptionally potential treatment for children. Even people of age struggle to express themselves in words. Children are in developing stages and presumably premature in confessing innermost emotions and experiences via speech. Furthermore, children in distress of trauma may be unnerved merely by speaking about the event or may not even understand the situation that has caused them pain. As E.A. Breat and R. Ostroff describes "*One important aspect of art therapy is the creation of a safe space where traumatic feelings can be processed. Sometimes the verbal skill is lacking to describe traumatic experiences and by creating art, the person can feel more confident.*" (AATA, n.d.). Expressing the unexpressed emotions like anger, sadness and fear through art prevents such emotions to pile up into anxiety, depression or developmental disability. In this way, art therapy is known to be a significant remedy for children suffering from traumas.

Color therapy is the approach to how color affects people, and may possibly heal us. Merged in the conducts of art therapy, color therapy is also treatment aimed to create balance and health in our body and mentality. Considering color as another mean of expression and

possibility to heal the distressed, I aim to investigate on the effects of color therapy. I strongly aspired to establish knowledge about by what means such healing through color and art is possible. I have done this by focusing on certain age group, children up to 19, as I believe one's mental and physical state during childhood and adolescence is the basis of one's future.

The 'disturbed children' of this investigation varies from children suffering post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), griefs of loss, abuse, learning disabilities, anger management, and more. Another reason to focus on such group is because at least 35% of children subject to one traumatic event suffer from serious aftermaths (AATA, *n.d.*). These children undergo difficulties unable to describe all in words. Moreover, 80% of children in America's juvenile justice system have been substance to abuse, have learning disabilities or mental health problem (*Art Therapy, 2013*). But seldom were they given a hand of help. Therefore, I feel it is pivotal to understand how might color therapy help relieve these children from such distress and harsh reality.

I critically analyzed researches on color and art therapy from various sources to answer my question: '*how might color therapy help heal the minds of disturbed children?*' The internet was initially used to create the foundation in my understanding of art and color therapy. For further in-depth analysis, book and journal articles on internet data bases were used as they consisted of diverse case studies. Additionally, I have done an interview with a specialist who works with children with special needs. I interviewed about the specialist's success and difficulties with art therapy in different cultures, age and gender groups. This contributed immensely to my holistic comprehension of how art heals us and how we can help the disturbed population of our society join and contribute. Likewise, therapists and patients personal comments to color therapy were also taken into account in my exploration.

I wished to be more knowledgeable of methods to heal individuals in such important stage of Life through this investigation. I also wanted to familiarize myself with art and color therapy which I dream to study professionally in the future. I also sought to attain affirmation of how and to what to extent my dream, healing with art, is effective. Therefore, this paper will be an investigation into how might color therapy help or is ineffective in helping the disturbed children.

## Color Therapy & Disturbed Children

Generally, art therapy is defined into two natures. One views the creative process of art therapeutic and another sees art as symbolic communication tool for the creator. Both art therapy and psychotherapy are commonly acknowledged and blended in most therapy sessions (*Malchiodi, 2013*). Likewise, today's focus of art therapy lies in creation or representations and image interpretations. However, developers of art therapy, Rhinehart and Engelhorn, regarded underlying elements of art including, line, form and color are also usable for healing (*Withrow, 2004*). Other therapists, like Carl Jung, also encouraged color usage, in expressing patients' innermost self, reflects the deeper, intimate side of one's traits (*Art Therapy, 2013*).

Correspondingly, color is believed to have psychological effects and carries emotions and meanings that can be used to treat people. Art therapy, exercising usage of color, can be seen as another level of color therapy and vice versa. With regards to this notion, I believe that as much as symbolic images help children express themselves, underlying elements of art like color can portray children's emotions and thought. Therefore, I aimed to investigate on usage of color as therapy, in other words, color therapy.

Color is light energy reflected, bended and refracted via objects like particles or molecules. Our eyes are able to correspond to a visible spectrum of 390 to 750 nanometer wavelengths. Each of the color in the visible spectrum has an identified frequency and vibration that also impacts us as well as how non-visible light namely, x-rays and ultraviolet ray, affects us (*Klotsche, 1992*).

Based on the concept explained, color therapy is utilizing our visible spectrum of light to heal individual's spirit, physical and mental health. Because each hue has its own unique frequency and vibration, it is believed that these distinct properties of color can be used to influence energy and frequencies in ourselves (*Cherry, n.d.*). Likewise, color's stimulus transmitted to our cerebrum, when used specifically appropriate to the need, is considered to change our emotions to assuage or into vigor. For example, it is proven that for emotionally unstable people, green can have a positive effect of soothing them. Whereas red can excite, increase heart rate, speed, strength and adrenaline in oneself (*Elliot, 2007*).

