THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN ART THERAPY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

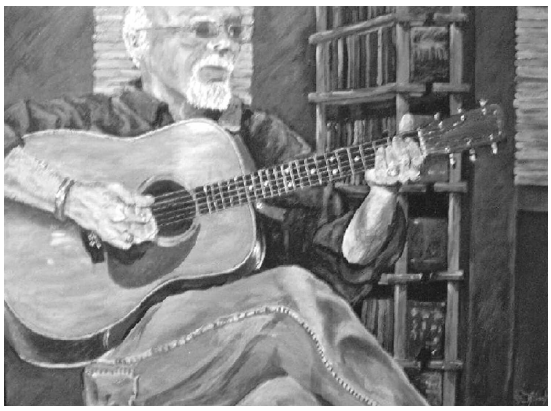


Figure 1. Self-Portrait, Acrylic on Canvas, 36″ x 42″.

Bruce L. Moon, Ph.D., ATR-BC, is a member of the faculty and chair of the art therapy department at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Formerly the director of the graduate program at Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the Harding Graduate Clinical Art Therapy Program in Worthington, Ohio, he has extensive clinical, administrative, and teaching experience. He holds a doctorate in creative arts with specialization in art therapy from Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Moon's current clinical practice is focused on the treatment of emotionally disturbed adolescents. He has lectured and led workshops at many colleges, universities, conferences, and symposia in the United States and Canada.

Dr. Moon is the author of *Existential Art Therapy: The Canvas Mirror; Essentials of Art Therapy Education and Practice; Introduction to Art Therapy: Faith in the Product; Art and Soul: Reflections on an Artistic Psychology; The Dynamics of Art as Therapy with Adolescents;* and *Ethical Issues in Art Therapy.* He is editor of Working with Images: The Art of Art Therapists, and co-edited Word Pictures: The Poetry and Art of Art Therapists. Moon's many years of experience in clinical and educational settings, coupled with his interdisciplinary training in theology, art therapy, education, and creative arts, inspire his provocative theoretical and practical approach to the multiple roles and forms of metaphor in art therapy.

Author's Note

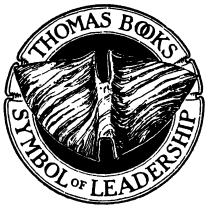
The clinical vignettes in this book are, in spirit, true. In all instances, details are fictional to ensure the confidentiality of persons with whom I have worked. The case illustrations and artworks presented are amalgamations of many specific situations. My intention is to provide realistic accounts of an art therapist's work with metaphors while also protecting the privacy of individuals.

THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN ART THERAPY

Theory, Method, and Experience

By

BRUCE L. MOON, PH.D., ATR-BC



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FOREWORD

The profession of art therapy has faced identity battles since its formal beginnings some 50 years ago. In that time, art therapists have defined and redefined theory and practice, struggled for recognition in the field of mental health, and asserted the efficacy of art as therapy, art in therapy, and art psychotherapy. The function of art in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment is debated within the profession and challenged outside the profession. Other mental health practitioners use art materials in therapy and assessment while licensure bids, managed care, and insurance companies hold sway over who gets treated and who provides the treatment.

Dr. Bruce Moon challenges the system in this text on metaphor in art therapy. Moon engages children, adolescents, and adults in art making, situating the therapeutic relationship directly in the artistic dialogue. By Moon's definition, one cannot be an art therapist or be doing art therapy unless engaged in one's own art making both in and out of session. He is passionate in his philosophy that "the therapeutic alliance is fostered when the focus is placed on the art process, [that] the therapeutic relationship emerges from the shared experience of client and therapist making art in the company of one another." In addition to asserting that the relationship forms and transforms in this shared experience, Moon believes that all artworks are metaphors of the person who created them. He argues (and I agree) that art as a tool in verbal therapy or as a means of diagnosis is not art therapy. For Moon, art therapy involves the practice of creating personal metaphor and advocating multiple meanings. He opposes the "systematic labeling and reductive interpretation of artwork" and speaks strongly to the practice of talking to images, establishing a respectful conversation with the artwork, and responding to imagery with story and poetry. Dr. Moon has a way with story and metaphor, using them to help the

reader understand the process he describes throughout the text. He dubs himself "metaphoretician" and offers guidelines in his use of metaphor and the role of artist-therapist in art therapy.

