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THE USE OF METAPHOR IN CHILD PSYCHOTHERAPY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED MODEL

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Philosophiae Doctor

in the

Faculty of Human Sciences

Department of Psychology

at the

University of the Free State

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March 2003

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Oranje-Vrystaat
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

- Dr. E.M. Luttig, a very special lady, without whose competent guidance and active support this project would never have been realised.

- Dr. M.C. Fourie, for being prepared to take on the project at a late stage and provide the process with structure, optimism and scientific coherence.

- The late Ds. J.F. Schwartz. The chapter entitled *The concept 'metaphor'* is dedicated to his memory.

- Prof P.J. Visagie, for guidance during the project's conception.

- Charl-Pierre Celliers for co-operation with the diagrams; Dr. P.D.d.W. Williams and Mrs E. McDonald for editorial assistance.

- My husband, Niel, parents and children for their support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As representational tools, metaphors form an intrinsic part of the process of conceptualisation. Metaphors reflect viewpoints about the nature of the world, illustrate the manner in which human senses interpret reality and constitute cultural meaning-networks. Consequently, metaphors have a determinate influence on individual experiences and perceptions (Bronowski, 1979; Bruner, 1990; Leary, 1990; Eco, 1999).

Examples of everyday uses for metaphors would be to describe life as a journey, or the brain as a computer. Metaphors, especially those in common use, are often accepted at face value without people realising the extent to which they influence thoughts and experiences (Leary, 1990; Lakoff, 1991).

During the course of normal development and play, as well as during the course of psychotherapy, children, adolescents and adults spontaneously create and use metaphors, which are unique to each person or situation (Kiepenhauer, 1990; Ammann, 1991; Frankel, 1998). When attempting to express psychic concepts, children can spontaneously create metaphors, which serve as vehicles for certain experiences or ideas. Alternatively, a therapist can introduce

what he or she considers to be an appropriate metaphor (Kalff, 1980; Allan, 1988; Oaklander, 1988; Ammann, 1991; Goldstein, 1999).

For the purposes of this study, which has the use of metaphor in psychotherapy as its main focus, the researcher has adopted a broad definition of metaphor whereby any portrayal, which gives shape to inner experience, is regarded as a metaphor. These include drawings, stories and symbols, which children imbue with meaning. (The researcher discusses the concept metaphor, including other definitions and similar representational devices, in chapter 2.)

Within a broader definition of metaphor, self-concepts, theories and also world-views, could be regarded as metaphors (Leary, 1990). An example of a perspective on models for scientific research, would be Kühn's explanation of paradigms "shifting" (Kühn, 1962). Kühn's metaphor created the expectation that perspectives could change or "shift" from one (traditional or entrenched) way of viewing a certain matter (called a "paradigm") to another, often-unexpected perspective, with the latter perspective explaining the given matter from a fresh, new insight.

According to Bruner (1990), research has shown that concepts, which have become part of a person's conceptual framework are extremely difficult to transcend and additional conceptualisations tend to be built on existing assumptions. As a result of this, the psyche is often bound by those metaphors according to which thinking is ordered. The enticing ways in which metaphors can structure arguments often make it difficult for individuals to transcend certain paradigms (Bruner, 1990; Lakoff, 1991). This might be the case even when these paradigms prove inadequate (Kühn, 1962; Lifton, 1993).

For these reasons, a discussion of metaphor has to consider some of the issues concerning truth and reality. While any given metaphor might be experienced as being the truth, this "truth" would in fact often have been experienced (and reacted to) differently, if it had been described by means of a different metaphor. The logical consequence of this has been to study the way in which metaphors influence views, and to consider the use of metaphors in psychotherapy as vehicles for change.

Metaphors sometimes serve as vehicles for meanings that are experienced to be on the threshold of consciousness. To use Shakespeare's words, they give name and shape to 'the forms of things unknown' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, act 5, scene 1, see footnote). By performing this function, metaphors serve as conceptual devices and aid the process of awareness.

The ways in which concepts influence thinking, place a great responsibility on cognisant individuals. In one of his later essays, written in 1957, Jung (1978, CW 10) stated: "We are living in an age filled with apocalyptic images of universal destruction" (p. 247). He found it "astounding that man (sic), the investigator, inventor and the vehicle of all these developments, the originator of all judgements and decisions and the planner of the future, must make himself such a *quantite` ne`gliable*" (p. 269).

Footnote 1: "...as imagination bodies forth / the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen / turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name" (Shakespeare, 1910, p. 216, lines 15-17).

In their book *The Sixth Extinction*, Leakey and Lewin (1996) express the concern that, due to their inherent limitations, humans could become the cause of their own demise. Others share this concern. When he received the Freedom Medal in Philadelphia in 1994, Vaclav Havel (speech cited in Hollis, 1995) president of the Czech Republic, presented his vision of the task ahead:

> The central political task of the final years of this century, then, is the creation of a new model of coexistence among various cultures, peoples, races and religious spheres within a single interconnected civilization...Transcendence is the only real alternative to extinction (pp. 127-128).

People thus have the responsibility to find meaning for themselves and managing their lives on an ongoing basis. This implies learning to understand and improve those skills needed to equip them for this task. Acquiring sensitivity for the way in which metaphors influence conceptualisations, should form an integral part of this coping equipment (Leary, 1990; Du Preez, 1991; Lakoff, 1991).

Children tend to be especially vulnerable in this regard. Their psyches are developmentally geared to absorb the models of the world (concepts, ways of thinking, attitudes) presented to them through the family system and culture into which they are born (Crain, 1992; Goldstein, 1999).

The appeal for heightened conceptual sensitivity and transcendence extends to psychology. As far as psychological theories are concerned, conceptual integration has become a necessary exercise. Bruner (1990) wrote:

> The science of mind as William James once called it, has become fragmented as never before in its history. It has lost its center and risks losing the cohesion needed to assure the internal exchange that might justify a division of labor between its parts (p. x).

Along with this fragmentation, valuable knowledge contained in the various theories is seen by Bruner (1990) as having become "sealed" and "remote" (p. x). The researcher shares Bruner's concern.

Presentation of subject matter

Chapter 2

'The concept metaphor'

Some premises pertaining to the issue of metaphor are explained, definitions of metaphor are discussed and contributions to the concept metaphor are presented.

The primary focus of this chapter is the first research question that arose, namely: what are relevant themes regarding the nature of metaphor? (See 3.1.1, p. 53.) This discussion is supplemented by information regarding the context within which the process of shaping and relating to metaphorical material takes place. (See 3.1.2.2, p. 54.)

Chapter 3

The research method

Research questions are presented and the research method is explained.

Chapter 4

The analytical approach

The implication of the need to promote understanding of basic representational processes is that those viewpoints specifically dealing with these processes be presented in greater detail. Amongst the six psychological perspectives that are discussed in this thesis, the analytical viewpoint is presented in the greatest detail. This perspective provides a holistic theoretical framework for psychotherapy as well as explicit guidelines for a greater understanding of the functioning of symbols and the use of metaphorical material in psychotherapy.

Chapter 5

Viewpoints from other disciplines

The intention here is to illustrate the convergence of disciplines in describing some basic principles that provide a better understanding of the nature of metaphors. Some of these descriptions have been instrumental in creating influential world-views. The postmodern movement is an example of one of these world-views.

It is not the aim of this thesis to allow the information from other disciplines to intrude on the subject matter in an unnatural manner. For example, it is not the intention of the researcher either to 'psychologise' biology or to 'biologise' psychology. A similar approach is taken to information gained from philosophy and other sciences.

The following viewpoints are discussed:

Biological viewpoints are discussed to illustrate which theories are currently seen to provide insight into the biological substratum of the psyche. This viewpoint is helpful in making the reader aware of certain inherent human characteristics, including those that imply limitations.

Kant (1724-1804) is discussed because of the influence that his work had on theorists from different disciplines. For example, both Peirce and Jung were introduced to Kant in their youth and credited him with exerting a definitive influence on their thinking (McGuire & Hull, 1980; Houser & Kloesel, 1992).

Hegel (1770-1831) is mentioned because of his introduction of the concepts of process and a dialogue between a culture and its population. He is also held partly responsible for influencing Hitler and Marx, who had a profound influence on the history of the previous century (Honderich, 1995).

The theories supplied by semioticians provide a description of how basic representational mechanisms could work. The contribution of Peirce is discussed in some detail to provide an example of this. Some remarks from the perspectives of Umberto Eco have been added.

The work of Ricoeur (1913-) illustrates the role of metaphor as a vehicle, linked to a network of possible meanings. Ricoeur's work also demonstrates how the process of creating meaning tends to become narrative in nature, as well as the way in which the strengths from otherwise disparate views can be employed to provide an integrated perspective.

The researcher cites Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff (1991) and Lakoff (1993) to demonstrate the way in which metaphors are embedded in language.

The discussion of these contributions is followed by a comparison of viewpoints on the mediation of truth and reality. Postmodernism is briefly discussed.

Chapter 6

Other relevant psychological approaches

The approaches discussed are psychoanalysis, Gestalt Therapy, the Ericksonian approach, cognitive psychotherapy and narrative psychotherapy. These approaches are presented chronologically in order of historical origin in so far as this is possible. However, the discussion of each approach includes material on current perspectives held. Although care is taken to allow an approach to speak for itself, the particular contribution of each approach to the research questions provided in chapter 3 is highlighted.

Since the integrated summary of the research findings is provided in Chapter 7, the main focus of this chapter will be to provide descriptions illustrating possible answers to the research questions. Some visual representations of the process of change involved when working with metaphor as seen from various theoretical perspectives are included. The contributions of Kalsched (1996), Rossi (1987) and Kolb (1984) to a better understanding of the process of metaphor-use are presented separately.

Chapter 7

Final research findings and conclusions

In this chapter, the researcher aims to provide a better understanding of the key concepts involved when metaphor is used in psychotherapy. Guidelines which emerge from this study are intended to be applicable for use within the preferred theoretical framework of any individual

therapist. The focus will be on promoting the competent therapeutic use of metaphors. An integrated description of process is provided.

Appendices A, B & C

Appendices A & B provide case illustrations to explain the relevance of the material provided in chapters 1 and 2. In Appendix C, a discussion of sandplay illustrates one method whereby the theoretical principles discussed can be concretely implemented in child psychotherapy.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT 'METAPHOR'

The focus of this chapter is two-fold:

- It addresses the first research question, namely: *What are relevant themes regarding the nature of metaphor*? (3.1.1, p. 53.)
- It begins to answer a further research question, namely: *Which conditions are perceived to be conducive to metaphor-use*? (3.1.2.2, p.54.)

The ability to create and relate to metaphor forms an integral part of general psychic functioning. Metaphors can be viewed as conceptual tools which serve the psyche in its ongoing task of interpreting the environment (Barker, 1985; Leary, 1990; Du Preez, 1991; Edelman, 1992; Burritt, 1999).

The fact that psychic processes are part of the whole that has to be interpreted, is a complicating factor. If the psyche is personified, it can be said that it is both subject and object to itself (Edinger, 1984; Soyland, 1994; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995; Van Eenwyk, 1997). Bound by the constraints imposed by its own nature, as well as the nature of the reality within which it finds

itself, the psyche is therefore faced with the challenge of experiencing as well as interpreting its own processes (Du Preez, 1991; Edelman, 1992).

In the opinion of the researcher, the mentioned complexities do not indicate insurmountable difficulties, but merely point out certain necessities which define the boundaries of mankind's investigation into reality. Despite these complexities, the ability to form concepts and create symbolic representations is an essentially natural psychic function which allows humans to achieve a certain amount of objectivity (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Macaulay, 1996; Eco, 1999).

Metaphor activates certain separate but linked processes and is therefore capable of evoking a composite experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Barker, 1985; Lusebrink, 1990; O' Hanlon & Martin, 1992). In the view of the researcher, this implies that any given metaphor can evoke a composite response with the various processes complementing one another. A given metaphor could, for example, provide words, words could activate images, images could activate feelings, and feelings could be understood when put into words. The process could also start at any other point, for example, with the introduction of an image, and is best understood when not visualised as a linear process, but as a network of functions (Rossi, 1987; Edelman, 1992; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

In support of the opinion expressed in the previous paragraph, Paprotté and Dirven (1985) discuss various experiments regarding the functioning of metaphor and conclude: 'These experiments suggest that the psychologically "deepest" level of thought is neither linguistic nor

perceptual-imaginal, but something abstract, with metaphor mediating between the images and the concepts' (p. 345). Paprotté and Dirven even go as far as to state that 'the term "metaphor" does not describe a unitary phenomenon but a range of quite diverse ones, as regards both the nature and the causes (origins) of the phenomenon' (p. 345).

Bruner (1983), Jung (CW 18, 1989), Bruner, (1990) Jung (CW 5, 1990) and Kalsched (1996) stress the importance of acknowledging an individual's subjective experience that a metaphorical expression of psychic contents is "real" or "true".

2.1 Defining metaphor

2.1.1 Complexities inherent in defining metaphor

The distinction between metaphor and other representational devices like symbols and images tends to become blurred, especially when they form an intricate part of the experience of psychotherapy.

While people tend to have an intuitive understanding of, and an innate ability to relate to and use metaphors, defining metaphor is a difficult task which is often accomplished with controversial results. To illustrate the difficulties inherent in defining metaphor, Leary (1990) cites Soskice who remarked: "Anyone who has grappled with the problem of metaphor will appreciate the

pragmatism of those who proceed to discuss it without giving any definition at all" (p. 4). These difficulties are due to the nature of metaphor.

Metaphor indicates more than can adequately be said in words. The expression, "his tension melted away", a metaphor depicting tension as a substance which can melt, is only effective if the reaction of the listener allows empathy for the corresponding relaxation of muscles, aided by the image of melting. Ahsen's (1984) theory postulates an ISM composite comprising of an image (I), sensory experience (S) and meaning (M). This is a helpful way of understanding the process described in the example given above. (Ahsen's theory is cited in Lusebrink, 1990 and is more fully discussed on p. 130.) The metaphors used to describe behaviour are in fact often descriptive of the experiential reality of such behaviours. For instance, the use of the expression "awakening to" indicates becoming aware of something. A further example would be describing an individual as "enmeshed" or "tied up" in a relationship.

For this reason, the researcher finds the definition provided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to be a helpful one for psychotherapy. These authors define metaphor as a process of "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5).

The researcher regards metaphor to be a representational phenomenon, with a composite character. The ability to utilise metaphor is perceived to form an integral part of a human being's natural capabilities. These capabilities are regarded to be partly the result of mankind's innate nature and partly the result of cultural and developmental legacies. 'Representational' as it is used here, does not only indicate the use of language, but the ability to form concepts or images.

Collins English Dictionary (CED) (2001) defines the term 'concept' as a 'directly intuited object of thought,' which aids the process of awareness. This could include rudimentary forms of awareness, as well as complex processes of conceptualisation. According to CED, the word 'image' has a wide meaning that includes both visual and non-visual mental representations. CED's description includes defining image as the "mental experience of something which is not immediately present to the senses, often involving memory", "a figure of speech, such as a simile or a metaphor", "mental representation or picture", "idea produced by the imagination", and, when used as a verb, "to portray or describe". In this thesis, the representation evoked by the metaphor will often be referred to as an image. Used in this sense, the word 'image' includes any interpretative representation.

Images can also become concepts, and as such can provide the material for abstract thought processes. It must be borne in mind that the different contexts within which meaning is often encountered, can lead to images or concepts becoming associated with certain contextual, sensory and emotional components which act as associative links. These links aid recall and concept formation. For example, the smell of peaches or the sound of a sprinkler system could allow an individual to remember his/her childhood visits to his/her grandfather's farm in vivid detail.

Although the concepts "metaphor", "sign" and "symbol" can be used to impart different meanings, these meanings can often be very closely related. Consider the following sentences regarding the rituals of the Christian faith: "The bread taken at communion is *symbolic* of the

body of Christ. It is a visible *sign* of a person's faith. The bread is also a *metaphor* for the way in which his Word nourishes our souls." It is, therefore, helpful to compare the definitions of metaphor with definitions of other similar representational devices.

2.1.2 Lexical definitions

In order to compare the uses of these terms with one another, the researcher consulted five different dictionaries for their respective definitions of 'metaphor', 'sign' and 'symbol'.

An older definition by *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary* (1910) is reminiscent of the original definition given by Aristotle (2.2, p. 19). Chambers defines 'metaphor' as the "transference of meaning, the putting of one thing for another which it only resembles, an implicit simile."

According to *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995), a metaphor is 'a way of describing something by comparing it to something else that has similar qualities without using the words "like" or "as".'

The *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (1995) defines 'metaphor' as " 1(a) the application of a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable... 2. Something considered as representing or symbolising another (usually abstract) thing."

The definition of the concept provided by *The Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1997) is "an expression which describes a person or object in a literary way by referring to something that is considered to possess similar characteristics to the person or object you are trying to describe. Figure of speech. To be a metaphor for something is to be a symbol which represents that thing."

More recently, *Collins English Dictionary* (2001) has defined 'metaphor' as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance".

Nearly two decades ago, Eco (1984) pointed out that dictionaries tend to experience difficulties when attempting to define 'metaphor'. The above examples indicate that this is still the case.

Owing to the similarities which exist, it is necessary to compare the uses of 'sign' and 'symbol' with 'metaphor'.

Collins English Dictionary (CED) (2001) gives sixteen uses for 'sign', including the following: "something that indicates or acts as a token of a fact, condition, etc., that is not immediately or outwardly observable"; "an action or gesture"; "board or placard"; "arbitrary or conventional mark or device that stands for a word or phrase"; "to outline in gestures".

The meanings that CED (2001) gives for the concept 'symbol' include, "something that represents or stands for something else, usually by convention or association, esp. a material object used to represent something abstract" and "an object, person, idea etc., used in a literary work, film, etc., to stand for or suggest something else with which it is associated either implicitly or in some subtle way".

It would thus appear that although the definitions of 'symbol', 'sign' and 'metaphor' overlap, 'sign' is most often used when the intention is to 'show' or point something out, 'symbol' is most often used in the sense of representing something, and 'metaphor' is most often used in the sense of interpreting one thing in terms of another.

The literature from other sources supports the trends described here (Leary, 1990; Du Preez, 1991). However, once a concept becomes a term used in a particular theoretical context, it is often defined in a specific way. This is the case when the concept 'sign' is used in semiotics, the concept 'symbol' is used in analytic psychology and the concept 'metaphor' is used in Ericksonian psychotherapy.

It appears to the researcher that the concepts complement one another and can co-exist meaningfully. When something previously intangible becomes available to consciousness, this would most commonly be seen as part of a symbolic process. However, when awareness is brought about through the medium of a form that allows personalised creative exploration, this process tends to become a metaphorical one. For example, the Greek god Zeus can serve as a symbol for a certain prototypical male role in Western society. However, if a powerful influential

businessman were to say, "I live the Zeus life", this prototype would become a metaphor for the way in which he lives.

2.2 Viewpoints from other disciplines

Historically, Aristotle (384-322 BC) was the first known philosopher to discuss the metaphor in some detail in his works *Poetica* (Aristotle, 1982) and *Rhetorica* (Aristotle, 1971). He viewed metaphor as an implicit simile between a literal object and a metaphorical object. Aristotle tended to focus on metaphors mainly as interesting or unusual means of linguistic portrayal, making little distinction between the metaphor and other adjacent figures of speech like the simile (Eco, 1984). He defined metaphor as follows: "Metaphor is the application to one thing of the name belonging to another" (*Poetica,* 1457b, p. 67). Aristotle also indicated that "a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarities in dissimilars" and it is, "from metaphor we can best get hold of something fresh" (*Rhetorica* 1410b). (The editor, Ross, does not provide *Rhetorica* with page numbers.) Aristotle adds: "Liveliness is especially conveyed by the metaphor, and by the further power of surprising the hearer; because the hearer expected something different, his acquisition of the new idea impresses him all the more" (*Rhetorica*, 1412b).

Magee (1987) and Russell (1996) hold that Aristotle influenced the philosophers that came after him. His belief in logic and reason as a means of testing what could be perceived by the senses, led to logic and reason gaining an inordinately exclusive status for many years (Edinger, 1999).

Lakoff (1993) asserts metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience in terms of another, often very different, domain of experience. The example he uses is that of understanding love in terms of a journey. He sees these two domains of experience (one about 'love' and the other about 'journey') as forming part of an underlying network of systems of meaning that he describes as 'conceptual maps'. Lakoff further explains:

> The LOVE-AS-A-JOURNEY mapping is a set of ontological correspondences that map knowledge about journeys onto knowledge about love. Such correspondences permit us to reason about love using the knowledge we use to reason about journeys (p. 4).

Although Lakoff is a linguist, he and Johnson, the co-author of *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) are adamant "no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis" (p. 19).

The biologist Edelman (1992) agrees with Lakoff. In Edelman's opinion "meaning results from the intrinsic workings of the body and the brain," and "individual humans construct cognitive concepts that reflect concepts concerned with the interactions between body-brain and the environment." He concludes, "conceptual embodiment occurs through bodily activities *prior to*

language" [Edelman's italics] (p.247). Metaphors are often employed in psychotherapy specifically for this reason (O' Hanlon & Martin, 1992; Gass, 1995).

Abrams (1993) mentions two literary views on metaphor. According to the traditional literary view, metaphor is a figure of speech or a trope. An alternative view quotes anthropological evidence and holds that all language is essentially metaphorical.

From the first point of view, metaphor is often simply defined as an implied analogy or as one of the tropes or figures of speech (Holman, 1972). However, Preminger (1974) gives an extremely useful discussion of metaphor. Metaphor is defined by him as "a condensed verbal relation in which an idea, image or symbol may, by presence of one or more other ideas, images or symbols, be enhanced in vividness, complexity, or breadth of implication" (p. 490). According to Preminger, merely analysing a metaphor for resemblances to the subject matter it refers to, is mostly seen to be counterproductive.

Preminger (1974) refers to a vital context or matrix that carries the network of meanings upon which the effectiveness of any metaphor relies. He further remarks on the sense of tension or polarity that is evoked by metaphor, stating: "we may well be able to apprehend metaphorical relations without being able to translate them into logical or any other terms" (p. 494).

Abrams (1993) describes the manner in which a specific metaphorical term can be connected to a variety of possible meanings. He explains how Searle distinguished between the 'utterance

meaning' and the literal meaning of metaphor, thereby indicating the intended meaning of the speaker (p. 68).

There is a tendency to conceptualise by using metaphor to create an imaginary space. Although this might initially appear unusual, it is a device that is frequently used in everyday speech. As an example, consider the expressions "I need room to think" and "He is in a world of his own". In a chapter entitled 'Mental-space builders,' Fujii (1995) explains how language is used to create imaginary space. (The importance of this ability for creativity is discussed under 2.4.4, p. 33.)

2.3 Metaphor as an aid to the manipulation of ideas

Through the use of signs, symbols, and metaphors, humans acquired the ability not only to name and form concepts of concrete, visible, external objects, but also the ability to manipulate ideas. To gain a greater understanding of metaphors, it is necessary to understand how awareness of some of the products of inner processes can be achieved by the creation of concepts to aid their recognition. The ability to use signs, symbols or metaphors to aid recognition and concept formation is part of this process (Macaulay, 1996).

There are two possible ways of investigating the ability to use metaphors. The first approach is to study metaphors as *products*, i.e. by treating the metaphors as being largely independent of the biological processes that give rise to them. The research done by Thagard (1992) describing

attempts to build computer models of the way the brain processes language would be an example of this approach.

The second approach is to investigate how consciousness and culture evolved and to build hypotheses *explaining the process* which gives rise to metaphors. It could be argued that, strictly speaking, the second approach builds on the first, i.e. that any investigator is limited to making inferences from studying the products of the psyche. However, there does seem to be an intrinsic difference in perspective between the two approaches. This difference lies in the importance attached to the biological, developmental, cultural and experiential basis on which the use of metaphor rests. Researchers advocating the second approach make these factors a focal point of their investigation.

According to Audi (1995), there has been much controversy in the past whether the meaning of a metaphor can be translated into a literal equivalent. Audi explains how Hobbes (1588-1679) and Locke (1632-1704) believed that clear-thinking philosophers would be able to communicate their own thoughts without using metaphors, but adds that this viewpoint is no longer widely held.

The opposite extreme has been argued equally persuasively. According to Blackburn (1994), Nietzsche considered all speech to be metaphorical and believed that literal truth was merely dead or fossilised metaphor. Blackburn further points out that Jakobson believed metaphor and its counterparts to be the basis of all linguistic communication. From the latter perspective, Eco (1984) cites Bede who referred to metaphor as "a genus of which all the other tropes are species" (p. 87).

Leary (1990) considers all knowledge to be rooted in analogical or metaphorical modes of perception and thought. He describes a "comparative, relational mode of understanding that I presume to be fundamental to human cognition" (p. 2). He further views metaphors as providing potentially creative insights into the way things function, but also as being capable of exerting a determining influence on viewpoints resulting in the inflexibility of categories. Theorists of varying persuasions, for example, Peirce (1839-1914) and Ricoeur (1913-), share Leary's approach to metaphor. (See 5.2.3, p. 149 & 5.2.5 p.157 respectively.) From this perspective, definitions of metaphor end up being metaphors themselves, making these definitions circular in nature.

However, as critics of the above viewpoint have noted, it is necessary to avoid seeing everything in terms of metaphor. It can often become necessary to distinguish between various figures of speech, or to allow for a view of metaphor as a tool. For example, Eco (1984) dismisses any overly inclusive way of dealing with metaphor. When he portrays unlimited semiosis as a netlike labyrinth, he prefers to call this a logical and topological model and not a metaphor. It is the opinion of the researcher, that, in doing so, Eco illustrates two other important points. The first implication is the existence of different levels of thought. For example, at one level a person could relate to a particular metaphor in a more basic way, allowing room for a certain amount of identification with the experiential context created by the metaphor. At another level he could say 'this is only a model'. Second, this implies that a person has the ability to influence the stance taken regarding particular metaphorical material.

2.4 Psychological approaches

Metaphor is often used in psychotherapy as a form of symbolic communication that invites participation in a process of imagining and expressing one thing in terms of another (Lankton, 1986; Hanlon & Wilk, 1987; O' Hanlon & Martin, 1992; Gass, 1995). This enables one image or concept (metaphor) to evoke a variety of different meanings. Metaphors can sometimes evoke perspectives that lie beyond the immediate reaches of conscious understanding (Zeig, 1987; Mills & Crowley, 1993).

Like images and symbols, metaphors do this by evoking an image which makes a certain portrayal of psychic contents possible. The form into which these contents are translated by means of the metaphor, makes them more easily accessible to consciousness, or, alternatively, enables them to influence unconscious processes (Erickson, 1980, Vol. IV, p. 326; O' Hanlon & Martin, 1992).

When a metaphorical image is experienced as an externalised object, this can lead to the image being regarded as part of 'outside' or objective reality. Psychic contents portrayed in this way can enable the investigation of the psyche by the psyche, thereby making it possible for the psyche to consciously influence its own concept formation. All insights regarding psychic functioning, including psychological theories, can be viewed from this perspective.

Unfortunately the ability to externalise psychic contents also forms the basis of projective defence mechanisms (Mahl, 1971; Schwartz, 1999). Externalisation could, therefore, potentially either facilitate the manipulation of contents or, alternatively, lead to the recognition of certain contents being resisted and regarded as 'non-me'. Certain psychic contents could then be experienced as only being part of outer reality. Only wanting to express love towards others, a person could resist the insight that he or she has some aggressive or controlling tendencies. This could lead to the following statement: "I am only doing this to you because I love you and have your best interests at heart and there is a lot of evil in the world."

A metaphor can cause certain psychic contents to become personified. An example of this would be to say, "My jealousy is a green-eyed snake. It attacks me unawares and causes me to act in a way of which I later feel ashamed." (Researcher's examples.)

Mills and Crowley (1993) explain how Sheldon Kopp differentiated among three ways (modes) of approaching the world, namely the rational, the empirical and the metaphorical. He describes the metaphorical mode as a way of approaching the world with openness to multiple meanings. According to him, this is achieved by being open to the symbolic dimensions of experience. In some respects Kopp's 'metaphorical mode' is similar to Jung's (1990, CW 6) 'symbolic attitude' (p. 475).

A more succinct differentiation than the one provided by Kopp, is the distinction Bruner (1990) makes between what he defines as the 'paradigmatic' mode of thought and the 'narrative mode'. Bruner includes both the rational and the empirical under what he calls the paradigmatic way of

knowing. The researcher views both as valid ways of making sense of experience. Some relevant aspects of Bruner's viewpoint will be discussed below. Bruner's viewpoint on narrative is discussed under the narrative approach (6.7.1, p. 259).

2.4.1 Bruner's viewpoint

The information on Bruner was obtained from Bruner (1983), Bruner, (1990) and Crain, (1992).

Bruner (1983) explains he realised early in his career that the metaphor according to which a study was conducted could influence the final experimental results. He wrote, 'If the (experimental) environment contained relevant and combinable cues, animals would respond with "insightful" hypotheses. But you could also design blind environments which would make their inhabitants look stupid' (pp. 24-25). Experiments that Bruner conducted convinced him that an investigation into the unconscious elements of cognition could yield valuable information.

According to Bruner, human beings represent their knowledge of the world in three ways: firstly, through habit and action, i.e. 'knowing what to do', second, through imagery, i.e. the depiction of events and relationships, and third, by representing things by means of a system of symbols. Bruner regards the intelligence-bearing constituents of mind, which make these functions possible, to be innate. These would include intention-driven skills, the appreciation of means-end relations, curiosity, the capacity for combining actions, a capacity for representation and an

innate appreciation of space, time, and even, possibly, an innate ability to deduce causality from experience.

Bruner (1990) regards mankind's classical questions to be concerned with "the nature of mind and its processes, questions about how we construct our meanings and our realities, questions about the shaping of mind by history and culture" (p. xi). He envisions any study of this nature as having as its focus the symbolic activities of human beings.

Bruner's study of infants convinced him that while infants might have a limited set of goals at which they directed their actions, as well as a limited repertory of means of achieving these objectives, they displayed what he called an innate 'means-ends readiness' and actively generated hypotheses from the start of life (Bruner, 1983). More importantly, from the point of view of this thesis, is the fact that, apart from this readiness to generate cognitive maps and to interact with people, Bruner was impressed by the ability of infants to play. According to Bruner (1983), play sensitises children "to the combinability of things of the world for goal-directed action" (p. 150).