Moreover, idea of colors therapy also lies in color carrying our emotions and symbolizing ourselves. Picasso confirms “Colors, like features, follow the changes of the emotions.” (Cherry, n.d.). Color choices is regarded as a reflection of one’s emotions and mindsets. White, in the Western world, common meaning or purity, innocence, neutrality. Black is the color of power, evil, death. Red symbolizing warmth, comfort, energy, excitement, life and blood (Appendix A) (Art Therapy, 2013). A study by Perkins (1977) analyzed the difference in the drawings of children under 12 who experienced life-threatening illness such as cancer to those who have not. Majority of children, aware of their sickness, used specific color choices and compositions



Figure 1. “The Unwanted Departure” by a young teenager 2 weeks after being diagnosed of leukemia. (face shaded green and red, white fist, grey arms) (Malchiodi, 1999)

including consistent use of black, especially to represent “faceless nightmare creature, cave, vise, spreading shadow, and darkened house.” like Figure 1 (Malchiodi, 1999). Both sets of children used red but the ill children utilized red more substantially and relating red often to blood. As this case shows, there are some prevalently accepted meanings of colors that are used.

However, meanings of colors may vary regards to culture, and time. Also, as colors are oftentimes related with one’s emotions, there is subjective aspect in interpreting colors that may differ between individuals, due to different context; personal experiences, and social surroundings. Even within a nation, there may be differences in color perception. For instance, black, white and yellow are commonly held sacred colors in different Native American Nations. However, each Native American Nations have other different colors they also hold scared, turquoise for Navajo, green for Apache and red for Iowa tribe (Art Therapy, 2013). Color can have diverse implications, it’s regarded differently by how patients use it and what situation the patient is in. But this varying factor of color symbolism could be undermined in regards to color’s effect to heal. Even though color meanings may be dependent on the context of each individuals, it still is individual’s trial to release emotions. Also, when the therapist understands the context, deducing conclusions and ways to heal the patients from colors is also possible.

Color therapy has various applications. Ancient Egypt, Greece, and China used to exercise color therapy by having rooms in diverse colors and crystals to divide sunlight into spectrum of colors. Today's exercise of color symbolism and effects are more common around us in marketing and advertising than in the intent to heal. Today, color therapy is viewed as a mere holistic or alternative treatment to heal our physical and mental health. However, constant research on color has proven many healing applications of colors.



Figure 2. Room coordinated with clam hues (Taylor. n.d.)

The application of color is also utilized in today's treatments like in the Worcester State Hospital's "green room" where everything in the room, the wall, shades are of "Nile green" color. The room, according to Dr. William A. Bryan of the Denver State Hospital, is beneficial for whom "suffering from nervousness and insomnia." and calms the agitated (Audrey, 1979). Besides, like art, colors can have profound effect on even ones who are not afflicted with predicaments. For such reason, colors are valued very important in interior designs like Figure 2.

Having gone through what color therapy is and some applications of color treatments I will discuss specific therapy cases of disturbed children and analyze the pros and cons of art and color therapy.

## Analysis of Effects of Color Therapy on Disturbed Children

Color therapy, and also art therapy, both have proponents advocating the use and effects of the treatment. Believing in these therapies, many case studies and researches have been made. The proponents of color therapy have several points to support their belief in such treatment. These are the following reasons :

First of all, as stated before, art as means of expression, can be a pathway to communicate for people who have difficulties to let their emotions out. Therefore, color therapy has therapeutic advantages. This is the most significant agreement throughout the supporters of color therapy. The process of using colors and making art lets children achieve emotional wellbeing. For example, pounding on clays, mixing colors violently how he or she wants to, could be a less dangerous form of catharsis than physical offends. Eliza, sexually abused by her father, was a 12 year old girl who could not disclose her scars of the event and only could let her anger out against her younger brother, the easy target. Only when Eliza was suggested to draw who upset her, she began to release her anger towards the source of pain, her father. Figure 3 is Eliza's drawing which she created ranting *"You're bad.. he's naughty doing that to me... Stop making me miserable.. Keep out of my house, it's mine and Mummy's and Jamie's and the cat's. I hate you"* (Liebmann, 2008). The anger released and the therapist locking up her drawing, therefore the abuser, helped Eliza be gleeful which she represented by creating flower cards for her mother. Eliza was unable to express her experiences and anxiety from trauma. However, she was able to communicate and dispose her anger via creation. Likewise art therapy helps relieve emotions, in which in many cases children themselves cannot understand explicitly as they lack of ability to understand their traumas.

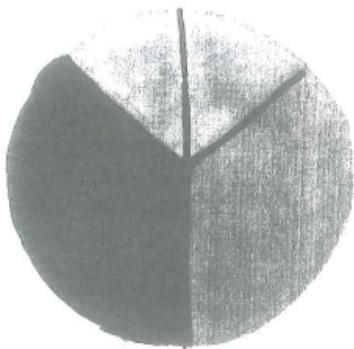


Figure 3. Drawing "The naughty monkey" representing Eliza's anger toward the abuser (Liebmann, 2008)

Furthermore, many in this field have explained color in art and art itself helps children as they are practical and less threatening ways to approach the disturbed children. A specialist I interviewed commented about her student with difficulties speaking and how painting easily help

the student. The specialist called letting the child choose her own colors, giving “*her control over her environment.*” (Appendix B). The independency given to the child boosted her confidence and the session helped “*her know that she can also make something.*” Moreover, as art is a recreation that can be felt as ‘play’ rather than ‘session’ for children, it give a different approach for children to face their difficulties and at times find unexpected solutions. The specialist also noted creation in art therapy have positive consequences even in other children as they learned to appreciate the disturbed ones, who commonly struggle to accomplish tasks they find easy.

