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ASSIGNMENT THREE
THE USE OF METAPHOR IN COUNSELLING AND QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH INTERVIEWS.

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*“Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing”.*

William Shakespeare. Macbeth Act 5, scene 5.

INTRODUCTION

The substitution of meaning of one thing for another is a concept that has been used for millennia, indeed we have our metaphor for ‘first-ness’ in the term ‘Big-Bang’. The earliest reference to metaphor is found in the first discovered written words – the historic and epic tale of King Gilgamesh in 2700 B.C. Described in Kovacs (1989) as a Babylonian legend about the King of Uruk, Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu. When Enkidu suddenly sickened and died, Gilgamesh became obsessed by a fear of death. His ancestor Ut-napishtim (who with his wife had been the only survivor of a great flood) told him of a plant that gave eternal life. After obtaining the plant, however, Gilgamesh left it unguarded and a serpent carried it off. He then turned to the ghost of Enkidu for consoling knowledge of the afterlife, only to be told by his friend that a gloomy future awaited the dead. This epic myth is a metaphorical tale, mirroring our deepest sense of ourselves in relation to existence. It uses a poetical metaphor to describe the

death of Gilgamesh as that of a *sleep that steals upon him like a soft mist that settles on his eyelids*.

The ancient Greek poets utilised the visual aspect of metaphor in classic poems that were often performed on stage as tragedies. In the epic poem and play *The Odyssey*, Homer used numerous metaphors to explain concepts that the audience may not have been able to comprehend, by relating it to something that they have already seen. An example is cited in Jones & Rieu (2003, p.58), when Odysseus had just slain his suitors Homer compares the dead suitors to “*a mound of dead fish, conjuring up the image of fish twitching and flopping*”. He often refers to the dawn as being “*rosy fingered*” or the Greek army as a “*silent mountain mist*”.

Metaphor has saturated our language throughout history, from Medieval Allegories, Shakespeare, and Renaissance Poets. Modern literature, poetry and music are flooded with metaphors. We continue to express ourselves, reason and think with metaphors. For example, the “*Worldwide Web*” with its “*links*”, “*pop-ups*”, and “*drop-down*” menus. It appears the more complex our world becomes; the more we embody our ideas and concepts in metaphors.

To place this paper in context I would firstly explain that as a counsellor and a hypnotherapist in private practice I often see clients who are referred for a multitude of issues (as a hypnotherapist I will interchangeably use the terms subconscious and unconscious as I believe that both terms share the same meaning). I believe that metaphor is the bridge that joins the fields of counselling and hypnotherapy. My intuition guides me to believe that as a practicing therapist that, the utilisation of metaphor engages the *creative* part of the mind, the subconscious mind. I would also venture to add that an altered state of consciousness can be accessed through the utilisation of metaphor. As a researcher I am also interested in how metaphor can be used in creative interviews to ‘mine’ the subconscious to obtain rich data that is normally out of our conscious awareness.

The concept of our lack of awareness of the richness and power of metaphor is not new. Back in the 1930’s Richards (1936, p.116) commented “Our skill with metaphor, with thought, is one thing – prodigious and inexplicable; our reflective awareness of that skill is quite another thing-very incomplete, distorted, fallacious, oversimplifying”. Despite many subsequent decades of research into the nature of mind, research on metaphor remains minimal.

I am mindful that there are positive and negative aspects in following a tacit understanding (Polyani 1962), even if it is as a result of many years of empirical experience. The epistemological understanding of the phenomena from this practical 'hands on' base perspective can be seen as a positive. However, as Ioannidis (2006) suggests, research is often biased, in that the idea that a concept is true before doing the study can influence the design and subsequently skew the findings to fit with your preconceptions.

In summary, my proposal as I commence this paper, is that metaphors engaged with in certain ways promote a rich, poetic, creative and 'visual' way of describing the world. I am also venturing further to suggest that in the appropriate environment, that can be created in the therapy room or a qualitative research interview, the utilisation of metaphors can create an 'altered state' (Ludwig 1966) which enables individuals to access their subconscious thoughts and processes.

The use of metaphor can have negative aspects, as Lord Palmerston the 19th Century British Prime Minister quotes "Half the wrong conclusions that mankind arrive are reached by the abuse of metaphors" (Hurd, 2010, p.76). I am also aware, that some people don't 'get' metaphor. They can be 'fluffy' and be heavily influenced by culture. Those on the Autistic Spectrum for example have difficulty with the illogical nature of metaphors. Rundblad & Annaz (2010) found that one of the most noticeable problems in autism involves the social use of language such as metaphor.

The aim of this paper is to explore the use of metaphors in counselling and research interviews and start a debate into how they can promote altered states and therefore help subject's access rich subjective data.

This paper will, I hope, lay a foundation for further research into this phenomenon.

*“How many roads must a man walk down,
before you call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove fly,
before she sleeps in the sand?
And how many times must a cannon ball fly,
before they're forever banned?”*

*The answer my friend is blowing in the wind,
the answer is blowing in the wind.”*

Bob Dylan – Blowing in the Wind

METAPHOR – A DEFINITION

In the following chapter I attempt to define and contextualise the term metaphor, derived from the Greek word *metapherein*, to transfer. Metaphor is defined in Costello (1991, p.52) as the “application of a word or phrase to an object or concept it does not literally denote, suggesting comparison to that object or concept”.

Metaphors are a global phenomenon and as Rosenblatt (1994, p. 12) suggests they give “different meanings to experiences and they provide different linguistic tools for characterising things”. They saturate our language, although not all metaphors are linguistic, they can also be musical, ritual, pictorial or gestural.

Metaphor is also often confused with other words, such as metonymy, allegory, simile and concept. Metonymy, a figure of speech, occurs when the name of one thing is used in place of the name of another with which is associated. For example the substitution of “crown” for “royalty” or the statement “Whitehall prepares for a hung parliament” in that Whitehall the physical place has been used to represent the Civil Service. The difference is highlighted in Knowles & Moon (2006, p.76) “Metonymy and metaphor also have fundamentally different functions. Metonymy is about referring: a method of naming or identifying something by mentioning something else which is a component part or symbolically linked. In contrast, metaphor is about understanding and interpretation: it is a means to understand or explain one phenomenon by describing it in terms of another.” Metonymy, like metaphor, facilitates communication and cognition although both are subject to potential conceptual confusion.

A simile is also a figure of speech by which one thing, action, or relationship is likened to something different. The words “as” or “like” are used to make the comparison explicit. Examples of similes include “she smiled like a Cheshire cat” or “life is like an onion”. Davidson (1979, p.13) points to the difference; “The simile says there is a likeness and leaves it to us to figure out some common feature or features; the metaphor does not explicitly assert a likeness, but if we accept it as a metaphor, we are again led to seek common features (not necessarily the same features the associated simile suggests . . .).” Rosenblatt (1994) suggested that similes do not seem to be accepted as a form of theoretical language, perhaps because of their inherent ambiguity.

A concept is a mental notion or idea founded on generalisation from particulars. A concept may or may not be metaphorical. Lakoff & Johnson (2003) promote the idea that our concepts structure what we perceive, how we relate to others and get around in the world. They go on to suggest that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical and that conceptual metaphor form a significant part of our values and belief system. For example, they quote the concept of argument and the “conceptual metaphor *argument is war*” (p.104). This metaphor is reflected in everyday language, for example “his criticisms were *right on target*...I *demolished* his argument...he *shot down* all of my arguments”, Lakoff & Johnson (2003, p.104). In most modern cultures we also win or lose arguments, we gain or lose ground or attack and defend – this conceptual metaphor structures the actions we perform in arguing. Conceptual metaphor structures colour the way we see the world.

Allegory is a form of extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative, are equated with the meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas as charity, greed, or envy. Therefore an allegory is a story with two meanings, a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning.

Boys-Stones (2003, p.2) found that “when there have been more metaphors in a continuous stream another kind of speech occurs, the Greeks called this allegory”. Literary examples would include Orwell’s *Animal Farm* or C.S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia* which included allegorical elements of good and evil and Christian themes and equivalences.

Metaphors are also embedded in culture. The cultural influence on metaphors is highlighted in the influential work of Lakoff & Johnson (2003, p.134). They argue that different cultures give rise to different metaphors due in part to the fact that they are associated to different experiences and in part that they provide different linguistic tools to characterize things. As discussed above they go further to suggest that cultures produce conceptual metaphors that form our way of seeing the world. Their model links with my proposal that the use of metaphor unlocks subconscious process in that Lakoff & Johnson believe that once people think in terms of metaphor then this entails an “automatic association of a concept and resultant creative leaps are likely”. Metaphors engage creative thinking and also are heavily involved in religion and religious texts.