From a biological point of view, Bruner (1990) believes "there are certain classes of meaning to which human beings are innately tuned and for which they actively search" (p. 72). However, he does not feel that man inherited Chomsky's LAD (Language Acquisition Device). He postulates that what is in fact inherited is more along the lines of a MAD, or a Meaning Acquisition Device. The components of such a device would be a sense of agency, a sense that there is a sequential order to things, and sensitivity to what is canonical and what is different and it further requires a narrator's perspective.

Bruner's later thinking led to a book entitled *Acts of Meaning* (1990). This book deals with the aftermath of the cognitive revolution and a resultant shift in his perspective. He was of the opinion that the 'classical' questions in psychology need to be revived and re-evaluated from the point of view of recent developments, not only in psychology itself, but also in co-operation with adjacent disciplines like philosophy, anthropology and linguistics.

Bruner (1990) agrees with Vygotsky (1978) that the community into which a child is born supplies it with "a very special kind of communal tool kit whose tools, once used, made the user a reflection of the community" (p. 11). He confirms psychology should focus on the study of human culture.

According to Bruner (1990), the construction of meaning and the processing of information are two entirely different processes. He regards the processing of information by a computer to be an activity that is indifferent to meaning. He points out that although such a system can perform operations that appear to create meaning, it cannot cope with vagueness, polysemy and with metaphorical or connotative connections. He views the cognitive psychologist Dennett's concept of virtual minds as equivalent to reductionism (Dennett, 1996). Consequently Bruner's own focus of preference shifted to understanding the processes involved in the creation of meaning.

2.4.2 Du Preez's viewpoint

The example that Du Preez (1991) gives to illustrate the manner in which metaphors can influence perceptions is that of viewing life as a stage on which people are the players (Shakespeare, 1910, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene V11, p. 260, lines 136-142).

Du Preez (1991) explains the process of progressing from non-specific to rudimentary formulations and then expanding the idea carried into awareness by means of the original metaphor into more clearly formulated concepts. He describes the way in which metaphors can aid theorising as follows:

> Your first difficulty...is to find a way of seeing, a way of placing your object in a new intellectual space which will reveal unexpected properties...if you did not see events in terms of each other you would be living in a world of isolated and unconnected happenings. The metaphorical basis of thought is not, therefore, a lamentable intrusion of poetry into the world of hard facts. The world begins in poetry (p. 52).

Du Preez (1991) further emphasises that a metaphor can create an "intellectual space" by indicating, "a system of implications, a park containing many paths, which can be followed to unexpected places" (p. 54). He stresses: "concepts interact emotionally and experientially because we relate to the world in ways determined by our biology and our culture" (p. 62).

A "dark" or "hidden" side is also assumed to be implicitly present. For example, Shakespeare's metaphor used by Du Preez depicting life as a stage, mentioned above, can cause people to forget that life is not in fact a play, but serious reality. Metaphors are further seen as having a potentially powerful ability to exert psychic influence, especially since this influence can also be exerted at the subliminal or unconscious level.

For the reasons given above, Soyland (1994) finds it necessary to warn: "employing metaphors in science is inescapable...(and)...over time, some metaphors may be regarded as literally true due to habitual use" (p. 105). Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Leary (1990) and Du Preez (1991) emphasise the importance of the so-called 'root metaphor' used in descriptions, the fact that it can be part of an unconscious system, that it can have come to be regarded as the truth and consequently be resistant to change.

2.4.3 Klinger's viewpoint

Klinger (1971) hypothesises that a continuous stream of baseline fantasy activity underlies consciousness. He asserts that play and fantasy originate in early childhood as undifferentiated sets of activities. These activities develop, increasing in complexity, coherence, and realism until playing activities seem to diminish and fantasy seems to increase. According to Klinger, this baseline activity is variously manifested in dreams, hallucinations, and drug-induced and waking fantasies. Klinger identifies the following functions of playing, dreaming and fantasy:

- To resolve developmental issues around topics about which subjects of a certain age are typically concerned.
- To resolve current concerns or incomplete processes, like goals towards which the individual is striving but the outcome of which is uncertain.

Regarding the meaningfulness of spontaneously generated imagery, Klinger (1971) remarks on the fact that the introspective evidence suggests that consciousness is always or at least mostly marked by some kind of imagery. Since he is behavioristically oriented, he suggests fantasy segments must be conceived of as "rather complex amalgamations of responses that constitute states of the entire organism" (p. 349). This implies the existence of systems that link related affects and self-systems. According to him, response sequences that become integrated, are not rigid, but flexible: "Thus what really seems to become integrated is not a rigid sequence of responses but a response schema that matches certain directions of movement or ideation with certain states of sensory or ideational feedback" (p. 350).

Klinger (1971) does not believe playing or dreaming to be teleologically directed towards finding solutions to problems. He asserts these activities can contribute to problem solving unintentionally, since they can give rise to the fusion of images, and this fusion can result in problem solving. He concedes fantasy serves an important adaptive function by allowing certain psychic contents to become more optimally integrated:

> Individuals who are in the throes of a single, deep current concern are likely to spend much of their time in corresponding self-states, preoccupied with relevant content, and that certain incentives (power, social acceptance) and unsettling events (moments of intense joy, anguish, conflict or loss) give rise to and influence fantasy (p. 151).

2.4.4 Object-relations

Many theorists believe that cultural development and evolution intertwined, one giving rise to the format of the other and vice versa. (Vygotsky, 1978; Bates, 1979; Bruner, 1990; Stevens, 1990; Leakey & Lewin, 1992, Goldstein, 1999). Object-relations theory describes the basic components of the primary relationships within which this exchange could originally have occurred and within which it still takes place.

According to the authors mentioned, culture teaches individuals not only the dominant metaphors and the dominant narratives of their group, but through medium of family and social structures, also provides the container, i.e. the relationships, within which children can develop the necessary skills to negotiate these meanings.

Object-relations deals with the people and things to which individuals form attachments or relationships and by which they define what is meaningful for them. An understanding of the basics of object-relations theory is therefore important for an understanding of how the use of

symbols and metaphors is conceptualised to take place in psychotherapy. 'Objects' can refer to any thing or person that acquires symbolic value for the child. Apart from people, 'objects' can include real objects such as a teddy bear or blanket. In the example given, the blanket or teddy bear serve as metaphors for security (Gordon, 1967; Winnicott, 1988; Schwartz, 1999).

The early bond between a mother and her baby is regarded to have a crucial influence on the baby's ability to use symbols, to develop a sense of self and of intentionality and to trust that life is meaningful, thereby being prepared to approach conflict situations with inner strength. The development of boundaries, separateness, existential loneliness, the space that contains and theories pertaining to the postulated mechanisms of engagement or splitting, are all the province of object-relations.

According to object-relations theorists, a child's parents, caretakers, or other significant figures provide the child with the necessary experiences to be able to develop the ability to use symbols and so be able to maintain a sense of others even when they are not present. It is also through medium of these relationships that the child develops certain patterns of interaction and internalises certain concepts in an inner world. These concepts predispose him or her to view and react to people or events in a certain way (Gordon, 1967; Klein, 1987; Schwartz, 1999).

Josephine Klein, a self psychologist, explains how the development of a sense of self, or a sense of connected selves, is an integral part of this process (Klein, 1987). Ideally the child should develop a feeling of trust in others as well as in his or her own ability to 'make things happen' (Winnicott, 1958), and to experience self-esteem (Klein, 1987). This includes the development of

the ability to integrate positive and negative aspects of the self and others. The successful completion of these developmental tasks is a prerequisite to the ability to be able to use images creatively (Winnicott, 1988; Kalsched, 1996).

Freud coined the term 'object-relations' and gave his own well-known description of developmental phases. However, one of the major premises of current object-relations viewpoints, is that, due to his subject material, the object relations described by Freud were in fact indicative of psychopathology and are, therefore, not always directly applicable as a guideline to normal child development. Fairbairn and Winnicott have provided descriptions of healthy relationships between mothers and babies. They propose that it is mainly love and relatedness that drive the process of development and not instincts (Schwartz, 1999).

Object relations relies heavily on the imaginary understanding of what goes on in a baby's mind and also attempts to describe the non-verbal aspects of human development. Melanie Klein (Klein, 1988; Klein, 1990), one of the pioneers of play therapy and responsible for such concepts as splitting and introjection, was notorious for the fact that she seemed to recognise only these hypothesised inner processes and relied on them too heavily in her interpretations. One example is her interpretation of a young boy's fear of walking to school as having something to do with the fact that the road symbolised a fear of sexuality, instead of realising that he was being bullied by his peers on his way to school (Schwartz, 1999). However, psychology is indebted to her for recognising the trauma, anxiety and aggression which accompanies the process of splitting (Klein 1988, 1990; Kalsched, 1996).

In 1951 Winnicott wrote a paper entitled 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomenon' about what he then referred to as a neglected area in psychoanalytic theory (Winnicott, 1958). Winnicott's theory has since become a vital part of psychotherapeutic conceptualising. Important aspects of this theory will be introduced here since it deals with an area of human experience reserved for negotiating reality and discovering meaning.

A very important aspect of dealing with metaphorical objects like transitional symbols or objects, is what Winnicott would refer to as the 'use of the object' (Winnicott, 1988). This term describes a person's ability to place an object under consideration outside the area of subjective phenomena. Since subjective emotions are involved, this is often not easy to achieve. The principle implies the concept of separateness, i.e. the ability of being able to deal with someone or something as having a truly separate existence in his or her own right, and as not existing to fulfil the individual's needs or do his or her bidding.

In the case of children a certain amount of non-separateness could be considered normal. Separation anxiety has the developmental function of making a child compliant to the parents and the society within which it grows up. However, as can be imagined, this vulnerability can become misused. According to Winnicott (1988), the creative use of symbolism to mediate realities becomes 'visible' with the child's use of the so-called 'transitional object'. This can be anything from a beloved toy to a security blanket that serves an important symbolic function for a young child.

During the process of object relating, a particular object becomes invested with meaning. It is as though the person perceives the object to be a carrier of part of the self. Projection is involved and feeling value is attributed to the object. However, in the case of object *using*, Winnicott (1988) states: "the object, if it is to be used, must necessarily be real in the sense of being part of shared reality, not a bundle of projections" (p. 103). This is seen as part of the change to the reality principle.

Another important part of the process that has to do with symbols and object-relations is what is called the 'destruction of the object'. This does not imply that the object is literally destroyed, but that a child breaks the bond that he /she has with the object. The object still exists in reality, but is seen as separate and loses some of its meaning for the particular child.

This principle will similarly apply to the process of working with metaphors. When a child has made a certain investment in the metaphorical object or perspective, that child must be able to 'destroy', or risk the destruction of certain ideas, in order to make the change in attitude that is necessary for transformation. In order to acquire or enhance this ability, the child in question has to be able to experiment in a safe environment. The process of experimentation makes it possible to learn that what happens can be dealt with meaningfully, and that the consequence is not punishment or abandonment or loss of control.

According to Winnicott (1958 & 1988), this process of being able to cathect objects with meaning, and then later to allow them to become decathected and to lose their meaning, seems to be repeated at later stages of development, including adulthood. This innate ability is especially

useful for the process of psychotherapy, specifically pertaining to the symbolic or metaphoric use of objects in psychotherapy.

Winnicott describes healthy active adaptation as including the development of a sense of inner space where the child can experience being alone, i.e. maintaining a necessary separateness. He uses the term 'impingement' to describe the damage done to the child if the child feels that the mother (or any other person) can somehow penetrate this space.

Winnicott (1988) postulates the existence of an imaginary space, or:

> An intermediate area of *experiencing*, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet related (p. 3).

He underlines the fact that the intermediate area of experience is:

> In direct continuity with the play area of the small child...and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work (p. 16).

This concept was later extended by Winnicott to include both the therapeutic space, and an individual's inner space where realities can safely be negotiated without fear of consequences.

The researcher realises that it would be more apt to refer to the psyche's ability to negotiate transitional activities rather than to concretise the function and refer to transitional space. However, human beings often exhibit a tendency to create an actual space within which this activity takes place.

Ammann (1991) mentions that Corbin, like Winnicott, refers to the concept of an intermediate, but psychically real world. According to Ammann, Corbin perceives the use of imagination to imply the use of perception, cognition and the assigning of meaning or value to objects. Amatruda (1997) refers to the realm of the imagination as "the world where worlds meet" (p. 19).

These descriptions are consistent with what Bruner and Feldman (1990) point out to be the common metaphor of a threshold between that which is known and visible and that which is intuited but not visible. According to these authors, this metaphor is indicative of emergent meaning. The transitional process is sometimes represented as forming a bridge between the psyche and the world (Jacobi, 1974; Hillman, 1988; Kiepenhauer, 1990).

The "as if" focus of transitional activity is central to the negotiation of metaphorical material. In child psychotherapy "as if" activity equals playing.

2.4.5 Using play to create metaphors in psychotherapy

The importance of a playful approach to creativity and life in general, is universally recognised (Allan, 1988; Bates, 1979; Ammann, 1991; Crain, 1992; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Amatruda, 1997).

The symbolic space and time within which the process of creative discovery takes place is considered to possess certain unique qualities. Whitmont (1978) points out the time and space transcendent quality of archetypes, symbols and myths. An illustration of this is the beginning to the Russian fairy tale 'Vasalisa'. Estes (1992) begins this tale as follows: "Once there was, and once there was not, a young mother who..." (p. 75). This implies what every reader of fairy tales knows, namely, that the action described in the tale will take place in a fantasy world, but that some of the 'truths' learnt from the tale could in some way be a valuable reflection of certain aspects of reality. It further implies the existence of a symbolic space within which psychic realities can be played out (Waterman, 1997).

Jung (1993, CW 12) described this symbolic 'space' as follows:

> The place or medium of realization is neither mind nor matter, but that intermediate realm of subtle reality which can be adequately only expressed by the symbol. The symbol is neither abstract nor concrete, neither rational nor irrational, neither real nor unreal, it is always both (p. 283).

For this reason, it is the opinion of the researcher that therapists should value a positive attitude towards symbolic work and attempt to ensure that it is done in a psychically safe place, where the reality and validity of the imaginative products of the psyche will be respected.

During play, thinking, feeling and action combine spontaneously. A playing child has no fear of failure and he/she experiences a heightened sense of control. Playing thus provides a unique combination of containment and empowerment (Allan, 1988) and allows children a way of experimenting within safe boundaries (Kalff, 1980). Children learn that they can initiate play simply by saying, "Let's play a game" or "Let's pretend.' Since it is an experiential activity, playing provides a way of getting to know the body, manipulating and experimenting with objects and situations as well as providing the accompanying emotional reactions (McMahon, 1992).

Ryce-Menuhin (1992) explains the scope of play:

> Play is a concept on its own, not reducible to any one sociopsychological view of the universe or to any one stage of civilization. The play element has existed in all cultures and in all known historical periods. It may be described as a suprabiological form through which society expresses its interpretation of life and the world (p. 8).

Playing can thus be seen as a central activity of childhood, not bound to any theoretical framework.

While playing sets aside the pressures of what ought or ought not to be done, and creates the time and space to explore different possibilities in a way which does not have momentous consequences, it is also a serious developmental activity and functions as a creative experience, a way of meaning making, i.e. of arriving at an understanding of the world (Piaget, 1951; Kalff, 1980; Allan, 1988; Oaklander, 1988; McMahon, 1992).

Since playing is linked to development, it is necessary to be able to relate a child's play to his/her developmental level. Object-relations theorists (Winnicott 1958; Gordon, 1967; Klein, 1988; Winnicott, 1988) maintain the ability to play starts developing within the safe space between a mother and her baby. These theorists consider the ability to play to be of equal importance to the play activity itself. For this reason, therapists should not only view playing as an activity which provides material for diagnosis or a context within which to manipulate change but should recognise playing as an activity with intrinsic value.

Through creative playing children develop the ability to experience containment and a sense of inner space. When a child's ability to experience self-containment has become compromised due to trauma during certain developmental stages, Winnicott (1988), postulates therapeutic work should be "directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play" (p. 44). In order to create the therapeutic environment within which a child will experiment and play with metaphors, it is, therefore, necessary to re-establish the link with the child's ability to play creatively. It is also necessary to understand the conditions under which

a person could lose the ability to enjoy being creative and experience that life is real and meaningful.

Although the contribution of play to development during pre-school years is recognised (Piaget, 1951), retaining the ability to play creatively with ideas remains vitally important even after childhood (McMahon, 1992). Winnicott (1988) stresses that adults play too and that one can judge when they enter into this 'mode' by being attentive to their voices, their choices of words and the fact that they enjoy an activity and find it amusing.

According to Winnicott (1988), playing has an important reality-testing component:

> The child gathers objects or phenomena from external reality and uses these in the service of some sample derived from inner or personal reality. Without hallucinating the child puts out a sample of dream potential and lives with this sample in a chosen setting of fragments from external reality (p. 60).

Henderson (1984) agrees that a child's mediation between his or her inner world and the external world, which also contains the expectations of family and society, is often achieved through playing. Ideally the family and society should value and sanction creative playing. However, although there is a growing understanding of the process of child development and the needs of children, playing activity itself often comes under the strictures of society. The result can be children who exhibit an inability to play freely. As children grow older, the devaluation of

playing as a meaningful activity can cause a shift in emphasis towards understanding, and away from experiencing (Goldstein, 1999).

Kalff (1980) explains how the adoption of a playing attitude initiates a transitional activity which can create a visible world of images and memories so that an image of a certain aspect of the psyche then becomes accessible to consciousness. Playing can then become a means of learning to recognise and validate the sense of self. Thus, playing could potentially engender a more appropriate, integrated, empowered relationship between a person's sense of self and the world.

The value of playing as a means of self-validation is stressed by Winnicott (1988):

> It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self (p. 63).

He underlines the necessity for being able to "achieve the resting state out of which a creative reaching-out can take place" (p. 65), as well as the feeling of being alive, without needing to defend against overwhelming anxiety.

In the opinion of the researcher, Vygotsky's description of transitional activity as a search for meaning is of particular importance for therapeutic work with metaphors, since metaphors often indicate meaning and psychic reality (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a pioneer who developed insights into the significance of play that influenced theorists like Winnicott and Bruner. For example, the idea that a transitional world, created by the process of productive imaginary activity, can be described as one in which it is possible to play with reality is most often associated with Winnicott. However, the description corresponds with the views of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky's works shed light on the meaning of play, and indicates an integrated approach to development, presenting unique insights into the nature of the internal processes that accompany development (Vygotsky, 1978; Crain, 1992).

Vygotsky studied memory, inner speech and play. He believed challenges provided by the environment led to the development of psychological tools such as signs, especially speech, in human beings. He considered these tools to form part of cultural material made available to a child during the course of development. The result of this, according to Vygotsky, was that human beings did not only respond to environmental stimuli, but also to the system of signs and the ideas 'carried' in this way by communication and culture. For him, writing and numbering systems created yet another source of potential development by aiding people to transcend the limits of their immediate consciousness and memory (Vygotsky, 1978; Crain, 1992).

Vygotsky wanted greater insight into the manner in which children acquire concepts contained in culture. He believed that the nature of these concepts could be studied by listening to the messages children give to themselves when they talk while playing. According to him, these concepts are internalised by children and become inner speech or inner messages (Crain, 1992).

Vygotsky contended that internal developmental transformations were brought about by play and described imagination and play as the creation of an illusionary world where the child could satisfy desires. He recognised that playing activity provides a transitional stage for children and viewed playing as the creation of an imaginary situation in which meaning takes centre stage. Vygotsky asserted the imaginary situation helped the child to discern the rules which govern meanings and behaviour (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Vygotsky, it is the act of playing that makes these rules of behaviour conscious and creates freedom from constraints by the knowledge that the action is not true. Conversely, since practical reality does not dominate the process, ideas and meanings do, and these meanings can have important implications. He noted that, while action dominates meaning in ordinary life, in play, meaning dominates action. This portrayed the act of playing to be one of discovering meaning (Vygotsky, 1978; Crain, 1992).

Vygotsky (1978) described the process of discovering meaning as follows:

> How does the child float from one object to another, from one action to another? This is accomplished by movement in the field of meaning — which subordinates all real objects and actions to itself. Behavior is not bound by the immediate perceptual field. This movement in the field of meaning dominates play. On the one hand it represents movement in an abstract field (which thus makes an appearance in play prior to the appearance of voluntary operation with meanings). On the other hand the method of movement is situational and concrete. (It is an affective not a logical change). In other

words, the field of meaning appears, but action within it occurs just as in reality. Herein lies the main developmental contradiction of play (p. 101).

2.5 The researcher's conclusions

An investigation of the concept 'metaphor' reveals its complex nature. This is especially pertinent when the investigation is extended to understanding metaphor as potentially more than a linguistic device. Consequently, its character and functioning are best grasped by enriched understanding from complementary sources.

When it is viewed as one of the representational phenomena, it becomes clear that metaphor needs to be investigated in terms of the basic nature of the psyche and underlying biological processes. Especially when viewed from the perspective of creating meaning, terms like 'sign', 'symbol', 'metaphor' and 'cognitive concept' seem to indicate different facets of the same network of interrelated representational processes. It would appear that metaphor draws from the resources of this network to evoke composite images and, consequently, stands in a flexible relationship to its companion representational phenomena.

Metaphor does not replace, but supplements more abstract levels of conceptualisation. A study of the literature indicated that a person has the ability to *choose* to adopt a certain approach to subject matter. The researcher postulates this ability is the result of a combination of the innate

way in which the human mind functions and a certain amount of acquired skill. The premise of 'acquired skill' indicates that experience and consequent appropriate concept formation could enhance the psyche's flexibility and consequently also its competence in dealing with metaphorical material.

Metaphors can evoke multidimensional concepts consisting of experiential, form and meaning components, which are linked to similar individual or cultural conceptual systems. This could have a decisive influence on the way in which information is introduced.

Since metaphors are multifaceted, different "truths" or viewpoints emerge from a single image. Multifaceted images can illustrate the integration of concepts or provide insight into the nature of certain paradoxes.

For purposes of psychotherapy, a definition of metaphor needs to include any visible portrayal of psychic contents. This would include extended metaphors like stories or myths, all of which provide patients with a medium for relating to psychic contents in terms of a composite image.

The ability of metaphors to evoke a sometimes transient, but experientially 'real' reality needs to be recognised. Those metaphors which are already in use as part of any person's conceptual system, influence the way in which additional information will be interpreted by that person.

Guiding any process of metaphor-use would require familiarity with the cultural meaning-networks on which metaphor relies and understanding of conditions conducive to creative transitional activities, especially creative playing.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher made use of an inductive process: literature pertaining to both the theory and the practice of metaphor-use was studied systematically in order to detect repetitive themes, relationships and patterns (Huysamen, 1994). Unstructured methods were employed to formulate a tentative theory on the grounds of the study of this literature. The integrative focus was intended to ensure that the descriptions would not remain loose and unconnected.

In order to formulate initial research questions which would focus the study, a more holistically-oriented preliminary survey of literature referring to the use of metaphor in psychotherapy was supplemented by an investigation of the sandplay method.

Sandplay is presented in detail in Appendix C (p. 372). This method provides an example of a creative playing activity by means of which children can shape dynamic metaphors of their inner experiences. During sandplay certain aspects of the patient's inner world that have particular significance are portrayed in a way which enables the patient to relate to these contents. The sand picture provides a metaphor that can be viewed and shared. Children usually find it natural to express psychic contents in this way (Kalff, 1980; Kiepenhauer, 1990; Ryce-Menuhin, 1992).

Since it demonstrates a sensitivity towards the metaphorical approach to psychic material and provides a concrete example of how the principles of working with metaphor could be applied in a therapeutic situation, the method known as 'sandplay' was considered suitable for providing the researcher with an initial theoretical background as well as therapeutic examples of the use of metaphor in child psychotherapy.

As the trustworthiness of the researcher's evaluation of the data would be dependent on sensitivity to and insight into the concepts mentioned in the studied literature (Patton, 1987), experience was gained in metaphor-use by collaborating with two colleagues. The aim of this collaboration was to gain personal experience in sandplay and other experiential work and to obtain supervision when using metaphor as a psychotherapist. The researcher also visited the practice of a knowledgeable sandplay therapist to be advised on this method.

Literature pertaining to the following psychological theories was studied to determine viewpoints regarding the use of metaphor in psychotherapy:

- Psychoanalysis, including object-relations
- Analytical psychology, including sandplay therapy
- Gestalt therapy
- The Ericksonian approach to therapy
- Cognitive therapy
- Narrative therapy

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Initial data indicated that ongoing conceptual adjustment, evolvement and change (including the use of metaphor) be viewed as an integral part of living. This implied that a study of metaphor-use in psychotherapy should include attempting to understand basic human representational processes and the conditions under which they take place, as well as information from viewpoints other than psychology. The theoretical viewpoints mentioned above were, therefore, supplemented by views on the functioning of the biological substratum which facilitates basic representational processes and viewpoints from philosophy and literary theory.

As has been pointed out in Chapter 2, within a broad definition of metaphor, psychological theories are metaphors themselves. This fact, namely that theories and theory construction are themselves sophisticated examples of representational phenomena, provided the researcher with a challenge. It necessitated gathering information from disciplines other than psychology for triangulation purposes. Descriptions of the actual use of metaphors, as well as theories explaining the use of metaphor were examined.

The initial study identified three aspects of metaphor to be important in relation to psychotherapy: understanding the nature of metaphorical concepts, the identification of key concepts- especially those focusing on the conditions considered to be conducive to optimising metaphor-use, and examining the process involved when metaphor becomes a vehicle for psychic meanings.

3.1 Research questions

On the grounds of the above-mentioned preliminary investigation, the researcher formulated certain research questions:

3.1.1 What are the relevant themes regarding the nature of metaphor?

Specific questions:

3.1.1.1 How is metaphor defined?

3.1.1.2 What characteristics of metaphors enable the portrayal of psychic contents?

3.1.1.3 What information regarding other representational phenomena may be relevant to metaphor?

3.1.1.4 What is the perceived contribution of the biological sciences?

3.1.1.5 What is the role attributed to culture?

3.1.1.6 How are issues of interpretation addressed? (Subjectivity and objectivity; truth and reality, including psychic reality; meaning.)

3.1.1.7 How is metaphor perceived to function on the threshold between conscious and unconscious psychic material?

3.1.2 *Which guidelines for metaphor-use emerged from the key concepts?*

Specific questions:

3.1.2.1 What attitude is taken towards psychic material, particularly towards metaphorical material?

3.1.2.2 Which conditions are perceived to be conducive to metaphor-use?

3.1.3 What relevant themes are mentioned regarding the process of metaphor-use?

Specific questions:

3.1.3.1 How is the process of metaphor-use described by each psychological approach? (Special attention was paid to recognition and understanding of the role played by experiential reality.)

3.1.3.2 Does the study reveal a pattern of identifiable stages or phases in the process?

3.1.3.3 What role is the therapist perceived to play?

3.2 Descriptive method

As no theory on metaphor can be regarded as complete in itself, the merits of various theoretical contributions needed to be recognised and described.

The term 'descriptive research' is often used regarding phenomenological or other forms of qualitative research. Phenomenology attempts to describe the meaning of expressions of lived experience. Most often the data described are interviews or case material (Van Vuuren, 1989; Giorgi, 1992). However, in this thesis, the researcher attempts to provide accurate descriptions of the viewpoints regarding metaphor held by various disciplines and psychological theories.

According to Walker (1985) rich description is characterised by its authentic and representative nature and provides 'tertiary understanding', i.e. conceptualisation of the same phenomenon from different cognitive levels. This implies making use of both experience near and experience far descriptions (Van Vuuren, 1989). It also ties in with Lévi-Strauss's (2002) explanation of describing what something means. He writes:

> 'To mean' means the ability of any kind of data to be translated into a different language. I do not mean a different language like French or German, but different words on a different level (p. 9).

Smaling (1994) stipulates that the object must be allowed to speak for itself. Application of this principle implies that data must be presented in context and with the correct accents (Slabbert, 1999). To this aim the researcher strove to allow theories to speak for themselves, and naturally occurring similarities to be demonstrated.

Layder (1993) maintains existing theories can be used to stimulate the formation of theory, either by using ideas or concepts from these theories as initial "sounding boards", or as a retrospective means of establishing an explanatory pattern on the data.

The theories the researcher chose to describe were selected due to their relevance and status in the field of psychology as well as on the basis of their relevance to the subject matter. The researcher believes that, since the essence of the use of metaphor was being sought, any representative collection of psychological theories would tend to point to the same essences and those themes inherent to metaphor-use would tend to be repeated in different theories or disciplines.

In contrast to quantitative researchers, qualitative and descriptive researchers form part of the reality that they are attempting to describe. Therapists find themselves in a similar position during the process of psychotherapy when they are part of the reality that they are attempting to

understand or describe. The researcher's experience in working with metaphor, both experientially and as a therapist, was, therefore, deemed important, since it increased sensitivity to the themes pertaining to metaphor-use which were discovered in the literature.

Care was taken to portray the various viewpoints, as clearly and as objectively as possible as well as in a manner which would be recognised by readers to be true to the spirit of each particular theory. To this end, the researcher has often used quotations to capture the flavour of a specific viewpoint. The idea was to avoid reading meaning into the theory, but rather to reveal what the "thing" itself (in this case each particular theory) points to.

The researcher used her understanding of the descriptions to mediate between the various theories in order to point out where similar meanings are considered to exist. However, while recognising the impossibility of approaching subject matter without any preconceived ideas whatsoever, the researcher's intention was to understand, accommodate and respect each particular viewpoint.

The researcher focused on each theory or theorist's particular contribution to a better understanding of the three aspects of metaphor mentioned above. This implied investigating the theory's particular viewpoint regarding representational processes and the process of conceptual evolvement. Additionally, each particular viewpoint's conception of the basic requirements of creative work with metaphors received attention.

Similarities between otherwise apparently disparate theories are postulated to indicate a certain underlying coherence between viewpoints. It is believed that certain patterns will reveal themselves to the reader. Special attention will be paid to the way in which these theories could be seen to be mutually enriching.

Using the descriptive method and making inductive conclusions, allowed the researcher not only to analyse preconceived formulations, but also to qualitatively compare the various viewpoints. It was the researcher's aim to attempt to provide a tentative theory to facilitate the use of metaphor in psychotherapy. The research method chosen, allowed the researcher to identify and further investigate those aspects of the use of metaphor which were not predictable at the onset of research, but, in the language of Strauss and Corbin (1990), "emerged" (p. 23) during the course of the research process. This allows for the formulation of innovative concepts.