Thirdly, color therapy can give another chance for children to be healed. At times, children create sheerly subconscious piece of work in which therapists can read the child is in strain and offer help. An interpretation of a case I read about a suicidal 15 year old girl who drew her life in the following representations Figures 4-7 proves how art therapy has been effective and color has been a meaningful method of communication.



*Figure 4. Drawing “The circle starts to spin” representing the circle at the girl’s birth (divided equally into black, blue, and red) (Shirley, 1999)*



*Figure 5. Drawing “Hope is gone” representing the girl’s state in start of depression (2/3 black, 1/3 in black and red) (Shirley, 1999)*



*Figure 6. Drawing “All-depression” (all black) (Shirley, 1999)*

The Figures 4-6 above were all created in different time. At first, the girl drew Figure 4, resembling a color wheel, and defined the 3 colors used; blue as hope, black as depression and red as anger. She said at her birth there were all 3 colors and the circle starting spinning. She later drew Figure 5 and stated as the circle spun, blue disappeared and even red remained only a bit. After few days, the girl drew Figure 6 with no explanation. However, this was enough for

therapists to grasp she was in despair. The girl was hospitalized for better care and she drew Figure 7 stating the circle slowed and may become more blue, especially if the red arrows (her parents as she later indirectly specified as her origin of anger), do not attack it. In these session, color was an assessment tool of the girl's state. Colors were not only the child's silent cry for rescue that saved her but also hints that developed her treatment to focus on tackling reasons of despondency, her parent's pressure (Shirley, 1999).

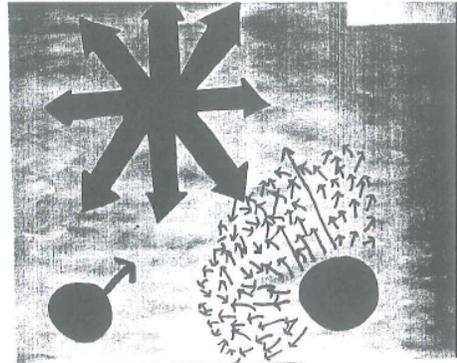


Figure 7. Drawing "Slowing down. Breaking up." created during the girl's recovery sessions (arrows in red, some blue in circles) (Shirley, 1999)

In addition, art therapy may be more beneficial for children than other goal-oriented therapies as children can be alleviated from the pressure of their actions being judged right or wrong. Also by this way, children avoids confrontation that are emotionally unbearable but still explore their issues. A 14 year old boy, recorded emotionally abused by a stepfather labeling him "too sensitive" and "sissy" for woman-like attitude, did not initially contribute verbally in therapy. However, he drew several drawings (Figures 8-10) to question like "How do others see you?" which communicates his innermost despairs (Shirley, 1999). The boy's story, which he choose not or could not speak of, is understood when seeing Figure 8-10 together.

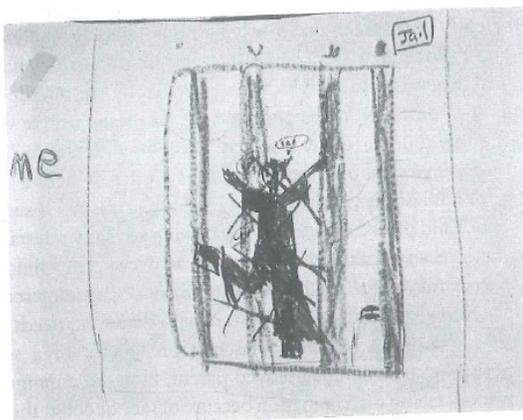


Figure 8. Drawing "A queen behind bars" in response to question "How do others see you?" boy behind the bars of woman's luggage (Shirley, 1999)

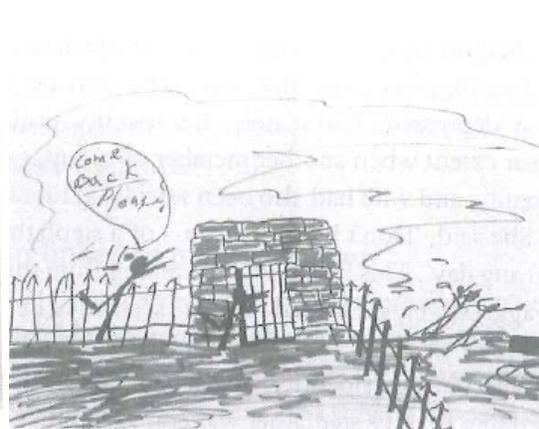
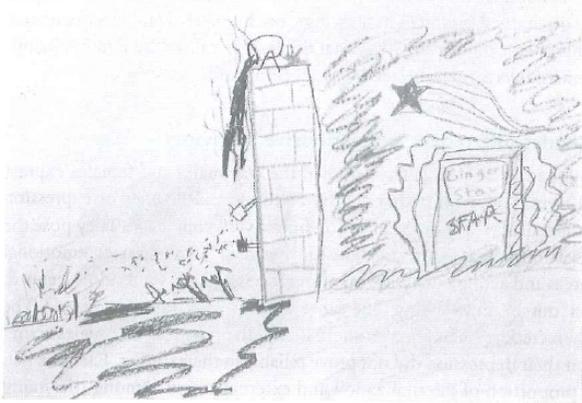