Moon's assertions are rooted in the psychology of art, art therapy theory, and to a certain degree, the imaginal work of post-Jungian archetypal psychologists. Florence Cane (1951, 1983) and Edith Kramer (1971, 1986) give us roots in studio-based approaches to art therapy, and both note the artwork being representative of its creator. Mildred Lachman-Chapin (1979) writes of her own art making with clients as central to therapeutic process. Janie Rhyne (1973, 1994) describes work with clients and groups in which she actively participates with her group members in the art process and describes the art creations as speaking about the creator. In speaking of the art group, Rhyne states: "The added dimension of genuine contact and communication is the most essential part. . . . All of our training in techniques, structures, and methodology is meaningless sham unless we evoke and develop the reality of knowing and being known" (p. 167). Michael Franklin (1990) discusses the relevance of esthetics and empathy in looking at client artwork without judgment and in responding to the client through art making. Janis Timm-Bottos (2001) offers a furthering of the studio-based approach, alive and well in community-based centers today, where artists and art therapists work side-by-side, making art, exploring issues of transition, and listening metaphorically. Catherine Moon (2002) argues for the arts-based model of art therapy practice and the poetic response to the metaphoric language of the client.

Mala Betensky (1973, 1995) defines the phenomenological method of art therapy, noting the art product as "a phenomenon with its own structure" (1995, p. xi). She describes assisting the client in learning to see what is in the artwork and using precise verbal description, such that the connection between the artwork and the client's inner experience is recognized. Vija Lusebrink (1990) reminds us of the "multileveledness" (Kreitler & Kreitler, 1972) of meaning in a work of art and of the concept of isomorphism (Arnheim, 1974) that allows us to consider the relationship between the internal state of the artist and the external manifestation or interaction in the art media. Sandra Kagin and Lusebrink (Kagin, 1969; Kagin & Lusebrink, 1978; Lusebrink, 1990) also developed a continuum of expression and variables of artistic media, giving art therapists a structure by which they can under-

stand and make decisions with regard to facilitating the client's process. The continuum and variables can be understood metaphorically and provide a theoretical basis for what Bruce Moon defines as our responsibility "to translate clients' metaphoric messages into theoretical understandings and treatment interventions that are appropriate within the therapeutic milieu."

Shaun McNiff (1992) discusses the process of talking to the artwork, establishing conversations between the creator and the art, and Rhyne suggests such interaction from within a Gestalt psychology framework. David Maclagan (2001) and Linney Wix (2000, 2003), among others, discuss the early traditions (in what is now called art therapy) of bringing art to people in different situations. Looking at the works of artists in psychiatric hospitals, convalescent wards, and educational settings (Hill, Adamson, Lydiatt, Simon, Edwards, Henzell, and Huntoon), and in concentration camps (Dicker-Brandeis), these authors define art therapy as firmly situated in a studio approach and note the importance, in fact necessity, of the therapist's experience as an artist who understands art making from the inside.