An examination of the literature leads one to conclude that theorists tend to make use of direct clinical experience or "live" data, as well as knowledge and theories from other sources and disciplines to arrive at the construction of theories which are the result of their own integrative processing. This similarity legitimises the researcher's own integrative attempt. Although the goal of this inductive research was not the manipulation of specific variables, but the development of theory, the researcher's aim was merely to provide guidelines for metaphor-use.

3.3 Objectivity

The researcher recognises that there is a paradigmatic difference between this method of research and positivistic research methods. This research is aimed at providing hypotheses. The task of positivistic research projects would be to further determine the usefulness of these hypotheses. However, this does not detract from the necessity of providing a research design that aims to provide trustworthy information. The research objective, namely the formulation of a tentative integrative theory of metaphor-use, determined the manner in which the research was conducted.

Regarding the objectivity of the choice of subject matter, namely the examination of existing, recognised theories, the researcher points out that Kerlinger and Lee (2001) argue theories can, to some extent, be regarded as objective 'statements about the world' made by 'the community of scientists' (pp. 7-8).

Smaling (1994) emphasises 'triadic openness'. This implies that the researcher be open to various possibilities, being prepared to consider them equally regarding their applicability to the subject matter in hand.

This study differs from standard qualitative research. In standard qualitative research, Grounded Theory is utilised to analyse the data, while this basic research study of theories hopes to provide an integrated model for metaphor use which can aid the interpretation of data.

3.4 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the consistency with which the same data would be compiled when using the same process at various points in time, i.e. the extent to which the same conclusion would be arrived at by similar research projects. In this case this would imply another researcher studying the same or other authoritative sources dealing with the subject of metaphor could come to similar conclusions.

Reliability was obtained when specific instances of the use of metaphor were described by various therapists from different psychological viewpoints and the same principles were found to apply. In an effort to obtain both internal and external reliability as far as possible, triangulation, auditing and careful defining of concepts were attempted throughout the research.

3.4.1 *Internal reliability*

The triangulations that could be applied to this study were between descriptions of various observers of the same phenomenon, between multiple theoretical perspectives and between comparisons of dissimilar methods of approaching the same basic unit (metaphor).

In accordance with Walker (1985), the researcher agrees that different perspectives should be viewed as potentially enriching and complementary rather than in competition with one another.

3.4.2 External reliability

Efforts were made to define concepts clearly and to provide an accurate description of the research procedure so that it would be possible for others to follow a similar procedure and compare their findings with those of the researcher.

3.5 Validity

An effort to validate this descriptive research, define concepts and clarify semantic content was attempted by:

- providing descriptions which do justice to the spirit of each body of work presented;
- pointing out similarities which appear legitimate;

- utilising the various contributions from literature to provide an integrated perspective from which the knowledge gained as a result of this investigation could be usefully applied in therapy;
- clarifying semantic content.

Validity was enhanced by the fact that these questions had already been spontaneously addressed and answered in the literature. Therefore, possible criticisms of asking leading questions or of interpreting data to suit the aims of the research were lessened.

Walker (1985) regards descriptive validity to be based on judging the authenticity of the description and whether the material being described is objectively judged to in fact be what the researcher deems it to be.

Conceptual validity requires that the concepts used fit the data (Walker, 1985). Smaling's (1994) stipulation that the study deal with the intended phenomena and not something else could be achieved by:

- Illustrating the same point from different sources in the literature.
- Accurately indicating the process by means of which conclusions were made.
- Ensuring that other researchers would have access to the same data.
- Adequately explaining concepts to readers to ensure that all readers will tend to understand the concepts similarly.

In the discussions that follow, theoretical validity can be evaluated by judging whether sound concepts are applied in a manner which has resulted in a coherent theory, and external validity by whether this theory can be generalised for use in psychotherapy.

Descriptions needed to illustrate each approach authentically. However, due to the fact that an integrated approach was sought, it has not always been the best option to exclude the researcher's opinion from the text itself.

CHAPTER 4

THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The framework provided by analytical psychology is relevant to therapeutic work associated with metaphor for the following reasons:

- It **stresses the importance of symbolic work** in psychotherapy, thereby granting metaphorical material a central place in what is generally regarded as one of the more extensive holistic theories of psychotherapy (Wilber, 1977).
- In conjunction with standard psychological considerations, the analytical approach tends to adopt **a holistic perspective** and includes consideration of the role played by hereditary traits, anthropology and cultural material, as well as philosophical and religious or spiritual needs. Rix Weaver (1973) has remarked "a person brings a personal problem into analysis, but he brings a complete soul along with it and also his world" (p. 1).
- The analytical approach **values the experiential process** of working with symbols and other metaphorical material. Starting with Jung's case studies and the description of his own inner journey in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, written in 1961 (see Jung, 1989), analytical psychotherapy has built up an extensive body of knowledge **describing the process** involved in the use of metaphorical material in psychotherapy.

4.1 The analytical view of the psyche

Jung's own writings, as well as the contributions of post-Jungian authors, include such a vast number of often varying perspectives, that any attempt at portraying the analytic view of the psyche in diagrammatic form is always the result of individual interpretation. This is due in no small measure to the nature of the psyche itself, which remains essentially beyond the grasp of the human mind.

While it is important for an understanding of analytical psychology to retain the concept of the psyche functioning as **a multifaceted, dynamic, integrated whole**, it is necessary to differentiate certain hypothetical components to aid understanding of psychic functioning. The figure provided in 4.1 must merely be regarded as a tool that attempts to portray the basic elements comprising the structure of the psyche as viewed by analytical psychology.

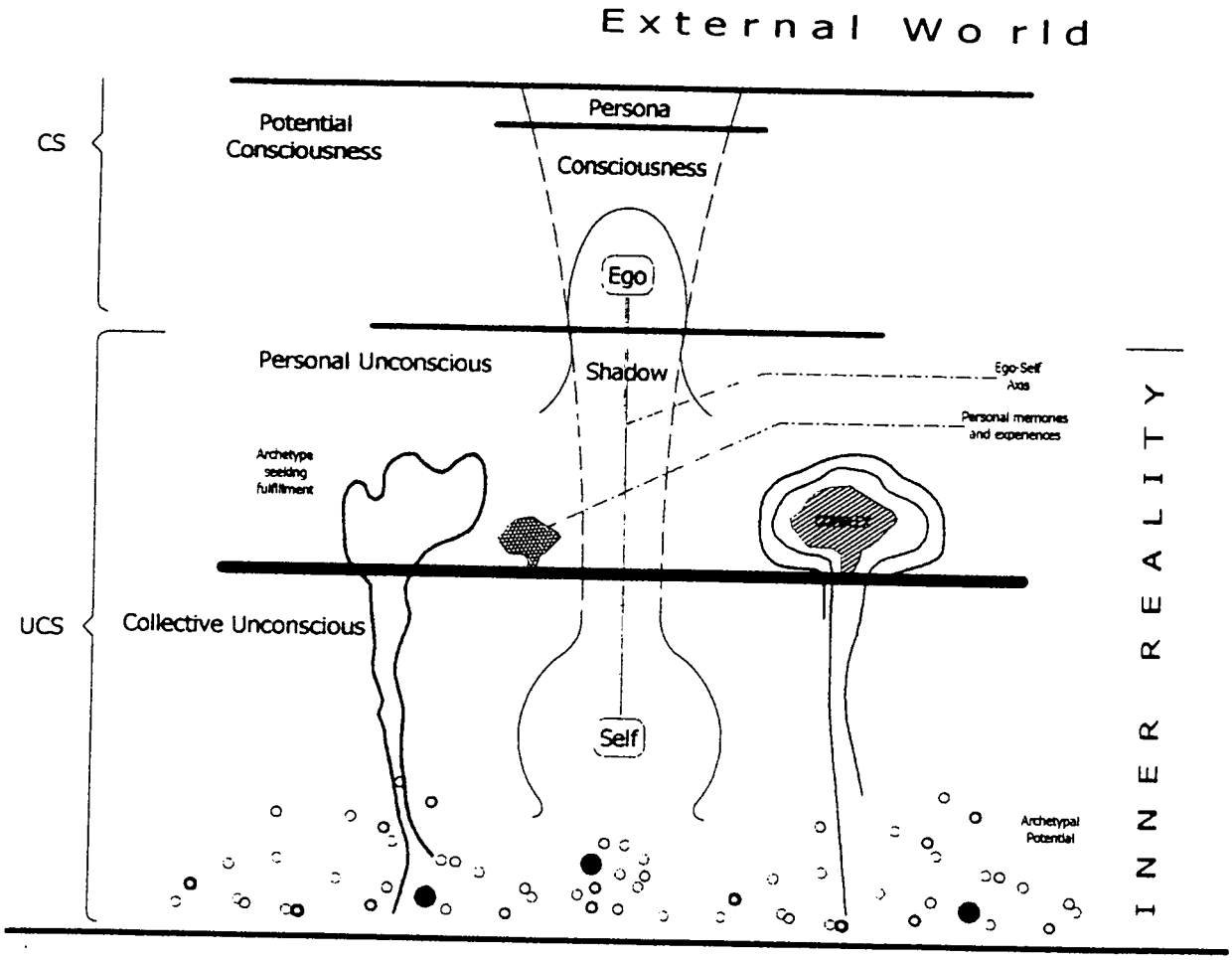

Figure 4.1 Analytical view of the psyche

This figure portrays the psyche to be divided into two parts: the *conscious* and the *unconscious*. The *Self* is the psyche's inner regulating centre, and the *ego* is the regulating centre of consciousness. Although each possesses a certain degree of autonomy, they are connected to one another by means of the *ego-Self axis* (Edinger, 1984). The concept of the ego-Self axis is an example of the way in which the analytical perspective views all personal complexes in their connection to their archetypal potential and it is for this reason that it is portrayed in this manner.

While providing a useful theoretical model, this portrayal does not represent an absolute. The Self can also be viewed as the whole psyche and the ego can be identified with material from the various complexes.

In the figure the *unconscious* is portrayed as comprising the *collective unconscious* with the *archetypal potential*, which is considered to be common to all human beings, as well as the *personal unconscious*. The *personal unconscious* contains the personal *complexes*.

These *complexes* are unique to each individual, and are thought to consist of a nucleus or core provided by the *archetypal* impetus, which is manifested or realised in an unique way in an individual's life as a result of that particular individual's developmental history and personal life experiences (Neumann, 1963; Stevens, 1990). Along with the person's memories, the personal unconscious can contain forgotten, unknown, or repressed material (Jung, 1977, CW 7, p. 66).

The analytical perspective views the *ego* as a complex, and the other complexes are perceived to be connected to their archetypal potential in the same way the *ego* is connected to the *Self*.

The *shadow* complex is shown as consisting of contents that could potentially have become conscious in the course of individual development, but had not done so, or had not been permitted to do so, and have been relegated to the unconscious. It is portrayed in the figure as being more than that part of the ego that lies in the unconscious. (The reason for this is discussed under 4.7, p. 81.)

The *persona* has the function of facilitating social interaction, as well as containing or protecting the core personality when necessary. It provides the individual with the ability to assume certain roles and implies that a certain 'face' (mask) can be used in interaction with *outer reality* (Jung, 1990, CW 6, pp. 465-467).

The *anima* and *animus* are perceived as being directed towards recognising 'the other', and therefore the recognition of 'separateness' is an important aspect to consider in this context. This relatedness would be directed both towards intra-psychic elements or *inner reality*, as well as towards people and ideas 'outside' in the external world (Jung, 1990, CW 6, pp. 468-470).

Outer reality containing the cultural manifestation or interpretation of material from the *collective consciousness*, specifically the society or cultural situation within which a particular individual functions, would theoretically include a large number of people sharing some of the same ideas, or characteristics. The collective influence of these shared contents would be experienced by an individual to be 'outside', objectively visible in the products of that society, for example, in their religion, national character, movies or plays (Henderson, 1984).

4.2 Consciousness and the unconscious

Jung regarded the human being's symbol-making ability (including the production of metaphorical material) to be a **natural function** of the unconscious (Jung, 1977, CW 7, p. 68).

Psychic material about which the individual is unconscious can either be experienced as belonging **'outside'** the psyche, or as forming part of a person's internal mental processes, i.e. '**inside**' the psyche. (Note: this describes an individual's experiential perspective and should not be regarded as an objective truth.) When 'the unconscious' is referred to, this implies unconscious material inside the psyche.

Unconscious material can be conceptualised as a **network** of potentially available meanings and associations, or simply, according to Jung (1978, CW 9ii), as '**the unknown**' (p. 3). In the latter sense the term 'unconscious' need not apply only to 'the unconscious' in the sense of a hypothetical intra-psychic entity, but can also include simply anything that lies outside the immediate range of consciousness. For example, certain aspects of **culture** could also potentially form part of 'unconscious' content. It is important to remember that the entire unconscious process is **always implicitly present** wherever conscious awareness exists. Jung (1989, CW 14) wrote: "Empirically we can establish no more than that the ego is surrounded on all sides by an unconscious factor" (p. 152).

If the unconscious is defined as everything outside conscious awareness, then everything that enters consciousness is experientially perceived to arise from what has previously been unconscious. For this reason, especially when new concepts are introduced to consciousness, these concepts can often be experientially perceived as a revelation from the unconscious.

On numerous occasions (for example, Jung, 1978, CW 9ii, p. 3 and Jung, 1989, CW 14, p. 152), Jung clearly stated that he viewed the unconscious not only as a personal 'memory bank', but also as **an active organisational entity** which anticipates and serves the needs of consciousness.

From a behavioristic perspective, the unconscious is a purely natural process without design (Klinger, 1971; Klinger, 1977) but from the analytical perspective it has a **potential directedness** which is characteristic of all **energy** processes. When the conscious mind participates actively and experiences each stage of the process, or at least understands it intuitively, then the next image always starts off on the higher level that has been won, and purposefulness develops (Jung, 1977, CW 7, p. 231).

From Jung's perspective, the unconscious could be conceptualised **both** as an **entity** and as an ongoing **process**, the latter coinciding with current views on neurobiology (Edelman, 1992; Capra, 1997). Jung visualised a **constant interplay between conscious and unconscious material**, so that contents which form part of conscious knowledge could become unconscious, and vice versa. He considered it possible that contents which had never been conscious could be presented to consciousness by the unconscious. By this he meant that, due to its **innate archetypal potential**, the psyche could present certain images to consciousness in an attempt to influence it in a manner that would enhance the particular individual's psychological development (Jung, 1977, CW 7, p. 68).

There are various reasons **why conscious contents could become unconscious**. Some memories are difficult to recall because they made too little impact on consciousness. Others are difficult to

recall because their impact was, or is potentially, too great and hence threatening. When it comes to recognising new material, the ego can reject the material either because it is inadequate to the task of recognising the new material, or because it feels threatened by new material. Certain complexes could prohibit the recognition of the new material because inclusion of this material would jeopardise their (prejudiced) way of interpreting reality (Jung, 1981, CW 8, pp. 173-175).

4.3 Self

From the analytical perspective, *Self* (see footnote) and *ego* are agents which guide certain processes within the individual. **The aim of these processes is to create a world picture that seems appropriate to the experiences of inner and outer reality**, while also being useful to interpret, influence and react to those realities.

Jung (1989, CW 14) portrayed the Self as an inner organising centre as well as being symbolic of humankind's totality. He perceived it as being, by definition, beyond the boundaries of knowledge and referred to 'the empirical ego and its transconscious foundation' and explained:

Footnote: 1) Jung referred to "self" and "Self", using both terms to express similar meanings (Samuels, Shorter & Plaut, 1987). The researcher will use the term "Self" consistently, except where Jung is quoted directly.

> As an empirical concept, The Self designates the whole range of psychic phenomena in man...it is a *transcendental* concept, for it presupposes the existence of unconscious factors on empirical grounds and thus characterises an entity that can be described only in part but, for the other part, remains at present unknowable and illimitable ...the self (sic) is not a philosophical idea, since it does not predicate its own existence, i.e., does not hypostasize itself (p. 152).

Jung (1990, CW 6) conceptualised the Self as being both '**only a working hypothesis**' and 'an archetypal idea (image)' (pp. 460-461). Working through the ego, the Self guides what is known as the **individuation process**. This can be defined as each individual's process of development towards realising and living his/her own unique potential. The unconscious is seen as a dynamic process, being in a continual state of flux and flow, capable of changing and developing. In this regard Jung (1989) remarked:

> The unconscious is a *process*, ...the psyche is transformed or developed by the relationship of the ego to the contents of the unconscious. In individual cases that transformation can be read from dreams and fantasies. In the collective life it has left its deposit principally in the various religious systems and their changing symbols. Through the study of these collective transformation processes and through the study of alchemical symbolism I arrived at the central concept of my psychology: *the process of individuation* (p. 209).

In Jung's opinion, the Self functions as the symbol as well as the guiding centre of the individuation process. Symbols of the Self are symbols of wholeness or unity and totality. An example of a Self-symbol often quoted by Jung is the mandala. Mandala is the Hindu term for a circle (Cirlot, 1996), and is understood as a symbol of order and as such of the inner space which is sacred and wards off chaos. (Indicates recognition of the need for **groundedness**.)

4.4 Ego

It is difficult to conceive of *consciousness* without the concept of a 'centre of consciousness', or an *ego*. For this reason the ego is viewed as the subject of consciousness. Jung (1978, CW 9ii) describes how, during the course of child development, the ego "seems to rise in the first place from the collusion between the somatic factor and the environment, and, once established as a subject, it goes on developing from further collisions with the outer world and the inner" (p. 5). According to this definition, the ego can be viewed as the psyche's centre for consciousness and responsible individual action (i.e. based on **connection to identity**).

Since the ego plays an important role in the conscious reaction of the individual to symbolical or metaphorical material, the functions of ego are discussed in more detail below. Analytical psychology views the ego as follows:

- As the **centre of consciousness,** while not comprising the whole field of consciousness. Jung (1978, CW 9ii) explains the ego must exist "in an absolute space and an absolute time...it is of the greatest importance that the ego should be anchored in the world of consciousness and that consciousness should be reinforced by very precise adaptation" (p. 24). In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1989) emphasised the fact that while the psyche as a whole could sometimes seem to function outside the ordinary laws of reality, the ego functioned as "a system of co-ordinates", needing "a here and there, an above and below, a before and after" (p. 308).

- As a **centre of adaptation**, i.e. as dynamic, empirical and complex relating. Jung (1978, CW 9ii) described the ego as: "the subject of all successful attempts at adaptation so far as these are achieved by will" (p. 6). The ego functions as the agent both of its own concerns and of those of the psyche as a whole.

- As the **agent** which must mediate between the demands of the individuation process and reality. In interaction with one another, both ego and Self carry the responsibility to provide balance. In Jung's (1978, CW 9ii) opinion, "the self acts upon the ego like an *objective occurrence* which free will can do very little to alter" (p. 5).

- As the **centre of identity and individuality**, which needs to be protected. Jung (1978, CW 9ii) emphasised: "It must be reckoned a psychic catastrophe when the *ego is assimilated by the self*" (p. 24).

- As **limited**, i.e. not quite the independent agent it sometimes sets itself up to be (Jung, 1978, CW 9ii), "its freedom is limited and its dependence proved in ways that are often decisive" (p. 6).

- As providing a '**space**' in that it functions as the exponent or the mirror of the Self and so making the transcendental 'visible'. Jung (1981, CW 8) compares the ego to a mirror in which the unconscious becomes aware of itself.

The ego-Self axis can be visualised as an axis connecting the ego and the Self, along which **communication** takes place. It remains the responsibility of the ego to retain its decision-making powers. The mature ego can become more flexible, and allow for both its own role and the role of the Self to be recognised. Jung (1977, CW 7) explained:

> If we picture the conscious mind, with the ego as its centre, as being opposed to the unconscious, and if we now add to our mental picture the process of assimilating the unconscious, we can think of this assimilation as a kind of approximation of conscious and unconscious, where the centre of the total personality no longer coincides with the ego, but with a point midway between the conscious and the unconscious. This would be the point of new equilibrium, a new centring of the total personality, a virtual centre which, on account of its focal position between conscious and unconscious, ensures for the personality a new and more solid foundation (p. 221).

Certain mythic patterns (**culture**) describe the process the ego has to go through to enable meaningful change and psychic growth to take place (Hollis, 1995). The hero figure is an example of a symbol for consciousness. Hero symbols arise in a culture when the hero needs to serve as the carrier of a new level of consciousness for society. In the individual psyche, the need for the hero symbol will arise when the ego needs strengthening (Jung & Kerenyi, 1973). In child development, the hero is the symbol that helps the child to separate from the parental images of early childhood (Hall, 1977).

4.5 The collective unconscious and its archetypes

Combining theories of **culture and a possible innate biological component**, archetypes are visualised as possessing no form in and of themselves. They are seen (Neumann, 1963) to function as "intangible unifiers" or 'cores', around which certain psychic contents tend to converge (p. 6). Just as Darwin considered the guiding principle behind the diversity of life forms to be the survival of the species, so Jung (1990, CW 5, p. 176) and others that have studied what Stevens (1990) refers to as "the apparently infinite multiformity of symbolisms created by mankind" (p. 23), realise that this material tends to exhibit the same **universal patterns** and tend to have the same basic underlying structures (Bierlein, 1993).

According to analytical psychology, archetypes are realised in the personality and carried in the symbols or traditions that are characteristic of each specific culture. They form representations of

a motif that can vary infinitely while still indicating the basic underlying pattern. Archetypes are not only images, but can also (Jung, 1964) include "thoughts, forms, universally understandable gestures, and many attitudes follow a pattern that was established long before man developed a reflective consciousness" (p. 58). In Jung's opinion, it was imperative to be consciously aware of and in harmony with the archetypal impetus, in order to remain balanced.

Archetypes and images were so **narrowly linked in Jung's mind** that he often confused the two. For example, he declared (Jung, 1977, CW 9i): "the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts" (p. 43). He also (Jung, 1981, CW 8) described an archetype as 'the instinct's perception of itself' or, 'the self-portrait of the instinct' (p. 136).

Jung's ideas in this regard developed between the years 1912-1934 (Samuels, Shorter & Plaut 1987). He began by referring to archetypes as 'primordial images', but later made it clear that he regarded the archetype as a nodal point, around which images portraying the same underlying pattern tended to gather. Jung (1990, CW 5) did, however, believe that this tendency was inborn, or innate, since "the archetypes...can easily produce in the most widely differing individuals ideas or combinations of ideas that are practically identical, and for whose origin no individual experience can be made responsible" (p. 313).

Attempts to explain archetypes end up as translations into metaphors. Mills and Crowley (1993), refer to archetypes as metaphorical prototypes. Jung and Kerenyi (1973) were of the opinion:

> Even the best attempts at explanations are only more or less successful translations into another metaphorical language...the "explanation" should always be such that the functional significance of the archetype remains unimpaired, so that an adequate and meaningful connection between the conscious mind and the archetype is assured. For the archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy. It represents or personifies certain instinctive data of the dark, primitive psyche, the real but invisible roots of consciousness (p. 79).

The functions of the archetypes, as described in analytical psychology, are as follows:

- Archetypes can **unite past and present**. Owing to their essentially 'formless' nature, old cultural images, or any other portrayal of archetypes, which have lost their validity or numinosity, can be filled in a fresh, new way that mirrors current reality, while still remaining true to the original archetypal intent.

- Archetypes can arise spontaneously and serve as **containers** as well as **agents** of necessary psychic energies. This implies that they can have a teleological, as well as a containment function, and have the ability to influence actions.

- Archetypes cannot be considered to be either 'good' or 'bad'. They **simply exist**, having come into being as a result of certain universal conflicts or tasks. From this perspective, it could be said that they mirror the objective reality of human life, taught to them by the

experience of certain recurring patterns through the ages. Analytical psychology perceives the archetypes as polarised, composed of both positive and negative qualities or potentialities.

- Jung (1978, CW 9ii) regarded archetypes as "**absolutes which one must learn how to handle correctly**. The will can control them only in part. It may be able to suppress them, but it cannot alter their nature, and what is suppressed comes up again in another place in altered form, but this time loaded with a resentment that makes the otherwise natural impulse our enemy" (p. 27).

- The above underlines how important it is for **consciousness** to participate in the process. Consciousness must ensure that these energies do not end up as the drivers of potentially dangerous unconscious processes. It can sometimes become necessary to 'heed' the archetypal impulse, but this must never be confused with a 'godlike' influence.

4.6 The personal unconscious and its complexes

Jung discovered that there were **emotionally charged, feeling-toned entities, around which images or ideas** related to any particular subject, tended to **converge** in the personal unconscious. He named these entities complexes. Jung (1981, CW 8) visualised any individual complex as rooted in an archetypal core, and as possessing "a constellating power corresponding to its energic value" (p. 12).

The most frequently quoted example of a specific complex, is the tendency of people to form a cluster of ideas relating to both their own particular mother and the mother image in general. This complex would then consist of material relating to their relationship to their own mother, as well as certain components which would include the way in which 'mother' is perceived and related to in their culture, along with what Jung would describe as the elements of the universal human mother imago or archetype (Neumann, 1963; Neumann, 1990).

When manifest in the life of a particular person, the mother complex would, according to Jung's theory (Jung, 1981, CW 8), consist of a feeling-toned nucleus to which a large number of what he referred to as "secondarily constellated associations" (p. 11), would be potentially connected. Different complexes would have varying potentials to influence behaviour. Some would have a high feeling-toned value and would then easily become activated, taking a large number of related associations in tow. Such **complexes would have a great potential to influence behaviour and cloud judgement.**

When triggered, a complex could behave as though it possessed a certain amount of **autonomy**. This would particularly be the case if certain of its contents were not accessible to the conscious mind and therefore not under the person's conscious control.

4.7 The shadow

Apparently with Plato's original metaphor at the back of his mind, Jung (1989) commented:

> Our basis is ego-consciousness, our world the field of light centred upon the focal point of the ego. From that point we look out upon an enigmatic world of obscurity, never knowing to what extent the shadowy forms we see are caused by our consciousness, or possess a reality of their own. (p. 324).

In Jungian psychology the shadow is often defined as those **parts** of the unconscious personality which could have become part of the ego complex, but were **split off** and now manifest as negative or shadow figures. However, similarly to some other theories (for example White & Epston, 1990), a closer examination of shadow material is considered to reveal not only repressed negativity, but also an individual's unlived potential. For this reason it is the perception of Von Franz (1974) that it is easier to approach the unconscious with the attitude that the shadow is simply all those contents of the unconscious, which are not directly accessible to the individual.

The ego has a twofold task in respect to dealing with shadow material. It has to protect its own integrity and not become swamped by unconscious material (**implies boundary-setting**), but it also has to keep up its task of trying to ensure optimal adjustment for the individual. The boundary where this confrontation takes place, holds the possibility of increasing knowledge and

enhancing well-being, but also forces the individual to deal with material that is felt to be painful, difficult, negative and anxiety-provoking (**implies holding tension**).

Owing to their ability to portray pre-conscious material in symbolic form, metaphors are the ideal vehicle for this type of psychic content (**implies containment-function of metaphors**). Symbols that can serve as vehicles for shadow material are often figures that are viewed as 'dirty', 'inferior', 'dangerous' or 'evil'. Since the shadow often contains unlived ego-potential, it tends to be portrayed by a figure with the same sexual identity as the ego. In literature or mythology, when a hero is too one-sided, two companions who complement one another, like Achilles and Patroclus, or Don Quixote and Sancho often portray the composite ideal (**implies externalisation**).

Projection may play an essential role in the process of denying certain contents. **Resistance** to recognition of shadow material is usually the result of this material being presented to consciousness as 'the other' or 'not me'. Thus, from the experiential point of view, "one meets with projections, one does not make them" (Jung, 1978, CW 9ii, p. 9). In order to integrate the shadow and to enhance the individual's perception of reality, projections need to be recognised and owned. "The effect of projection is to isolate the subject from his environment, since instead of a real relation there is now only an illusory one. **Projections change the world into a replica of one's own unknown face**" (p. 9). This leads to a feeling of sterility and isolation, without the person realising that the illusions come from themselves and "an unconscious factor...spins the illusions that veil his world" (p. 10). Therefore, the process of recognising and integrating

projections and in doing so of integrating and taking responsibility for shadow material represents an essential part of the analytic process.

Emotions associated with shadow material make dealing with the shadow a challenging task. Jung (1978, CW 9ii) noted, "affects occur usually where adaptation is weakest"(p. 8). This explains why the correct attitude towards shadow material is important. Any person dealing with shadow material has to be prepared to face negative or painful aspects of his/her personality (Von Franz, 1974). Narrative therapists White and Epston (1990) and Parry and Doan (1994) similarly perceive emotions to provide potential entry-points to accessing psychic material.

Jung (1978, CW 9ii) further links emotion to the individual's ability to be able to mediate **reality** with integrity when he writes: "It is through the 'affect' that the subject becomes involved and so comes to feel the whole weight of reality...In psychology one possesses nothing unless one has experienced it in reality" (p. 33).

Since the shadow has an archetypal core, it will manifest **partly** as a **personal** and **partly** as a **collective** entity. This means that individual shadow material could mirror the collective problems of society.

Jung was of the opinion that, apart from the above, the psyche has objective negative or evil potentialities, which can be experienced to be very numinous and compelling. He emphasised that these potentially negative potentialities should not be projected onto others, but that individuals should learn to recognise and take **moral responsibility** for their own inner evil

tendencies (Jung, 1978, CW 9ii): "To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real" (p. 8).

4.8 The persona

Soon after the shadow begins to be dissociated from the ego image, a child learns that it is possible to pretend various roles. This is the beginning of *persona* formation. The persona is an outer layer of the personality that is bound to the **various roles prevalent in the cultural collective**. It functions as a compromise between what the ego wishes, or how the person might experience himself /herself to be, and what society permits as a functioning social role. According to Jung (1977, CW 7, p. 158) and Hall (1983), many universal persona roles have archetypal roots, such as teacher, healer, mother, father and so forth.

Since the persona is a facade, it can permit duplicity towards others and can also cause an inner feeling of self-alienation if it does not reflect the true abilities of the individual. However, during normal functioning the various persona roles facilitate social interaction by allowing people to relate through these roles, thereby creating a certain amount of personal space and protecting personal feelings. Difficulties can result if the persona becomes too far removed from the real personality, or if the ego identifies itself with the persona role (Hall 1977).