Figure 9. Drawing "Come back" boy trying to get grandparents (his comfort) from graveyards (Shirley, 1999)



*Figure 10. Drawing “A wish to join a dead rock star” black figure being himself trying to fall and die like how his idol rock-star did (Shirley, 1999)*

Figure 8 displays himself caged inside woman’s suitcase, showing how the boy felt his identity is impelled in woman-likeness as stepfather’s emotional abuse taught him. Figure 9 shows how he misses and needs his dead grandparents (the only comfort) who cannot be met due to the wall (death). As to to meet his grandparents (comfort) he has been trying committing suicides shown in Figure 10. The boy explained his reasons, indirectly through these

drawings. Facing such abuse directly without art, depressed the boy to believe his stepfather’s words as true descriptions of his identity and that his identity was wrong, leading to suicidal trials. However, the drawings, even though full of grief, was an endurable way of facing his state and reflect on reality. Art therapy had the power to diminish the emotions of the boy to a tolerable state. Also, as he was in a group therapy, there was a girl who understood the boy by his drawings, knowing for herself how low self-esteem makes oneself feel amiss. She complimented and encouraged the boy and all others followed to assure the boy he was the right one (Shirley, 1999). This reveals the profoundness of art as a communication method as it helped the group empathize, develop bonds and heal each other as peers in similar positions.

Besides, the openness of art that could include diverse thoughts and feelings, even conflicting ones, by using diverse colors, lines, figures and compositions, all in one canvas without restrictions, can help create the ‘big picture’ for clients. Observations on their creation can help children develop inclusive reflections and realization about themselves. Also, expressions in children’s art could be a symbolical message which works as a bridge for the therapist to walk over to understand the children’s thoughts and emotions more comprehensively, inducing better treatment. Another asset of color therapy is suggested in neurological researches which have demonstrated art contributes to interaction of different parts of the brain which facilitates cognitive learning skills (Liebmann, 2008). Therefore, color therapy can be a solution to consult disturbed children with learning disabilities.

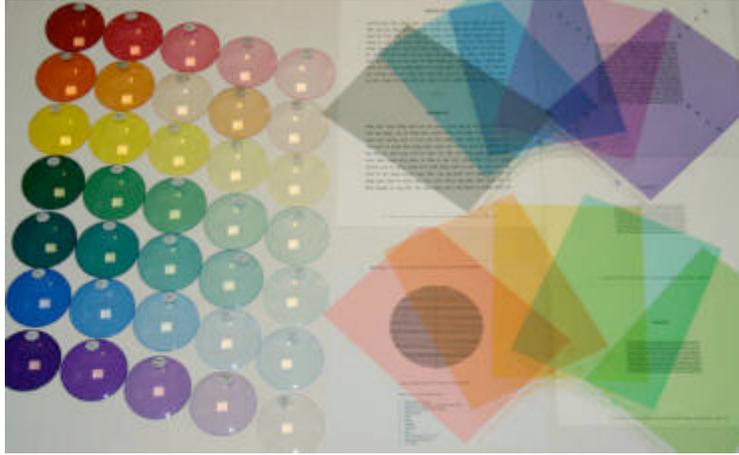


Figure 11. Color Filters for Children (Lawrence, 2011)

Color light therapy, in which children select color filter to placed over their books, have been proven to improve dyslexia and disturbed children's learning abilities (Figure 11). This type of color therapy utilizes specific colors of light as stimulus to the brain. Rooms painted in colors children choose may have positive impacts too. UK's color therapist Kheli Italiano stated her 8 year old depressed client insisted to color her room orange, an anti-depressant color, and there was an improvement in the client's attitude (Khan, 2013). In addition, blue light is known let children relax. James, 5 year old boy, with severe ADHD, shown more readiness to do work and calm emotional state in "bluish charcoal room", even his academics enhanced as he controlled his time and focus in blue room (Taylor, n.d.). Similarly, there has been cases disturbed children are relieved to cope better based on the colors of their environment. Correspondingly, for those reasons and effects explained color therapy is endorsed by many.

However, on the other hand, some rebut to theses advantages of color therapy. Arguing the effects of colors are overstated, skeptics draw the attention to how colors differ meanings in different contexts. Interestingly, they do not deny the powers of color, however disputes the effects to be temporary and at times creating unexpected consequences. For example, even though yellow is known to improve focus of children with ADHD and learning disabilities, a room completely yellow can cause disorientations (Khan, 2013).