Metaphor is a difficult concept and often misunderstood. Mary Watkins (1976) states that it "takes a different eye to see. When we understand the secret that things are not only as they appear to common sensible perception, we find the need to nurture an uncommon kind of perception" (p. 12). Watkins (1981) also speaks to the necessity of the art therapist being in touch with his or her own art making, insisting that we must attend to our own images if we are to be available to the images of others. "We must write out our dreams, illustrate them, speak to their characters, paint spontaneously, seek for the images that determine our responses to others, to ourselves, our patients and our life" (p. 125). James Hillman (1977) speaks to the de-literalizing, sometimes humorous, sense of metaphor and the importance of admitting one's lostness in front of the image. In the works of Hillman (1981) and Berry (1982), metaphor is found in the precise description of the image, hearing that description metaphorically, discovering the necessity within the image, and making the image matter. If indeed as art therapists we are not about fixing, interpreting, or diagnosing the patient, but about art making and "being trusting enough to convey to another an openness to images" (Watkins, 1981, p. 121) in therapy, then we must "discover what the image wants and from that determine our therapy" (Berry, 1982, p. 78).

Bruce Moon adds to this ongoing dialogue in literature with concrete examples and dedication to the idea that therapy is in the art making of both therapist and client. He confirms the viability of the concepts of metaphor and art in therapy, offering case vignettes that clearly, and often poetically, describe a reliance on an intuitive grasp of situations and an improvisational way of working alongside clients. He discusses the reciprocal self-disclosure, the sharing of vulnerabilities, the shared journey, and the therapist and client coming to know each other in the mutual art-making process. His passion for his work is evident throughout the text, in his storytelling and his poetry, as well as in the more didactic and practical components of explaining the practice of art therapy.

JOSIE ABBENANTE
Laguna, New Mexico

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My method and approach have been deeply influenced, both overtly and subtly, by many art therapists and related theorists. Among them are Pat Allen, Florence Cane, Shaun McNiff, Catherine Moon, Janie Rhyne, Bob Schoenholtz, and Mary Watkins. The writings of James Hillman have also inspired me. Without all the above contributions, this book would not have been possible.

I am grateful to the students at Mount Mary College who tolerated my rambling discussions of metaphors as this book took shape; their critical responses and constructive suggestions were insightful. I also want to express gratitude to my colleague, Dr. Lynn Kapitan, who read and commented on early drafts of the manuscript, and Ling Olaes, an aspiring art therapist who edited the final work. Finally, special thanks go to Catherine Moon for her patient and constructive critiques of the text. Cathy's support, encouragement, and painstaking assistance were instrumental to the writing of this book.

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THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN ART THERAPY

INTRODUCTION

I believe that all artworks are metaphoric depictions of the people who create them. In art therapy relationships, stories that unfold as artists create and interact with their artworks are not one-sided or exclusive conversations. Art therapists (along with the processes and products of art making, and people who make the art) are active partners of the dialogues. To illustrate the interaction, I share stories from the art therapy studio that describe an approach to art therapy focused on the central role of clients' metaphoric creations and art therapists' metaphoric responses.

The word metaphor is derived from the Greek *meta,* meaning above or beyond, and *phorein,* meaning to carry from one place to another (Kopp, R. R., 1995); the latter is the same root as *amphora,* an ancient Greek vessel for carrying and storing precious liquids. Metaphors in language are also carriers: They hold information that hides meaning in symbolic form. My book explores the functions, qualities, and characteristics of metaphors in art therapy, and examines methods of relating with and responding to metaphoric artworks and the artists who create them. I describe encounters with people from psychiatric hospitals and my private practice who literally and metaphorically wrestled with emotional problems and existential issues, and then discuss the role metaphors played in their therapeutic journeys.

Pragmatic and poetic, this book is a tribute to the complexities and mysteries of working with people who are suffering and striving to tell their stories through expressive artistic processes. Its roots lay deep in encounters with children, adolescents, and adults who have come to me for help over the last three decades. It is grounded in my interactions with graduate art therapy students and in my own encounters with important themes in life. I make no effort to affix particular meanings to the metaphors discussed in the clinical vignettes, but I do

suggest ways to listen and respond to metaphoric communications.

Nearly every art therapist I know believes in the power of metaphoric imagery, and capacity of the creative process to unlock and deepen communication. Metaphoric imagery can provide clients and therapists psychological insights that go beyond linear rationality. However, there are significant differences in how art therapists behave toward and interact with the artworks people create.