4.9 Anima and Animus

Jung (1978, CW 9ii) views the anima or animus as the **projection making factors** in the psyche and refers to them as *eros* and *logos*. He describes the anima and the animus as "*functions* which filter the contents of the collective unconscious through to the conscious mind...though the *contents* of anima and animus can be integrated, they themselves cannot, since they are archetypes (p. 20).

According to classical analytical theory, people relate by means of the energy released by contact with the contra sexual element or opposite gender. The animus is then viewed as the (often unconscious) masculinity in the feminine psyche, and the anima as the (often unconscious) feminine in the masculine psyche.

Since 'the other' is developmentally often specifically focused on the recognition of characteristics of the opposite sex, a significant aspect of **relatedness energy** is still considered to be gender related (Griesel, 1999). The nature or characteristics of this energy is initially known only through projection on to members of the opposite sex. These projections can cause the object of the individual's fascination to appear very numinous and desirable. However, post-Jungians also tend to view the anima and the animus as two types of energy, with individuals considered to be capable of utilising both types of energy (Griesel, 1999).

Apart from the anima and the animus, Jung also theorised extensively about the role of **psychic energy** per se (Jung, 1981, CW 8). He regarded the concept of psychic energy to be an *a priori* concept similar to Kant's concepts of time and space. Jung visualised this energy as being able to have a certain goal or to produce a certain compulsion for being interested in something or for doing something. He viewed the psyche in a similar way to what systems theorists would refer to as a partially closed system (Capra, 1997), causing energy that was displaced to reappear elsewhere (Jung, 1981, CW 8, p. 18). From Jung's perspective, energy is closely linked to the concept of feeling-value. He stated (Jung, 1978, CW 9ii): "The feeling-value is a very important criterion which psychology cannot do without, because it determines in large measure the role that the content will play in the psychic economy" (p. 28).

4.10 Inner and outer reality

According to Jung, the **culture** into which a child is born imparts meaning to his experiences. This leads to the development of personality (Jung, 1990, CW 5, p. 177). Thus analytic psychology agrees with other theorists like Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1990), that culture plays an important part in child development. However, the interaction between the individual and the environment is regarded as important within the analytical frame of reference. From this frame of reference, culture provides both the holding environment that provides a young child with "encircling" and teaches him/her containment as well as the potential to learn separateness.

Jung believed that material in the cultural collective became metaphors for archetypes. He perceived myth to possess a dynamic aspect that speaks to and connects with the spirit of a people or culture (Jung, 1964). According to (Burritt, 1999), these symbols of a culture have:

> creative energy which sometimes lies buried and inactive, but potentially dynamic, in the external forms and structures, institutions and traditions of the culture...when it is vibrant, it has the strength and force to express and carry the aspirations of those people...Paradoxically, the substance of myth is not created by that culture or those people. It is rather as if the collective unconscious erupts into the space and time which the culture occupies (p. 76).

4.11 Synchronicity

Jung explored the existence of an acausal-connecting factor. Von Franz (1964) explains this concept as follows:

> In ways that are still completely beyond our comprehension, our unconscious is similarly attuned to our surroundings- to our group, to society in general, and, beyond these, to the space-time continuum and the whole of nature (p. 220).

Events appearing together in a way that seems to be meaningful, but where this relationship cannot be considered to be causal in the strict sense of the word, are considered to be synchronistic.

Meaningful coincidences have a way of drawing particular attention to certain elements of a situation, especially if the importance of what has occurred seems to have been underestimated (Hall, 1983). It would seem that not only the psyche of the person, but also outside events could tend to co-operate to show certain important patterns (Samuels, Shorter & Platt, 1987).

4.12 Symbols

4.12.1 *Symbolism in dreams*

Although not restricted to humans, dreaming seems to be a universal, necessary, biologically determined experience of our species, involving the processing of information, and the regulating of the conscious attitude in order to promote healthy psychological functioning (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995). **Dreams can provide guidelines to working with metaphors**, since dreams (Jung, 1989, CW 18) "are the commonest and universally accessible source for the investigation of man's symbolizing faculty" (p. 190).

In the opinion of Stevens (1990) Jung viewed **psychotherapy** as a "**process of creative synthesis** whereby the ego was informed and fructified by healing symbols arising from the unconscious; it was not a business of reductive analysis whereby the unconscious was subdued, conquered and colonized by an imperial ego" (p. 34).

There is some difference between consciously working with metaphors (for example, during active imagination) and working with those metaphors, stories or symbols produced by the unconscious without active ego participation as is the case with dreaming (Weaver, 1973).

Dreams construct images that appear to arise spontaneously. According to Hall (1977):

> the dream has objectivity in the same sense that a laboratory blood specimen has an objectivity: it comes from the patient and reflects the internal state of his functioning but is not created by his conscious activity (p. 127).

The symbols or metaphors in dreams are able to confront ego-consciousness with the aim of enlarging or adjusting it. Jung (1981, CW 8) referred to this as "spontaneous self-portrayal" (p.133). Hall (1983) makes the important point that the ego is always only capable of a partial view, and that an ongoing, natural, regulatory process is continually taking place outside conscious awareness. This is in agreement with current theories regarding psychic functioning, regardless of whether the individual is asleep or not (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995) and Jung's own point of view (Jung, 1977, CW 7).

In most cases the **influence** of dream material, either on the conscious mind, or on behaviour, takes place **at a subliminal level**. However, under certain circumstances, dreams seem to make a stronger appeal on consciousness in order to be recognised. This is the case with dreams that make such a strong impression that they are remembered and mulled over. It is also true of recurring dreams, as well as of nightmares or any dreams that wake the dreamer (Hall, 1983). According to Jung, recurring dreams can either compensate for a one-sided view of consciousness, date back from a specific incident of trauma that has not been sufficiently addressed, or they anticipate a future event. In the latter case, they tend to cease once this event has been realised (CW 18, pp. 185-264).

Analytically oriented psychologists maintain dream symbols attempt to teach the conscious mind something that it lacks, rather than to confuse it by concealing its message in symbols that are completely inaccessible to consciousness. Hall (1977) likens dream interpretation to a process of helping toward symbolic completion. Analytical psychologists regard dreams to be either compensatory or complementary. This means that they either show a view that is aimed at providing what is lacking from the conscious attitude, or they complement or enhance the conscious attitude (Hall, 1983; Broadribb, 1990).

Since dreams form part of the **ongoing dialogue** between consciousness and the unconscious, dream interpretation must recognise its limits. A dream interpretation can never be considered to be complete. The same would be true for the interpretation of symbols or metaphors used in any other context (Jung, 1989, CW 18, p. 212; Jung, 1993, CW 12, p. 44).

In dream interpretation that attempts to ascertain what the symbolic material might mean to the individual, the characteristics of the therapeutic relationship need to be considered (Jung, 1989, CW 18):

> Dream analysis on this level is less a technique than a dialectical process between two personalities. If it is handled as a technique, the peculiarity of the subject as an individual is excluded and the therapeutic problem is reduced to the simple question: who will dominate whom?...I wanted the healing process to grow out of the patient's own personality...I wanted to preserve my patient's dignity and freedom so that he could live his life by his own volition (p. 215).

While remaining true to most of Jung's basic concepts, a number of more recent authors like Hillman (1975), Hall (1977), Hall (1983) and Broadribb (1990), have presented views on dream interpretation which include the views of other theorists as well as their own points of view gleaned from their own research and psychotherapeutic experience. A clear example is Hillman (1975). Hillman emphasises that dreams form wholes, (Gestalten) as well as patterned sequences which are aimed at meaning-making in the same way that myths are: *"Our method then is to grasp phenomenologically the action sequence and to conceptualize it as a mythologem* [Hillman's italics]...If we take the dream as a drama, then it is a field of action, or as the gestalt psychologists would say, a field of forces" (p. 206). This one quotation implies a combination of gestalt, Jungian, narrative and phenomenological perspectives.

4.12.2 Amplification of symbols

Amplification aims to expand the scope of an image by means of associations and comparisons that strive to enhance understanding of the image, without violating the original intention in any way. This process can often enrich the meaning not only of dream symbols, but also the products of other metaphorical processes like active imagination, or sandplay work.

Jung accentuated that the process of amplification or association should remain limited by the context within which the material is presented (Jung, 1989, CW 18, p. 189). He found that the most helpful procedure was to stay with the content of the dream and not to use the technique of free association to lead to the core complexes of the dreamer.

Jung considered an in-depth knowledge of the way in which certain recurring themes have manifested in culture, would make a **therapist sensitive to objectively occurring patterns**, and in this way lessen the possibility of personal bias from interfering with the process of interpretation and leading to errors of judgement. He regarded this as a way of making the interpretation of symbols more scientific.

4.12.3 'Symbol', 'sign', 'image', 'imago' and 'metaphor'

Jung's use of the concepts 'symbol' and 'metaphor, were **closely allied**. This was especially true when Jung referred to '**the living symbol**', i.e. an image that serves as a vehicle for psychic contents. This interpretation is recognised, for example, by Robertson (1995): "As long as a symbol was truly a symbol and not merely a sign, it was inexhaustible, an endless metaphor" (p. 148).

Samuels, Shorter and Platt (1987) define **metaphor** (from an analytical perspective) as "**the definition and exploration of one thing by reference to the image of another**" (p. 93). According to these authors, Jung's method of amplification is in fact a search for a frame of reference, or a metaphor, "for a particular expression of psychic content" (p. 93).

Jung (1990, CW 6) distinguished clearly between 'symbol' and 'sign', declaring: "Symbolic and *semiotic* meanings are entirely different things" (p. 474). To Jung, a symbol does not point to something in the way that a sign does. He viewed the function of a symbol specifically as indicating what is still partly hidden or relatively unknown. According to him, a symbol is not a conscious comment in the same way that an allegory is. A symbol can be alive, "pregnant with meaning," or "dead", possessing only historical significance. "The living symbol formulates an essential unconscious factor, and the more widespread this factor is, the more general is the effect of the symbol, for it touches the corresponding chord in every psyche" (p. 477). (Compare Peirce, 5.2.3, p. 149 and Eco, 5.2.4, p. 154 and Ricoeur, 5.2.5, p. 157.)

Although Jung himself worked mostly with the concept of the symbol, it is the opinion of the researcher that Jung's emphasis on the use of images in analytical psychology did not only come later as implied by Samuels, Shorter and Plaut (1987). In Jung's view (Jung, 1990, CW 6), "**every psychic process is an image and an imagining**" (p. 52). Jung (1973) referred to language as "itself only an image" (p. 79), and frequently used examples to illustrate how the psyche tends to work by way of myth, metaphor and image.

By referring to the symbol as 'living', Jung wanted to indicate that the symbol in question, presented meaning in such a way as to make it appear 'numinous' (i.e. 'alive' or 'attractive'), to the individual or collective psyche. Nevertheless, Jung, Neumann (1974) and Hollis (1995) explain that any individual or cultural symbol does not retain its numinosity indefinitely.

There were certain differences between Freud and Jung regarding their view of symbols (Freud, 1973). Freud tended to see symbols as fixed, often sexual in meaning and pertaining to those unconscious contents that analytic psychology denotes as the 'personal unconscious'. Jung tended to view symbols as being able to point to universal or transcendent meanings. While not rejecting all instances of sexual interpretation, he realised that the libido, or psychic energy could also focus on other matters. These would be different in each individual case, but could point beyond the personal, to collective or archetypal contents (Jung, 1990, CW 5). Jung referred to some symbols as being 'objective' (i.e. **externalised**). By this he meant they were perceived to be objective parts of the environment, appearing to arise spontaneously from the collective or individual unconscious (Jung, 1990, CW 6).

According to Samuels, Shorter and Plaut (1987), the term 'imago' is most often used when referring not to the image created by one individual psyche as part of its own subjective process, but an archetypal representation. However, Jung (1990, CW 6) cautioned:

> because of its extremely subjective origin the *imago* is frequently more an image of a subjective functional complex than of the object itself. In the analytical treatment of unconscious products it is essential that the *imago* should not be assumed to be identical with the object; it is better to regard it as an image of the subjective relation to the object. (p. 473).

Myth or narrative is a concept related to metaphor, symbol and image. Hollis (1995) defines myth as "dramatization of conscious or unconscious values of a group or an individual" (p. 12). In his autobiography, Jung relates how he asked himself what particular myth he was living in his own life (Jung, 1989). Used in this context, the term myth implies what narrative therapists refer to as personal narratives (6.7, p. 258). A person's personal myth can also be seen as an extended metaphor.

From the above, it becomes clear that there is a close connection between the concepts "symbol", "image", "imago", " myth" and "metaphor" in analytical psychology. The symbols created by the psyche are considered to be grounded in a particular archetype, but to find personal expression in each individual case. (See also archetypes, 4.5, p. 76 and complexes, 4.6, p. 79.)

4.12.4 The functioning of symbols

The ability of symbols to serve as **visible vehicles, for energy-laden psychic contents**, makes it possible for them to fulfil a unique function:

- Symbols **indicate something hidden** or not yet fully understood. Jung insisted that the use of the term 'symbol' be restricted to those instances where there was an indication of something remaining hidden, not accessible to consciousness, or that could not be better expressed in any other way (Jung, 1990, CW 6, p. 474). Defined in this way, the symbol becomes a vehicle for expressing psychic contents that are not yet clearly defined, or are difficult to express or grasp consciously by any other means.

- Symbols serve as **mediators** between conscious and unconscious contents, also becoming the medium through which these contents are communicated. This is often referred to as the symbol's 'bridging' function (Jacobi, 1974). Hillman (1988) states that the symbol becomes the "bridge between the child's first world of imagination and the actual world into which it descends" (p. xiv).

- Symbols thus serve the function of **making psychic contents 'visible', or 'naming' them**, in order that they can be consciously acknowledged, worked with and shared with others. This process makes reality testing possible. (See references to ego function and awareness: 6.1.2,

p. 195; 6.3.3.3, p. 218.) Symbols can aid conscious adjustment by mediating between what they indicate and what is already accepted by consciousness.

- Symbols can function as **agents**. Jung worked with the 'visible' symbol both as a concept, but also at times as a personification of a certain quality. In the opinion of the researcher, the impetus that activates a symbolic process in children could come from the environment, be a part of a child's developmental process, or be an attempt at achieving or **restoring inner balance**. (Burritt, 1999 holds similar views.)

- In view of the large amount of mental processing which takes place outside conscious awareness (see 4.5, p. 76; 4.6, p. 79; 5.1.6, p. 123 & 5.1.7, p. 126), symbols that portray psychic contents are often experienced as having a **teleological function**. Jung asserted that the 'archetypal mind' could take over the teleological function of consciousness and stated that the archetypes possessed their own initiative and specific energy. In Jung's opinion, archetypes were able to initiate the production of meaningful interpretations in their own symbolic style and were capable of interfering in a given situation by means of certain impulses or thought formations. He believed that, like complexes, an archetypal impetus was capable of modifying or obstructing conscious intention (Jung, 1977, CW, 9i).

- Since symbols can be multi-faceted, it is possible for symbols to **portray contradictory opposites** in a composite way. A symbol can thus provide an image indicating a suspension of polarities or opposites. Symbols can facilitate integrated perception (see 6.9.2, p. 280) by combining contradictory experiences in a single portrayal. According to Jung (1990, CW 6),

symbols therefore possess a potentially "redeeming power" (p. 477) as well as the ability to facilitate change. They do this by providing an indication or a guideline **pointing towards the possible transcending of opposites** causing conflict in the psyche.

- Symbols serve a **containment function**, making psychic contents more manageable and relieving tension.

- Symbols can serve as the **vehicles for projection**. Jung (1990, CW 5) asserted "all the things that could happen in conscious life, but do not happen, are acted out in the unconscious and consequently appear in projection" (p. 310).

- As the above makes clear, Jung believed that an innate drive towards the creation and use of symbols resulted in **culture** and also **enhanced consciousness**, thus serving as a force to counterbalance the instincts (CW 8). The emphasis on this aspect must be viewed in historical context (Samuels, Shorter & Plaut, 1987).

- Symbols not only function as vehicles for reality, but also portray the products of fantasy or productive imagination. Portrayed by symbols, **psychic contents gain an external existence** and objective reality of their own.

- Symbols, metaphors, myths and other representational devices **combine image with emotion and meaning,** indicating the way in which psychic contents are related. Psychic energy, projected on to symbols, manifests as 'feeling', 'emotion', or 'value' attached to these

symbols. Jung (1964) explains that symbols not only convey concepts, but also illustrate relationships between psychic contents and the way in which these contents are related to "the living individual" (p. 88).

Symbols can exert a **paradoxical influence**. The same symbol could, for example, provide containment of psychic contents, while simultaneously suggesting guidelines for liberation and change. Rooted in archetypes, symbols are further capable of having both a potentially healing or destructive impact on the psyche (Hall, 1983).

4.12.5 Symbols as mediators

Jung regarded himself to be a descriptive scientist and considered his psychology to be scientific and empirical. He relied on observed facts for his descriptions of how the psyche functioned. He felt that he should take into account how things presented themselves in reality, so that, for example, to divorce fact from feeling or value would in fact be less true to life and consequently less scientific. (See Jung, 1978, CW 9ii, p. 13.)

Jung felt an obligation to make his contemporaries aware of the **reality of the psyche**. He believed images produced by the psyche as fantasy products, have a reality of their own and that one needs to relate to these images in accordance with this assumption.

Although Jung has been described as a superb model-maker (Robertson, 1995), he never confused his models with reality and always regarded his research as an ongoing process.

4.12.6 *The symbolic attitude*

It is an important premise of this thesis that just as the eye can focus instinctively, or the hand can reach out for an object, so the mind can 'choose' to think from a certain perspective or from a certain conceptual level. Although not similar, Jung's concept of the **symbolic attitude** is related to this idea.

Jung (1990, CW 5) asserted: "The world is empty only to him who does not know how to direct his libido towards things and people, and to render them alive and beautiful" (p. 173), clearly implying that the mind appears to have some choice in the matter. Using mathematics as an example, he stated (Jung, 1990, CW 6): "Whether a thing is a symbol or not depends chiefly on the attitude of the observing consciousness" (p. 475). (Compare Eco, 5.2.4, p. 154.) He thus perceived the symbolic attitude to be capable of assigning meaning to events or images.

4.13 Jung's description of his own process

In his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, written in 1961, Jung (1989) gave a detailed account of his own process of working with inner images. He underlined the contribution of this work to his theory: "The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important of my life- in them everything essential was decided" (p. 199). He elaborated:

> My life is what I have done, my scientific work; the one is inseparable from the other. The work is the expression of my inner development; for the commitment to the contents of the unconscious forms the man and produces his transformations (p. 222).

Jung clearly stated that the most satisfactory processes were initiated when the reigning conscious attitude adopted a stance that made increasing awareness of unconscious influences possible. This did not mean that responsibility was abdicated, but that the position of the ego was decentralised. (This is similar to the principle advocated by Derrida. See 5.2.7.2, p. 177.)

Jung allowed himself to follow or examine even those fantasies that struck him as ridiculous, the idea of involvement with which made his ego feel devalued. He took care to write down his experiences so that he could later subject them to a process of investigation. In order to gain a sense of understanding and perspective, he also compared his own experiences with other experiences that he could read about or that were reported to him.

Jung (1989) described the containment function of images: "To the extent that I managed to translate the emotions into images-that is to say, to find the images that were concealed in the emotions — I was inwardly calmed and reassured" (p. 177).

Jung valued the necessity of the role suffering and pain often plays in initiating transformation (Jung, 1993, CW 12, pp.272-273). He underscored the potential value of a creative depression and inner dialogue (Jung, 1990, CW 5, p. 172).

Jung further described the importance he attached to retaining his separateness from these images and retaining the ego's ability to make responsible choices.

Lastly, Jung (1989) emphasised the importance of allowing these processed images to fulfil the constructive function of initiating change:

> I always knew that everything I was experiencing was ultimately directed at this real life of mine. I had to meet its obligations and fulfil its meanings...The images of the unconscious place a great responsibility upon a man. Failure to understand them, or a shirking of ethical responsibility, deprives him of his wholeness and imposes a painful fragmentariness on his life (pp. 189-193.)

4.14 Analytical perception of process: the transcendent function

Sometimes metaphorical material (for example an image, or a symbol) can combine opposites in a way that seems to indicate a possible solution to the tension or conflict caused by what had previously appeared to have presented an impasse. Jung referred to this mediation process as the transcendent function. According to him, this function facilitated a complex process culminating in what could be called a psychic paradigm shift or attitude adjustment (Jung, 1990, CW6, p. 480). The transcendent function is closely linked to the central archetype, the Self, which is theorised to create images as a result of its drive towards wholeness and psychic balance.

Although referring to the transcendent *function*, Jung made it clear that he was describing a *process* (Jung, 1981, CW 8, pp. 69-91). He visualised this process occurring on the threshold between conscious and unconscious psychic contents (CW 8, p. 69). In practice, the unconscious is experienced as those unknown factors influencing consciousness (4.2, p. 68; 5.1.6, p. 123). Consciousness itself is viewed as directed focused attention that could present a one-sided view of reality.

Jung (1981, CW 8) advocated an ongoing inner dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious. In this regard he remarked: "What we are searching for is a way to make conscious those contents which are about to influence our actions, so that the secret interference of the unconscious and its unpleasant consequences can be avoided" (p. 78).

The process involved in the transcendent function is portrayed in the following diagram:

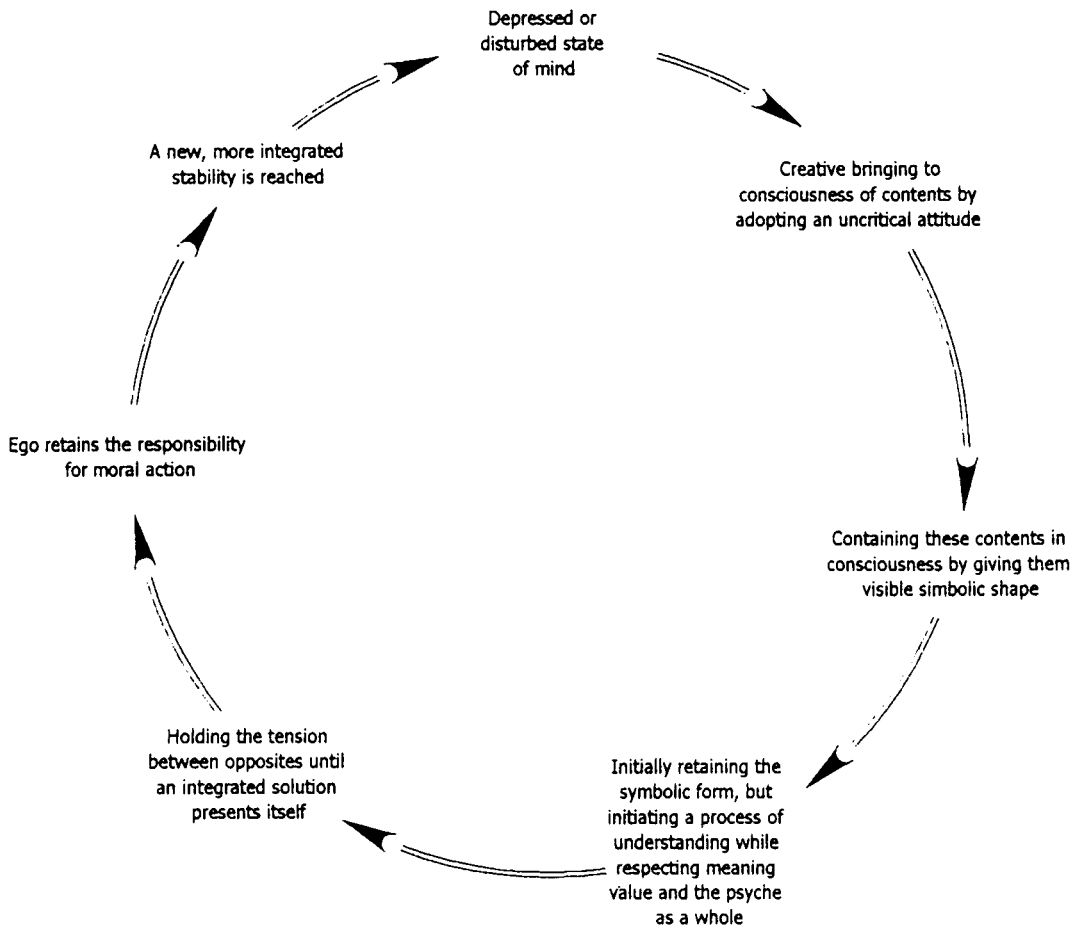

Figure 4.2 Analytical perception of process

As the diagram shows, the initial trigger activating the transcendent function is often a *depressed or disturbed state of mind*, which initiates an enquiry into the meaning or purpose of the symptoms. According to analytical psychology, a person has to be prepared to adopt a neutral or uncritical attitude that would allow the *creative bringing into consciousness of unknown contents*. Jung emphasised that psychic contents must be respected for what they are before being evaluated for 'truth' or 'correctness', since contents exist which do not necessarily fit neatly into

a preconceived model. He stated (Jung, 1981, CW 8): 'One might just as well ask if the duck-billed platypus is a "true" or "correct" invention of the Creator's will" (p. 91). (Compare Eco, 1999: *Kant and the Platypus*.)

This material can then be *portrayed metaphorically in visible or otherwise accessible form*. Jung (1981, CW 8) viewed symbols as "the best possible expression for a complex fact not yet clearly apprehended by consciousness" (p. 75).

While the contents are often initially portrayed in symbolic form, creative formulation must be supplemented by *understanding*. Jung explained: "One tendency seems to be the regulating principle of the other; both are bound together in a compensatory relationship...the two supplement one another to form the transcendent function" (p.85, italics not shown). He continued: "The ideal case would be if these two aspects could exist side by side or rhythmically succeed each other" (p. 86).

Insight often requires patience and persistence. In order for the transcendent function to fulfil its purpose, it might be necessary for an individual to continue *holding the tension between* what might appear to be contradictory *opposites*, without choosing in favour of one or the other, until an integrated solution presents itself. Some opposites can be reconciled or assimilated. Other opposites, for example, the continual interplay between dependence and independence, can only be kept in balance or transcended by the creation of a concept which allows them to co-exist in some meaningful way.

Once options have been revealed, the *ego retains the responsibility for moral action*. A particular cycle ends when *a new, more integrated stability is reached.*

The task of the transcendent function itself is never completed. For this reason, the researcher maintains that a therapist has the function not only of facilitating the transcendent function in therapy, but also of empowering individuals to become capable of negotiating similar processes independently. The analytical perspective agrees with other perspectives (e.g. Gestalt, cognitive and narrative approaches) in this respect and advocates the importance of empowering the patient.

The psychological approaches discussed in chapter 6 are in agreement that an inquiry into emotions can often provide a way of bringing certain psychic contents into awareness. The recognition of the regulating function of the psyche, as well as the emphasis on being prepared to hold the tension between opposites without escaping from awareness of the material until a solution can be reached, is similar to Gestalt theory.

4.15 The researcher's conclusions

A study of analytical literature, including the sandplay method (see Appendix C), revealed detailed descriptions of therapeutic processes in which extensive use had been made of

metaphorical material. This approach also provides hypotheses regarding the nature of metaphorical material and the use of metaphors, images or symbols as facilitators of psychic processes. For this reason, the analytical approach has been presented fairly comprehensively.

This approach places valuable emphasis on respecting metaphorical portrayals of psychic contents. The numerous references to both cognitive and experiential aspects of the process of working with metaphorical were useful since the researcher could initiate the formulation of key concepts and the guidelines indicated by these concepts. To the researcher, the material provided by studying the literature which forms the backgrounds of chapters 2 and 4 provided a baseline which could be enriched by other relevant approaches.

CHAPTER 5

VIEWPOINTS FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES

Authors like De Berry (1993), point out that it is important for psychologists to recognise the contributions of viewpoints from other disciplines. In addition to allowing psychological theories to enrich one another, it is considered important to enrich psychological theories with theoretical input from other sources.

The researcher's investigation revealed most of the major psychological theorists grounded their theories on knowledge gained not only from actual experience in, or experiments conducted within the field of psychotherapy, but from a holistic approach to their subject matter. Bruner (1990) provides one example of this by including viewpoints gleaned from anthropology, biology, mythology, philosophy, and language theory in his presentation of the value of narratives. The researcher maintains approaching theories from a narrow perspective implies losing touch with the perspectives in which these theories were originally grounded.

The discussion that follows is necessarily selective. Viewpoints will be discussed which are regarded potentially capable of enhancing insight into the use of the metaphor in psychotherapy.

5.1 The biological substratum of the psyche

Since biological processes provide the basis for representational processes that in their turn provide the visible products of 'psyche', a theory of metaphor does well to ground itself in what is known about these processes.

The oldest use of the term 'psyche' dates from the way in which it was used by the early Greeks to denote the soul or the essence of life. However, according to Reber (1985), the term 'psyche' is most commonly used in psychology as an approximate equivalent to the term 'mind'. This indicates a certain problematic dualism between mind and body, most notably between the mind and the brain.

Authors from a variety of disciplines address the problem of dualism. Examples are Edelman (1992), a biologist; Kalsched (1996), a psychologist; and Capra (1997), a physicist. These authors suggest that mind and body be viewed as a unity. The brain is seen as a structure by means of which mind, which is viewed as a process, operates. To see mind as a process and the brain, or brain-body, as a structure through which this process operates, is a useful conceptualisation, provided that it is remembered that living matter is being referred to in this way. The authors mentioned emphasise this.

Winnicott (1958) describes the importance of the unity of what he calls the 'psyche-soma':

> The psyche and the soma are not to be distinguished except according to the direction from which one is looking. One can look at the developing body or at the developing psyche. I suppose the word psyche here means the *imaginative elaboration of somatic parts, feelings and functions*, that is of physical aliveness...We know that this imaginative elaboration is dependent on the existence and the healthy functioning of the brain...The psyche is not, however, felt by the individual to be localized in the brain, or indeed to be localized anywhere (p. 244).

Capra (1997) describes mind as a 'process of cognition' (p. 271). He uses this term in its broader sense. However, the term 'cognition' can become a contentious one when used in psychology. For this reason, the researcher has chosen to use the term 'psyche' to describe mind and body as a functional unity.

Predictions about the current era tend to agree that the definitive influence of the so-called 'information era' will eventually be supplemented by equally definitive advances in the biological sciences, especially in the field of human genetics. Kaplan and Sadock (1995) predicted that "such terms... will predominate in the journals of the 21st century" (p. 3). These predictions have gained impetus from the successful mapping of the human genome during the first half of the year 2001.