Plus, there are limitations to color therapy in which even art therapists argue as setbacks. The analytical and evaluative skills of most studies are criticized as lacking empirical support and sample size, and concluding with oversimplified data and subjective validation (O'Connor,

2011). Many proponents agree there are many weaknesses to scientifically backup this alternative treatment as there are many undefinable variables in therapy. Furthermore, cautious provision is needed for the therapy to not become anti-therapeutic for children. With natures of indirectness, color therapies may become a comfort zone children hide from their problems. Like 8 year old boy Billy, traumatized by abuse, was said in the initial part of the therapy, *“continued to produce expansive color washes”* and *“delaying the subject of his anger”* (Liebmann, 2008).

Lastly, color therapy with ‘children’ may be a particularly difficult treatment because the simplistic expressions may only consist of lines, doodles, shapes than colors since color usage is firmly tied with one’s development (Malchiodi, 2013). Consequently, for younger children, art therapy may help as an expression however, color may not be part of it. However, on the other hand this means after children grasp the concept of color, it could be another potential expression and way of assessing children’s conditions. One’s use of colors in art expressions is very susceptible thus easily limited as I have overviewed before about traumatized children may prevalently use specific colors like red or black. Such context and therapy sessions suiting each child could possibly cause the child to overcome his or her problems.

With current studies based on therapy sessions rather than scientific data about brains working as a result of art it may be difficult to argue the science behind art and color therapy. Even though this is a clear weak point of art and color therapy, Ryan, a 9 year old boy with leukemia, believes art therapy is what he needs as *“it makes you feel like can do anything really”* (Danzico, 2013). The girl who drew the color wheels said she *“learned to send messages with no words to adequately describe”* her distress (Shirley, 1999). Client of British Association of Art Therapists commented art gave *“the confidence to confront major issues in my life to make life-changing decisions and follow them through. It got me to the door and I walked through it”* (BAAT, 2011). Children KNOW there is effects of color and art on them. It is apparent color and art therapy worked as significant interventions for children’s mind as it has enabled children to express, feel, communicate and finally be healed.

## Conclusion

Color therapy, like any other treatments, is not a panacea for every physical and mental problems we face. Nor is color a traditional method of treatment. However, through this investigation, it was evident that color and art could be effectively used as treatments. I believe the key to my question *'How might color therapy help heal the minds of disturbed children?'* lies in the children's overcomes and feelings about the therapies. Did art significantly help Eliza? the girl of color wheels? James? I believe yes. Art allowed Eliza to have the emotional outburst, help the therapist pay attention to the color wheel girl and improved James' focus skills.

In conclusion, art and color therapy are substantiated by their results to be effective. However, the explicit process of healing art stimulates is yet unknown. Therefore, even though I believe the potentials of art and color therapy, I suggest they are not the sole diagnostic tool to assess and heal children. However, these therapies should play a part when treating children, especially the ones that have difficulties communicating verbally.

I comprehended vast variety and in depth knowledges about art and color's influence on our emotions and actions. For instance, which colors have what meanings and effects, how each color's impacts alter in personal, cultural, situational differences, and how colors are used by children in therapies. However, I yet feel my inquiry incomplete as there were unresolved questions to my current research. Learning about color therapy, I understood how complicated it is to measure or prove the effect of art and color. I questioned are there ways effects of art therapy be measured independent of other treatments and is it necessary to do so?

Some other unresolved questions were as to how exactly does color association help children and how can art therapy be scientifically or medically backed up? I understood from readings that researches on the changes in our brains when art soothes us may be lead to some answers for my questions. Therefore, I feel neurological studies on art therapy should be the subject of further research for many art therapist today.

Nevertheless, I wish to maintain the competence of art and color should not be sternly underestimated for its current scientific validity as Einstein expressed *"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted"* (Harris, n.d.). I believe only

when the case studies and personal knowledge of art therapy are combined with medical knowledge of art therapy, both equally important, we can maximize the healing powers of art therapy. On that account, if scientific and medical knowledge is attain for art therapy, the prospects of art therapy as treatment for the disturbed children will proliferate. I hope my own knowledge and current research in these therapy will soon become more expansive.

