Aromatherapy Oils: Commodities, Materials, Essences

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the essential oils that are the central tools of aromatherapy and uses them as a case study for different approaches to material culture. It considers the conceptual and political implications of thinking of essential oils as, in turn, commodities, materials and essences. I argue that both cultural studies and aromatherapy have something to learn from each other. Classic materialist approaches might do well to focus more attention on the material properties and effects of things. Aromatherapy, on the other hand, could benefit from the enriched political understanding associated with classic materialist critique. New materialist strains of cultural studies may also find the vibrancy of matter that underpins many CAM/New Age practices worthy of examination.

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Essential oils are extracted from aromatic plants that produce fragrant essences located in tiny secretory cells in various parts of the plant. These natural essences can be found in flowers, leaves, twigs, berries, seeds, roots, peel, resin, bark or wood. Tea Tree for example comes from leaves and twigs, Lavender from flowers, Lemon from peel and Sandalwood from wood. Distillation: The aromatic plant material is heated via water and/or steam until a vapour is formed. The vapour is then condensed back into a liquid which contains the active chemicals from the plant. Essential oils are not just used for aromatherapy. They can also be used in fragrancing, cosmeceutical, food and drink, and other industries. Academic journal article Cultural Studies Review. Aromatherapy Oils: Commodities, Materials, Essences. By Barcan, Ruth. Read preview. Academic journal article Cultural Studies Review. Aromatherapy Oils: Commodities, Materials, Essences. By Barcan, Ruth. Read preview. Article excerpt. Aromatherapy is a modern form of plant medicine in which highly concentrated plant extracts known as essential oils are used, singly or in blends, as therapeutic agents. They are commonly used via inhalation (in an oil burner or vaporiser), but may also be used topically (for example dispersed in a carrier oil, or in a bath) and, more rarely, ingested. Aromatherapy is, then, more reliant on physical things to do its therapeutic work than many other complementary/alternative (CAM) therapies. You searched for: aromatherapy oils! Etsy is the home to thousands of handmade, vintage, and one-of-a-kind products and gifts related to your search. No matter what you're looking for or where you are in the world, our global marketplace of sellers can help you find unique and affordable options. Let's get started! Well you're in luck, because here they come. There are 81958 aromatherapy oils for sale on Etsy, and they cost $14.62 on average. The most common aromatherapy oils material is metal. The most popular color? You guessed it: black.