Edelman (1992) points out that although the brain consists of relatively straightforward chemical elements like carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sulphur, phosphorus and certain trace

elements, the number of connections in the brain and the way in which the patterns formed by these connections function, make it, "the most complicated material object in the known universe" (p. 17). Viewed from Edelman's perspective, the brain is a living, fluid, flexible, self-organising system, which, while endlessly creative, can maintain coherent stability over time. This system links body and psyche.

Through interaction between linked processes (for example through thoughts), the psyche, if one considers it a mind-and-matter unit, can change its own matter, i.e. its neuron firing patterns. It is postulated that metaphors serve as important aids to this process of change (Edelman, 1992; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995; Kandel, 1998).

5.1.1 The role played by inborn components

According to many authors (for example, Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Edelman, 1992; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995 and Dennett, 1996) the brain is the product of a process of natural selection. Edelman (1992) explains that the process of natural selection favours the survival of those individuals in a living population whose genes carry characteristics that are important for the survival of the species as a whole. Since the process is not a carefully planned and executed program, but relies on random elements and chance, not all that is carried in the genes has been specifically selected for survival. Also, as Dennett (1996) remarks, it is simpler for the process to build on existing functions than it is to rely on the development of entirely new functions.

Dennett (1996) further points out that although natural selection has no foresight, it "has gradually built things with foresight" (p. 75). He goes on to declare that it is one of the most important tasks of the mind, "to produce a future" (p. 75). These abilities are known as **second order processes** (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995) **and metaphor-use is closely linked** to these processes.

Bruner (1990) and Leaky and Lewin (1992) agree that, from an evolutionary perspective, mankind's most valuable assets would be twofold:

- First, those abilities that help humans achieve **consciousness** and mastery over their own behaviour.

- Second, the fact that the malleable human infant is born into a **cultural environment** which is uniquely geared both to aid the development of a sense of self-identity and mastery, as well as to equip it with knowledge and collective cultural experience.

An important question asked by researchers in the fields of evolution and physiology is how the second order processes, described above, form and operate. Judging by the immaturity of the brains of *homo erectus* infants at birth, (this knowledge is gained from fossil evidence), Leakey and Lewin (1992), postulate that *homo erectus* must already have had an extended childhood 1.6 million years ago. This leads them to theorise that "qualities as complex as consciousness, morality, and ethics developed over a long period of time in our history" and, "in a sense proto-

human **culture** is not only a product of our ancestors' behavior, it **is also part of the selection pressure that drives further evolution**" (p. 199).

According to Leaky and Lewin (1992) manipulative capabilities, the development of social skills and the ability to think by using concepts, most particularly language, were involved in the formation of second order processes.

Consciousness and unconscious processes are further discussed under the appropriate headings (5.1.6, p. 122 & 5.1.7, p. 125).

As a result of the interaction between cultural development and the process of natural selection, the existence of what appear to be certain **universal behaviour patterns** has led to a great deal of speculation. Investigators attempt to determine whether these universal mechanisms reside in culture, or whether the process of cultural exchange between a child and the social context within which he or she grows up is aided by innate mechanisms. Implied here are abilities such as the tendency to experience events in spatio-temporal terms, a possible innate narrative propensity, the tendency to seek relationships and causalities, as well as mankind's apparently innate curiosity and intentionality (Bruner 1990). Also included would be a tendency towards certain behaviour patterns, like, for example, maternal bonding (Stevens, 1990).

As has been explained in chapter 4, these patterns or tendencies are **often portrayed and understood metaphorically**. Consequently, knowledge about these patterns provides vital background information for the interpretation of metaphors.

Stevens (1990) quotes a number of traits that are considered to be present in all cultures whatever their historical era or their geographical location. This list includes 'obvious' behaviour, like rules for governing disputes, courtship behaviour, homicide, funeral rites and trade, as well as behaviour that would not necessarily come to mind, like taboos relating to food and incest, associations of men which exclude women, gambling and dream interpretation.

Stevens (1990) adds:

> Human behaviour is highly circumscribed by the genetic consequences of evolutionary adaptation and...any attempt to adopt forms of social organisation and ways of life other than those which are characteristic of our species must lead to personal and social disorientation (p. 24).

The above implies two possibilities. First, as expressed by Robertson (1995), that "objects and events that have had meaning for a large number of people for a long period of time leave a record in the human psyche" (p. 148). The other possibility is that this knowledge forms part of the culture into which a person is born (for example, Bruner, 1990). Although advocates for both viewpoints agree enough evidence exists to postulate the existence of certain inborn tendencies, the exact nature and functioning of these tendencies are currently still matters for debate.

The realisation of our connectedness to the evolutionary process of which we form a product has, amongst others, two major implications:

- our symbol-forming function was built on other functions and the "perfect machine" metaphor for the mind is therefore not totally applicable (Thagard, 1992);

- as stated by Leakey and Lewin (1992), "although we may not like the idea, the **human mind must have limits** to what it can comprehend, and its own consciousness may be one of the things beyond those boundaries" (p. 311).

5.1.2. Sensory interpretation ***(reality testing)***

As a result of the process of natural selection, the **human senses are specifically geared to interpret the world in a certain way**. In order to understand the necessary conditions which enhance the ability to work creatively with metaphors, it is necessary to understand the manner in which this predisposition influences perception. Indeed, limitations make coherent perception possible.

Bruner (1983) has the following to say regarding the interpretative ability of the human senses:

> How curiously clever our senses are with respect to the world we need to manage. To begin with, they are so riskily narrow-band. Much of the world goes too fast to be seen or apprehended, much goes too slowly; much is too big, too small or too high-pitched or too

> dim or too bright or off color. Technology may devise ways of registering what our naked senses cannot discern. But we know, somehow, that there is something different about "knowing" by instrument that there are molecules out there and "seeing" that the sky is blue. We use the first kind of knowledge to explain the second. The testimony of the senses seems less like the primary stuff of knowledge than like fodder for testing the hypothesis that precede sense.
>
> But that is only part of the story, and was not the main part as far as I was concerned. It is not just that evolution has tuned our senses to the demands of our habitat. Nature, to boot, has given us so limited a span of attention that we can only sample lightly from the biased input that our senses permit us to apprehend. And "sample" is indeed the word for it. But it is not random, this sampling of the world by the eye and the ear and the skin senses and the rest. It is a filtering, a sorting out, and finally a construction...The nature of the filter and of the construction processes that work with it- these constitute the *real* philosopher's stone. It does not turn base metal into gold, but it turns physical "stimuli" into knowledge, a much more valuable transformation (p. 66).

Knowledge regarding the nature of the senses has resulted in **theories of interpretation**. For instance, the information the brain receives from the eye, and interprets as precise information, is in fact composed of very coarse units of information. Using the physiology of the eye as an example, Bronowski (1979) postulates that our brain already starts interpreting and making inferences at a very basic level.

Macaulay (1996) describes how Platt studied the eye's way of processing information and making assumptions about the relationships perceived. This made him wonder whether, "intelligence may be the ability to perceive successive analogies at higher and higher levels of abstraction; a multiple repetition of a single basic neural process of organization...(of) analogic progression" (p. 68).

5.1.3. Certain basic characteristics of brain functioning

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe brain structure and functioning in detail, **certain basic facts are helpful in explaining how the brain gains the ability to compare various units of information in order to arrive at a composite image, which makes co-ordinated responses possible.**

According to Kaplan and Sadock (1995), some of the brain functions currently being studied include those functions concerned with noting similarities and differences, as well as those concerned with the storing, classifying and retrieving of information. Higher order functions like logical deduction and language representations are also receiving attention from researchers. These researchers tend to agree that even relatively simple forms of cognitive functioning require complex networking of various regions in the brain.

Pribram (1995) explains how the brain relies on the formation of certain synapses between target neurons to develop complex patterns of connections. Every function of the brain appears to be reliant on specific neural circuits. These circuits are postulated to function according to four principles of organisation:

- reciprocity (sometimes, however, the connections between these circuits are not direct)
- neural connections which can either be divergent or convergent; these connections being seen to be either hierarchical, parallel or both
- certain brain areas are specialised to perform certain functions
- interindividual variability

These neural circuits operate in ways which enable various neuronal groupings to interact by means of what Edelman (1992) refers to as, "**massively parallel and reciprocal connections**" (p. 85). The brain arrives at these responses by correlating the various reactions from different neuronal groupings (mappings), some of which rely on differing sensory inputs.

'**Neuroplasticity**' is a term used to describe the brain's ability to adapt to a wide variety of circumstances. Neuroplasticity is made possible by the fact that neurotransmitters can modulate the way in which target neurons will process subsequent synaptic information.

According to Kaplan and Sadock (1995), two types of mechanisms appear to be involved when the brain reacts to the long-term effects of environmental factors on the brain, namely, those that involve protein phosphorylation and those which include the regulation of gene expression.

Protein phosphorylation is postulated to provide the means for short-term memory and long-term memory seems to rely on the regulation of gene expression.

Kandel (1998) agrees with the above. He emphasises **the importance currently attached to a better understanding of gene expression** and summarises five points that he considers to represent the current thinking of biologists about the relationship of mind to the brain. These principles are the following:

- that what is called the mind is actually a range of functions carried out by the brain
- that genes, specifically combinations of genes, exert significant control over behaviour- here Kandel is referring to the dual function of genes, namely, their function both as regulators of anatomical structure and as regulators of anatomical function
- that experience produces sustained changes in the effectiveness of neural connections by altering gene expression
- that specific genes or combinations of genes thus play a role both in making individuals more susceptible to certain forms of behaviour, as well as by sustaining, as a result of environmental influence, those forms of behaviour
- that alterations in gene expression give rise to structural alterations in the neural circuits of the brain, these morphological changes being indicative of the long-term memory process and also that each individual brain is modified in unique ways.

Kandel is not proposing a radically different viewpoint from that which is already an accepted one in psychology. Both **disciplines agree that inherited traits influence behaviour to a**

greater or lesser degree, but that the actual biology of the brain is also influenced by environmental functions. However, it is important to take cognisance of the enhanced ability of neurophysiologists to describe brain functioning and also possibly to devise means of influencing this process.

5.1. 4 The importance of memory

The above makes it clear why Edelman (1992) should emphasise the importance of **memory** as **one of the basic brain functions**. Memory makes recognition possible and this in turn generates the ability for autobiographical recollection. Memory does this by providing the needed **referencing in time and space** that aids the process of determining the way in which events or concepts are related.

Long-term memory is further postulated to have an associative or schematic organisation. The information is postulated to be encoded in such a way that it can be retrieved, recoded and stored again in modified format. The theoretical grounding of these hypotheses is heavily reliant on **cognitive theory** (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

According to the "multiple-entry modular memory system", there seem to be two major interrelated memory systems namely **perceptual and reflective processes**. Information can also come into memory from multiple levels. Kaplan and Sadock (1995) discuss research done by

Johnson on a brain function that she describes as a 'memory monitoring' function. According to this research, **individuals are able to discriminate between memories generated by incoming information from self-generated thought, imagination, fantasy or dreams**. The more reflection is involved, the more the person is able both to distinguish the source of the information (internal or external) and to retrieve it intact.

Bruner (1983) realised the importance of the human **narrative ability**. He discovered that facts introduced in the form of stories were easier to remember, but also showed resistance to change. Once it had been accepted, individuals tended to stick to the original story, despite evidence to the contrary.

5.1.5. Internal value-criteria

The impression a given metaphor will make on the individual involved, is intimately connected to the psychic reaction elicited. To explain these types of reaction, Edelman (1992) proposes that **internal criteria of value**, the basis of which are set by evolutionary selection, are used as references to **determine the appropriateness of certain responses**.

He postulates that this is accomplished by the **experiential use** that is made **of** what he refers to as **qualia**. Edelman (1992) defines qualia as follows: "Qualia constitute the collection of personal or subjective experiences, feelings and sensations that accompanies awareness" (p.

125). While qualia are seen by him to form an integral part of **embodied consciousness**, he notes that people, realising that their experiences are unique, tend to leave references to the qualia out of descriptions of internal states given to others.

According to Kaplan and Sadock (1995), perception and emotions are thought to originate in different systems in the brain. This then leads to the hypotheses that **emotion and cognition are two levels of awareness** that can either be integrated or split. This process is as yet not well understood. However, it seems clear that the **emotional value-criteria**, which assign meaning to experience, have an important function both in memory and in thought processes. For this reason it is considered important that **emotions and intellect should not be artificially split**, since the systems involved probably interact closely. Research done by Kalsched (1996) is discussed in this study as an example of an integrated approach which applies this knowledge to enhance psychotherapy.

Greenspan and Curry (1995) view emotions as being central to cognition, suggesting that emotions orchestrate many cognitive operations and make creative thought possible. For example, the creation of a new idea is postulated to take place when individuals use their own emotional experience to assign meaning and assess the significance of events. Greenspan and Curry (1995) describe this as follows:

> Each sensory experience...is labelled by both its physical properties and its emotional qualities. This double coding helps the child both to place the memory or experience in a catalogue of experience and retrieve and reconstruct it when needed. As the child grows,

> emotional reactions come to operate as a sixth sense that allows the child to recognise and understand situations (p. 299).

Greenspan maintains these emotions, as well as the cognitions which accompany them, are aids to a complex emotional signalling system, which acts like an orchestra leader for a vast array of cognitive instruments. It becomes clear that **learning and thought processes depend a great deal on meaning.**

Both Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Leakey and Lewin (1992), agree that consciousness cannot be a totally objective experience. According to the latter, the dimension of feeling makes consciousness a subjective experience but also provides empathy for others. However, the ability to perceive things considered as 'not me' or 'objective' is a prerequisite for consciousness. It, therefore, appears that the opposites of **subjectivity and objectivity** were **necessary paradoxes** in the cradle of consciousness.

5.1.6 Unconscious processes

Most mental activity is obviously **not conscious**. Non-aware forms of perception are thought to be able to directly influence an individual's emotional states, thoughts and behaviour. Dennett (1996) describes how olfactory signals can bypass the thalamus. These signals then influence old

control centres in the brain, prompting them to exert a compelling unconscious influence on behaviour.

When Bruner and his associates replicated Jung's association experiment, they realised, in retrospect, that the fact that individuals would either give a quick or 'vigilant' or, alternatively, a slow or 'defensive' reaction to a word, meant that the individual was interpreting stimuli on a subliminal level before bringing the information to consciousness. They linked this to Broadbent's proposal of the existence of a 'buffer storage system' where input is held (Bruner, 1983).

Understanding those mechanisms which regulate certain contents out of awareness, as well as the processes involved in the reintegration of these contents into conscious awareness, is a focal point of the psychotherapeutic work with metaphors.

A study by Moomal and Heinzi (2000), regarding deception and self-deception illustrates how the processing of information can be hindered when dissociative mechanisms become involved. Their study bears out a number of psychodynamic premises regarding "splitting" of consciousness and also provides a theory for the original intent of this mechanism as a coping strategy.

Moomal and Heinzi discuss the ability of people with strong ego-functions and the need to act purposefully in life, to filter out certain facts from conscious awareness as a temporary coping mechanism. They point out that research seems to indicate that, in cases where the person is not

later able to revisit and cope with the aspect of reality which has been filtered out, this leads to depression. Moomal and Heinzi further suggest that depression is a mechanism designed to induce the person to revisit a memory or belief that has been regulated out of awareness in order that the appropriate adjustment to reality can be made. When this condition persists over time it could lead to, "deception by the self of itself *as an other*" (Moomal & Heinzi, 2000, p. 46). The same hypothesis, namely, that it is possible for two attitudes to co-exist, the one being conscious and the other unconscious, has been suggested by other theorists, for example by Jung (4.6, p. 79).

The above implies that behaviour can be motivated by unconscious concepts or wholes, the exact nature or structure of which are not easily accessible to consciousness. Studies such as this one indicate the importance of integrating clinical experience and psychodynamic theorising with research which incorporates knowledge and theories from other disciplines, or from other perspectives within the same discipline.

The opinion of the researcher is that the psyche functions as an organised, self-governing whole, even without focused consciousness, but that focused consciousness is necessary for certain functions. According to Kaplan and Sadock (1995), the fact that focused consciousness was present when certain processing took place, influences the nature of that processing. Focused consciousness, therefore, probably has the ability to override certain other systems. The researcher does not describe the psyche as 'self-governing' to imply that it functions as a perfect system. However, certain innate means of co-ordinating functions and correlating information would be necessary preconditions for holistic processing.

5.1.7 Consciousness

Kaplan and Sadock (1995) describe consciousness as "**a subjective awareness of some of the aspects of ongoing cognitive processing**, rather than as a way station required for further processing" (p. 281).

Based on the research done by Miller (cited by Bruner, 1990), **consciousness** itself is considered to be **limited** to handling seven plus or minus two bits of information at any one time. A process called 'chunking' is postulated, which entails the grouping together of bits of information in order to enlarge the scope of focal attention.

"Chunking" implies the existence of **meaning structures** which, under the influence of the cognitive sciences, are most commonly referred to as 'schemas'. These mental models or schemata, are defined by Kaplan and Sadock (1995) as, "unconscious, highly organized structural processes that are derived from past experiences, that aid in interpreting present stimuli, and that influence the direction of future behavior" (p. 282).

Regarding metaphor, Miller (1979) argues that, while metaphor builds on and transforms existing meaning structures in a similar manner to non-metaphorical material, imagining a **metaphor** to

be true **can enrich and broaden** "the conception of what a world can be" (p. 247). Miller thus recognises the creative value of "as if" activity which has been more fully discussed in chapter 2.

Edelman (1992) describes two forms of consciousness. According to him, one form, which he refers to as the remembered present, is shared by animals and, although it may be influenced by past experiences, is not seen by him to transcend momentary awareness. Consciousness is further perceived to function as an aid to recognition and as supplying the feeling of being certain, as well as a sense of continuity and awareness of the present (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995), which is probably close to what is more commonly referred to as a sense of being, and is connected to **self-identity**.

Edelman (1992) views higher-order consciousness as mediated by conceptual categorisation and facilitated by symbolic memory, but reliant on primary consciousness. He further views higher-order consciousness as providing the individual with the capabilities needed to model, "the past, present, future, a self and the world" (p. 134). This form of consciousness Edelman describes thus includes **awareness of the self placed in spatio-temporal context capable of making use of symbolic concepts**.

It is useful to conceptualise what become visible as the products of consciousness, as the visible results of a process which are represented in a hypothetical 'space' or **transient imaginary world**. However, this conceptualisation is not without its critics (Woolfolk, 1998). It is the opinion of the researcher that the words 'model' or 'world' are used by authors simply to imply the ability to evoke a certain rendering of reality and that this does not negate the insight of those

authors that the products of mind are indicative of an ongoing process. The views of Leaky and Lewin (1992) and Edelman (1992), which follow, illustrate this.

The type of consciousness with which this thesis is concerned, is defined by Edelman (1992) as involving, "the recognition by a thinking subject of his or her own acts or affects," and, as embodying, "a model of the personal, and of the past and the future as well as the present " (both quotations, p. 112).

According to Leakey and Lewin (1992) and Dennett (1996), higher-order consciousness initially developed because it was necessary for individuals living in social groups to be able to understand others. This understanding is seen by these authors to include the intricacies of subterfuge, as well as the ability to play with symbolic objects. A benefit gained from these abilities was that they enabled the self to be able to become an object to itself.

The extent to which metaphors are embedded in thinking processes, (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 5.2.6, p. 165), leads to speculation about **the use of metaphor during the conception and evolution of language, consciousness and culture.**

5.1.8 The role played by culture

Bruner (1990) makes the development of culture central to his theory, stating:

> The symbolic systems that individuals used in constructing meaning were systems that were already "there", deeply entrenched in culture and language. They constituted a very special kind of communal tool kit whose tools, once used, made the user a reflection of the community' (p. 11).

It would seem that during the process of interaction between socialisation, culture, and evolution based on perception, the uses of language, symbols and the conceptualised image developed in conjunction with one another. The issue here is not the actual seeing of the image, but the development of the ability to use the image to aid understanding. This includes the ability to endow it with symbolic significance or meaning (Lieberman, 1984).

It is the researcher's perception that, from the very beginning of man's development, certain things which have now become defined to stand opposite one another when a narrow theoretical stance is taken, were mutually dependent and have become inextricably intertwined. It is difficult to imagine symbols and image making, or ritual burials that imply some sort of mythology without language. Leakey and Lewin (1992) theorise that **the ability to adopt symbolic behaviour patterns, as well as the ability to engage in image-making activities, developed in conjunction with language**, and, therefore, that evidence of these behaviours probably indicates

an existing, if rudimentary, language. The development of culture probably created the need for the development of consciousness and the use of symbols.

5.1.9 Levels of thought

Regarding the existence of levels of thinking, Dennett (1996) is of the opinion:

> the big step...was the step from first-order to second-order; the higher orders were just a matter of how much an agent can keep in his head at one time, and this varies with the circumstances, even with in a single agent (p. 159).

'Metacognition' is a term used to denote the ability to think about thinking. It is postulated to develop in children at approximately six years of age (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995). **Any appearance-reality distinction, as well as the ability to be aware of separateness, is postulated to be the result of metacognition**. Although metacognition can check for fallacious logic, it seems sometimes, especially under conditions of trust and acceptance, to become temporarily suspended. This makes it possible for incorrect views to be adjusted under the influence of others, but also makes individuals vulnerable to suggestibility (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

Edelman (1992) refers to "**parallel levels of perceptual and conceptual life**" (p. 174). While emphasising the manner in which various levels of thought and brain mechanisms coexist and interact and how "we live on several levels at once" (p. 150), he acknowledges that **thought can become abstract and removed from perceptual experience**.

5.1.10 The relevance of theories of brain function for the use of metaphor

Since the 1980s various disciplines have joined forces to produce insights into questions of perception, cognition, consciousness, memory and related topics. A **large part of current cognitive research is done in conjunction with neurobiological research**. Consequently, these fields have become merged to a certain extent with neurobiology relying on cognitive formulations like 'schemas' to explain brain functioning and cognitive theory being influenced by the information processing and computer metaphors of cognitive functioning which are currently in vogue (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

Since the 1990s, the **connection between the brain and 'the mind'** has enjoyed renewed attention. This has not only been due to the increased co-operation described above, but also to the above-mentioned **increased understanding of the nature of the processes** taking place. Brain systems tend to be seen by current researchers to be related and interdependent. Understanding brain regulation has become as important as identifying specific sites that perform

specific functions, and the importance of interdisciplinary co-operation is highlighted (Edelman, 1992; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995; Kandel, 1998).

Various theories of brain function deemed to be relevant to a better understanding of the use of metaphors and images in psychotherapy will now be discussed. Edelman (1992) stresses that 'the conceptual centres of the brain treat the symbols and their references and the imagery they evoke as an "independent" world to be further categorized' (p. 134).

A **sensory image** is defined by Siegel (1995) as 'a pattern of neural excitation with a characteristic activation of particular neurons. That pattern is what is meant by the term "mental representation."' (p. 178). Sensation is seen as being translated into perceptions that are referred to as an 'iconic image' and these are considered to provide information used in higher cognitive functions. **Perception** is viewed as being able to take place **without focal awareness,** but information dealt with in this way is perceived as being **processed differently**. Attention processes are seen as being able to **selectively focus** on certain external or internal data. Thinking is seen to involve, "the **mental representation** of some aspects of the world or of the self and the manipulation of those representations" (p. 179), and to include categorisation and general problem solving as well as judgement and decision making abilities which aid rational thought processes, assessments of future probabilities and the making of choices.

Visual, auditory, and possibly also other forms of processing, are considered to take place in **gestalt** form that is heavily influenced by 'top-down processing'. **Top-down processing** means that incoming information is prejudged and that how this information is eventually perceived, is

dependent on the nature of existing concepts. The ability to be mentally capable of remembering, creating, inspecting and transforming mental images, appears to require similar time and effort to that which is required in the case of the processing of external data (Hall, 1977; Hall, 1983; Lusebrink, 1990; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

Complex images appear to require more time and effort to process than simpler images. This is postulated to be due to the fact that they contain more **meaning** (Pervin, 1990; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995). The process of working with images thus appears to be influenced both by the nature of the material, such as the emotions involved, as well as by how the material relates to the existing concepts.

According to Lusebrink (1990), **images are complex phenomena**, having various affective-somatic, structural, meaning and other components. Lusebrink discusses Ahsen's research that conceptualises images as a three-dimensional unity. Ahsen uses the term ISM to indicate that the forming of an image (I) is followed by a somatic response (S), and meaning (M). According to him, any visual image to which a subject is responsive, will, on investigation, be found to have revived an existing inner three-dimensional unit. Lusebrink (1990) asserts that images with strong emotional component, for example traumatic images, retain their meaning for long periods of time. Where certain issues have a strong emotional component, they tend to make intellectual categorisation and verbal labelling more difficult. He advocates using the image itself as a starting point for processing in psychotherapy since this will often make it easier for a subject to relate to issues. NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming) is an example of a theory of behaviour change aimed at reviving and changing existing ISM-units.

Block (1981) agrees with Lusebrink that internal imagery is made accessible to consciousness through existing motoric, sensory and visual perceptual systems. He argues that, since imaging and actual perceiving share the same perceptual systems, 'we can avoid confusion by simply adopting the convention of using "mental image" to denote the internal representations involved in mental imagery' (p. 9). Block further argues that since **many representations appear to contain elements of both the so-called 'pictorial' and the 'descriptional' approaches to images**, opposing arguments between supporters of these two approaches, which are intent on maintaining differences, should be regarded as non-sensical. From the point of view of cognitive theory, these would include propositions and images as well as semantic and lexical symbols.

Although these processes are postulated to be capable of taking place without consciousness, they become known directly only through translation into consciousness and language. According to Block, cognitive scientists tend to view the influence of language as dominant even concerning subjective experiences, theorising that many non-verbal processes, especially those specifically concerned with communication were formed through language in the first place (Block, 1981).

Mills and Crowley (1993) describe the process of working with metaphors as a primary experience, which is mediated by right-brain processes, whereby unconscious association patterns summate to present consciousness with a new response through a process of transderivational search. According to these authors, right-brain involvement increases when the brain is processing metaphors since the **processing of metaphors requires a fluidity of**

contextual understanding. They postulate that, "metaphor arises out of an interweaving of imagery and implication, the message of which can be gleaned only from a vantage point of context and shifting meanings" (p. 25). It must be borne in mind that the distinction between left and right brain function is a controversial one (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

5.1.11 Metaphors as aids to understanding brain function

Although the functioning of the human brain is currently often explained with the aid of the 'computer'-metaphor, the brain differs from a computer in that it interacts with the data that it is either storing or producing in a way that influences the nature of the data itself as well as the way in which it is portrayed or interpreted.

Metaphors or analogies that are used as aids to understanding of brain function need to be taken into account. A short summary of the neuropsychologist Pribram's view on the use of metaphors, models and analogies as aids to understanding brain function, will be presented below.

Pribram (1990) asserts **when several levels of inquiry need to be related to one another, the use of an appropriate metaphor, model or analogy can aid the researcher in transcending previous views** which are serving to encapsulate or limit understanding at that particular point in time. He cites Peirce (1932), with whom he agrees that innovation stems almost exclusively from the creative use of analogy, and makes the point that "the proper use of analogical reasoning sets

in motion a self-reflective process by which, metaphorically speaking, brains come to understand themselves" (p. 79).

Pribram does not, however, go as far as does Gooch (1973) to suggest that the ways in which the brain reflects about itself will tend to mirror the structure of the brain. He envisages the same progression suggested by Du Preez (1991). Du Preez postulates that a researcher starts with "metaphors that are loosely coupled to the data to be organized and ends ideally by furnishing precise models of the fit of those data to the type of organization suggested by the original metaphor" (p. 79), and emphasises that the, "kind of understanding often achieved by metaphor- what we might call existential understanding- is not the kind that is the goal of science" (p. 80).

The reason for this, in Pribram's opinion, is that **while existential understanding is private, scientific understanding needs to be logically communicable**. Another point he makes is that it is the brain's processes that are accessible to experience and that the brain is not capable of sensing itself.

Pribram shows how **metaphors** taken from telecommunications, control systems engineering and computer sciences **have influenced and aided research**. While he shows the usefulness of each of these perspectives, he also comments on their limitations. His description of the implications of a holograph-like view of reality has an important bearing on many of the matters discussed below, and is, therefore, explained in more detail.

According to Pribram (1990), a **holographic view of reality** would correspond to many of the more recent advances made in the area of physics and the theories concerning them, notably the theories of Bohm, Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr and Russell's collaborator Whitehead.

Pribram explains:

> "Ordinary reality" is the reality of Newton's mechanics and Euclid's geometry. It is grasped through consensual validation-by bringing to bear the several senses and inferring a reality that partakes of them all...What are the characteristics of ...(a) holograph-like view of reality? First, it does not correspond to sense perception and is thus counterintuitive. Second, this order, which Bohm calls "implicate" to distinguish it from the ordinary "explicate" sensory order, is nonobjective. The objective, explicate order is made up of the images by which we know objects. These images are constructed by lenses: the lenses and lenslike characteristics of our senses as well as the lenses, often called "objectives" of our microscopes and telescopes. By contrast, the holograph-like implicate non-objective reality is not composed of things but of quantally constituted microwaves and their interactive constituents such as constructive (nodal) and destructive inferences. Leibniz (1714/1973) described such a reality in his *Monadology*, in which the whole universe was represented in each monad, a windowless portion of the whole. Substitute lensless for windowless, and the monad becomes holographic...in the reality described in this domain, the ordinary dimensionalities of space and time become enfolded, (implicated) (pp. 95-96).

Since the hologram itself only provides **a 'still' depiction of what is in fact a moving and changing scene**, Pribram advocates the use of the term 'holonomic' to describe implicate reality. One could note that while Pribram is describing a spaceless, timeless concept without boundaries, devoid of objective reality, he still refers to this as "reality described in this *domain* [my italics]."

In the opinion of the researcher, this occurs because it is impossible for the human mind to conceptualise in any other way. **Even when the deconstruction of postmodernism is discussed, what the human mind tends to visualise, is a metaphorical space into which concepts can be 'brought' for 'deconstruction'**. When the transitional process, taking place in this 'world' of deconstruction is interrupted by the 'deconstructer' being called to dinner, he or she enters once again a constructed world of common reality and walks down a passage to sit down at a table.

5.1.12 How neurobiologists view psychic reality

In the light of current research and tendencies towards interdisciplinary co-operation, Kandel (1998) asserts the traditional distinction between "those who care about people and those who care about research" (p. 458) has become less readily acceptable.