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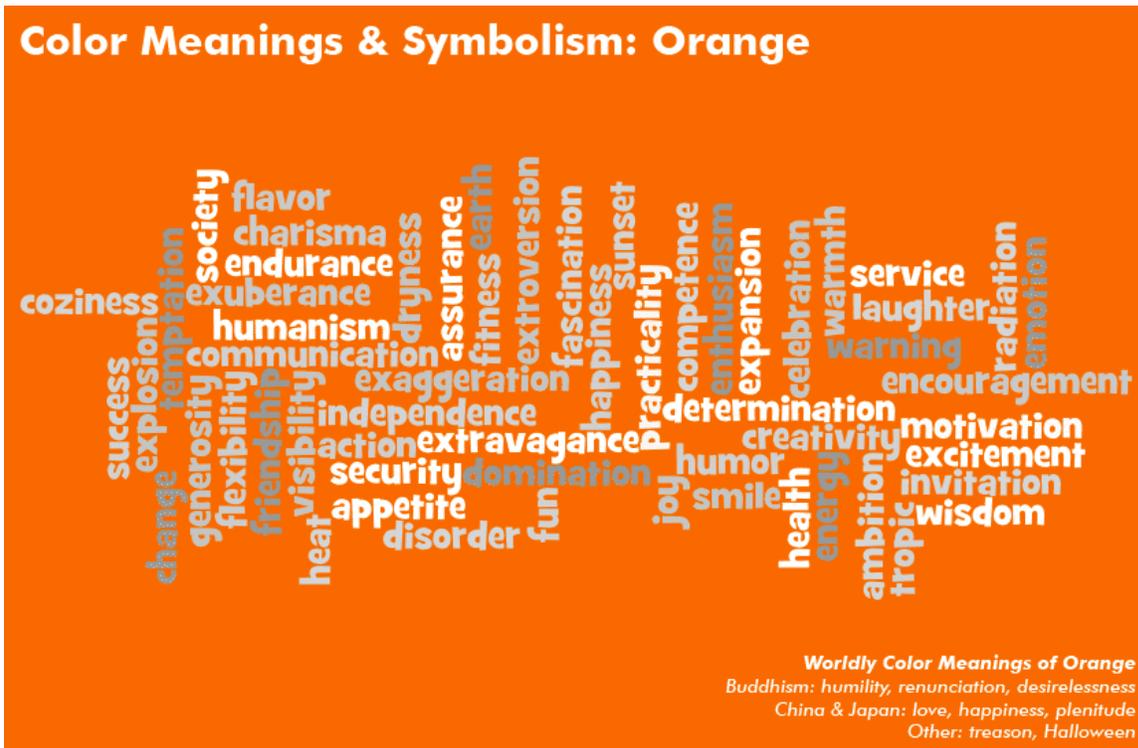
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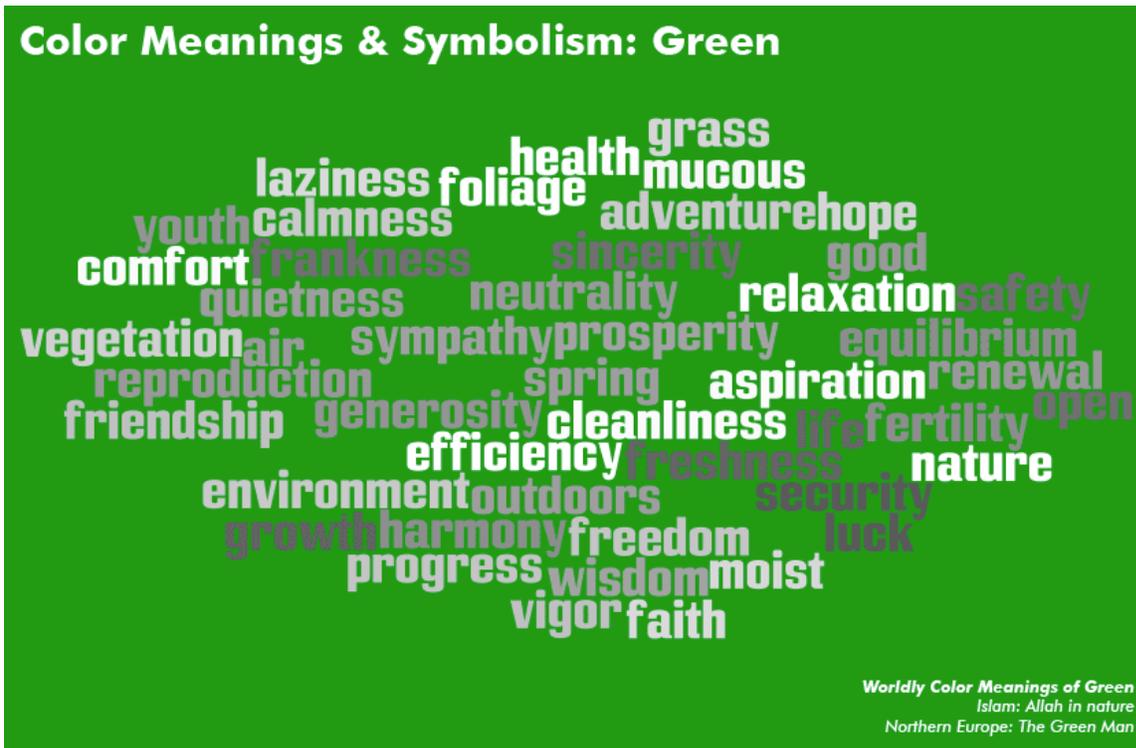
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