Art therapists' theoretical and philosophical differences are evidenced in how they respond and relate to artworks, and the people who create them. For example, some art therapists emphasize the roles that art making and imagery play in facilitating verbal interaction in therapy. These art therapists believe that artworks and images are tools that assist in verbal psychotherapy. Other art therapists focus on the role of images as an indicator of dysfunction. These art therapists view artworks and images as projective aids in diagnosis. Still others regard art making as a practice of creating personal metaphors. From this perspective, art therapists act as beholders of, guides to, or creative assistants in the unfolding process, but the most important therapeutic agents are still the metaphors and clients who give the metaphors tangible form. Note that no single perspective is consistently superior; thus, many art therapists integrate a variety of approaches in their work, based on clients' unique needs.

In the methodology described in this book, art therapists do not necessarily seek to understand or interpret one single meaning of a client's artwork, but rather become advocates for a multitude of meanings. Although artworks are often mysterious and perplexing, they hold multiple truths that are open to many valid interpretations. As opposed to with systematic labeling or reductive interpretation of metaphoric messages, I approach clients' artworks with a sense of awe and wonder, and try to establish a respectful conversation with them that honors many possible meanings. In response to clients' metaphors, I often create stories or poems about the images, and encourage clients to do the same.

In art therapy sessions, I engage in dialogues with clients and their artworks in an effort to invite both to share stories. I often encounter art pieces that are disturbing, puzzling, and hard to grasp. Still, in nearly every circumstance, when I stay patient and keep an open mind, artworks inevitably uncover important meanings that are relevant to their creators. This book describes how to look at, listen to, and

respond to the metaphors that artworks divulge.

"I am going to tell you a story." For as long as I can remember, these words have filled me with eagerness and excitement. As a child, the words meant that my mother was going to make some special time to read me a book. In elementary school, when the teacher announced story time, I celebrated the precious break from math and geography, which I perceived as inflexible and dull. Story time would set my imagination free. In church, whenever the minister said, "Let me tell you a story," I was lured from my daydreams into the heart of the homily. It didn't matter what the story was about, or even how poignant, funny, or profound it was. There was always something immediate that captured my imagination and caused me to almost forget to breathe until the story ended.

Today, stories continue to capture my imagination. Some of my favorite stories are parables, a word derived from the Greek *para-bole,* meaning juxtaposition for the sake of comparison (Jones, 1969). In its simplest form, the parable conveys a single message by juxtaposing an abstract demand, and a vivid story or situation. Parables have both literal and figurative meanings, which listeners typically interpret themselves.

As an art therapist, I regard clients' metaphoric artworks as being akin to parables. There is a juxtaposition of the physical objects people create and the life experiences they bring to the moment of creation. My therapeutic goal is to help people explore different interpretations of their art so they themselves can decide what it means. To do this, I avoid making overt my preferred interpretations of their artworks. If I assign a particular meaning to a client's creation, I undermine the client's own ability to discover meaning. On the other hand, when the meaning of a client's art piece remains implicit, the interpretive work is left for the client. For art therapists, the ability to wait for clients to make their own interpretations invites a deeper therapeutic relationship.

Clients often interpret their works different from how I would. Sometimes this is difficult for me because I want my clients to understand my point and learn from my experiences. But I recognize that in poking around for themselves in metaphors, clients often come up with understandings that are truer, deeper, and more personally significant than anything I could have said. What people realize on their own from metaphors becomes truths they can harvest for themselves–

not merely my truth, which they can passively accept or actively reject.