Although the exact way in which the brain functions in order to use metaphors as images of transformation is by no means clearly understood, many neurobiological researchers appear to experience less uncertainty regarding what could be considered to be contentious issues, than members of other disciplines.

An example, reminiscent of Kandel's (1998) first principle, is the following statement regarding the nature of mind made by Siegel (1995):

> Emotions, memories, desires, images, ideas and thoughts emanate from complex neural structures encased in the skull. Even the subjective experience of self-awareness can be understood as a cognitive-perceptual process that internally focuses attention on itself. Neuroanatomy reveals that the billions of cells in the brain are distributed in a complex interwoven network. Recently designed computer models of parallel distributed processes can mimic such things as perceptual recognition, decision processes, and learning. **Thus psychiatrists need not postulate a mind substance that is separate in location, quality, or quantity from the functioning of the brain** [researcher's italics]. Biological, psychodynamic, and social psychiatry can find a common home and language in the field of cognitive sciences (p. 277).

The researcher regards the above statement as valid but one-sided in the sense that **no allowance is made for psychic reality**.

Although Kandel (1998) advocates co-operation between disciplines his emphasis appears to be similar to Siegel's, i.e. all behaviour is reducible to brain function. While arguing legitimately and convincingly that mind-body dualism must not be upheld, that the defensive stances taken towards one another by the various disciplines is counterproductive, and that recent advances in the understanding of brain biology make recognition of research results in this area imperative, in the opinion of the researcher, Kandel's vision nevertheless tends to be too reductionistic.

The researcher maintains it remains necessary to guard against a view of brain function which reduces the mind to 'nothing but' neurophysiological processes. **Clarity of perspective benefits from a holistic view of mind**. Allowing for a broader perspective need not impede a researcher's ability to do focused scientific research. It would, however, safeguard the researcher from making naive statements about psychic reality.

5.1.13 Mind-body unity and psychic reality

In the opinion of the researcher, it remains necessary to **guard against a too literal or concrete interpretation of the brain and behaviour**. An example of this would be the theory of Gooch (1973), that the cerebellum is the seat of the self. The self in Gooch's theory is similar but not identical to the Jungian theory of Self. He views the cerebellum as the seat of alternative consciousness and refers to it as a universe in its own right. In the opinion of this author it is

more useful to see the ability of the psyche for self-regulation as a function of the psyche as a whole, which is evident but as yet poorly understood.

The total sum of networks of associations and symbols that are used to create meaning, are obviously not exclusively carried 'inside' the brain. Equally, while the products of 'mind' fill libraries, television screens, the Internet, conversations and memories, what becomes conscious are again the visible results of individual psychic processes.

For the above reasons, it is necessary to **remain clear on the distinction between brain function itself and its manifest expression**. This distinction is not made by this researcher in order to perpetuate a conception of mind-body dualism, but rather to investigate how this unity gives rise to a symbolically mediated psychic reality. In fact, it is 'in' or through the medium of this domain of reality that researchers are able to reflect on brain function.

5.2 Philosophical and other viewpoints

As emphasised above, it is necessary to provide a description of how basic representational processes could be seen to take place in order to understand the nature and function of metaphor. While it is necessary to have some knowledge of the biological basis from which these processes originate, psychotherapists additionally need to be cognisant of the various ways in which

members of other disciplines have developed concepts to describe human representational phenomena.

5.2.1 Kant (1724-1804)

Kant is widely regarded as the father of critical philosophy and, although many of his arguments, including those regarding **basic representational processes**, have been amended, criticised or further developed, he has had a definitive influence on modern thinking (Audi, 1995). Recognised as a truly exceptional intellect with astounding powers of intuition and imagination, Kant predicted the discovery of the plant Uranus (discovered by Herschel in 1881), and also described the rudiments of a field theory that was to influence 19th century physics. Kant's main focus was on meta-theoretical theorising, i.e. about attempting to describe the foundations upon which scientific or metaphysical knowledge is built. An example of this would be his search for a method for metaphysics (Cassirer, 1981).

Influenced by Leibniz, Kant used the idea of the **existence of *a priori* knowledge** to speculate about concepts like space and time. Without the benefit of current insights into matters like sensory interpretation or internal value criteria, he perceived these concepts as forms imposed on experience by the mind and not the other way around. According to Honderich (1995), Kant referred to this insight as his 'Copernican revolution' (p. 436). In 1781 Kant completed the

Critique of Pure Reason (Kant, 1959). The investigation of the various possibilities became an immense task and the book took eleven years to complete.

In this book, Kant identified those categories of thought without which he deemed experience itself to be impossible. He coined the term 'schema' to describe these concepts which he saw as **subjective**, with the function of distinguishing between things as they really are, and things as these concepts present them to the mind. Cassirer (1981) explains: 'subjective', used in this sense, "meant going in no way beyond the bounds of the individual knower, nor beyond the psychological processes through which the world of sensations, ideas and their connection, is generated for the individual" (p. 193). 'Individual', used in this sense, alludes to what is universally true of the way in which individuals perceive the world, i.e. is true of all human beings.

However, Kant did not perceive man's view of reality as being only determined by *a priori* concepts. According to him, 'obscurity' does have an **implicit reality** and existence of its own. Although limited in their ability to describe reality fully, humans are mentally equipped to make some sense of the world (Cassirer, 1981; Magee, 1987).

Despite the fact that Kant (correspondence, cited in Cassirer, 1981) could write "the immortal soul's secret capacity for knowledge speaks an unnamed language and gives us implicit concepts which can be felt but not described" (p. 56), orderliness and the belief that the universe is intelligible to man, were important to him. He felt that the unity of **consciousness** presupposes orderly experience. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant (1959) stated: "We do not enlarge, but

disfigure the sciences when we lose sight of their respective limits and allow them to run into one another" (p. 8). Although strict about reasoning and setting boundaries to thought, Cassirer (1981) asserts Kant is just as quick to admit when an inquiry is "relative and preliminary" (p. 69).

Kant emphasised the importance of the concept of free will: what psychologists would refer to as the ability to make **responsible conscious choices**. The cultural and historical milieu, as well as Kant's own nature, made it difficult for him to recognise that internal value criteria could have an emotional component. He **wanted humankind to claim the freedom to make choices independently of the desires of their sensuous being**, and tried to define principles for moral behaviour that transcend passion. This is paradoxical since it implies both being bound by certain preconceived obligations and having the obligation to use free will to choose wisely (Maunter, 1997). It can be argued that here Kant is describing a paradox, not of his own creation, but is presenting a paradox inherent in the human condition.

Although Kant might have been horrified at the prospect, Robertson (1995) believes Kant's theory underlines the importance of a study of the psychological aspects of the human mind. The following of Kant's perspectives are important from the point of view of this thesis:

- The perspective of a human being as **dealing with the infinite through mediation of the finite**. Although certain principles confine the interpretation of reality and constrict contact with the infinite, they are, paradoxically, also the means by which the infinite becomes visible, understandable or manipulable.

- Kant's view that the finite is created by the ways in which **innate human nature** predisposes mankind to conceptualise reality.
- His view that **necessary conditions or principles impose themselves on interpretation** and are revealed on further investigation to be *a priori*, i.e. principles in themselves. Examples of these for psychology would be the necessities imposed by boundaries, space, time, perceived relationships between objects and people, content as given in the here-and-now and the tendency to seek 'wholes'.

5.2.2 Hegel (1770-1831)

If Kant could be credited with an initial attempt to describe human representational processes, Hegel could be credited with an initial attempt to understand and describe **how conceptual processes originate and change in society**. Hegel developed theory of an ongoing dialogue between history (or culture) and the collective. A process often conceived of as an inner dialogue (where an individual becomes aware of certain conceptual disparities and a process of individual conceptual adjustment and modification is initiated), is portrayed by Hegel as taking place between the cultural collective and reigning ideologies.

Hegel's historical influence and his idea of an **ongoing dialectical process** (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) of conceptual change have led to his being included in this discussion. Hegel is credited with influencing such diverse personalities as Marx, Feuerbach, Peirce and Sartre (Audi,

1995). Despite his emphasis on practicality, Hegel was an idealist. Although this was not his intention, the application of his theories in practice led to totalitarian states like the Nazi regime and Stalin's Russia (Magee, 1987), thereby illustrating the **definitive power of concepts**.

Hegel wanted to construct a theory that would account for fluidity, not relying too heavily on controversial presuppositions. According to Maunter (1997), Hegel viewed human nature in historical terms, seeing history as a process that would pass through a variety of 'forms of consciousness' to ultimately achieve 'absolute knowledge' (p. 239). Using ancient Greece as an example, he argued that societies were more harmonious at that time, but that this was due to the fact that people in Greek society were naive. Once Socrates started questioning society, he created a feeling of dissatisfaction that gave rise to the initiation of a process towards social change. In the case of ancient Greece the 'thesis' would have been the acceptance of the views and existing state of affairs. When these were questioned, people became dissatisfied, giving rise to the 'antithesis'. Once things had changed and a new 'synthesis' had been achieved, this new idea became the reigning 'thesis' that would give rise to the next 'antithesis'.

Since Hegel saw the **potential for dialectic** as being **inherent in the nature of the existing 'thesis'**. He regarded true dialectic to be the intrinsic development of subject matter (Goetzmann, 1973; Maunter, 1997) and viewed concepts and ways of life as forming an integral part of the fabric of any society. Consequently, Hegel postulated that concepts change as societies change, and *vice versa*. A process of change thus takes place within the reigning *Geist* or Mind as a society develops through history. When the process of questioning takes place, individuals become alienated from the *status quo*. By '**alienation**' Hegel meant that what was in fact part of

an individual's world view could start seeming foreign and unacceptable. (Enough similarity exists between Hegel's concept 'alienation' and the psychological concepts 'splitting' and 'projection' to assume that a certain underlying innate psychic tendency is being described.)

Hegel conceptualised 'being' or **'spirit' as an activity or process**. 'Spirit' as manifest in the person of the historian, artist or philosopher is seen as reflecting the essence of the time in which the comments made by these disciplines takes place. Their comments are perceived to provide a reflection of the time in which they live, as well as setting in motion a process of reflection that creates the possibility of transcending what it describes (Goetzmann, 1973). Here Hegel is describing **collective** energy that holds the potential of setting a collective **regulating process** in motion.

Hegel regarded his system as an integration of all positions, as forming a circle indicating a process of growth and providing the **possibilities for opposites to turn to one another in search of a solution** (Magee, 1987). In his view the process of development represents **an ongoing drive towards self-completion, which possesses a life of its own.** He tended to see everything as a **whole**, and viewed the natural sciences as an integral part of metaphysics (Goetzmann, 1973). **Self-knowledge becomes freedom** in Hegel's ideology. According to Magee (1987), Hegel favoured a practical stance, seeing reason as being determined by practical, reasonable necessity, saying, "The Real is the Rational, and the Rational is the Real" (p. 198). He felt that the mistake that the French had made after the Revolution was to be rigidly, abstractly rational. For Hegel what **was ultimately perceived as reality was a mental reality**.

Russell (1996) criticised Hegel for being a mystic who tried to formulate a theory that was too holistic and allowed necessary distinctions to become blurred.

A major contribution to understanding representational processes has been made by extensive work done in the field of **semiotics**. The work of only two semioticians, whose views are relevant to the subject matter of this thesis, will be discussed. These are one of the pioneers in this field, Charles Saunders Peirce (1839-1914) and a well-known current theorist Umberto Eco. The aim of the discussion which follows is to give the reader some insight into perspectives held by certain semoticians.

Honderich (1995) describes semiotics as the general philosophical theory dealing with the production of signs and symbols as part of code systems. According to Maunter (1997), this theory has developed to include all signs or symbols that are accessible to being perceived by the senses, i.e. verbal, visual, olfactory and tactile.

Audi (1995) states that semioticians have been criticised for not understanding the possible unconscious, deep rhetorical and affective components which also form part of the process of producing and using signs. However, he mentions that theories in this field are varied and diverse and numerous differences of opinion exist. Many contemporary semoticians, such as Eco (1999), recognise the idiosyncratic components of language use.

Pioneers in this field of study were the son of a Harvard mathematician, C. S. Peirce, and the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. De Saussure developed the idea of a science that would

study the way in which signs are used in a lecture 'Cours de linguistique gènèrale' which he gave at the Sorbonne in 1911. He believed that discourses of every kind could best be understood by analogy with properties inherent in language. De Saussure was especially impressed by these possibilities and envisaged **networks of meanings and possible choices** (Innis, 1985).

5.2.3 Peirce (1893-1914)

Peirce was a good friend of the philosopher and psychologist William James. A well-known aspect of Peirce's work is his belief in the practical nature of thinking. Gallie (1952) describes how Peirce coined the term 'pragmatism' to refer to what he defined as "a method of ascertaining the meaning of hard words and abstract conceptions" (p. 11) and humorously described the term pragmatism as "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers" (p. 22).

Although Peirce valued logic and was himself a chemist and statistician, it is worth noting that he was influenced by Duns Scotus (c1266-1308), a Franciscan philosopher and theologian of the Middle Ages who concerned himself with matters like causation, matter and form, and the interdependency of things (Blackburn, 1994). Peirce was influenced by Kant (Honderich, 1995). Like Kant, Peirce thought it was important to have the attitude that the universe made sense and that it was at least partially intelligible (Caws, 1980).

An excellent logician, Peirce developed a systematised theory of logic (Gallie, 1952). He valued a **descriptive, practical approach to reality**. According to him, an object is known from its real or imagined effects and meaning refers to something that happens or could happen (Gallie, 1952; Magee, 1987). In this regard, Gallie (1952) cites Peirce as follows:

> Consider what effects, effects which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object (p. 12).

Peirce **believed behaviour and experience to be connected**, viewed knowledge as fallible, and advocated an ongoing process of inquiry (Magee, 1987). In accordance with this, he further insisted that words, symbols or conceptions only have meaning in relation to real or imagined actions (Gallie, 1952).

Peirce used the term 'abduction' to refer to the logic of discovery, i.e. the **process of continually constructing new hypotheses** to replace ones that no longer appear valid. In Pierce's opinion the process of inquiry mentioned above begins when a previously settled belief is disturbed and ends as soon as a new answer replaces doubt by belief. From his frame of reference, an ongoing process of inquiry will ensure that something could potentially be proved wrong by experience over time. He seems to have placed great trust in the fact that new concepts would be spontaneously formulated as knowledge about a subject in question increased (Magee, 1987).

Peirce thus proposed to begin from both everyday and scientific inquiry and to investigate the **norms that govern cognition** on that basis. He coined the phrase 'critical common-sensism' (Honderich, 1995) and believed in an evolutionary cosmology, explaining how the world of existing things and law-governed behaviour could have evolved from pure possibility. Peirce's aim was to arrive at statements precise enough to be useful while remaining flexible (Caws, 1980).

Accepting the fact that observation can never establish laws that do not permit slight deviations, Peirce postulated truth to be the long-term convergence of investigated opinion, i.e. what a suitable process of inquiry would tend to accept if pursued to an ideal limit. According to Caws (1980), the following two statements Peirce made regarding **truth and reality** respectively are the most often quoted:

- The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real (p. 64).

- Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend scientific belief, which concordance the abstract statement may possess by virtue of the confession of its inaccuracy and onesidedness, and this is the essential ingredient of the truth (p. 64).

Peirce developed his theory of signs to aid understanding of how **interpretations** originate. According to this viewpoint, signs are used to make inferences about and develop understanding

of an object in question. Gallie (1952) points out that Peirce visualised any sign as part of a working system of signs. **Signs** are seen as **mediators** between a person and the outside world. People are depicted as living containers and producers of signs. For example, Peirce (cited in Caws, 1980) explained, "The mind is a sign developing according to the laws of inference" (p. 83).

Peirce constructed a list of categories simply naming them *first*, *second*, and *third*. *First* can be described as the category which exists before conceptualisation takes place. This material can be indicated but is essentially beyond consciousness. *Second* is where an object indicates the existence of a subject. This implies some form of concrete portrayal by means of a sign. The *second* can also be seen as an attempt to portray reality. However, an attempted portrayal of reality must also include a sense of relatedness, or an interpretation. This interpretation would be the attempted description of the *third*. This description, or *third* is also a sign, called the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign can therefore be seen as a way of making 'something', a *first*, 'visible' and so open to interpretation, and also as providing the means or vehicle of interpretation (Gallie, 1952; Innis, 1985; Houser & Kloesel, 1992).

Peirce (1891, cited in Houser & Kloesel, 1992) expressed this as follows: "First is the conception of being or existing independent of anything else. Second is the conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with something else. Third is the conception of mediation, whereby the a first and a second are brought into relation...In psychology Feeling is first, Sense of reaction Second, General conception Third" (p. 296, capital letters and punctuation are Peirce's). Peirce

(1892, in Houser & Kloesel, 1992) postulated **a continuum of interpretants**, describing "a continuous flow of inference" (p. 315).

He referred to what he called the *ground* of the sign, indicating that the sign refers to this *ground* or idea, but is not identical to it in all respects. He also describes a triad of ground, object and interpretant and says that the object of this triad is to **embody meaning** (Gallie, 1952; Innis, 1985).

Caws (1980) is of the opinion Peirce viewed psychology as an **experiential investigation** primarily concerned with human judgements. Consistent with his viewpoint that behaviour and experience are connected he insisted that knowledge from internal processes could only be gained from external facts. Peirce (1868, in Houser & Kloesel, 1992) stated: "Whenever we think, we have present to consciousness some feeling, image, conception, or other representation, which serves as a sign"(p. 38). He also declared: "whenever a man feels, he is thinking of *something*. Even those passions which have no definite object-as melancholy-only come to consciousness through tinging *the objects of thought* [Peirce's italics]" (p. 43).

According to Peirce, further effect will always require an effort, this in turn leading to the forming of a general concept or "logical interpretant'. This logical interpretant must always stimulate activity in the individual's 'inner world'. Peirce postulated that individuals **'experiment' in the inner world**, comparing this to what they perceived in the outer world. In his view individuals are then driven by patterns or habits to modify their reactions according to

circumstances. He further postulated that, if the content and meaning of concepts was to be examined, they would be found to be **future oriented** (Gallie, 1952; Houser & Kloesel, 1992).

Peirce divided signs into *icons,* which have a one-to-one resemblance to the object to which they refer, *indexes* which have a direct existential or causal connection to the object, and *symbols*. To Peirce icons, indexes and symbols are all signs. He describes symbols as developing out of other signs. He further states that **mental signs have a mixed nature** and that those signs referred to as symbols are concepts (Gallie, 1952; Houser & Kloesel, 1992).

5.2.4 Eco

Eco's main perspective is linguistic in nature. He underlines the **inferential nature of representational processes** and that the sign is an inference and not an equivalent (Eco, 1984). Eco developed the Peircean idea of an ongoing and infinite process of interpretation into his **theory of unlimited semiosis**, suggesting: "the universe of semiosis can be postulated in the format of a labyrinth". This labyrinth-model is not intended to be simplistic, but to suggest a network of infinite possibilities for meaning (Eco, 1984).

Eco emphasises Aristotle's description of the metaphor as **a tool of cognition**. He acknowledges the metaphor as being notoriously difficult to analyse. In this regard, Eco (1984) mentions that many authors, including Aristotle, make metaphor a generic term and quotes the Venerable Bede

as saying that the metaphor can also be approached as "a genus of which all the other tropes are species" (p. 87). Eco describes the metaphor as a semiotic phenomenon permitted by most semiotic systems, and remarks that, due to the nature of the metaphor, it often **combines various sense impressions**.

According to Eco, someone that wants to express **more than just the literal truth** uses the metaphor. He further remarks on the fact that metaphor is difficult to define without reference to **experience**. He views metaphor as more than a transfer of meaning from one thing on to something else and uses the concept of 'condensation', formulated by Freud in 1933 (see Freud, 1973), to aid his discussion in this regard (p. 49). This is similar to viewing metaphor as an aid to 'chunking'. (See 5.1.7, p. 126.)

From Eco's perspective **metaphors are conveyed by means of signs**. He (Eco, 1984) views signs to be indicative of "something latent" (in Eco, 1999 he simply refers to 'Something') and "revelatory of a contact in a way which tells us something of the imprinter" (p. 15). He also regards the sign to be "the instrument through which the subject is continuously made and unmade," continuing, "as subjects, we are what the shape of the world produced by signs makes us become...Perhaps we are, somewhere, the deep impulse which generates semiosis. And yet we recognize ourselves only as semiosis in progress" (p. 45). In this sense (paradoxically in light of the first sentence of this paragraph), **any current sign functions as a potentially transient metaphor for reality.**

Regarding the **circular nature of metaphor interpretation**, Eco (1984) explains: "we are dealing with multiple inferential movements: hypothesis (or abduction), induction, and deduction" (p. 101). According to him, some metaphors are too well known, and are accepted without being seen as contributing to a perspective. Metaphors which do make an impression, are "at once a source of clarity and enigma" (p. 102). Eco states that it forms part of their nature that they **invite** their **meaning to be deduced**. He further remarks that metaphors can be used to highlight certain qualities, so **prejudicing a description** in a particular way (Innis, 1985).

Eco (1984) mentions the importance of understanding the "**cultural networks**" which function as "co-texts" for understanding metaphor (p. 104). Metaphorical knowledge is "knowledge of the dynamics of the real...the best metaphors are those in which the cultural process, the dynamics itself of semiosis, shows through" (p. 102).

Eco (1984) **rejects a too broad approach to metaphors**, indicating that one can **choose** to regard something as a metaphor or not. The following remark provides an example of this stance: "/Tree/ and /labyrinth/ are not metaphors. They are topological and logical models, and as such they are studied in their proper domain. However I have no difficulties in admitting that, as labels or emblems for the overall discussion... they can be taken as metaphors" (p. 2).

In an essay on **symbols,** Eco (1986) similarly makes it clear that, in his opinion, whether to relate to something as a symbol or not is **a matter of choice**. He indicates: 'through a pragmatic decision: "I want to interpret this text symbolically"' (p. 179), a person can take a certain stance towards material based on their underlying conceptual framework. Eco suggests "a positive way

to approach every instance of symbolic mode would be to ask: which theology legitimates it?" (p. 180).

The current tendency among theorists towards more integrated perspectives similarly characterises Eco's most recent work, *Kant and the Platypus* (1999).

5.2.5 Ricoeur (1913-)

Ricoeur is a French existential philosopher and theorist, with a special interest in **symbolic** forms. His viewpoint is important for this thesis because **metaphor** and **narrative** play a central role in his recent work (Honderich, 1995).

He mediates between his own interest, phenomenology and the more formal methodologies like semiotics (Macaulay, 1996). Ricoeur (1978) values **containing polarities**. He attempts to avoid polarised thinking in order to allow his concepts to become enriched by **seeking** a "ground on which the **complementarity** of rival hermeneutics...can be established" (p. 182). This seems to suggest an integrated approach, attempting to establish links between different schools of thought, (especially between structuralism and phenomenology).

Ricoeur, often also provides a historical perspective on his subject matter (Ricoeur, 1978). He advocates questions of **meaning, subjectivity and truth** being addressed in terms of a **dialogue**

that tries to look at issues from different perspectives and stresses the humility needed to investigate the truth (Blackburn, 1994).

Within a broad definition of metaphor, a **model** would serve as a metaphor for what it intends to describe. A special interest of Ricoeur's is the idea that a specific theoretical model, (like Marxism or psychoanalysis), often contains both a **positive and negative hermeneutic** (Honderich, 1995). He sees the way in which a particular model limits thought as resulting in a negative hermeneutic, but feels that each model also provides a positive hermeneutic, pointing to the possibility of redemption or transcendence (Honderich, 1995).

Ricoeur's discussion of Freud is of particular importance for the subject matter in hand, and the essence of this will be portrayed in more detail below.

Ricoeur (1978) acknowledges that, from the point of view of some practising psychoanalysts, psychoanalytic theory might seem "sufficient for an understanding of all that takes place in the field of experience and theory" (p. 178). However, from his own point of view, **every theory is an exercise in meaning-making**, and, when the themes around which it is constructed are looked at closely, it will be found to describe certain themes common to the human condition which have been dealt with, in often similar ways, before. "Freud can thus be relocated on a well-known trajectory" (p. 175). He argues that it would be incorrect to see Freudian theory as a totality:

> We must consider the doctrine as an ordering of a very specific experience by the use of concepts which have been constructed and coherently linked together. This is the analytical experience, and we must hold strictly to the point that...Freudian concepts come into play...within its circumference. The concepts with which a theory operates are not all objectified in the fields which that theory thematizes (pp. 174-175).

In the opinion of the researcher, the above is an important perspective to bear in mind. It implies that **no theory can claim to be exclusively valid** regarding its comments on the particular subject matter being addressed. Instead a theory should be perceived as a system of concepts attempting to describe certain experiences and producing certain more or less useful hypotheses in a field where contradicting and overlapping theories deal with the same subject matter. The other important perspective is that **common themes** keep recurring around particular matters when any attempt is made to discuss the human condition from whatever discipline or perspective.

Regarding the concept of Freudian symbolism, Ricoeur (1978) stresses the 'unspeakable', i.e. not in the first place strictly linguistic, **nature of some of the symbols of the unconscious**, and goes on to state:

> I stand fast with Nabert in saying that understanding is inseparable from self-understanding and that the symbolic universe is the milieu of self-explanation. This means that there is no longer a problem of meaning unless signs are the means, the milieu, and the medium thanks to which a human existent seeks to situate, project, and

understand himself. In contrast, however, there is no direct apprehension of the self by the self, no internal apperception or appropriation of the self's desire to exist through the short cut of consciousness but only by the long road of the interpretation of signs. In short, my philosophical working hypothesis is concrete reflection, i.e., the *cogito* as mediated by the whole universe of signs" (p. 177).

By 'concrete reflection' Ricoeur seems to the researcher to indicate **an ongoing process of consciousness-making**.

Ricoeur's viewpoint regarding symbols is also noteworthy. He wants to satisfy both rationality and systematic thought while acknowledging the particular **nature of the symbol**. Ricoeur (1978) makes the same distinction between symbol and sign that Jung (1990, CW 6) does, describing a symbol as "an expression with a double meaning" (p. 182). His discussion of the symbol is so close to the ideas that Jung expresses in the chapter entitled 'Late thoughts' in his autobiographical, *Memories Dreams and Reflections* (1989) that it is almost impossible to believe that these two authors did not influence one another directly.

According to Ricoeur, a sign points to something and stands for something in the same way that a symbol does, but the symbol points to something more. This indicates the **revealing power** of the symbol and the way in which it **invites thought**. Ricoeur (1978) perceives any symbol as having what he refers to as '**opaqueness**' (p. 183), suggesting that although the understanding of the symbol can be enlightening at various levels, in the end the dilemma of trying to understand

the unfathomable remains. Both symbol and metaphor are seen as possessing **an extralinguistic component**, i.e. of being capable of indicating more than can be said in words (Macaulay, 1996).

Although Ricoeur (1978) views every symbol as being part of, or building on, **a network, or an interlinking group of networks containing concepts or meanings**, he warns against the 'backward flight of thought in search of the "first truth"...that might not be a "first truth" at all' (p. 36), and takes the symbol itself as it presents itself in the here and now as his starting point. Like Jung (1989, chap. 6), he mentions the fact that humans have lost touch with their historical susceptibility to certain symbols, especially the sacred. Ricoeur (1978) subscribes to the idea of being able to perceive the symbol as having a voice of its own, stating, "I do not posit the meaning, the symbol gives it" (p. 37).

Ricoeur is of the opinion that every symbol "gives birth" to understanding by means of an interpretation that is both "in" and "beyond" the symbol itself. According to him the symbol **unifies several levels of experience**. On the subjective level, the person gets the idea of what the symbol could mean or stand for. Ricoeur is, however wary of believing through experience and warns against the danger inherent in 'believing' in the message of the symbol.

Ricoeur (1978) advocates approaching symbols on an intellectual level, **taking a 'third' perspective** and trying to rise above the dualism contained in the symbol itself. According to him, one way of doing this would be **inquiring about existing models** that have attempted to provide a framework for matters to which a particular symbol alludes. What is perceived to be a point of clarity can be arrived at, but, "the price of clarity is the loss of depth" (p. 51). This

indicates that there is a certain level or perspective from which the symbol can be approached which would seem to 'explain' it, but that while being able to provide useful insights and usable perspectives on the symbol, this approach has the inevitable effect of reducing the numinosity of the symbol.

Ricoeur (1978) writes that a 'primary symbol' starts "from something which has first-level meaning and is borrowed from the experience of nature - man's (sic) contact and orientation in space" (p. 38). An example would be seeing 'evil' as a 'blemish'. This would be similar to the approach to metaphors taken by Lakoff and Johnson (5. 2.6, p. 165).

Ricoeur perceives **mythical symbols** as having an underlying network of potential symbolic meanings supporting them. The 'message' of one particular symbol would thus also have its counterpoint\s contained in the **multiplicity of potential meanings** and contexts provided by these networks. This implies Ricoeur perceives each symbol as simultaneously pointing both to the universal and the particular.

Ricoeur (1978) maintains there is often an underlying mythical structure on which a new myth builds, explaining something about universal human experience. When this 'something' appears in its current 'concrete' form (p. 41), it points to both its current message and to the underlying one on which it builds. This does not have to be only 'one' concept, but can point to a whole interlinking structure.

According to Ricoeur, a new myth often appears in the form of a narrative or drama **implying a 'story'** (Bruner, 1990, White & Epston, 1990; Parry & Doan, 1994.) In this way (Ricoeur, 1978) the particular symbol and its underlying myth can be **rooted in "a multiplicity of narratives"**, pointing to "an endless diversity of symbolic systems" (p. 41).

Although the above may sound open-ended and vague, Ricoeur stresses that the symbol must be approached in a logical manner, seeking meaning and order. Thus at least two attitudes must be present in an approach to symbols, one appreciating the richness and the particular way in which the symbol 'speaks', and the other of trying to make order and sense (Ricoeur, 1978).

Tending towards a multidisciplinary approach towards metaphor, Ricoeur (1977) stresses the **metaphor's ability to create new meaning**.

In the opinion of the researcher, the above discussion illustrates the close similarity that exists between processes involving the use of symbols or metaphors respectively.

Tension forms a key element in Ricoeur's theory of metaphor. Any metaphor is postulated to give rise to tension which seeks to be creatively resolved. Macaulay (1996) describes this tension as existing, "not so much between a subject and a predicate as between semantic incongruence and congruence" (p. 107). To resolve tension, Ricoeur postulates that individuals tend to look for new images, or, alternatively, tension can be created by the images themselves, aiding the process of change. According to Corsini and Wedding (1995), therapists who want to explain or induce new insights, make use of this principle.