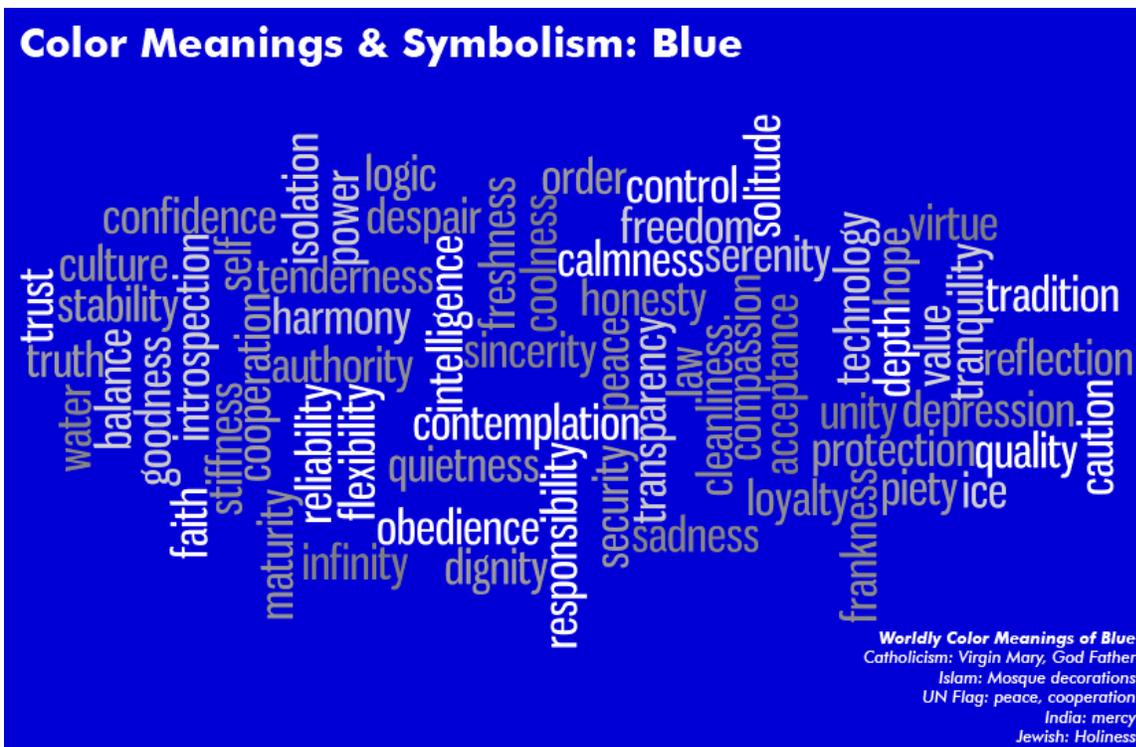
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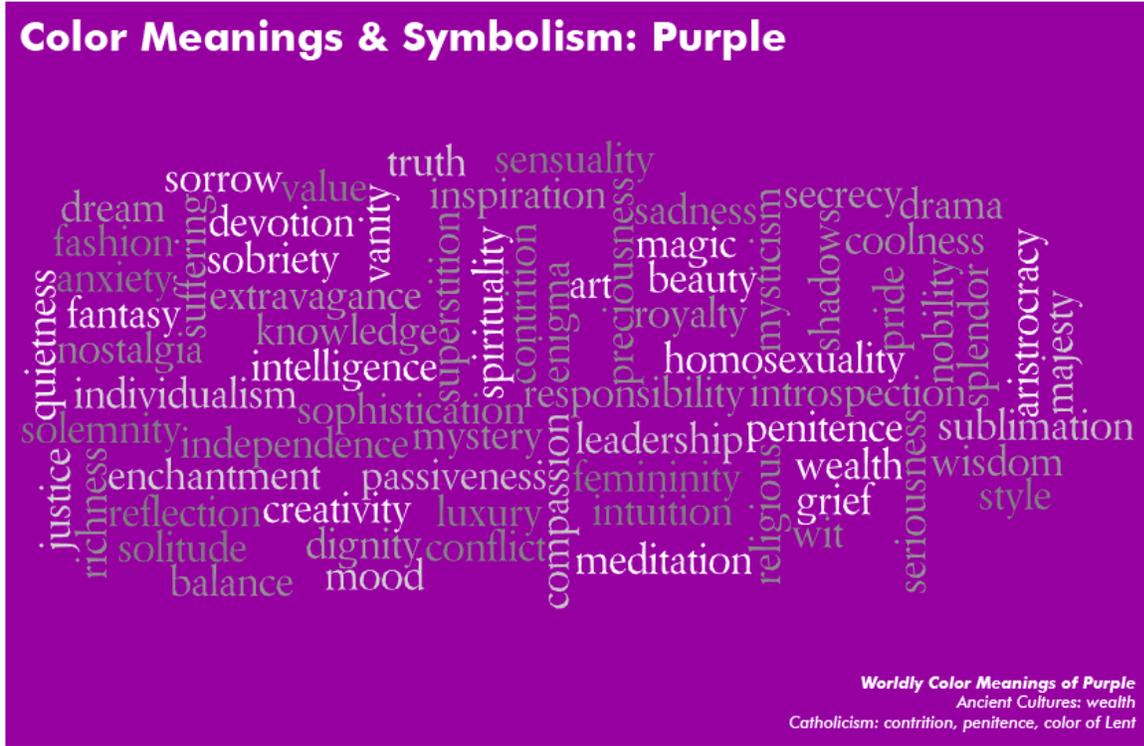
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- Color Meanings & Symbolism : Blue (Primary Color)