Throughout history it is clear that metaphors are ubiquitous in religious texts. Fran Ferder is a Franciscan sister, clinical psychologist, university professor, and author. In Ferder (2010) she suggests that typologically we can relate to the central stories of the Bible involving annunciation, temptation, agony and transfiguration etc. because they are metaphorical. Borg (2001) promotes a metaphorical reading of the bible to step away from the literal, historical and factual meanings of the text to move beyond to the question “what does this story mean as a story” (p. 37). Borg (2001, p.41) emphasises that reading through a lens of metaphor is *seeing* not believing, “the point is not to believe in metaphor, but to see in the light of it ...metaphors can be profoundly true, even though they are not literally true. Metaphor is poetry plus, not factuality minus. That is, metaphor is not less than fact but more”. He cites many biblical examples, including the story of the exodus as metaphorical narrative of the divine/human relationship depicting both the human predicament and the means of deliverance.

Rabbi David Nelson in Nelson (2006, p.20) reinforces the influence of metaphor in religion – “The value of metaphor in human life in general, and religion in particular, can hardly be over estimated. In our search for meaning in an overwhelming world, we use this sort of thought process to bring within our grasp that which would otherwise remain unbearably large and incomprehensible.” Metaphor, according to Nelson is a language that enables us to make sense of otherwise incomprehensible phenomena, which in a spiritual dimension makes sense, but also contributes to the possibility that the use of metaphor provides a subconscious awareness of what is beyond conscious understanding.

On reflection I find Borg’s suggestion of the power of metaphor in religious texts fascinating. As a hypnotherapist I am aware that the use of prayer, meditation and metaphor can create ‘suggestible altered states’. Although tempting, the possibility that their use could have influenced the minds of millions of followers is too big an issue to follow in this paper, but could well be the subject of further research?

In summary, metaphor reflects our basic human desire to see the resemblance or equivalence in our worlds. Metaphors have a powerful dreamlike quality that link conscious and sub-conscious processes (Ortony, 1993). They are remarkable in their *inexpressibility, vividness and compactness*. Metaphors embody and define the intangible and abstract, although this process limits the perceptions to those which make sense within the possible illogic of metaphors.

We are born princes and the civilising process makes us frogs

Eric Berne

THERAPEUTIC USE OF METAPHOR

In this chapter I will refer to the historical context of the use of metaphor in therapy, and develop the theme to its current utilisation.

The origins of the use of metaphor in therapy and healing go back many centuries, if not millennia. For example, the use of the 'mountain meditation' in Buddhist meditation, where the suggestion that you are "strong and mountain-like whilst the world passes you by" has been used by practitioners for 2500 years and has recently been adopted by Mindfulness therapists (Kabat-Zinn, 1996). Moodley & West (2005) allude to ancient techniques of drumming, chanting and holotropic breath work to elicit a state of absorption and altered states of consciousness engaged by Shaman and healers, which are now being used by Transpersonal Psychologists.

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) the founder of psychoanalysis saw metaphor as a verbal elaboration and symptom of the elemental

psychological process of condensation. Nash (1962, p.25) found that “Freud not only illustrated by metaphor, he also conceived in metaphor”. Freud’s model of the human mind is itself a metaphor. There are no actual parts of the brain which could be labelled the “super-ego”, “ego” or “id”. Metaphor in Freud's work is not mere literary decoration it is a necessary part of his formulation and exposition of his scientific theories. Kvale (1996) suggests that Psychoanalysis is awash with metaphors, often taken from legends and myths such Oedipus and Electra.

Carl Jung a follower of Freud also proposed a metaphoric iceberg model of the mind. Like Freud, Jung posited the existence of a conscious and an unconscious mind. The part of the iceberg that is above the surface of the water is seen as the conscious mind where we think and communicate. Below the level of the conscious mind, and the bulk of the ice berg, is what Freud would call the unconscious, and what Jung called the ‘personal unconscious’. Here we will find feelings, urges and other information that is difficult to bring to consciousness. Jung believed that symbols (or metaphors) are subjective and dwell in the personal unconscious. He explains further in Jung (1964, p.8) “What we call a symbol (metaphor) is a term, a name, or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown or hidden from us.” Whilst we may not be able to fully explain the meaning, we can still *know* the significance for us, and the deeper the symbol or metaphor is explored the higher the personal significance. Jung (1964) also noted certain dream symbols that possess the same universal meaning for all. He terms this phenomenon the ‘collective unconscious’. While dreams are personal, your personal experiences often touch on universal themes and symbols. Jung’s universal metaphors revealed through dreams are counter to Lakoff & Johnson’s cultural view of metaphor. Freud and Jung’s relationship with metaphors and symbols initiated a constant theme of the use of metaphor to explain therapeutic theory. Roger’s metaphor of likening human growth towards self actualisation to the growth of potatoes in a dark cellar and Berne’s symbols for Parent, Adult and Child in his Transactional Analysis model is clear examples of the use of metaphor.

Moving forward to refer to recently developed models which incorporate the use of metaphors in their client work. For example, the Human Givens practitioners believe that human life could barely exist, if exist at all, without metaphor and stories (Williams, 2010). They understand that they are at the very heart of everything that makes us human. The capacity for stories is

built into our very biology and they have the power to inspire, motivate and heal. Williams (2010) demonstrates the very real effects of stories on our mental health and development, showing how they can highlight the strength and resilience of the human spirit. Human Givens use metaphors and story structures extensively (but not exclusively) as a problem solving therapeutic method.

Metaphor work is often used in relationship counselling. Bergin (1998) reports the effective use of cartoons as a metaphor for couples to illustrate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences that emerge in the counselling process.

There is significant literature on the systematic use of metaphor in psychotherapy. Lankton and Lankton (1983) provide a thorough approach and Barker (1985) provides an insight through client case studies. However, only one model utilises metaphor at its core. That model was originated by the late David Grove. Grove's ideas were published as *Resolving Traumatic Memories: Metaphors and Symbols in Psychotherapy* (1989). The book was based on Grove's client work and was edited by Dr Basil Panzer. A paper on the use of metaphors in therapy would lack substance without a detailed look at the work of David Grove.

One therapist the late New Zealand counselling psychologist David Grove pioneered the use of metaphor in counselling and psychotherapy in the 1980's, particularly for working with clients who have suffered a trauma. He found that his clients often used personal metaphors to describe their painful emotional states and traumatic memories. He also found that when the metaphors were examined they became idiosyncratic with meaning that only applied to his client. He also discovered that the metaphors had form and structure that had a consistent internal logic. Sullivan & Rees (2008, p.13) comment on Grove's work "Rather than people *having* metaphors, it's as if they *were* their metaphors. And when these changed, they did too." This is a powerful assertion, and if true, could have significant impact on the therapeutic process, which after all is about *change*. On reflection I wonder why after thirty years why is there very little research and literature on the use of metaphor in therapy, (only three books have been published on Grove's work)?

Grove found that clients have a number of ways of describing their experiences and inner realities. They can be expressed as memories, metaphors, symbols and semantics. In Grove & Panzer (1989) he explains that the therapist should be aware of the

client's predominant language. Each of the four languages is explored further:-

Memories. A memory is a recall of any event of the past. Grove suggests that the client using *memory language* will not only relate to particular events that have occurred (real or imagined) they may also express anticipatory memories about the future. An example is provided in Grove & Panzer (1989, p.4) "when a husband is talking about his relationship with his wife and he focuses on "If only I had not hit her then, we would not be having this difficulty now", the husband is identifying this past event as the main cause that is affecting him now". The client in this mode will relate current issues in terms of past events.

Symbols. Grove refers to symbols as internal and idiosyncratic rather than Jungian universal symbols. These symbols are embodied within the client. Again in Grove & Panzer (1989, p.4) I find an example with the same client who faces a relationship problem with his wife – "I'm so upset with the fact that I hit my wife and my relationship now, it is so *tensed* it is like every time we meet and talk it's like I have got this *knot* in my stomach." Clients expressing in this mode relate predominantly to their physiology, although "it's like a knot" is also a metaphor.

Metaphors. Grove defines metaphors in this context as individually derived, based on the client's own experience and external to their body. Remaining with the husband client a further example is provide in Grove & Panzer (1984, p.5) "Ever since it happened we have no communication. It's like there is a *wall between us*. Every time I to talk to my wife it's like trying to *talk through a brick wall*. The *wall* is the metaphor." Here the language is dense in metaphor. The issue is not feelings, memories or what has happened. He is concerned with the *wall* between them. According to Grove working on the *wall* will promote therapeutic change.

Semantics. The importance in this mode is the private definition of the words. The words carry the meaning for the client in this way of expressing. For example the husband might say "Well, she really deserved what I did to her, she is so immature. If she was more mature then we would not have a problem. The problem is really in the communication. It does not really have anything to do with what I did, but we are not communicating and I just think it is her immaturity that does it" (Groves & Panzer, 1984, p.5). Grove admits that he finds this kind of client 'tricky' in that the other modes are delivered with meaning. Whereas with semantics it is the words and not the meaning that have the most effect.

This kind of client appears to be 'in the head' and perhaps not the kind of client that would grasp the concept of metaphor or symbols. A client perhaps more suited to a cognitive approach?