Similarly to Du Preez (1991), Ricoeur views the exploration of the paradigm provided by any particular metaphor as a way of **imagining new possibilities**. He sees the metaphor's ability to portray the relationships in an unexpected light as a means of inducing individuals to view an object of study from a new perspective, becoming aware of things that have gone unnoticed (Ricoeur, 1977).

Ricoeur (1978) wrote a paper entitled *The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling* maintaining "**there is a structural analogy between the cognitive, the imaginative, and the emotional components of the complete metaphorical act**" (p. 157).

Referring to the **relational properties of metaphor**, Ricoeur asserts (1981) the metaphor has both cognitive and more poetic components, and "the whole process of the objectification of language, of human action, and of symbolic systems makes procedures of explanation possible" (p. 232). Ricoeur emphasises the **metaphor's ability to be "true" in it's own unique way** and to create new meaning through the process of productive imagination.

5.2.6 Metaphors embedded in language

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) wrote a definitive, often quoted, exposition describing how **an underlying network of metaphors provide any culture with a conceptual system in terms of which people act, think and define reality.**

These authors argue that human thought processes are essentially metaphorical and **operate outside conscious awareness**. The definition provided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) namely that "the essence of metaphor is **understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another**" (p. 5), unintentionally provides an especially succinct description of the way in which metaphors influence patients in psychotherapy. The emphasis which these authors place on the cultural system, of which the underlying metaphor system is postulated to form an inextricable component, is especially relevant.

Lakoff and Johnson emphasise what they term "**metaphorical systematicity**" as well as the function metaphors have of **highlighting certain characteristics while hiding others**. They have effectively demonstrated that many metaphors are so embedded in language, thought and culture, that people remain largely unconscious of the extent to which these metaphors define the way reality is experienced.

Lakoff (1991) explains how **metaphors without internal validity can nevertheless influence and motivate** individuals. In an article concerning the metaphor system used to justify the Gulf

War, he discusses such metaphors as "war as a competitive game", "war as medicine", seeing an entire country as a person (in this case Saddam Hussein), and the "just war" metaphor with Kuwait in the role of the victim (Lakoff, 1991). He points out that since these metaphors are powerful and compelling, individuals tend to be moved by them without questioning their internal validity. Lakoff then goes on to point out what was hidden by these metaphors, for example, that the government of Kuwait was an oppressive monarchy.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) reach the following conclusions:

- Fundamental concepts tend to be organised in terms of one or more spatialisation metaphors. Although the practice of **localising concepts** like 'inner' and 'outer' and 'mind', is currently being challenged (Klein, 1987; Bruner, 1983; Bruner, 1990), the universal prevalence of these metaphors cautions against overly hasty abandonment. The same argument would apply to the fact that individuals tend to experience certain concepts like 'mind' in terms of boundaries.

- There seems to be an **internal systematicity** regarding spatialisation metaphors. If happiness is seen as being 'up', then most similar expressions will comply with this tendency (spirits 'rise'). Furthermore, other metaphors implying positive outcomes will comply with the system (heaven is also 'up' and value 'rises').

- These metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state: "In actuality we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its **experiential basis**" (p. 19).

- These authors maintain: "**The most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture**" (p. 22) and also that, 'It can be misleading ...to speak of direct physical experience as though there were some core of immediate experience which we then "interpret" in terms of our conceptual system...our culture is already present in the very experience itself' (p. 57). According to Lakoff and Johnson, it becomes clear that the networks of meanings which are created by culture must indeed serve an important **containment** function.

- According to Lakoff and Johnson, **the richest types of metaphors allow individuals to use one highly structured and clearly delineated concept to structure another**. An example of this would be Shakespeare's metaphor of life as a stage and the people as players used by Du Preez (see Chapter 2). These metaphors also give an indication of the ruling attitudes towards certain things. Another example is the metaphor of 'information processing' compares human intellectual functioning to that of a computer or a robot. This has certain implications for the way in which individuals experience themselves.

- Metaphors are considered to be "**valid**" within a certain theoretical or cultural context when they correspond closely to what is experienced collectively and what they hide corresponds to little of what that particular collective chooses to recognise.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) hypothesise that **awareness of certain metaphors can be a prerequisite for change**. In order for a change in perception to take place, it will often be necessary for the metaphor or image by means of which the individual experiences a certain concept to be brought into awareness so that it can be challenged and changed. They wish to make individuals aware that, "in most cases, what is at issue is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor but the perceptions and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it" (p. 158).

Lakoff and Johnson conceptualise **objectivism and subjectivism** as necessary myths that **need to co-exist as constellated opposites**. They see cultural conceptual systems as being able to create a relative objectivity into which the individual is initiated by being born and then growing up in that system. The object of cultural and theoretical systems is seen as being to rise above individual bias. These ideas have gained ground with the focus on culture and current arguments for the inevitability of subjectivity (Bruner, 1990; Schwartz, 1999).

While the 'myth' of objectivism sees objects as having properties in and of themselves, and as standing in relationships to one another independently of outside understanding, Lakoff and Johnson argue that they "do not believe that there is such a thing as absolute truth, and...think that it is pointless to try and give a theory of it" (p. 182) and that individuals and societies must be encouraged to arrive at negotiated, aware, understanding. From this perspective an individual's perception of truth is the result of imagination constrained by external

circumstances. From the point of view of the discipline of psychology, this forms part of ongoing psychic processing and can take place consciously or unconsciously.

Lakoff and Johnson are of the opinion that metaphor is a central component of psychic processing. In reference to **truth and meaning** they assert "the only answer is to base both the theory of truth and the theory of meaning on a theory of understanding. Metaphor, both conventional and nonconventional, plays a central role in such a program" (p. 184). They further postulate that metaphor unites reason and imagination, describing metaphor as "*imaginative rationality*" (p. 193) and emphasise that "metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness" (p. 193).

Lakoff and Johnson clearly regard metaphor to be both "essential to human understanding" and "a mechanism for creating new meaning and new realities in our lives" (p. 196). Theorists like Pribram (1990) and Du Preez (1991) add a proviso to this view. Both these theorists advocate a progression: from metaphorical insight, to reasoned analogy and from reasoned analogy, to a theoretical framework ('empirical modelling').

According to Leary (1990), the important ability to distinguish between **different levels of analogy** is also indicated at in ordinary conversation. However, Leary further points out that even when analogies are used as scientific models, they still function as metaphors on a certain level. This implies remaining aware of the possibility that any model being used could also function as a potential metaphor with the ability to obscure certain facts while highlighting others. The plea

thus becomes one for the recognition of an ongoing process of negotiated, constrained but imaginative understanding, which includes an awareness of the properties and relationships indicated by the conceptual systems used (Robertson, 1995).

Putman (1996) writes: "The important thing, it seems to me, is to find a picture that enables us to make sense of phenomena from within our world and our practice, rather than to seek a God's-Eye View" (p. 109).

5.2.7 Issues of truth and reality

It could be said that mankind seems to have an innate need to determine what is 'real' and what is 'true' in any given situation. At times, the ability to do this has been idealised. For example, in 1597 Bacon wrote: "certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth" (Bacon, 1910, p. 4). In practice, this amounts to either accepting a previously conceived workable hypothesis, or constructing a new one. During an interview, R. D. Laing (in conversation with Mullan, 1995), expressed this as follows: "Whatever we call the truth is simply what we need to make our beliefs compatible with our existence" (p. 308).

The researcher takes a middle position regarding the controversial issues of truth and reality and is of the opinion that objective reality shapes concepts, but that these concepts have to be

negotiated within the limits placed by sensory abilities, cultural concepts, historical period and individual experience. The stance is taken that while limitations need to be recognised and respected, greater understanding of the functioning of mediational processes and their foundations can enhance the ability to perform these negotiations.

It is important to bear in mind that influential theorists have not only contributed to a better understanding of the human ability to perceive things as "true" or "real", but the theories themselves have often been influential enough to prescribe the way in which these matters are conceived of or are conceptualised. The models provided by theorists capture the imagination and come to be regarded as factual, i. e. 'the truth'. Examples of this nature can be found in the contributions made from diverse sources. Consider the contributions made by Aristotle, Plato and Kant, or Einstein and Planck. Leary (1990) quotes an ironic example: Newton initially used the attraction between people as a creative metaphor to aid his formulation of his theory of gravity. Even before Newton's death, Berkeley used gravity as a metaphor to explain the attraction between people!

The aim of the discussion that follows is not to become entangled in an overly theoretical or extensive discussion, but merely to indicate some of the possible approaches to truth. Although it could be argued at succeeding levels of abstraction that truth and reality are contentious theoretical issues, it must be remembered that what are being dealt with in this thesis are essentially *natural* ways in which the concepts of 'truth' and 'reality' are formulated by the human mind. The focus of the researcher is on perspectives that will be useful for the process of psychotherapy.

Some of the difficulties inherent in evaluating the validity of concepts professing to describe or define what can be considered to be true or real have already been indicated. This researcher is of the opinion that while most people make use of certain necessary idealised cognitive models (Lakoff, 1993) they also have the equally necessary ability to tolerate ambiguities and complexities. This researcher is further of the opinion that these ambiguities and complexities ensure flexibility by providing material for alternatives.

Some of the **problems with determining truth** are the following:

- The mental model that is used to determine or represent truth might itself be contentious

- The person seeking to discover truths about himself and the world that he lives in, is always both the object and the subject of his own studies

- Different matters, although they might be considered to stand in opposition to one another, can nevertheless all seem to have some element of truth about them

- Although ways of discovering the truth can be described and analysed, they seem to be natural human talents, based on inborn perceptive and interpretative abilities. To some extent, as is also argued elsewhere (e.g. 5.2.6, p. 165), objectivity is a relative term because whatever is objectively perceived is by definition subjectively acquired and conceived of. External reality always remains to some extent a subjective human phenomenon, based on the limits

set by the fact that it is filtered through to consciousness by a specifically human interpretative apparatus, both physiological (Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Dennett, 1996), and cultural (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Bruner, 1990).

5.2.7.1 Fernàndez-Armesto

Fernàndez-Armesto's (1997) integrated approach to questions regarding truth is discussed below:

Fernàndez-Armesto (1997) proposes that different approaches to truth should be recognised as being potentially complementary and any subject should be approached from a composite, integrated, perspective that would include checking one approach against the other. This implies a process of communication between different perspectives in order to arrive at "a way of understanding and identifying truth which can survive in the post-modern era" (p. 3). He describes different approaches as "mental strategies on which we ...rely to find our way in the world (p. 227). Fernàndez-Armesto proposes that the ways in which people understand truth can be classified under four headings:

- 'The truth that you feel'

This is described as a gut feeling, not consciously based on sensory interpretation or rational thinking processes. The metaphor is often experienced as suggesting something that lies outside, or on the periphery of the borders of consciousness and indicating more than can be said in words. Fernàndez-Armesto points out that humans seem to have an **intuitive perception** that the concept of truth has a certain universal element contained inside itself, which can transcend subjective formulations. The recognition mechanism used to describe this ultimate truth, according to Fernàndez-Armesto, is feeling. In this sense, "feeling is thought unformulated; thought is feeling expressed in communicable ways" (p. 27). Used in this sense, feeling is closely linked to meaning. He uses the examples of the Japanese concept of *animae*, and the Javanese concept of *rasa*, words used to convey the concept of implicit if elusive meaning.

- 'The truth that you are told'- an acquired model of the world

Within a broader definition of metaphor, these **acquired models** are metaphors which explain reality in a certain way, emphasising certain truths while hiding others. However, Fernàndez-Armesto points out that, although such a system may be suspect, it can serve an important social function. People that live in such a system learn to compensate for the short-comings of the system and to manipulate the truth as told by that system in order to get what they want,

indicating at least an unconscious knowledge that the system itself is not the perfectly reliable. He remarks: "Truth transmitted from another world always comes with string attached to human manipulators and is inseparable from the authority conferred by assent and commanded by elites" (p. 51.) He also emphasises that various cultures have a tendency to view 'truths' other than their own with suspicion. Members of differing cultures would regard the Western view of the value of logic and sense perception as insufficient. He regards the truth a person accepts as a part of culture as "crafted, modified and controlled by formulators of dogmas...embedded in structures of authority and assent" (p. 67). Although such a culturally bound truth can be regarded as an essentially mediated truth, he remarks on the existence of a seemingly widespread willingness among people to accept the truth they are told on human authority.

- 'The truth you think for yourself'- the truth that reason determines

Reason is often seen as a way of thinking autonomously and creatively. Early rationalists believed that "things unforgotten" or *aletheia* were potentially present in secret caverns in the mind and could be unlocked by reason. Although individuals will tend to argue according to the 'facts' known to them from within a system, the application of reason can provide "a means of escaping from the constraints of belief-systems backed by authority and from the resentment which clever people feel at the power of their own passions" (p. 85). In this way reason can become a tool with which to try and transcend certain facts embedded in the collective thought, but which are not necessarily valid. However, as Fernàndez-Armesto points out: "It seems silly to

try to separate experience and thought. Thoughts become part of our experience as soon as we have them - and we could not know about our other experiences except by registering them in our thoughts" (p. 87). Reason is viewed as "an item in a tool kit" (p. 87).

- 'The truth you perceive through your senses'

The senses can contradict one another and human perception can be fooled. **Although the senses can deceive**, Fernàndez-Armesto points out, that **no matter how often individuals may discover that their senses have been in error, they still tend to fall back on them.**

Fernàndez-Armesto sees Kant's view that we impose certain qualities on things that we perceive, (most notably time and space), as an example of the knowledge gained only by intuition and an acceptance of the existence of a reality unattainable to our senses.

The solution Fernàndez-Armesto proposes for the dilemma of **subjectivism** is that of compiling or combining points of view in order to arrive at a negotiated objectivity. Fernàndez-Armesto argues although "**objectivity** would be the result of compiling or combining all possible subjective points of view...(and)...if we try to see from every point of view, we shall never attain our goal;...it is at least meaningful to speak of seeing from every point of view, whereas it is literal nonsense to speak of seeing from none" (p. 228). He emphasises that the process of sifting through information and experiences in order to arrive at the truth seems to be aimed at the

mediation of reality. He also recognises the importance of forming concepts the aim of which are "to wrest reality from doubt by naming its parts" (p. 227).

Fernàndez-Armesto argues that all four ways have their own intrinsic merits and that they are systemically linked. He links the search for truth to reality testing and asserts: "The truth-quest is always the same: the unwavering search for signs to match reality" (p. 227). (Compare Peirce, 5.2.3, p. 149.)

5.2.7.2 The contribution of postmodernism

The views of postmodernism are reflected in some aspects of daily life that are mostly taken for granted. For example, the tendency to refer to the world as 'the global village' encourages individuals to feel connected, despite their differences. Thus the impact of postmodernism is not restricted to intellectuals. It is a perspective, the influence of which, is reflected in the lives of people and in the way reality is experienced. The views of postmodernism are also reflected in cultural expressions like music, works of art or the movies.

Sarup (1993) identifies four characteristics of postmodernism. These will be discussed, with the inclusion of perspectives from sources other than Sarup.

First, human beings are viewed as subjects of the reality they live. This decentralises consciousness, in other words, the person no longer takes centre stage but is viewed as a participant in a certain world-view or as a co-producer of a certain reality (Sarup, 1993).

Cilliers (1998) refers to Lyotard's book *The Postmodern Condition*, written in 1984, as "a classical text in this field" (p. 113). Cilliers explains Lyotard's view that perspectives held in society tended to be arranged in the form of a group of narratives with a certain main myth or 'metanarrative' at the centre. Examples of these metanarratives would be the ideas that sustain religious, political, economic or ideological systems. For example, Lyotard believes that science tends to be viewed as representing the totality of all true knowledge and he rejects this, preferring to view scientific theories as contextually bounded groups of different smaller narratives that are useful in explaining certain data. According to Cilliers, Lyotard perceived the unconscious as three-dimensional and dynamic and held that it should be portrayed by visual or figural means rather than only be understood two-dimensionally.

Second, those changes that take place over time and the development of new systems to replace older ones are no longer necessarily seen to be improvements on existing ones (as postulated, for example, by Hegel, 5.2.3, p. 145). The postmodern view tends to be that, human nature being what it is, mistakes from the past can be repeated in different guises (Sarup, 1993).

Third, Sarup (1993) contends that, in the analyses of spoken and written language, the focus tends to be on the signifier and not on a hypothetical concept underlying the overt denotation. Citing Derrida's assertion that it is not possible to identify a signified which is not itself a

signifier, Sarup (1993) describes meaning as, "continually moving along a chain of signifiers" (p. 33). According to this view, signifiers can become signified and vice versa.

Fourth, according to Sarup, for the above reasons, postmodern philosophers criticise metaphysics and the conventional conceptualisations of identity and truth. Perspectives held came to be seen as a narrative with a certain myth at its centre. Philosophers became mistrustful of hierarchical or grand narratives. In postmodern society it becomes a necessary exercise to understand the mechanisms that keep the grand narratives in place.

In 1966, the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida gave a lecture called "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" which invited people to become aware of the inherent possibilities of meaning other than those which are centrally entrenched and accepted. Derrida delights in illustrating the manner in which meanings inherent in a text can be used to deconstruct that text, causing the text to fail by its own criteria. He values texts above the spoken word. Derrida regards the words necessary in the formulation of concepts to be at the same time both inadequate and indispensable (Cilliers, 1998).

Sarup (1993) and Cilliers (1998) explain that Derrida regards consciousness to be an experience mediated by prejudiced concepts and views human beings as becoming potentially alienated from meaningfulness under the influence of the language that they use to describe their experience, instead of becoming more integrated. According to these authors, Derrida bases this opinion on the argument that a realm of an independent signified does not exist; that no particular sign can

be regarded as referring to any particular signified; that it is not possible to escape the system of signifiers; and, lastly, that here can be no unqualified present or consciousness.

Cilliers (1998), who argues in favour of complex systems, describes Derrida's view that the meaning of any sign is always unanchored and that written or spoken language always forms part of **a system of interrelated concepts**. Cilliers explains Derrida's perception that there is no place outside language from where meaning can be generated, consequently there can be no 'inside' or 'outside', and, furthermore, the relationships between concepts are always changing. However, Cilliers points out that certain relatively stable constructs do exist and can be analysed, provided that it is understood that this stability is neither permanent nor complete and that meaning is always in the process of being generated by an interactive process between signifiers.

In the researcher's opinion, by inviting the subject to discover himself in the text, Derrida helps the individual to **externalise** and gain **distance or objectivity**. The **attitude,** which makes this possible, is an attitude of playful willingness to examine alternative meanings. The fact that the term, when used in this sense, refers to a creative, flexible but nonetheless serious attitude to subject matter (see also 7.2.1, p. 303) is often poorly understood.

Cilliers (1998) further points out that Derrida regarded human beings to have a tendency to think in terms of binary **opposites**. In Derrida's opinion, individuals then tend to give a central position to one of the opposites, marginalising the other. Derrida further argues that opposites like subject/object or interior/exterior rely on and are inherent in one another (see 7.1.6, p. 297). He

perceives the play of opposites as being potentially creative and regards the centralising of one of a pair of opposites as problematic since this stops free, creative movement between the two.

Since it is Derrida's opinion that language not only represents reality but also co-authors it, he **values metaphor as a necessary condition for thought** and not merely as a figure of speech. Sarup (1993) expresses this as follows: " **Meaning shifts around, and metaphor is the name of the process by which it does so**" (p. 47). According to Sarup, Derrida asserts that it is possible to imply different meanings simultaneously through metaphor.

Derrida's position is:

- There is no limit to the number of metaphors for any given idea
- One thing is stated, but it is required that something different be understood
- The hearer or reader becomes part of the creative process.

Derrida maintains metaphors which form an integral part of **cultural perspectives** are particularly insidious. (Compare 5.2.6, p. 165.) Sarup (1993) gives the metaphor "time is money" as an example of this. If people believe that time is money and only fit to be used wisely it could become impossible to enjoy leisure time without feeling guilt or the need to be busy.

The researcher believes postmodernism **created sensitivity for realities other than those entrenched in society**. While the effects of deconstruction can often be disturbing, and cause a feeling of fragmentation or rootlessness, from another perspective deconstruction can be regarded as a relatively safe exercise since proponents of postmodernism deconstructed a cultural canon that was safely written down and could always be referred to. Deconstruction is always per definition deconstruction of *something*.

According to Cilliers (1998), postmodernism is at least partly a reaction to the pessimism created by some modernists like Nietzche. While modernism held that freedom comes with understanding, postmodernism holds that **meaning** evolves as a result of interpretation.

In the view of Parry and Doan (1994) the emphasis of late modernists like Gregory Bateson and the views of hermeneutic philosophers like Paul Ricoeur on how knowledge is interpreted, led to a postmodern view of:

> a world in which every perception of reality, of one another, and of oneself – including those of the therapist, including this assertion itself – is but an act of interpretation. No person, no theory, no point of view has privilege at the expense of anyone else's. One may of course *choose* to give privilege to a particular position – for instance as a matter of justice- but that is a (predominantly) ethical decision (p. 22).

According to Sarup (1993), postmodernism is associated with authors like Derrida, Foucalt and Lyotard and its impetus is traced back to the writings of philosophers like Whitehead and

Wittgenstein. Similarly to the view of Bruner (1990), the **stories** that interest postmodernists are not only those of individuals, but the dominant narratives embedded within cultures (Parry & Doan, 1994).

Postmodern perspectives are seen by proponents of this perspective to be useful in subverting fixed perspectives and assumptions. Thus one of the major themes of postmodernism is the constructivist approach (Sarup, 1993). Burr (1995) identifies as the themes of this approach the rejection both of essentialist as well as realist theories. All historical and cultural knowledge is deemed to be relative and universal themes are seen to be constructs resulting from human interaction. Reality is seen to be defined in relation to circumstances. Burr underlines the role of language as the carrier of meaningful constructs which make sense of experience.

Some postmodernists tend to emphasise the role that language plays in reality construction by ordering perspectives and motivating actions. White (White & Epston, 1990) writes:

> There exists a stock of culturally available discourses that are considered appropriate and relevant to the expression or representation of particular aspects of experience. Thus, our understandings of our lived experience, including those we refer to as "self-understandings", are mediated through language. And it can be expected that those "truth" discourses of the unitary and global knowledges contribute significantly in this mediation of understanding and in the constitution of personhood and of relationship (pp. 27-28).

Miller (1997) considers what are referred to as reflecting or mirroring procedures are in fact also construction processes. **The tropes, in particular the metaphor and analogies, are seen both as tools and as theories by which to understand the use of language**. The self-reflectiveness of language is also recognised. Hanlon and Wilk (1987) point out that it is not possible to talk about 'the mind' in terms that are not metaphorical and go on to remark:

> If someone is asked to describe his subjective experience, he is being asked to produce a metaphor; and he cannot describe subjective experience without altering the process along the lines of the chosen metaphor (p. 24).

In terms of its use as a vehicle for meaning, these authors argue "every metaphor breaks down *somewhere*; otherwise the form of speech would not be metaphorical but literal" (p. 50) and note:

> The abuse of language occurs when its metaphorical nature is hidden, if the representation is identified with the thing represented. Therefore the linguistically hygienic use of metaphor depends on the full recognition of its limitations, that is, on critical consciousness of the generalisations, analogies and abstractions involved (p. 52).

The views of postmodernism, the **emphasis on the use of language** and the influence of semiotics are all displayed in the following quotation by Parry and Doan (1994):

> In the demise of all grand narratives, we now live in a world in which personal narratives essentially stand alone as the means by which we pull together the text of our own

> lives...Our own stories stand alone as the codes according to which we interpret the significance and meaning of the text of our own lives and those of others who concern us (p. 24).

The negative view of this set of circumstances is the fear of being overwhelmed as individuals by what Parry and Doan refer to as 'giant systems'. However, as White and Epston (1990) point out, there are also definite advantages to being able to generate creative individualised solutions to circumstances.

Paradoxically, while postmodernism resulted in the deconstruction of prevailing narratives, insights provided by this have also been responsible for the empowerment of individuals, providing the insights into construction and deconstruction processes needed to heal the fragmentation caused by it. According to Lifton (1993), opposing reactions to the deconstruction of postmodernism have been either the tendency to become more rigid and fundamentalist, or the development of the ability to be flexible and adjustable in the face of challenges.

Although Fernàndez-Armesto (1997) is critical of constructivism on moral grounds, he acknowledges the need which existed at the beginning of the twentieth century to rescue the **truth** from 'the graveyard of certainty', and rejects a defensive flight into fundamentalism, stating: "Fundamentalism means uncritical, literal acceptance what are supposed to be the founding doctrines or documents of a tradition. It demands a closed mind and the suspension of rational faculties; it is attractive only to the desperate and the dim" (p. 207).

Deconstruction was achieved by scientific theories that led to concepts of 'relativity', 'chaos' and 'uncertainty'. An example is Gödel's theory. The importance of Gödel's work from the perspective of this thesis is that axioms are unprovable in a system on which they are based. This makes it necessary to inquire across systems in order to expand paradigms and underlines the need for theories that allow for change or transformation (Robertson, 1995; Fernàndez-Armesto, 1997).

The researcher agrees that the preceding process of consciousness making had brought to light that humankind needed to recognise some of its very basic but erroneous prejudices. Only when sufficient means to preserve the ideas of culture and knowledge were available, could humankind take the chance of destroying meanings, knowing that it could always go back and recreate them. In this sense breaking down meaning structures which no longer worked in order to rebuild some radically new ones, while it felt unsafe and radical, was in actual fact a contained enterprise. The focus on culture was the next logical step after humankind had gathered the mental tools to change individual consciousness. It is necessary to consciously question and renew the concepts held in culture in order for humankind to survive. Just as that of which humankind is unconscious has to be searched for and selectively utilised in processes of transformation, so cultural and social awareness must expand and transform. Individuals needed to become aware of what was going on in culture in the same way in which they needed to become aware of what was going on in their own inner unconscious processes. Awareness is a precondition for transformation. People need some conception of where they are coming from in order for them to judge what to preserve and how to transform. After the era of deconstruction, the new drive

seems to be towards integration of existing ideas that work well, to look for patterns and similarities and at how concepts enhance one another.

According to Sarup (1993) and Cilliers (1998), Lyotard perceives especially the unconscious mind to be less dependant on language. As these authors explain, Lyotard regards the ability to form three-dimensional figures and visual representations to be one of the unconscious mind's main characteristics. According to him, dream material contains more meaning than can adequately be expressed in words. Lyotard regards dreams, which consist of three-dimensional material as being capable of disrupting and challenging linear perceptions and making transformation possible. Lyotard further makes the distinction between scientific and narrative discourse. He describes the latter as taking place with an awareness of mythical space and narrative time.

White (White & Epston, 1990) particularly mentions Foucault and the late modernist Bateson as influencing his perspective on narrative processes. Foucault is particularly important to White because he emphasised the indivisibility of power and knowledge and Bateson because of his explanation of the interpretative process. According to White, Bateson regarded context, the mapping of events through time and the function of perceived differences in highlighting the relational aspects, as forming the key elements of interpretation. White similarly emphasises the importance of context and the temporal dimension to narratives, as well as the fact that any narrative consists of order and sequence and therefore implies process. According to him, narratives are simultaneously both linear and instantaneous. The meaning created by an individual's narratives are seen to determine that individual's behaviour.

White (White & Epston, 1990) further comments on the role played by analogies:

> The analogies that we employ determine our examination of the world: the questions we ask about events, the realities we construct, and the "real" effects experienced by those parties to the *enquiry* (p. 5).

Analogies are thus seen to provide interpretative frameworks. The influence of Foucault leads White (White and Epston, 1990) to conclude: "A domain of knowledge is a domain of power and a domain of power is a domain of knowledge" (p. 22).

5.3 The researcher's conclusions

In the opinion of the researcher, the subject matter discussed up to this point in the thesis has highlighted the following:

Regarding the **nature of metaphor**:

- It is the researcher's opinion that theories of metaphor-use can be meaningfully integrated by basing theoretical integration on descriptions of the practice of metaphor-use and knowledge of the biological processes underlying these experiences. Many of the complexities which are

perceived to be characteristic of metaphor as a trope or as a psychotherapeutic tool, are in fact reflections either of the limitations or the ingenuity of the brain. This means that many of the qualities which become apparent in an investigation into the nature and the use of metaphor, are in fact reflective of certain of the general characteristics of psychic functioning. One of the main reasons that various theories tend to emphasise the same phenomena or come to similar conclusions while investigating from different perspectives, is that these theories also tend to reflect the inherent nature of the psyche. From this vantage point some conceptual integration can become a spontaneous and unforced process.

- The psyche appears to be vulnerable to those representational phenomena by means of which thinking is ordered and reality comes to be understood. Conceptualisations, once established, can become difficult to transcend. Fixed, institutionalised, cultural or personal viewpoints can, therefore, become sterile and damaging. For this reason it becomes important not to focus only on the means by which representations become established, but also to investigate the ways in which change can be initiated.

Regarding the necessity for formulating **guidelines for metaphor-use**:

- In light of the above, it can be argued that the need exists for empowerment towards grounded flexibility of conceptualisations.

- The researcher would like to suggest that empowerment can be promoted by encouraging understanding of and experience in dealing with the process of conceptualisation itself rather

than gaining an illusionary sense of security from embeddedness in static concepts or recipes for change.

Regarding the necessity for enhanced understanding of the **process of metaphor-use**:

- This thesis proposes that people should be encouraged to strive towards becoming optimally equipped to understand and consciously influence the process of negotiating meaning and reality.

- However, it must be recognised that the ability to do so will always remain limited by influences outside consciousness or beyond our ability to control.

- What is advocated is an ongoing process, diligently undertaken from a decentralised stance and grounded in awareness, which accepts limitations and recognises the necessity for making responsible, integrated choices.

The next chapter will examine the use of metaphor and the process of change as seen by some psychological approaches.

CHAPTER 6

OTHER RELEVANT PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES

6.1 The psychoanalytic approach

- The psychoanalytic approach is discussed to illustrate the manner in which, from its inception as a discipline, psychology has had to deal with issues relating to meaning and **how meaning is communicated via symbols, images and metaphors.**

Freud and Breuer's 1895 publication *On Hysteria* introduced the idea that symptoms have meaning and that this meaning is not always consciously available to the patient but can be hinted at in a symbolic way. An example would be if a patient were confronted with a situation which was unacceptable to him/ her, but instead of consciously admitting this, found that he/she instead experienced severe difficulties with swallowing. Freud referred to these as mnemonic symbols. His term for the process by which the meaning of these symptoms was recognised and integrated into conscious awareness, was 'abreaction' (Schwartz, 1999).