- Color Meanings & Symbolism : Purple (Secondary Color)



## **Appendix B : Transcript of Interview with Ms. Tanya (Art Therapy Specialist)**

- ME : I've heard that you work with children with special needs, could you tell me some of your experiences?
- Ms. Tanya : So I began working with adults with developmental disabilities from age 22 to 75. During it there was many different types of programs but one of the programs I ran was the art program. We would take their work to art fairs and represent them as artists.
- ME : Really? What kind of works?
- Ms. Tanya : About, 10 years ago? There was this older man that had obsessive stress disorder and was non-verbal. He could make paintings for hours, it was just lines. Little small lines, over and over again, so they were in different patterns. So that was one type. There was another 45 year old man who made very funny drawings. Sort of, I think, related to himself. His father, used to be a priest, I think a lot of it was around his father. His father died and a lot of his drawings seem to reflect that. Some people that weren't so capable of using their hands, we would give them different materials, collage, sculptures, or any type of art that worked for them.
  
- ME : So just to check, the works created differs, they are not confined to anything, as individuals are dignified. And art therapy is flexible to suit individuals...You said that the first man was non-verbal, do you think that art therapy helps those who cannot communicate through language or any other mediums?
- Ms. Tanya : YES. Absolutely.
- ME : So that was your experiences with adults. How about children? Were there any experiences you had with children that help you develop such conviction in art therapy?
- Ms. Tanya : Umm.. Yes, I think working in high-school? Level of kids with... let me think of this... I had a girl with down syndrome, she had a very vivid imagination. So she would draw superman with blood coming out of his mouth. So I think for her it was very difficult to understand through speaking, so I think art was an avenue to express a lot of her imagination and creativity.

- ME : Do you think it helps them to do those activities?
- Ms. Tanya : YES.
- ME : How? Do they feel better after?
- Ms. Tanya : I'm not sure... if I can explain that. You have to ask them for that. Well, for the man who drew the lines, he had a lot of anxiety. And it was obvious painting lines calmed him.
  
- ME : In NIS, do you work with children with special needs?
- Ms. Tanya : Yes.
- ME : In that process, do you offer them art?
- Ms. Tanya : I do. And I think this (art therapy) also helps children who don't have as good, fine motor skills or write as well. Their own drawings are representations of them, so I think yes it does help them. And it also helps other children because it shows them (other children) that they (children with special needs) can do something, something good too.
- ME : That's nice.
- Ms. Tanya : There's this one little girl who has difficulties speaking and loves painting. I give her opportunity to do what she loves and I give her opportunities by giving her choices of what color she wants to use. This gives her some control over her environment. Color is fun for her. She acts more confident after these activities. When she knows she did something, use colors, paint, create, something on those lines makes her proud.
  
- ME : How is this kind of work important to you, personally?
- Ms. Tanya : Working with kids with special needs? Well.. on different levels. One is teaching other kids about kids with special needs. When kids are included with their same age peers, when very young, when they learn at very young age it is okay to be different.
- ME : I like that aspect too.
- Ms. Tanya : Yes. Sometimes the process's slow but teaching kids to communicate with art and so teach them, when they communicate, they can get what they want. Also, I think teaching kids achieve their own success... Most often, I think 90% of the time, they know, they are aware

that they are different, even though people may not consider that. But they usually know its going to be hard for them and letting them achieve success...

- ME : So more like helping them develop their ego by accomplishments?

- Ms. Tanya : Yes!

- ME : Were there any difficulties that interfered with helping children?

- Ms. Tanya : Of course. Well sometimes progress can go three steps up. But then plateau for a while. Again three steps up again one back. But often times you just have to take three months and take a step back to see what progress has been made. Like every other day we have good days and bad days. And we constantly have to look at them and their art from different angles

- ME : Overall, what do you think of the concept art therapy

- Ms. Tanya : What do I think of the concept of art therapy, that's a beautiful question. Well, I guess I'd say art is therapeutic for everyone. But I think for people that have more difficulty communicating, or seeing, or hearing, art becomes an avenue more available for them. More meaningful for them as they don't have other options to show what is going on in their brain.

- ME : I agree on how art lets us communicate. I mean I feel some people convey their emotions and thoughts better visually.

- Ms. Tanya : Going back to the children there. I think that part which children can communicate through art and they know they can and are understood by others, gives respects to their ego. Ego is the most important thing. For kids with special needs, if you are to work everyday and you're painting and are acknowledge by it the kids feel success and they can grow on top of that.