When using a predominantly metaphoric language it is the *idea* of the metaphor and its *visualisation* (the wall) that is important. When referring to a metaphoric symbol, it is not the words that are important; it is the feelings (*knot in stomach*). In the language of memories it is the memory itself again rather than the words that are significant.

Groves & Panzer (1989) ascertain that when a client internally accesses their 'matrix of experience' through the language of metaphors, symbols and memories and the therapist utilises 'Clean Language' the client will enter into an alpha state (an altered state or conversational trance state.) This is a fascinating concept and supports my empirical evidence. Unfortunately, no Research Findings are quoted to support this statement, although David Grove produced a number of videos of his client work (see Grove 1991a/b & 1992) where it is clear that his clients expressing in metaphorical language and enter an alpha (trance) state.

It is important to consider Clean Language (which is at the heart of Grove's model) and altered states (which occur both in hypnosis and counselling/ psychotherapy). Recent examples of which include; Deep Emotional Processing therapy (Berger, 2000) and Reichian therapy (see West 1994), psychotherapies which help clients resolve issues in an altered state by following feelings and embodied experiences.

Sullivan & Rees (2008, p.14) highlight the importance of the link between the use of clean language and metaphor in therapy – "As a complete approach, Clean Language can be combined with the metaphors a person uses, creating a bridge between their conscious and unconscious minds. This can become a profound personal exploration: a route to deeper understanding of themselves, and to resolution and healing". The therapist using clean language and metaphor can get to a new level of understanding. Clean language in itself is not a way of understanding metaphors, it allows the client to dwell in their experience and reveal new insights for themselves. It is not the universal answer, and is inappropriate to use in certain (more cognitive) therapies and for clients who don't easily use metaphor, symbols or memory. Its use could easily be extended to other spheres, such as education, research and commerce. In the next section I wish to explore clean language in more detail.

Many models of psychotherapy and counselling have paid different degrees of attention to the words used by therapists. The person-centred approach developed by Carl Rogers promoted a non-directive engagement with clients. Rogers believed that humans have an innate tendency to find their own fulfilment. In Rogers (1980, p.117) he stated that "Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behaviour; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided". In this paper I do not wish to dwell on Roger's Core Conditions, suffice to say that his non-directive approach; staying with the client's story through mirroring, pacing, paraphrasing and summarising are akin to Grove's model of clean language. To use a metaphor – Roger's Person Centred model was the spring from which the river of Clean Language flows.

Other models such as Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) have also focused on the language of the therapist. NLP therapists focus on the predominant sub-modalities in their clients' own language. They can be visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory, or gustatory, reflecting our basic senses. For example a client with a *visual* language may report *seeing* what you say, or having a *vision* of the future, whereas *kinaesthetic* language is wrapped around *touch* and *feelings* (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). Comparing his use of Clean Language to that of Ericksonian and NLP practitioners David Groves in Groves & Panzer (1989, p.8) states "we believe that our emphasis on clean language – which allows the client to remain in an alpha state, to remain on the level of matrix, and in the mental set in which he finds himself – goes beyond the efforts of these schools...The shape and the structure of questions will limit the ways in which a client can respond and can leave a form of tunnel vision which will restrict his response pattern. Were we to ask: 'And how did you feel about that?' this would tend to limit the client's response". This may well presuppose that the most valued way to respond pertains to a *feeling*, whereas the client may have wanted to respond in another way (i.e. cognitively)." When clean language is used the client can manifest his own language and the language used by the therapist is facilitatory, allowing the client to enter into their matrix of experience and remain in the alpha state.

If Clean Language is not used by the therapist the client will come out of trance. Clean Language questions are only asked by the therapist that enhances the client's own understanding of their experience, thus structuring an internal reality. Examples of clean questions would be "What would you like to have happen?" or "What needs to happen?" as opposed to "What do you want?"

which future orients a client and forces a reply in terms of what he wants or doesn't want. Useful examples are provided in the following table.

Table 1
Aspects of clean language

Question	Clean Question
What can I do for you?	What do you need to have happen?
How can I help?	What would be helpful?
What seems to be the matter?	What do you want?
What is your problem?	What would you like?
What brings you here (today)?	What would you want (to happen here today?)
How do you feel?	Are you experiencing anything now?
What is going through your mind?	Is there something you are thinking?
I am listening.	And when that happened, how did you feel?
What are you thinking?	Are you thinking anything?
How do you feel about that?	And when that happened, how did you feel?
What does it remind you of?	And when that happened, how did that affect you?
Tell me what happened.	And when that happened...?
What do you think/feel?	Is there anything happening?
Can you get in touch with that feeling?	And when you have that feeling, what does that feel like? And where do you feel it?
How does that make you feel?	And when that happened did you have any feeling?
Are you angry/do you feel angry?	What is that feeling like?

You must have a lot of anger.	Did you feel anything when that happened?
I want you to...	And what do you suggest you could do....?
Words	Clean Words
Addiction, habit, compulsion	What is it that you don't want to do?
Depression, anxiety, phobia, obsession, pathology.	What is it that you don't want to think/feel?

From Grove & Panzer (1989, p.14)

The neutrality of clean language is explained in Grove (1991b, p. 9) "clean language is information-centred. It is neither client nor therapist centred." When reflecting on the phrases used in the above table, their use in more conventional counselling and psychotherapy could be considered as inauthentic or incongruent. However, the use of the Clean Language, as suggested, keeps the client within their 'matrix of experience' and therefore in a creative alpha state.

Case Studies

It may be useful to illustrate the utilisation of clean language and metaphor in therapy through the introduction of two case studies of sessions in my private practice. Stiles (2007) suggest that practitioners have expertise in daily access to the phenomena that theories of counselling and psychotherapy seek to explain. Practitioners' clinical experience can be accumulated and shared through theory-building case study research. The two studies highlight the use of clean language and metaphor in a single session, for the purposes of this paper I wish to focus on the individual sessions and not the overall processes involved with each client. It was evident to me that both clients entered alpha states during these sessions and they reported significant resultant positive emotional shifts.

Case Study One

Emily (not her real name) in her forties presented with issues around weight gain. She explained that she had received counselling and psychotherapy over a number of years and hinted at possible child abuse. She indicated that she believed that her weight problems and low self-esteem were connected to childhood issues, but didn't want to go over her past with me

again at this time. We contracted to use metaphor as a way of resolving her issues without the need to resurrect painful memories. She also believed that her previous therapy had been useful but hadn't got to the root of her problems.

The session can be summarised (almost verbatim) as follows:-

Client: "When I think of my weight *it's* like a bubbling black liquid" (pointing at her stomach).

Therapist: "So *it's* like a bubbling black liquid – and it's in your stomach?"

Client: "Yes and underneath the bubbling black liquid there is turmoil".

Therapist: "And when there is bubbling black liquid with turmoil underneath, what needs to happen?" (I could have investigated 'turmoil' in more depth here".

Client: "*It* needs to turn white".

Therapist: "And when *it* needs to turn white, can *it* turn white?"

Client: (pause...client has her eyes closed at this stage) "No *it's* blue"

Therapist: "What needs to happen next?"

Client: "I need to get rid of some rubbish."

Therapist: "And when you need to get rid of some rubbish, what needs to happen?"

Client: "I need to put the bags in the bin."

Therapist: "How many bags do you need to put in the bin?" (Deepening her matrix of experience.)

Client: "Twenty eight."

Therapist: "And when you need to put twenty eight bags in the bin – can you put twenty eight bags in the bin?"

Client: (Pause and Rapid Eye Movement (R.E.M.)) "Yes" (Small sigh.)

Therapist: "And when you have put the twenty eight bags in the bin, what happens next?"

Client: "*It's* still blue."

Therapist: "And when *it's* still blue, what needs to happen?"

Client: (Pause) "There are seventeen more bags"

Therapist: "And when there are seventeen more bags, what needs to happen to those bags?"

Client: "They need to go in the cosmic bin".

Therapist: "And when they need to go into the cosmic bin, can they go into the cosmic bin?"

Client: (Pause and R.E.M.) "Yes" (Sigh).

Therapist: "And when they have all gone in the bin, what happens next?"

Client: "*It's* now light blue."

Therapist: "So what needs to happen?"

Client: "There are seventy two layers."

Therapist: "What needs to happen to seventy two layers?"

Client: "*They* need to go."

Therapist: "And when *they* need to go, can *they* go?"

Client: (Pause and R.E.M.) "No".

Therapist: "So when there are seventy two layers what needs to happen?"

Client: "I need to ask for help."

Therapist: "And when you need to ask for help, who or what can help?" (Often resources can be found in this altered state – they range from 'higher-self', 'spiritual-self' or God.)

Client: "The wise part can help."

Therapist: "Thank you wise part, thank you for helping, now what needs to happen?"

Client: "*They* need to go into the cosmic bin – ten at a time."

Therapist: “And when *they* need to go into the bin ten at a time – can *they* go into the cosmic bin ten at a time?”

Client: (Pause and R.E.M.) “Yes” (large sigh and further pause).

Therapist: “And what happens next?”