S. B. Kopp (1976) suggests three basic ways to know: through rational thought, empirical observation, and metaphor. "We can know things *rationally,* by thinking about them. If they seem logically consistent within themselves and with what else we know, we accept them as being true" (p. 21); this way of knowing is perhaps the most familiar mode. Another way of knowing is through empirical observation. "In this case we depend upon our senses, truth being a matter of perceiving correctly" (p. 21). A third way of knowing is through metaphor:

> In this mode we do not depend primarily on thinking logically nor on checking out our perceptions. Understanding the world metaphorically means we depend on an intuitive grasp of situations, in which we are open to the symbolic dimensions of experience. (p. 21)

What S. B. Kopp describes as metaphorical knowing is related to Allen's (1995) idea that art is a way of knowing. Allen suggests that imagination is a resource through which one can perceive life's possibilities and options. "Art making is a way to explore our imagination and to begin to allow it to be more flexible, to learn how to see more options" (p. 4). When people explore the world metaphorically through art making, they gradually learn to rely on their intuitive understandings of situations and experiences, and open themselves to multiple meanings that coexist.

In the following chapters, I share vignettes to illustrate different roles metaphors play in art therapy and describe ways that art therapists can creatively interact with clients and their artworks. Ultimately, this book is an expression of faith in the central role of metaphoric art making and metaphoric responses to artworks created in art therapy contexts. I trust in the inherent healing power of art and metaphoric understandings, and I hope this work affirms this same faith in other art therapists. The ideas presented in this text call for commitment to methods that immerse art therapists and clients in metaphors, mysteries, and the unpredictable processes of artistic creation.

BRUCE L. MOON
Mundelein, IL. 2007

Chapter I

METAPHOR AND INDIRECT COMMUNICATION IN THERAPY

The Pilot Who Would Be a Teacher[1]

Once upon a time, not all that long ago, in a land untouched by modernity, unspoiled by television, undamaged by fossil fuel emissions, and unharmed by the ravages of global corporations, the inhabitants of a certain village awoke to find that during the night, a large silver bird had come to rest in the clearing. The leader of the tribe sent word to all the huts, and soon after sunrise, the residents of the village gathered at the edge of the meadow to watch (what they presumed to be) God sleeping.

When the airplane pilot roused from her slumber, she was taken aback as she peered out the cockpit window at row upon row of men, women, and children staring reverently at her machine.

The pilot cautiously opened the side hatch and walked out on a wing. The members of the tribe immediately fell to the ground, quivering and praying that the woman who emerged from the side of God would not harm them. The pilot was amused. She was, after all, a well-educated woman, and not particularly religious at that. She thought, "How quaint, but how foolish. I will teach these sadly uninformed people all about airplanes."[1]

The pilot raised her hands and beckoned the people. Hesitantly the villagers arose and approached her. When all had come closer, the pilot turned with a flourish and re-entered her craft. She engaged the engine, and with a dramatic roar, the propellers spun and lights flashed.

When she looked out the window, the pilot was irritated to see all the people laying face down in the dirt, covering their heads in supplication. She turned off the engine and went back out onto the wing, trying desperately to think of some way to

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1. This story appears in a slightly altered form in *Existential art therapy: The canvas mirror* by B. L. Moon, 1990 and 1995.

teach them about the technology of airplanes. She began to speak, but at a silent signal from their leader, all the villagers raised their spears and threw. The pilot was killed instantly.

The village residents erected a shrine on that very spot. Each year, on the anniversary of the pilot's death, they offer sacrifices to the silver bird in hopes that God will never again roar at them. So far this sacrificial ritual seems to have worked.

The pilot's response to the villagers' fears and lack of knowledge was to attempt to teach them, or at least tell them, the truth about airplanes. Alas, people seldom welcome truths they are not prepared to handle. Contrary to the saying, truth often does not set people free, and sadly, it does not necessarily change attitudes, beliefs, or biases. In this story, the modern, well-educated pilot didn't realize the awesome power of the metaphor she was. She also was operating from the mindset of a colonizer, not recognizing that her worldviews differed from those of the villagers. She assumed her perspective was the right one–the only one, in fact. She neglected to consider how the cultural beliefs and traditions of the villagers might impact their perspectives and misunderstandings. Failure to understand the power of metaphor, coupled with cultural imperialism, was a deadly combination for the pilot.