Client: (Weeping) “*It’s* the core, *its* horrible!”

Therapist: “And when there is a core and *it’s* horrible; what needs to happen?”

Client: “*It* needs to be wrapped in a metal covering.”

Therapist: “And when *it* needs to be wrapped in a metal covering, can *it* be wrapped in a metal covering?”

Client: (Pause and R.E.M.) “Yes” (sigh.)

Therapist: “What happens next?”

Client: “*It* needs to go into the cosmic bin.”

Therapist: “And when *it* needs to go into the cosmic bin, can *it* go into the cosmic bin?”

Client: (Pause and R.E.M.) “Yes” (more tears).

Therapist: “And what happens next?”

Client: (smile) “*It’s* a white shiny thing, *it’s* white and shiny and there is a filter over *it* to keep *it* white and shiny”.

Therapist: “And when *it’s* white and shiny and there is a filter over *it*, what else needs to happen?”

Client: “I need to put *it* on a pedestal.”

Therapist: “And when you need to put *it* on a pedestal, can you put *it* on a pedestal?”

Client: “Yes” (smile.)

Therapist: “What else needs to happen?”

Client: “I need to keep *it*.”

Therapist: “And when you need to keep *it*, can you keep *it*?”

Client: “Yes, *it* is in my heart now” (points to her heart.)

Therapist: “And when *it* is in your heart, what else needs to happen?”

Client: “Nothing”.

The client opens her eyes, coming back to conscious awareness and says “Wow”.

Case Study Two

Mark, not his real name, and in his late forties had just been diagnosed with small-cell cancer. The medical prognosis was not good and a series of chemotherapy and radiotherapy had been scheduled over the next two months. Mark was, as you would expect, extremely anxious and wanted to seek counselling support and was open to complementary therapies that may ease his current angst.

To ground Mark I suggested that he close his eyes and find his ‘safe place’, a place where he could relax. He explained that his ‘safe place’ was green with pure water running in the stream. As he went into the experience he relaxed – and entered an altered state.

Therapist: “So Mark, as you relax in your safe place, what needs to happen next?”

Client: “I need to talk to my immune system.”

Therapist: “And when you need to talk to your immune system, can you talk to your immune system?”

Client: “Yes”.

Therapist: “So what happens next?”

Client: “*It’s* like white lights”.

Therapist: “And when *it’s* like white lights, can I talk to white lights?” (Talking to the internal resource can be useful, the client is still listening with his conscious mind.)

Client: “Yes.”

Therapist: "What needs to happen next white lights?"

Client: "We need to round *them* up" (grimace.)

Therapist: "Who are *they*?"

Client: "The cancer cells."

Therapist: "What do *they* look like?" (Getting the client back into the matrix of experience and the metaphor.)

Client: "*They* are black."

Therapist: "And when they are black, what needs to happen?"

Client: "We need to round *them* up."

Therapist: "And when *they* are black and *you* need to round them up, what happens next?"

Client: "*They* are weak and we need to turn *them* white."

Therapist: "And when *they* are weak and need to be turned white what happens next?"

Client: "After time we turn *them* white."

Therapist: "And after what time do you turn *them* white?"

Client: "Three months."

Therapist: "And what else needs to happen white lights?"

Client: "We need to move from the right lung – but there is a blockage."

Therapist: "What needs to happen?"

Client: "We need to find a new way through."

Therapist: "What needs to happen to find a new way through?"

Client: "We need to believe we can go through."

Therapist: "And when you need to believe that you can go through, what needs to happen?"

Client: “We need to change the story”. (The client remains in an altered state and continues to disassociate through the term “we”.)

Therapist: “And when you change the story and believe, can you go through?”

Client: (Tears and pause) “Yes.”

Therapist: (Further pause) “And what happens next?”

Client: “*We* turn *them* white after three months.”

Therapist: “And after three months *you* turn them white.”

Client: (Big smile): “Yes”.

Therapist: “And after three months?” (‘Future-pacing’ the client.)

Client: “*They* are gone” (large sigh.)

Therapist: “White lights – is there anything else you can do for Mark here today?”

Client: “No” (smile.)

Therapist: “Mark as you have heard, white lights, your immune system is happy that they are gone after three months. You can start to open your eyes and bring yourself slowly back into the room” (bringing the client back into conscious awareness.)

In summary, metaphors are used extensively in therapy and the majority of therapeutic models are based on metaphors. The work of David Grove on focussing on the clients’ metaphor is fascinating and little known in the counselling world. If we as humans become our metaphors, then in changing the self descriptive metaphors we can promote healthy psychological change. Clients can change unhelpful metaphors through the psychological process of therapy into more positive ones, or become more accepting of them.

*Lively and intact in a recurring wave
Of arrival. The soul establishes itself.
But how far can it swim out through the eyes
And still return safely to its nest?*

John Ashbury

ALTERED STATES AND COUNSELLING

In this chapter I want to explore the different mind states and how they can change during a therapeutic encounter.

David Grove asserted that his clients entered an alpha state when they dwelled in the matrix of experience of memory or metaphor, and the deeper they travelled into the matrix the deeper the altered (or trance) state. They reverted to conscious awareness when they came out of the matrix of experience. That is why Clean Language is crucial as the therapist can easily affect the client's state by using inappropriate language.

Human Givens is interesting in its observations on trance states. They maintain that in any situation in which we are engaged emotionally we are necessarily in a trance state. It's a necessary state for learning and survival (Williams, 2011).

Lakoff & Johnson (2003) refer to the creative state that the use of metaphor induces and in a significant Swedish study Bundzen et al (2002) found that altered states improve linguistic ability, mood and psychosomatic auto-regulation. Lawley & Tompkins (2000, p. 28) are more specific in their connection to therapy in the style introduced by Grove (which they term Symbolic Modelling) – “The states which clients access during Symbolic Modelling seem to have many characteristics in common with those involving heightened creativity.” I will develop this link in more detail below.

The direct link between creative and altered states is highlighted eruditely in Koestler (1994, p.178) “The creative act, insofar as it depends on unconscious resources, pre-supposes a relaxing of controls and a regression to modes of ideation which are indifferent to the rules of verbal logic, unperturbed by contradiction, untouched by the dogmas and taboos of so called common sense. At the decisive stage of discovery the codes of principled reasoning are suspended – as they are with a dream, the reverie, the manic flight of thought, when the stream of ideation is free to drift, by its own emotional gravity, as it were, in

an apparent 'lawless' fashion." The stream of ideation that is free to drift, is I believe apparent when we lose ourselves in metaphor, and is highlighted in the case studies described earlier in this paper. If clients are entering altered states in the therapy room, it is important to define the phenomena.

In defining an altered state in Ludwig (1966, p. 225-234) states "Beneath man's thin veneer of consciousness lies a relatively uncharted realm of mental activity, the nature and function of which have been neither systematically explored nor adequately conceptualized." Despite the advances in Neuroscience this 'realm' remains mostly uncharted. A more formal definition can be found in Jonas (2005, p.46), "the various states in which the mind can be aware but is not in its usual wakeful condition, such as during hypnosis, meditation, hallucination, trance, and the dream stage." This definition highlights two points. Firstly, there are a number of states in which the mind can be aware but not wakeful. Grove's work focuses on the alpha state, a conversational trance state. There are other mind states that will be described in more detail shortly. Further, altered states are engaged or encouraged by a number of catalysts such as hypnosis and meditation. I believe that there are many catalysts for altered states and a number of these can be engaged in the counselling therapy room, or during a research interview.

Altered states can be measured depending upon brain wave frequency. Keirn, Z.A. & Aunon (1990, p.7) set out the various brain wave states in the following table:-

Table 2

Brian Waves and Associated States

Type	Frequency (Hz)	State
<u>Delta</u>	Up to 4	Deep sleep. Deep Hypnosis. Increasing immune functions. Physical and mental restructuring.
<u>Theta</u>	4 – <8	Deep relaxation. State of meditation. Hypnosis. Increase in creativity.

<u>Alpha</u>	8 – 13	Relaxed. Creative. Mental and muscular relaxation. Positive thought. Improved memory. Assimilation and capacity for study. Improved performance in sport. Reduced pain.
<u>Beta</u>	13-30	Alert. Working. Active. Busy or anxious thinking. Active concentration. Tension, anxiety and stress. Confusion & irritability. Psychosomatic problems.

Reflecting on the various states of consciousness I wonder what state I am in during a counselling session, and what state my client is in. I recall during a session, one anxious client wanted to measure her blood pressure at the start of the session (we were in a doctor's surgery), I can't recall the measure, but it was significantly lower at the end of the session. She may well have gone from a high Beta State to an Alpha State during the session? Certainly the Alpha State appears to be a more productive state for therapy.

Carl Rogers found that he was at his best he was in an altered state. He wrote in Rogers (1980, p.99), "When I am at my best as a group facilitator or a therapist I discover another characteristic. I find that I am closest to my inner intuitive self, when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me, when perhaps I am in a slightly altered state of consciousness in the relationship, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. Then simply my *presence* is releasing and helpful. There is nothing I can do to force this experience, but when I relax and be close to the transcendental core of me, then I may behave in strange and impulsive ways in the relationship and ways that I cannot justify rationally, which have nothing to do with my thought processes. But these strange behaviours seem to turn out right in some odd way. At these moments it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other." Roger's words resonate with a way-of-being that I have often experienced in the therapy room and he reports not only an alpha state but there is also an associated spiritual connection, which I have also felt. Perhaps this is an unmentioned 'Core Condition' - the ability to

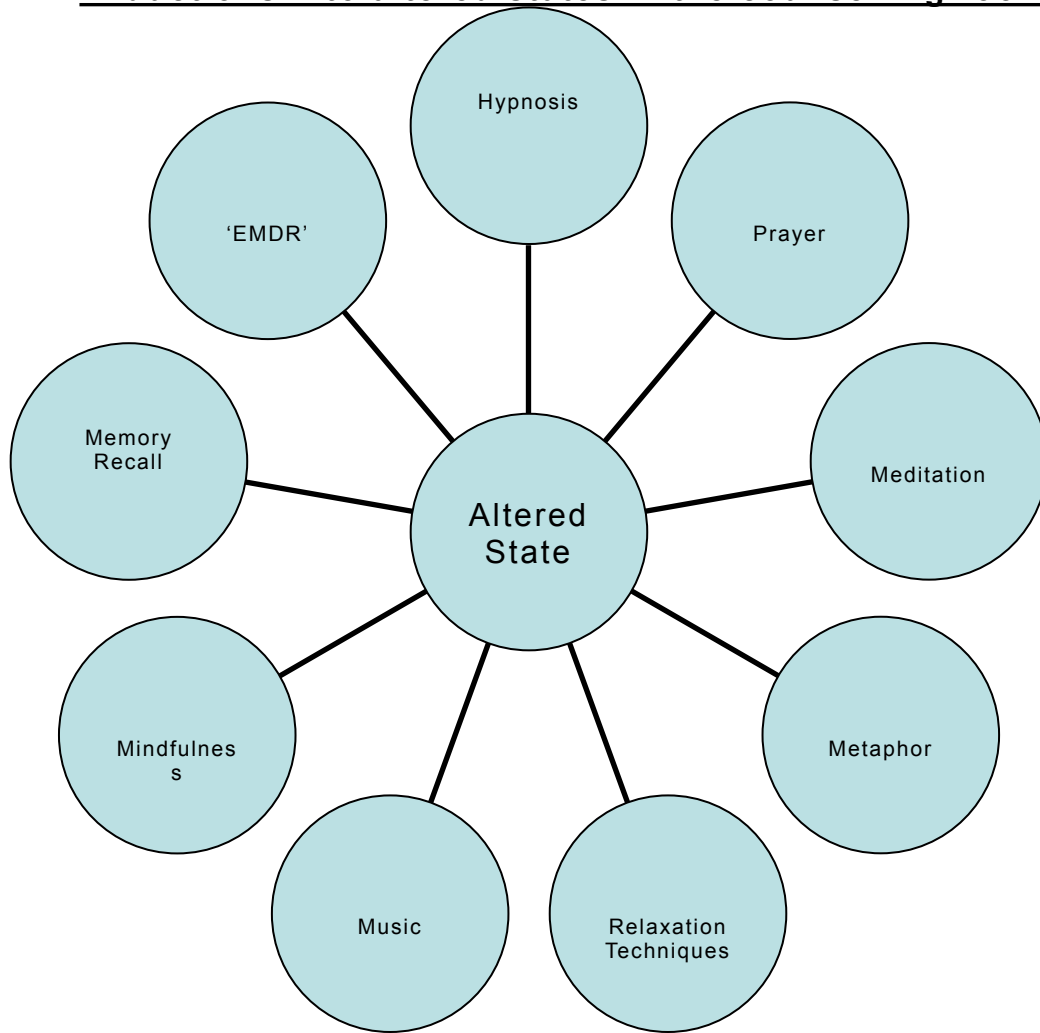
offer a space to dwell in an altered state (with the resultant spiritual connectedness)?

I believe that altered states are often engaged by counsellors and their clients. Gubi (2011, p.65) suggests that a significant minority of counsellors use prayer “to still the mind, aiding peace, calm, meaning, purpose and direction at times of stuckness, panic and anxiety.” These are all reported alpha state responses. Also, interestingly, Gubi in his research into the integration of prayer into counselling found that the settling into an alpha state through the use of silent prayer at the start of the session was enabling for the client – “The interview data suggest that the use of silence at the beginning of a session is the most appropriate form of prayer at this stage, as it enables the client to gain stillness and a focus for the work to gain stillness and a focus for the work. It provides a spiritual space which facilitates the client in focusing on their ‘point of pain’ and on the essence of their deepest self (authenticity) which allows the unconscious to speak.” (Gubi, 2011, p.71). I believe that counsellors using prayer in this way are encouraging an altered state in themselves and their client, similar to Grove and his use of metaphor, which used ethically; is a creative way to investigate authentic self and unconscious processes.

Wardle (2011, p.177) suggests that a number of counsellors using psychic energy in their therapy encountered themes including “metaphor, symbols...soul to soul connection” (and) “clients have described an *altered state* of consciousness on these occasions”. Table 3 reveals my proposal that altered states are induced (often unintentionally) in the counselling room in many ways.

The following table reveals some of the many ways in which an altered state is induced in the counselling room. This table is based on my own empirical experiences.

Table 3
Inductions into altered states in the counselling room



In summary it is apparent that altered states in counselling appear to be universally common, but not widely acknowledged. On reflection, this could be due to the perception of the 'risky' and inappropriate nature of work at this level. I believe this is missing a crucial opportunity for counsellors and their clients to explore a creative and positive mind-state. In conclusion I repeat Carl Rogers' words "At these moments it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other" (1980, p.99).

*Random raindrops
on the window pane.*

*Touch them with your finger tip -
but there's the barrier of glass.*

*You know that if you wanted
to become involved
you should be on
the other side.*

Starfields.

METAPHORS AND RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

In this section I will focus on the use of metaphors in qualitative research interviews and link the Grovian Model of Clean Language and Metaphor/Memory to a recent transcript.

Our language is riddled with metaphor used to describe our affective state and personal attributes. It is through metaphor, at least in part, that we describe how we think and feel. The capacity of metaphor to capture creatively how we are feeling relates to Langer's conception of the two kinds of knowing. Langer (1957) distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive knowledge. Metaphor, art, poetry and music fall with the non-discursive category. Artists, she suggests have an ability to conceive the variety of forms of human feelings. Further she proposed that the meanings found in poetry and metaphors transcend literal language.

Through non-discursive knowing we come to feel what we cannot necessarily see. This form of knowing is an important concept in qualitative social science research. Knowles & Cole (2008, p.9) comment "One of the major weaknesses of the logical positivist movement was a tendency on their part to dismiss poetic and metaphorical language as meaningless utterances. This led them to regard as meaningful only propositions of an empirical kind that, in principle, could be proven through scientific procedures." The use of art, poetry and metaphor are a powerful and creative way of describing what we know.

As metaphors are often used to describe our world their use in qualitative research interviews is well documented. Kvale (1996, p.21) describes research interviews as a form of professional conversation – “a research interview seeks through questioning to obtain knowledge of the subject’s world”.

In this seminal text Kvale introduces the two alternative roles of research interviewers as metaphors - the miner and the traveller. “In the *miner metaphor*, knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer as a miner who unearths the valuable metal. Some miners seek objective facts to be quantified; others seek nuggets of essential meaning. In both conceptions the knowledge is waiting in the subject’s interior to be uncovered, uncontaminated by the miner. The interviewer digs nuggets of data or meanings out of the subject’s pure experiences, unpolluted by any leading questions. The interview researcher strips the surface of conscious experiences; the therapeutic interviewer mines the deeper unconscious layers.” (Kvale, 1996, p.3) There are interesting links between Kvale and Grove. Other than the obvious metaphor link Kvale talks of the subject’s knowledge being in their interior and the stripping away of conscious experiences which relates to Grove’s metaphor work inducing alpha states and subsequent unconscious processes.

Clean Language promoted by Grove steers the interviewer away from leading questions which Kvale regards as pollutants. Grove suggests that Clean Language can induce the alpha state which is the preferred state for mining the subject’s interior. On reflection it seems to me that the work carried out by therapists utilising Grove’s model is akin to the therapeutic interviewer mining the deep unconscious.

Kvale promotes the use of metaphors in reporting qualitative studies. In Kvale (1996, p.275) he states “A metaphor is richer, more complete than a simple description of the data. Metaphors are data-reducing and pattern-making devices.” The use of metaphor in analysing the data is promoted by Kvale, but there is no mention of a subject’s use of metaphor or the promotion of metaphor in the interview. He promotes clean, simple open questioning and the focusing on unconscious process; that link with the work of Grove.