Nomenclature

The following are brief explanations of words and phrases I developed that are important to concepts presented in this text:

- Therapeutic metaphor–a story, parable, artwork, sound, movement, or other form of metaphoric image that is analogous to a situation in the client's life. When therapists use this indirect communication of a metaphor, clients may respond more openly to conversations that could have been met with more defensiveness. For example, a therapist working with a client with unhealthy defensive behavior might call attention to positive and negative consequences of it by describing a fieldstone wall around a garden that protects vegetables from animal predators and yet constricts sunlight needed for growth.
- Visual (image) metaphor–an artwork or artistic process through which one thing (the artist) is described in terms of another (the

image). In the broadest sense, all artworks are overt or covert descriptions of the artists who create them.
- Aural metaphor–an acoustic phenomenon in which one thing (the subject) is described in terms of another (the sound).
- Kinetic metaphor–a physical movement or gesture in which one thing (the subject) is described in terms of another (the action).
- Milieu metaphor–a physical setting that describes one thing (the subject) in terms of another (the environment).
- Metaphoretician–a term I devised (Moon, B. L., 1990, 1995) to describe one who skillfully and spontaneously uses metaphors to uncover and convey truths. A metaphoretician is inclined to speculative contemplation and action in response to metaphors.
- Metaverbal–a term I devised (Moon, B. L., 1990, 1995) to describe art therapy as a treatment modality that transcends words.

Advantages of Metaphors in Psychotherapy

Metaphors have been vital to communication among humans throughout history. From time immemorial, stories, parables, proverbs, fables, and fairy tales have been used to convey essential truths about the human condition. Found in the epic tale *Gilgamesh* and parables of Jesus, as well as contemporary novels, metaphors carry potent messages that help people create and discover meaning in their lives.

It is easy to understand why verbal are incorporated in psychotherapy. But before discussing the benefits of metaphors in art therapy, I explore how metaphors support traditional psychotherapy. Generally speaking in this section, I refer to metaphors generated by psychotherapists and describe advantages to conveying messages metaphorically rather than through more direct, literal, or confrontational means.

First, well-constructed metaphoric stories are interesting. Stories have the capacity to capture the listener's imagination and inspire new considerations of situations in unique ways. A second advantage is that metaphors present their messages indirectly, disguised by the images of the story. This indirect route allows for a subtler, less confrontational delivery of messages: The listener can simply respond to surface meanings of the story if they are implicit, or if deeper meanings are too

threatening or discomforting. Third, metaphoric stories are effective because listeners can interpret stories their own ways, determining the points of metaphors themselves.

A fourth advantage is that metaphoric communication in psychotherapy makes clients responsible for the personal changes that are the goal of therapy because clients decide what metaphors mean. When therapists present their messages directly, as in the form of specific advice, clients may follow the advice. If this advice leads to unsatisfactory results, clients may blame therapists; conversely, if therapists' advice leads to positive outcomes, clients may attribute success to therapists rather than to their own hard work.

A fifth advantage of metaphoric communication is that it can be enjoyable for both clients and therapists. Communicating in this way may conjure up memories of other occurrences of storytelling that have pleasant associations for both clients and therapists. Barker (1985) suggests that telling stories often strengthens therapeutic relationships.

In summary, verbal metaphors in therapy can engage, inspire, and influence clients. Metaphors present new ways of perceiving a situation or experience, and enable the therapist to avoid being overly confrontational or prescriptive. Metaphoric stories are often ambiguous and indirect, holding potential for multiple interpretations. By virtue of these attributes, metaphors may help therapists develop positive therapeutic alliances by avoiding negative reactions to more overt confrontations.