In recent years the focussing on metaphor in research interviews has gained some momentum. For example Zanotto et al (2008, p. 2) found that “The use of metaphor in research has gained momentum in recent years. It is timely for researchers to approach metaphor as social and situated, as a matter of language and discourse, and not just as a matter of thought. Over

the last 25 years, scholars have come to appreciate in depth the cognitive, motivated and embodied nature of metaphor, but have tended to background the linguistic form of metaphor and have largely ignored how this connects to its role in the discourses in which our lives are constructed and lived.” Researchers are becoming increasingly aware that people use metaphor to reflect their cross-cultural reality. Cameron (2007a) introduces the concept of a methodology for metaphor-led discourse analysis. Identification of metaphor in discourse is the first step, followed by the extraction of patterns of metaphor use.

Grove promoted the use of metaphor for trauma resolution and in Cameron (2007b p.197) is research that suggests that the use of metaphor in reconciliation talk between an IRA bomber and victim is crucial. “The analysis starts from identification of linguistic metaphors and works recursively between levels of discourse, revealing how micro-level negotiation of metaphors contributes to emergent macro-level metaphor systems. Metaphors frame the reconciliation process as a *journey*, as *connection*, as *changing a distorted image* and as *listening to the other’s story*.” The focussing of metaphor in such scenarios can be extremely effective. However there is a paucity of research on the mind states induced by the use of metaphor.

It is widely acknowledged that metaphors are universally utilised and that they are a creative description of subjective experience. I am proposing that the use of Clean Language and metaphors promote an alpha state. This will no doubt be the subject of future research although there is little room in this paper for in-depth research into this phenomenon. I am able to analyse a research interview that took place recently at The University of Manchester between Dr William West and me (see appendix one).

The context of this research interview firstly needs to be established. It took place during a group tuition session on a Professional Doctorate in Counselling programme ran by Dr William West and Dr Clare Lennie. The subject of the research was the subject’s experience of counselling training. It was a qualitative, semi-structured interview and took place before the writing of this paper. The entire cohort was present during the twenty minute process, which may have added to the anxiety of the participants, and the questions and answers may have been ‘censored’ in some form.

There are limitations in endeavouring to obtain truth and meaning from one interview. However, as this may well lead to further research a pragmatic approach has been adopted on this occasion.

I want to analyse the data of this interview in an unusual manner. Rather than looking at the hermeneutics, the meaning of the text, I want to investigate how much meaning is created by the questions posed. If we were to look at the transcript through the lens of Grove's model, how can the use of Clean Language, dwelling in the interviewee's 'matrix of experience' and resultant alpha state influence the amount and richness of the data? To do this I believe I will need a practical 'bricoleur' approach, as defined in McLeod (2003).

To define the amount of meaning produced by different question types I will utilise a form of Grounded Theory. To analyse the meaning of the text I will use a Heuristic method and create a poem (or 'Creative Synthesis') as defined in Moustakas (1990).

Firstly to focus on Grounded Theory methodology, Strauss & Corbin (1990) systemised a theory which is "grounded" in the phenomenon under exploration. Denzin & Lincoln (2000, p.ix) described Grounded Theory as "serving at the front of the qualitative revolution". Rennie & Brewer (1987, p.11-12) explain the method in more detail – "All elements (e.g. single lines, sentences, or complete thoughts in texts) of an initial set of data (e.g. archival information, interviewees' accounts) are compared and conceptualised in terms of commonalities. In the early stages of the analysis, these commonalities are lexically symbolized as descriptive categories that are closely tied to the language of the data. Each datum is placed in as many categories as possible to preserve the conceptual richness of the phenomenon." For the purposes of this study at the Grounded Theory analytical stage I am not looking to describe the meaning revealed in the data, but how much meaning is created by two different types of questions.

Looking through the lens of Grove's model, but for research interviews rather than therapeutic work, there are questions that keep the client in their 'matrix of experience' and those that bring them out of the matrix. By using Clean Language and allowing the subjects to focus on their internal experience through memory and metaphor (I will leave symbols and semantics aside to simplify this process) they remain in an alpha state, improving creative thought processes. Grove explains further in Grove & Panzer (1989, p.9) "When the client is in a matrix he is also in an altered state. When he is out of the matrix, the client tends to be out of the alpha state. At the first level of the matrix, the client will be in the alpha state, *internally oriented and paying attention to the internal rather than external environment*. By using clean language to ask clean questions, we uncover the infrastructure of the client's reality." Using Clean Language in research is similar

in many ways to Robert Elliott's Brief Structured Recall (Elliott, 1984) keeping the activity of the interviewer to an absolute minimum.

The Findings of this data analysis reveal the number of Meaning Units (MU's) that each of the two classifications of question produces.

The following table reveals my working out and notes for the first page of the interview.

Table 4

Working Notes on Grounded Theory Analysis

<p>William: So, I'm interested in your experiences as a trainee. What that was like, what it meant to you. Can you cast your mind back to when you went into training? Matrix - An invitation into the matrix of experience, and use of a metaphor – “cast your mind back”.</p>
<p>Jonathan: Yeah, that was about <u>eight years ago</u>, with <u>Counselling Concepts</u>. It was <u>borne out of actually going to a meditation group</u>, actually, at <u>Stockport College</u>, and I'd just recently, kind of, <u>got into Buddhism</u>, if you like. That was <u>interesting, meditation</u>. I'd <u>overheard the conversation in the group that this lady was a counsellor in a counselling course at Stockport and she thought the meditation might be useful for her practice</u>. So, I thought, that sounds an interesting course and, the next minute, <u>I found myself booked on the Concepts course</u>. (laughter) 10 MUs.</p>
<p>William: And what was it like, the course? In Matrix. Clean Language - stays in the matrix of experience – memory.</p>
<p>Jonathan: I found it <u>fascinating and intriguing</u>, yeah. <u>Coming from a world of corporate business</u>, it was just kind of so <u>refreshing</u>, and <u>different</u>. Yeah, almost <u>quite indulgent</u>, I think, <u>talking about me and my feelings and my thoughts</u>. 7 MUs.</p>
<p>William: So, was it skill quest or theory-based? What was the mix? In Matrix - Clean, stays in the matrix – memory.</p>

Jonathan: Mostly skills, with a little bit of theory. 2 MUs.
William: Right, and then you went from that straight away to the – In Matrix - Clean, stays in the matrix – memory .
Jonathan: To the <u>Certificate course</u> . That's <u>the one-year course</u> which, again, was <u>quite skills-based</u> , <u>lots of videos</u> , <u>triage work</u> , <u>triangular work</u> . 6 MUs.
William: Was this with PD, as well? Out of the matrix of experience - not clean .
Jonathan: PD, yeah. <u>I actually went on a PD course first</u> . 1 MU.
William: Oh right? Not a question – but clean .
Jonathan: So, I went on a PD course, I think it was in between Concepts and the Certificate.
William: Oh right. So you had Concepts, PD then Certificate with PD? In Matrix - Clean, stays in the matrix – memory
Jonathan: Yeah. So I kind of <u>got heavily into PD</u> , it <u>was really, really powerful stuff</u> . Yeah. 2 MUs.
William: Yeah? A good experience? I mean, I'm not sure if that's the right word to use? In Matrix - Stays in the memory .
Jonathan: I think <u>it was a good experience</u> . I think <u>it gave me a space to, kind of, do an explore about me and, kind of, a lot of normalising of my experiences within the group as well</u> . <u>Some of it was very uncomfortable, particularly towards the end</u> . <u>The Diploma PD got particularly comfortable...uncomfortable, in the end</u> . 6 MUs.

William: Right, right. Was that discomfort... was that resolved, well-handled? [In Matrix - Stays in the memory, paraphrases “uncomfortable”.](#)

Jonathan: I don't think it was, actually. I think it was left hanging there. There were some personality clashes within the group. I think it often happens as the group matures and some big fallings-out. That happened in the PD group and, kind of, rippled out into outside of the PD. I don't think that ever really got resolved.
[7 MUs.](#)

The remainder of the data was analysed in this manner and the following table reveals the Findings.

Table 5

Findings – Meaning Units that follow ‘In the Matrix’ Questions v. ‘Non- Matrix’ Questions.

	Total Number of Questions	Total Meaning Units.	Average Meaning Units per Question.
‘Matrix’ Question	29	141	4.86
‘Non-Matrix’ Question.	27	42	1.55

In reviewing the Findings there is a surprisingly marked difference in the amount of meaning that the two types of questions encourage. It could well be that the use of Clean Language and focusing on the interviewees *internal world* of

memory and metaphor produces richer *alpha state* data. However, I believe that this information needs to be treated with due caution. It is a very small study, from one interview and there a number of possible flaws in the data analysis. Charmaz (2003, p. 250-251) warns of the possible conflicts involved with this methodology "Strauss and Corbin's (1990) stance assumes an objective, external reality, aims towards unbiased data collection, proposes a set of technical procedures, and espouses verification." I am not an objective observer in this process, I am the interviewee and the researcher and the process has no external verification. It does not follow the Grounded Theory method as it was used in a practical way to research the amount of meaning rather than the detail of the meaning. Charmaz (p. 251) emphasises the flexibility of the methodology "We can use grounded theory methods as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures". This has been my approach in this paper.

Whilst I have endeavoured to remain objective and professional throughout this process I understand that the research could well be interpreted as biased, as I was looking for proof in my notion that altered states can be created in research interviews and that altered states enhance the richness of the data. (The choice of category is a subjective notion). Neither of which have been proven in this research, although the Findings may well encourage me or others to do further research on the subject.

Ethics in research is an essential element and some consideration of the ethics in this research and possible future research into the use of Clean Language in research requires some consideration. Any future research should be guided by the good practice guidelines of the BACP (see BACP, 2002). (There are no ethical issues with regard to informed consent in this research process as the interviewee and the researcher are the same person). However, as discussed above there could be ethical implications in the researcher analysing effectively their own data. This couldn't be avoided in this situation as this was the only interview carried out during this academic year. The major ethical consideration for future research would be the use of Clean Language and the suggestibility of interviewees in an alpha state. However, as Clean Language repeats the subject's own words and doesn't pollute the subject's experience they are unlikely to be influenced by the process. This possibility should be included within the informed consent prior to interviews taking place.

Finally, in an effort to bring some meaning to the data, I have created a poem, a *Creative Synthesis*. Moustakas (1990, p.32) states that “Meanings are inherent in a particular world-view, an individual life, and the connections between self, other and world”. The following poem endeavours, in a creative way to give some meaning and develop the quoted connections.

Moustakas (1990, p.28) suggests a period of dwelling on the data, which will create themes which can be described in a creative synthesis. He describes this period of *immersion* where the researcher “lives the question in walking, sleeping, and even dream states” (Moustakas 1990, p.28). A period of meditative contemplation and reflective dream states preceded these words:-

Poem

The Journey

*Mindfully ready
booked on by Spirit
repelled by desk and suit.
Refreshingly different this new path.*

*A concept leads
to skills of exploration
and navigation.
A development of self and alter.*

*Integrative wondering,
trailblazing glades of parallel flight.*

*Panorama and mountain,
and
yet more mountain.
Whose peak must be seen
by the ghosts.
The ghosts of unconscious being.*

*Peering now over shoulder
The journey of dark and light
Free-wheeling down flowered dale
Hard pedal up arid peak
Is mirrored in future place.*

In summary it appears through this brief process there is merit in considering the use of Clean Language, memory and metaphor in

research interviews. There are ethical considerations, although it could be argued that Clean Language is ethical in itself as it follows the interviewee's language. This could be the start of an interesting debate?

CONCLUSION

The use of metaphor in therapy is relatively common, although its specific conscious use as seen in Grove's work continues to be unknown in the counselling world. This paper has also highlighted the possible use of Clean Language and metaphors in the research domain to enhance the richness of resultant data. I am cautiously optimistic that used in the appropriate environment and with ethical safeguards an alternative interview structure could emerge.

To conclude I reflect on what has surprised me in working on this paper?

- The universal use of metaphor and how creative metaphors can be.

- Sullivan & Rees (2008, p.13) comment on Grove's work "Rather than people *having* metaphors, it's as if they *were* their metaphors. And when these changed, they did too." This is a powerful assertion, and if true, could have significant impact on the therapeutic process.
- The use of alpha states in counselling that already exists and is little mentioned. Roger's words on his own altered state, I found hugely impact-full. "I am in a slightly altered state of consciousness in the relationship, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. Then simply my *presence* is releasing and helpful." Rogers (1980, p.99).
- The use of Clean Language in therapy was known to me. It can be a very powerful therapeutic tool. However, I was surprised by the cross-over to research interviews and the profound Findings that Clean Language, focussing on memory and metaphor, can increase the resultant amount of meaning by a factor of five.

When I commenced this paper, I was under the impression that this is a narrow subject. I was wrong. To cover the use of metaphor in therapy and then to relate metaphor to the use in research is a significant field. A field that requires more attention and investigation into altered states in therapy, altered states in research interviews, alpha states, the use of clean language, spiritual connections and the matrix of experience. I conclude this paper with more questions than I started with, maybe not such a bad thing? More metaphorical fields to journey through in the future!

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Appendix One

William: So, I'm interested in your experiences as a trainee. What that was like, what it meant to you. Can you cast your mind back to when you went into training?

Jonathan: Yeah, that was about eight years ago, with Counselling Concepts. It was borne out of actually going to a meditation group, actually, at Stockport College, and I'd just recently, kind of, got into Buddhism, if you like. That was interesting, meditation. I'd overheard the conversation in the

group that this lady was a counsellor in a counselling course at Stockport and she thought the meditation might be useful for her practice. So, I thought, that sounds an interesting course and, the next minute, I found myself booked on the Concepts course. (laughter)

William: And what was it like, the course?

Jonathan: I found it fascinating and intriguing, yeah. Coming from a world of corporate business, it was just kind of so refreshing, and different. Yeah, almost quite indulgent, I think, talking about me and my feelings and my thoughts.

William: So, was it skill quest or theory-based? What was the mix?

Jonathan: Mostly skills, with a little bit of theory.

William: Right, and then you went from that straight away to the –

Jonathan: To the Certificate course. That's the one-year course which, again, was quite skills-based, lots of videos, triage work, triangular work.

William: Was this with PD, as well?

Jonathan: PD, yeah. I actually went on a PD course first.

William: Oh right?

Jonathan: So, I went on a PD course, I think it was in between Concepts and the Certificate.

William: Oh right. So you had Concepts, PD then Certificate with PD?

Jonathan: Yeah. So I kind of got heavily into PD, it was really, really powerful stuff. Yeah.

William: Yeah? A good experience? I mean, I'm not sure if that's the right word to use?

Jonathan: I think it was a good experience. I think it gave me a space to, kind of, do an explore about me and, kind of, a lot of normalising of my experiences within the group as well. Some of it was very uncomfortable, particularly towards the end. The

Diploma PD got particularly comfortable...uncomfortable, in the end.

William: Right, right. Was that discomfort... was that resolved, well-handled?

Jonathan: I don't think it was, actually. I think it was left hanging there. There were some personality clashes within the group. I think it often happens as the group matures and some big fallings-out. That happened in the PD group and, kind of, rippled out into outside of the PD. I don't think that ever really got resolved.

William: Right. I was noticing you were saying towards the end, (inaudible 00:03:17), you know, a bit late on for that to be...?

Jonathan: There were still a few months left, but I feel what happened, with my own experience, is that it drew me closer to an individual and away from another individual. So, after the course finished, I've not spoken to one of them and become very good friends with the other.

William: Right?

Jonathan: And I think that was developed through the PD.

William: And was it the personal therapy part of the course?

Jonathan: Yes, yes.

William: So, how much of that did you have?

Jonathan: 20 hours of personal therapy. In those days there was no specification of when you have them so I took them in dribs and drabs when I thought I needed them, which I thought was more flexible for me and more appropriate than having to do ten in one year and ten the next, which I think is the case now.

William: Right. I'm kind of assuming it was a personal incentive course?

Jonathan: Egan.

William: Oh, it was Egan? Right. So, Egan as in Egan the model and exposure to a range of views and techniques?

Jonathan: Yeah.

William: How did you find that?

Jonathan: To be honest with you, I found Egan dry, difficult to read and, yeah, what didn't really kind of light my fire very much, to be honest. But, what happened was, I think, he sheds lights on other types of therapies and gives the green light to be integrative, so that's the bit I found interesting.

William: So, that was the pay-off of being exposed to it, given that integrative?

Jonathan: Yes.

William: Yes, because I wondered if, you were saying you, kind of, come from a business background, whether the language of Egan...?

Jonathan: That's probably what wound me up about it, if I'm being honest.

William: Oh right? (laughter)

Jonathan: Coming from that kind of business talk, contextualisation, that I was trying to get away from, I think, by becoming a counsellor, I knew I was being dragged back there to this kind of business model type thing. I've not really thought about that until recently. Probably, on reflection, that I realised that was the case.

William: So, if you're looking back at that training experience now, I mean, what was the most important, or the most useful, you know, out of the mix?

Jonathan: I think the placement was probably the most important. I just thought that everything else was surrounding, like, sort of like a sausage roll, and the placement was the sausage, and everything else was there to support that, that placement.

William: So getting out there working with clients really adds an extra something to it?

Jonathan: Yeah.

William: So, how many placement hours did you do in the training?

Jonathan: Well, about 150, through separate GPs' surgeries. So right in there at the deep end, really, I felt.

William: Yeah. Deep end in a good way, or...?

Jonathan: Thinking back, yes, but at the time it felt a bit seat-of-the-pants because there was no protection for the GPs. They just threw everybody at you.

William: Right, so they weren't filtering people?

Jonathan: No, you were the counsellor in that GP's surgery, whether you were a trainee or not, you got all those clients.

William: Were there other counsellors in the practice?

Jonathan: I was the first one there.