Advantages of Metaphors in Art Therapy

Art therapy is a metaverbal approach to therapy. True, verbal metaphors are frequently used by art therapists; but it is important to understand that visual images (e.g., drawings, paintings, and sculptures) are also metaphoric, and that there are techniques that art therapists can use to respond to clients' metaphoric images. I consider all artworks created in the context of art therapy to be metaphoric of their creator; thus, the metaphors that receive the most attention in this text are those that emerge through the client's art-making process. There are many advantages to using visual, aural, kinetic, and milieu metaphors in art therapy, including:

1. Visual artworks are, by nature, stimulating. They have the capacity to liberate the imaginations of the creator and viewer alike, and may encourage insights that are inaccessible through linear discourse alone.
2. Artistic metaphors are indirect expressions and, therefore, less confrontational and psychologically threatening than direct statements. An artwork is an externalized object once removed from the artist who created it; this distance, if maintained by the therapist's response to it, establishes an element of safety for the client. Consider the difference between asking a client to "explain why you are defensive" and asking the same client to "draw walls." The content of the client's expressions might be similar in both instances, but the affective experience could be markedly different. The act of drawing a wall can be a safer, less anxiety-provoking way to deal with personal defenses. This quality of safety depends upon both the art therapist's ability to keep within the structure of the metaphor and the client's capacity to trust the art-making process.
3. When clients create an art piece, they gain access to the many layers of meaning contained in the metaphor at both conscious and unconscious levels. Even when a drawing appears to be a straightforward or concrete expression of an idea, there may be processes the artist is consciously unaware of that are important. I observed an example of this when a client drew a picture of his favorite fairytale, *Jack and the Beanstalk*. At one level, the drawing was a simple depiction of Jack stealing the giant's precious golden egg. After exploring different meanings for the drawing, the client realized that at a deeper level, the drawing portrayed his lifelong struggle for recognition and acceptance from his aloof and overbearing father.
4. Artistic metaphors provide opportunities for clients to reframe their experiences by looking at situations from new perspectives and making them concrete in visual images. One client drew herself as a small mouse about to be stepped on by a large woman. The client's initial interpretation of the drawing was related to feelings she had about her older sister who, she said, "always put me down." Clearly, the client identified with the position of the mouse in the drawing. While those feelings were valid, the art therapist encouraged her to imagine herself in the position of the

woman. By doing this, the client was, for the first time, able to get in touch with the irrational fear the woman felt toward the tiny mouse. Reframing allowed the client to feel empathy for her sister, and that opened new channels of communication between them that eventually led to a more fulfilling relationship.

5. Artworks provide a "third member" in therapeutic relationships. In art therapy, the client, art therapist, and artwork are equal partners. The client and art therapist can each create an artwork to express thoughts and feelings that otherwise might be regarded as unacceptable or difficult to articulate in words. I have seen this dynamic many times in encounters with children. Several years ago, I worked with a little girl whose mother was struggling with alcoholism. The girl was shy and soft-spoken, and whenever she was asked directly about her relationship with her mother, she always responded that everything was fine. One day, she drew a picture of a little boy and woman throwing stones at each other. As she looked at the picture, she said, "The little boy is very angry and hurt, and that is why he is throwing stones at his mommy."
6. The activities of making and sharing visual metaphors promote rapport between the art therapist and client. When an art therapist creates art alongside the client, the act of working together encourages a relationship that goes deeper than words. Likewise, when an art therapist observes the client making art, a sense of shared experience may foster relationship formation. Sharing stories connected with artworks can be pleasurable. Information is exchanged between the client and art therapist that is often perceived as non-threatening and enjoyable.
7. When art therapists communicate with clients through their own visual metaphors, they create opportunities to support, inform, engage, offer interpretations, provoke thought, and gently confront clients in safe, psychologically non-threatening ways.

Metaphor: Therapeutic Sense or Nonsense

Despite the advantages of using metaphors in both verbal and art therapy, metaphoric communication has its detractors. Some believe the indirect nature of metaphors is not conducive to efficient, time-limited therapy. The benefits of metaphoric openness and potential for multiple interpretations are also debatable. Therapists who prefer a