William: Ah. Ah.

Jonathan: Yeah, trailblazing, if you like.

William: Yeah, well, I've kind of gone like that because, you know, it's not recommended practice to put trainees into an agency without... Supervision, or mentoring, within or without of the practice?

Jonathan: Without. There was supervision, private, family-arranged, as per it is now.

William: Yes. Did that work well enough?

Jonathan: I think it was essential, really, particularly in view of what I was doing and where I was. I don't think I would have, the words "got away with it" come to mind, but... (laughter) It would have been very difficult indeed.

William: Looking back on the training, apart from the placement, like, was there things you would wish to have more of, or less of? I mean, the balance of the training, the different elements?

Jonathan: It was quite hands-on, I appreciated that. There wasn't perhaps enough academic model-based stuff for me. And, that's probably why I came on and did the MA afterwards here, to itch that need, scratch that need. But, I appreciate that, for other people, that was perfect for them.

William: Right.

Jonathan: So, I would have wanted, perhaps, a little bit more in-depth discussion around particular models and things. But, the actual PD was about right, at an hour a week. A couple of residential a year, which were dramatic and impactful, I found.

William: Dramatic as in...?

Jonathan: As in finding out about myself and really, kind of, letting go of stuff.

William: What made that possible?

Jonathan: One of the things we had to do was dress up as our alter ego, which was quite a strange thing. I think I got dressed up as a gangster, actually, probably to relate to my old business days. Also, we had to do a show and, whilst that was quite amusing for everyone involved, it was... Something about being in the spotlight for a while and being okay with that and breaking through that comfort barrier was linking to the counselling practices at the same time, interestingly. Because, almost it feels like you're potentially in that spotlight sometimes, well, particularly as a trainee counsellor practicing in a difficult placement. So, there was a bit of that parallel stuff going on at the residential.

William: Right. Yeah, so, you wanted a bit more academic theory, is what I'm hearing? I mean, was there other things that you would want more of, in retrospect?

Jonathan: No. To be fair, I think it hung together quite well for me. But I think you have to bear in mind that I was so, kind of, inspired and overawed by the whole experience of training as a private counsellor. 25 years sat behind a desk doing a job that I didn't particularly enjoy, this was so, kind of, revolutionary for me that, you know, I could have sat in, covered a couple of carrier pigeons and got quite excited about it I think.

William: Taking a slightly different way, then, was there anything where you were given too much, you know, too much focus on and that could have been different?

Jonathan: I was going to say there was quite a lot of role play stuff that was deliberately made to make us feel uncomfortable. As some of that, on reflection, was very difficult at the time but, actually, has been proven to be quite useful. I actually thought they were playing games with us, the tutors, at that particular

time, perhaps being a little bit unnecessarily cruel. So, yeah, I thought at the time that was quite difficult but, actually, reflecting back, I'm glad that they put it in there.

William: It sounds like quite a tough training course, that you were pushed and stretched and put on the spot?

Jonathan: Literally put on the spot, quite often in the middle of, you know, everybody else, yeah.

William: So, in terms of you, now, as a practitioner, thinking back to that training, yeah, was it enough, did it prepare you well enough?

Jonathan: I think it did, I think it did, and the vast majority of people on the course have, actually, ended up working in counselling, despite the kind of tales of woe that we received towards the end of the course that we couldn't get jobs in the counselling sector. Yeah, I would say 80-90% of the cohort are actually working at some level in counselling.

William: That's impressive.

Jonathan: Yes. I think it did, I think what was missing... I suppose for me, talking personally, and this is why I went on to do some further education, was that it didn't give me that kind of, "Well, I'm a qualified counsellor but I've not got any kind of confidence with regard to academia out of this". There's no kind of rubber stamp saying I'm kind of good enough academically.

William: Right. So, for you, it wasn't just enough to be trained, you wanted that extra stamp?

Jonathan: Yes. Stamp, piece of paper, whether that actually made me a better counsellor or not, I'm not quite sure. It was about my own personal journey and my confidence levels maybe.

William: Right, right. And, I mean, you know, looking back at that training process, what, you know, what would be a picture or a metaphor for what you went through?

Jonathan: It was a gentle path up a hill, with some of it was quite shaded and a bit scary, but there was quite sunny glades every now and then. And there was a nice panoramic view at the top, but then I could see some other mountains in the distance that I knew I needed to climb.

William: Right. (laughter)

Jonathan: From there. So, it was a very gentle lovely foothill, flowery, nice smells but not the end of my journey.

William: Yeah, would one of those mountains be the Masters?

Jonathan: That was the, yeah, the Masters and then we got to the top of that and there was another one waiting. (laughter)

William: And the next one after this?

Jonathan: I'm not sure.

William: And, you were saying earlier on you've been involved in, you know, the Concepts Course and you've also been involved in training hypnotherapists, I'm just wondering how much your own experience of training is carried over into the role of you as a trainer? How much you've, you know evolved, with the mix?

Jonathan: Yeah. It's interesting because I'm actually teaching at the same college that I did the Concepts Course in and there's a lot of kind of... there's a ghost of me in there, of my own experience of what it's like and how excited I was about this sort of new way of seeing things. And I can almost see the ghost of me in quite a lot of the students.

William: Is that a friendly ghost, a good ghost?

Jonathan: Yeah, I think it is quite a good ghost. Yeah, and sharing their excitement, really.

William: Right.

Jonathan: I didn't realise how...What I didn't realise was are what the frustrations of actually being an employee in an education establishment would be. (laughter) You know, just silly things like booking a room and having the right key fob and having this and having that and submitting things and all the kind of different jargon and language that is used outside of the education system that's a new learning, that's another mountain to go up.

William: Right, so you're telling me that your work as a trainer is just about you in the room with the students and with the ghost of you as a trainee but it's also what happens outside the room with the staff, the education and relating to that mountain?

Jonathan: Yeah, and the politics of it all. As a sole trader practitioner, I'm not really used to that, you know, politics and who gets on with who and all that kind of, I was going to say nonsense, but that stuff.

William: Right, right. That's really interesting. I was just thinking that's one thing we didn't come up with this morning was the context that training is delivered in and those other relationships.

Jonathan: Yes, which you don't see, generally, when you're sat on this side of the fence.

William: Yeah, yeah.

[Silence]

William: I think I'm running out of questions, yes. Have we reached the end or is there more we... Have you got a sense of things you haven't told me that I haven't asked you about?

Jonathan: It was only the interpersonal stuff of the tutors that went on which I found interesting. That I thought they were playing games sometimes, that –

William: With each other?

Jonathan: With the group, in the Diploma, that we had a female and male and they started off as bad mum and good dad and finished off as good mum and bad dad, which I noticed towards the end of the course. And, that was an interesting revelation for me, how people could change those kind of roles and what the impact of that had on the group.

William: Right, and you're saying that they were making that change or the impact of working with your group...?

Jonathan: I wasn't quite sure whether that was something that was deliberate or subconscious, but certainly that, for my own experience and the shared experience of the group, was that that's what was happening.

William: Right, and are you co-facilitated on the Concepts Course that you're teaching?

Jonathan: No, it's just me.

William: Right, I see, but I guess you... even if you're just on your own that you... the group's new. You might have different meanings to the group over time, you might become bad dad to...?

Jonathan: Yeah. To a few of them, yeah.

William: So, you're aware of that dimension in you as a trainer?

Jonathan: Yes.

William: Does that every get sticky?

Jonathan: In the Diploma?

William: Well, I guess, either you as student or you as a Concept trainer.

Jonathan: I think it's early days yet for the Concepts one because I'm only halfway through the ten-week course, so we'll have to wait and see what happens on that. Maybe, with it being such a brief course, it doesn't get a chance to become that. It will be interesting to see. But it was definitely. I think, the elephant in the room that nobody ever mentioned in the Diploma.

William: Oh, right. It wasn't mentioned but you were aware of it, is a process, is people responding to these changes?

Jonathan: And it was mentioned out(?) with(?) the trainers, but never actually directly to them.

William: Right, you mean it was discussed in PD, or somewhere?

Jonathan: Yeah, it was, PD or over the kettle or...

William: Oh right, but not in the (inaudible 00:20:31)? And they didn't bring it up as a...?

Jonathan: No.

William: That's interesting. Do you think, if that had been worked with, how could that have affected the training process, do you think?

Jonathan: I think it would have enriched it, to be honest.

William: I was wondering that, yeah.

Jonathan: Yeah, I think it was a missed opportunity for us all, to look at that. And we're left with that still, really.

William: Right. I suppose I'm also thinking it takes a certain level of courage to go into that territory as a trainer, maybe even as a trainee, you know, to take those kind of risks?

Jonathan: Yes, yeah.

William: So the spotlights...So that's one bit of the spotlight but what's the views. You know, you were put under the spotlight in different ways and different... but not that bit of the spotlight.

Jonathan: No, which was a shame.

William: Right. Yeah. I think that's a useful point to stop.

Jonathan: Okay. Thank you.

William: Thank you.