*6.1.1 Freud's view of **conscious** and **unconscious** processes*

Freud's main focus of attention was the unconscious. In 1901, Freud (1964, Vol. V) referred to the unconscious as '*the* problem in psychology' (p. 611) and expressed the opinion that "it is the much-abused privilege of conscious activity, wherever it plays a part, to conceal every other activity from our eyes" (p. 614). In 1923, Freud (1964, Vol. XIX) described consciousness as follows: "A purely descriptive term, resting on perception of the most immediate and certain character...a state of consciousness is characteristically very transitory" (p. 14).

He asserted that **inner conflict and tension** were caused by unconscious psychic contents the implications of which were in opposition to those contents which were available to consciousness. Freud deducted that the unconscious often presented the contents of the psyche to consciousness in disguised form. He expressed the view that the unconscious could give the impression of actually being cunning (Freud, 1973).

Metaphorically speaking, Freud (1964, Vol. XIX) visualised the consciousness as a 'surface', although he indicated that he realised the limitations of his metaphor. He also differentiated between 'internal' and 'external' perceptions, postulating the existence of an 'inner' psychic world, bound to the way in which the body is experienced, i.e.

> A person's own body, and above all, its surface, is a place from which both internal and external perceptions may spring. It is *seen* like any other object, but to the *touch* yields two kinds of sensations, one of which may be equivalent to an internal perception (p. 25).

Freud further perceived **ego function** (by implication also reality-testing) as being **partly unconscious**. He pointed out that **many functions, although carried out unconsciously, appeared to be well organised.** From this Freud concluded that mental powers which could be termed to be higher ranking and difficult, were often performed without apparent conscious assistance (Freud, 1964, Vol. V).

Freud realised that mental processes were unconscious (Schwartz, 1999), a view which is still held. (See 5.1.6, p. 123.) It follows that a large part of the regulation of psychic contents and tasks such as planning, as well as motivations for behaviour, would take place automatically outside conscious awareness.

Psychic contents capable of becoming conscious were considered to be latent. The preconscious was conceived of as a hypothetical entity or mechanism through which contents have to pass in order to reach consciousness. This suggested to Freud that the preconscious had the ability to serve as a **filter** for psychic material that had to be regulated to the unconscious. Some material was regarded as "latent", i.e. potentially capable of coming to consciousness, and other material was considered to be repressed. According to Freud's theory, **retrieval** of this material **would be resisted** (Freud, 1964,

Vol. XIX). In addition to this, Freud described certain defensive mechanisms such as resistance, condensation, repression, displacement and symbolic representation (Gabbard, 1995). This implied the existence of inner dissociative mechanisms which could disrupt or inhibit the automatic integration of psychic material.

It was Freud's perception that **ego defences** were predominantly formed as a result of repression. He considered them to form a barrier against the direct expression of id. In 1936, Anna Freud developed these thoughts in her book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (Freud, 1977). In it she described such mechanisms as reversal, sublimation, regression, undoing, reaction formation, introjection and identification.

Psychoanalytic theory holds that all individuals use a characteristic repertoire of defence mechanisms. It would be necessary for a therapist working with a client to understand and deal with these defence mechanisms. The description of defence mechanisms is a valuable psychoanalytic contribution. The existence of well-known defences like projection, denial or separation anxiety is often referred to outside the contextual framework of psychoanalysis (Mahl, 1971).

Freud **visualised mental processes as striving for equilibrium, and conceptualised libido as force**, through means of which, instinctual sexual energy was made available to the mind. He thought that primitive sexual libido could be transformed by sublimation to perform higher functions.

6.1.2 Ego-function and defences ***(reality testing)***

Except where specifically otherwise indicated, the researcher has summarised the discussion of the ego and defences from Mahl (1971) and Gabbard (1995).

Freud emphasised the importance of the need for individuals to maintain their connection to the external world, while admitting to the existence of psychic reality. He referred to this as the psyche's reality testing function and remarked on the fact that this function appeared to have an **important connection to conscious awareness**. He used the term 'ego' to describe the system responsible for regulating these functions.

Freud initially regarded the ego merely to be an extension of the id, subjected to the id's impulses, with the function of responding to reality. The id itself was portrayed as an inaccessible part of the personality filled with a chaotic, excited range of emotions and instincts. This led to a view of the id as a dangerous presence, with a mind of it's own and difficult to control. (Note **attitude** towards psychic material.)

By 1938 Freud was able to provide a more comprehensive description of his view of ego development and functioning. In *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, he postulated a pre-established connection between ego and sensory, perception and muscular action, and

defined the task of the ego as self-preservation. Freud's theory held that the ego reacted to both external and internal "events" (Gabbard, 1995).

Freud considered the **tension** produced by conflict between id and the restraints imposed by reality to be central to ego development. According to Gabbard (1995), more recent researchers (e.g. Hartman) feel strongly that primary autonomous ego functions like perception, motility, memory and intelligence are present at birth and also influenced by genetic factors, i.e. that the ego grows independently of instinctual drives.

Gabbard (1995) summarises the functions of the ego as the **control and regulation of instinctual drives**, judgement, mediating between the internal world and external reality, conducting object relations, having an integrative function, being linked to higher order thought processes and organising the defensive functions. The ego is perceived as having to function as mediator between the id and the outside world by the capacity to delay or postpone drive discharge.

In Gabbard's opinion, **the ability for abstract thinking allows representation of the instinctual drives in fantasy form**, enabling the individual to circumvent the need to discharge them in action. The ego is viewed as enhancing the psyche's capacity to tolerate pain, anxiety and frustration. Gabbard emphasises the ego's ability to distinguish and mediate between internal fantasy and the demands made by external reality. It must, however, be borne in mind that consciousness is more than ego and that the concept of

the self, when used as an indication of identity, is directly related to conscious, aware, executive functioning.

Kalsched (1996) contends that images and metaphors are some of the most often used ways of accessing the functioning of the defences (see 6.2, p. 206).

6.1.3 The psychoanalytic view of the ***therapeutic relationship***

Freud's focus was the successful treatment of patients. He applied his new theory to inform him about the events he witnessed in his consulting room, concurrently using the material from his therapies as evidence for his theories.

Since memories in the unconscious have been divorced from their original connection by being translated into verbal symbols, **Freud regarded verbal symbols to be the medium through which these memories could be recovered**. He envisioned a process, by means of which, the problematic contents could be retrieved and integrated. Freud recognised the significance of the relationship between patient and therapist and coined the terms 'transference' and 'countertransference' to describe the dynamics of this process. He acknowledged the value of adopting a neutral or non-judgmental stance towards psychic material, but would interpret what he judged to be the significance of this material to the patient.

In psychoanalytic theory, the relationship between the patient and the therapist is often explained in metaphorical terms. For example, Casement (1985) describes a case in which he interpreted his patient's acting out behaviour as an attack on the process of psychotherapy. While the danger of using the relationship as an unrealistic metaphor for the patient's psychodynamic functioning does exist, an appropriate interpretation of the significance of certain behaviour patterns could provide therapists with the means of examining and changing a patient's present behaviour.

6.1.4 Dream interpretation ***(process)***

That Freud and Breuer were willing to listen to patients and allowed them to rediscover repressed psychic contents via the use of the technique of free association, was innovative. However, Freud regarded the real starting point of depth psychology to be his recognition of the importance of dream material (Freud, 1973). In 1900 Freud's publication *The Interpretation of Dreams* portrayed dreams as a way in which unconscious material could become accessible so that it could be 'worked through' (his term) in psychotherapy. Freud named the following as the important theoretical consideration to bear in mind with the interpretation of dreams: manifest and latent contents, wish fulfilment and the fact that certain dream symbols or types tend to be universal (Freud, 1973).

According to Freud, the best way to discover aspects of importance in the dream material was to use the method of free association. He recognised the power of the mechanism of resistance and emphasised that the therapist should notice where a patient experienced blockages during the course of his/her recollections so that an interpretation can be made. When attempting to understand dream material, Freud focused on what these associations indicated, namely the latent contents of the dream. The therapist was assigned the role of trying to determine what these contents could be and to interpret them to the patient. Freud regarded resistance to be a sign of inner conflict. He also postulated the existence of an **inner agency**, which he referred to as 'the censor of dreams'.

Unfortunately, Freud (1973) **tended to pathologise psychic contents**, referring to dreams as "a pathological product, the first member of a class which includes hysterical symptoms, obsessions and delusions" (p. 44). He likened the dream process to a harmless psychosis. Freud credited dreaming or active imagination processes to be capable of supplying therapists with insight into what he referred to as primary processes. His perception was that these primary processes could cause mental illness but were also responsible for creativity (Freud, 1964, Vol. V; Freud, 1973).

In his *Introductory Lectures*, first published in 1933, Freud (1973) describes the elements of the dream:

> Such of those elements as allow any point of contact to be found between them are *condensed* into new unities. In the process of transforming the thoughts into pictures, preference is unmistakably given to such as permit of this putting-together, this condensation; it is as though a force were at work which was subjecting the material to compression and concentration. As a result of condensation, one element in the manifest dream may correspond to numerous elements in the latent dream-thoughts; but conversely too, one element in the dream thoughts may be represented by several images in the dream (p. 49). (This ties in with the idea of "chunking" as described above under 5.1.7, p. 126.)

Freud (1973) was thus aware of **symbolism and** what he called "**other methods of representation**" in dreams (p. 51). He asserted that the same symbols appeared in dream material of different individuals to indicate specific contents. For example, an overcoat or cloak in woman's dreams was thought to represent a man, a spider in dreams was regarded as a symbol of the phallic mother and held to indicate fear of female sexuality. A bridge was considered symbolic of the male organ, which unites the two parents in intercourse. A bridge was also perceived to represent transitions from one state to another.

Freud was interested in **universal symbolic material** like fairy tales, legends and myths and displayed a lifetime interest in archaeology. He felt that the motifs in fairy tales often mirrored the manifest dream contents. However, he saw dreams as enlightening the approach to mythological material and not the other way around. From Freud's point of

view, **personal developmental issues were paramount in giving rise to the symbolic material contained in myths.** Freud (1973) stated: "Thus, for instance, the legend of the Labyrinth can be recognised as a representation of anal birth: the twisting paths are the bowels and Ariadne's thread is the umbilical cord" (p. 54).

*6.1.5 Creativity versus dogmatism (**Attitude towards theoretical 'reality'**)*

Although Freud (1964, Vol. V) realised that "we must always be prepared to drop our conceptual scaffolding if we feel that we are in a position to replace it by something that approximates more closely to the unknown reality" (p. 610), according to Schwartz (1999), it was the dogmatic nature of formulations similar to the examples given above, that gave rise to Freud's differences with other theorists of the same period like Adler, Jung and later Ferenczi.

Freud vacillated between his tendency to become dogmatic in the attempt to keep his original theories intact, and preserving his scientific integrity by being open to new insights and possibilities. Recent trends in psychoanalysis have been to become more open to alternative viewpoints (Bruner, 1983; Schwartz, 1999).

Freud recognised that in dealing with psychic contents he was dealing with a dynamic system, but could ultimately not transcend structure with concept. A

diagram that Freud used in 1923 (Freud, 1964, Vol. XIX) demonstrated how concretely his conceptualisations were still bound to the actual brain itself. The diagram, reproduced below, is included to illustrate that Freud tended to view his concepts as located in certain brain areas. (The researcher does not imply that Freud did not realise that his conceptualisations had abstract value.) Since the researcher's intention is merely to show that Freud used the shape of the brain to indicate his concepts, the areas indicated (ego, pcs-preconscious, pcpt-cs-the perceptual system, the id, repressed material, etc.) are not discussed further.

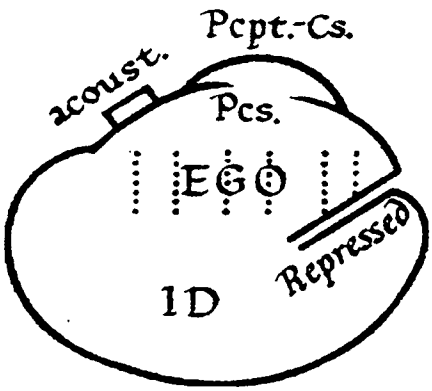

Figure 6.1 Freud's diagram of the psyche (1923/1964, p24)

6.1.6 *Current trends in psychoanalysis*

Freud tended to paint depressing pictures both of the unconscious processes and of the ego's struggle in mediating between the id and the superego, portraying the ego as having to placate both parties rather than as being able to negotiate settlements (Freud, 1964, Vol. XIX; Gabbard, 1995), and did not seem able to translate the process into a positive striving for wholeness or completion. (**Attitude towards psychic reality**.)

To compensate for this lack, positive striving towards wholeness and completion became a basic premise of many of the theories that built on Freud's ideas. Schwartz (1999) recounts that Donald Fairbairn made the important point that the psychopathology Freud encountered through his therapy with patients in Vienna, was psychopathology resulting from development that had been affected by unusually severe developmental circumstances. Indeed, according to Schwartz (1999), independent sources confirm that not only sexual repression, but also molestation and other abusive child-rearing practices were common at that time. Fairbairn felt that the original innate drive when the developing child was not traumatised would be for relatedness and love (Schwartz, 1999).

Schwartz (1999) currently defines psychoanalysis broadly:

> Psychoanalysis is a systematic attempt by many workers over the last 100 years to understand the structure and dynamics of the inner world of the experiencing human being...psychoanalysis aims not only to facilitate a description of the human inner world but to understand it (p. 1).

Schwartz (1999) stresses it is not only the **reliving of psychic material** that is important for healing, but also the **alteration of the patient's reaction** to it. His perception is that emotional distress comes, not only from the nature of the material itself, but also from the inadequate way in which it was initially processed. Schwartz states that psychoanalysis has developed into a discipline that not only recognises theoretical psychodynamics, but also focuses on the process of understanding the individual meaning that psychic material has for patients and remains aware of an individual's connection to the rest of humanity. He feels that Freud's own theories were restricted by the traumatic events that were taking place all over Europe at that time, and also the fact that Freud himself and his other Jewish colleagues were so often discriminated against. This, in Schwartz's opinion, led Freud to overestimate the value of the individual and to underestimate **culture and social relationships**.

In response to mechanistic viewpoints like those of Dennett (1996), Schwartz agrees with Bruner (1990) that the complexity of psychic reality is not simply a compilation of the basic laws and functions of the brain. He regards **psychic phenomena to be a new set of phenomena** which needs to be approached on its own terms.

Regarding the criticism of **subjectivity**, Schwartz (1999) remarks:

> Psychoanalysis is a science in the sense that it is an attempt to understand human subjectivity in material terms- it locates its understanding of human subjectivity in the world of lived experience (p. 5).

The question of subjectivity is an inevitable part of the work done in psychotherapy, especially when metaphors are a main focus of this work. It is an issue addressed both by Gestalt therapy and by Bruner (1990). (See 6.3, p. 210; 6.6, p. 245.)

Schwartz's (1999) basic plea is an **integrative** one aimed at understanding the change prompted by new discoveries and better insights. He argues in favour of the value of an historical understanding of the development of insights in psychoanalysis, and places emphasis on allowing theories to complement and enrich one another instead of letting their contents become battleground issues. He uses the metaphor of 'the analytic hour' to remind therapists that they are bound together by their common focus, namely the **space** that they are creating in order to guide the process of psychotherapy. "The task for future theorists of the analytic hour is to restore the common ground of psychoanalytic exploration" (p. 129).

6.1.7 *Freud's perception of* ***process***

Freud's perception of how repressed psychic material could be retrieved from the unconscious was vital and laid the foundation for more intricate descriptions of this process to be formulated. However, his original concept was a relatively straightforward one and is depicted below using a simple V-format (Fig. 6.2):

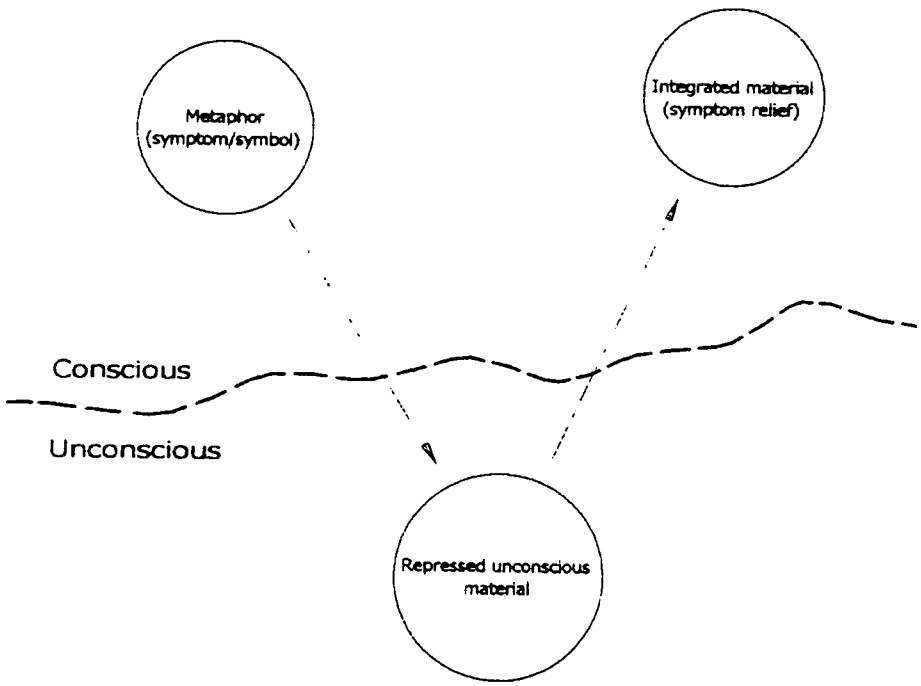

Figure 6.2 Freud's initial V-model

According to this diagram, a *symptom or symbol* is recognised as a *metaphor* for psychic material which has been repressed due to stricture or trauma. Through means of free association, the link with the *repressed unconscious material* is retrieved and the material

is more appropriately processed, rendering the metaphorical disguise unnecessary. *Integration of repressed material* provides *symptom relief.*

Process as depicted here in its initial "pioneer-format", can be compared to the more complex descriptions done by Ericksonian therapists (for example, Lankton & Lankton, 1987) of the manner in which they postulate metaphorical material influences psychic contents (6.4, p. 232).

6.2. Kalsched's perspective on process: a description of what happens when dissociation occurs

Kalsched (1996) integrates perspectives from psychoanalytic, object relations and analytical psychology. However, due to the emphasis he places on splitting as a defence mechanism, the relevant part of his theory is discussed here.

Kalsched explains what occurs when the natural process of ongoing adjustment and integration is **sabotaged by a regulatory system** that, as a result of earlier trauma, tends to dissociate the normal process of reality testing. According to Kalsched, a dissociation between mind and body leads to a feeling of lost energy or meaninglessness. He defines 'mind' as the source of rational mental abilities and thought processes, abstraction, logic and concept formation which relies heavily on the use of language.

Kalsched (1996) describes the traumatic split that results if the **mind imposes meaning on a situation instead of creating meaning in interaction with sensate experience**:

> One danger of psychotherapy is that it becomes too "mental" (wordy) and loses the link with the body. When this happens, psychotherapy loses the psyche also. Correspondingly, a danger of pure bodywork is that it may release much somatized energy without this raw affect becoming available to the mind in the form of images or words that would enable it to be understood. If affect from the body cannot be expressed in verbal or symbolic language between people, it cannot reach the level of "meaning" which is where the psyche is...and if this happens, the possibility of truly transformative work is also lost....When mind and body split, the animating principle of psychological life, or what we would call the spirit, leaves (pp. 66-67).

According to Kalsched (1996), the above is dependent on the developing **individual's ability to form a secure inner reality and sense of self.** Under optimal conditions, the concepts produced by the mind would be integrated with psychosomatic experience and hence be **realistically grounded**:

> This would include the capacity for reflection and transcendence of immediacy through a process in which the neural and hormonal signals from the body are transmuted into representations such as words and concepts...the way in which

> our minds give form and representation to otherwise undifferentiated input from the body and its senses. Language is a crucial part of this logos function and the evolution of a representational language makes experience comprehensible both to the self and to others. If we include right-brain function in our notion of mind, then representation will not just be desiccated words, but in moving images, in words that connect to the body (p. 63).

However, when there is dissociation between the psychosomatic experiences, including emotions, **incoming stimuli are filtered through the regulating system** and they are experienced as though they enter consciousness directly through the mind, which of course they do not.

Kalsched (1996) portrays the psyche as being equivalent to the **meaning-making or transitional space** described by Winnicott (1988). He emphasises **the necessity of honouring the reality-value** that the products of the psyche have for the individual:

> By the reality of the psyche, I mean the intermediate realm of experience which serves as a ligament connecting the inner self and the outside world by means of symbolic processes which communicate a sense of "meaning" (p. 6).

When the psyche is described as being 'split', this implies that **certain meanings are not allowed to co-exist in the transitional space**. The researcher postulates that the split is

in meaning. Consequently, it is not 'in' the transitional space, it manifests in the transitional space.

According to Kalsched, an inner system has to attack certain mind-body links in order to keep the dissociation intact. When this inner filtering process is taking place, the person concerned does not acknowledge or take responsibility for certain meanings. These then tend to become somatic symptoms or are projected. For example, a fear of rejection, which is not acknowledged or dealt with, can manifest as an incomprehensible but 'terrible' sensation felt in the stomach.

Kalsched (1996) notes:

> The affect and sensation aspects of experience stay with the body and the mental representation aspect is split off into the "mind". Such a person will not be able to let his or her mind give shape to bodily impulses in words or images. Instead messages from the body will have to be discharged in some other way and will therefore remain pre-symbolic. Such an individual will have no words for feelings, and this will put him or her at a terrible disadvantage (p. 66).

Kalsched's theory has three implications for this thesis:

- It explains that the **mind and body have to function as an integrated system in order for an individual to be able to engage in reality testing**.

- It emphasises that an individual needs to be able to **give 'mind' to sensations**, since not to do so affects reality testing and a secure sense of self.

- It underlines the usefulness of **metaphors as instruments for initiating the process of psychic integration**.

6.3 The Gestalt approach

The Gestalt perspective is relevant to this thesis for the following reasons:

- Gestalt therapy accentuates the value of the **experiential** component of psychotherapy and attempts to understand the mechanisms involved in initiating change through medium of experiences. Consequently, Gestalt therapy provides descriptions of how experiential situations can function as vehicles for change.

- There are numerous descriptions of the use of expressive techniques and the way in which this material is utilised in therapy. The use of **images** as an integral part of the experiential process as well as the hypothetical stages of such a **process** are described

- There is an emphasis on respecting individual differences and allowing individuals to remain **true** to themselves and **to their inner images** and needs, while at the same time respecting the fact that **reality has to be optimally negotiated** Individuals are both encouraged and empowered to learn to manage and trust their own processes (**responsibility**).

6.3.1. Development of the method

Gestalt therapy developed out of Gestalt psychology and field theory. According to Clarkson and Mackewn (1993), Gestalt therapy was also influenced by phenomenology, psychoanalysis, psychodrama, eastern philosophy and the work of Reich and Rolf. For this reason, Wallen (1970) describes Gestalt therapy as the product of the combined developments that have taken place in psychotherapy since the origination of psychoanalysis.

Field theorist Kurt Lewin and Gestalt theorists like Wertheimer, Köhler and Koffka provided the grounds for a theory that took into account the interrelationships between the object and the interpretative processes of the perceiver. One of the most basic premises of Gestalt theory is that the product of any interpretative process is more than the sum of the parts of the initial stimulus. Viewed from this perspective, this process has to be dealt with as a whole (Marx & Hillix, 1963). Due to the links with field theory,

Marx and Hillix (1963) regard the whole to be "not the sum, or the product, or any simple function of its parts, but a field whose character depends upon all of itself" (p. 192).

Although criticism has been levelled against both the results of some of the initial research done in this area, as well as against the lack of structure, vagueness and ambiguity which characterise some of the theorising, Gestalt theorists did succeed in highlighting the importance of viewing interrelated events from an integrated perspective. Furthermore, these theorists demonstrated the way in which individual interaction with data influences what is seen (Marx & Hillix, 1963).

Fritz Perls initially advocated the Gestalt approach as a way of doing therapy. Perls collaborated with his wife Laura Perls and Paul Goodman (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Perls, 1969; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993). Perls (1969) describes a gestalt as "an ultimate experiential unit" (p. 15). There is an especially close relationship between Gestalt therapy and the existential or phenomenological approach.

6.3.2 Influence of other theories

As has been pointed out, Gestalt therapists make use of many of the concepts created by other theories. Due to the emphasis Gestalt therapy places on working with images and

metaphors, their choice of theoretical material deemed suitable for integration has relevance for this thesis.

Perls was originally trained in psychoanalysis and borrows some of his concepts like projection and repression from the psychoanalytic approach. **Repression is postulated to lead to the inability to form efficient 'gestalten'** and these instances of repression are then thought to become habitual. Wallen (1970) describes an integrated individual as someone with whom the process of appropriate gestalt formation and gestalt destruction can take place spontaneously without blocking due to negative inhibitions. This process is observed in therapy where **the signs indicative of blockages are seen to be confusion and uncertainty and the inability to act or choose freely 'in the moment'**. Other concepts borrowed from psychoanalysis are those of 'splitting' and 'projection'.

The method chosen is adapted to what the particular therapist perceives the **needs of the patient** to be. For example, regarding the use of expressi· e techniques and theoretical approaches, Sherno (1996) remarks: "I can talk about dreams, someone who creates images as they speak, I can work with their images. Someone who is visual, we can draw. I can use anything, theoretically. It's tailor-made to the person I'm working with and to the interaction between us" (p. 180). The approaches Sherno (1996) mentions are Freudian, existential, phenomenology, field theory, Reichian and object relations theories like those of Winnicott and Daniel Stern.

Another example of the integration of knowledge from adjacent disciplines, would be the widespread use of **meditation and breathing techniques** among Gestalt therapists. Naranjo perceives Gestalt therapy as a verbalised meditation and therapy itself as an act of self-disclosure which permits the therapeutic influence (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970). Gestalt therapy stresses the **importance of the non-verbal** and consequently many Gestalt therapists are experienced in a large number of techniques designed to allow for the recognition or integration of psychic material on a non-verbal level (Oaklander, 1988, Mortola, 1999).

The more recent approaches like those of Sherno (1996) acknowledge recent trends and developments in psychotherapy like the **current emphasis on the genetic and the cultural**. Sherno feels that the initial emphasis of Perls was on the individual, adding that although Gestalt principles haven't changed, what is regarded as the focus of therapy has. She further feels that current Gestalt therapy realised the interdependence of things and the work of therapy is seen as being in the interaction between the person and their 'field' (as in field theory) (p. 176).

6.3.3. Principles of Gestalt therapy

Clarkson and Mackewn (1993) name "six clusters of interrelated concepts" (p. 33) that have to be considered in order to understand the Gestalt perspective. These are holism,

field theory, cycles of experience, contact, theory of self and Perls' theory of psychological disturbance. The researcher will discuss these and other concepts considered important for an understanding of Gestalt therapy, pointing out the relevance to **metaphor**.

6.3.3.1. Holism and contact

Gestalt therapists feel strongly that what has traditionally been termed to be **'mind', 'body' or 'external world'** must in fact be approached as **a whole** (Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993). Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) view the individual as bringing this 'whole' of multi-layered, multi-faceted behaviour into the therapeutic situation and is invited to 'experiment' with the living through of events and meanings. The metaphor applied to the therapist is that of a catalyst, precipitating a reaction which might not otherwise have occurred. The above authors further state that they are dealing with what they call 'private events', the locus of these events being the 'mind' (p. 42). Perls uses the common metaphor of the world for the **unconscious** as well as the metaphor of the psyche as a system which strives for **equilibrium among internal energies** (Bruner & Feldman, 1990).

Regarding the relationship between individual and environment, Beisser (1970) perceives orderly change within **social systems** as moving towards integration and holism. One is

reminded of the philosophy of Hegel (Magee, 1987; see also 5.2.2, p. 145) here, since the process is envisioned as a process of dynamic equilibrium which is seen as continual, integrated adjustment that requires that the system become conscious of alienated fragments (**unavailable contents**).

Boundaries (**containment**) are perceived to be important, especially the boundaries between people. Regarding the question of the ego-boundary, Perls considered it natural that individuals would experience themselves as boundaried and that it would often be on these personal boundaries that individuals would become aware of conflicts, experience individual identity and polarities.

6.3.3.2 Theory of **self** and **self-growth**

Gestalt therapy underlines the value of being focused on a continuous, timely, realistic adjustments to circumstances. The benefits of self-growth are perceived to be available through self-discovery, especially through the observation of self in action (i.e. through identity-linked **awareness**). Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) warn the novice that it is "an arduous process...continuous and cumulative" (**process**), further implying that it has to do with the adoption of a specific **attitude** and has to become a way of life (p. 29). The term 'self' is used to indicate a sense of individual identity. The individual is

encouraged to participate in, and eventually learn to monitor his or her own inner processes and modes of interaction.

6.3.3.3 Value of **awareness in the present**

The importance of working in the present is accentuated. Past events are judged according to the way in which they are expressed in, or influence the present. A favourite statement of Perls, the founder of Gestalt therapy, was: "only the *now* exists" (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951, p. 14). Naranjo (1970) makes clear how the future and the past have the potential to block the awareness of being alive in the present. He also sees remembering the past as being coloured by current events or as colouring current events. Sherno deals with the past self as part of the transference situation (Sherno, 1996).

There appears to be a difference between consciousness as such, and being experientially focused. The former could remain an intellectual exercise, but the latter would necessitate cultivating awareness of 'inhibitions' (**material unavailable to consciousness**). Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) describe inhibitions as "an active holding in" (p. 48) which prevents certain psychic material from entering consciousness. These authors do not feel that merely denying awareness of this material can solve a problem. They encourage individuals to formulate their experiences using 'now', 'at this

moment' or 'here and now' in order to develop awareness of what it really is that they are experiencing or that they want.

The value of uninhibited awareness is also stressed by Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) regarding creativity in other fields: "science, no matter how pure, is the product of human beings actively engaged in the exciting business of living their personal lives" (p. 50). However, awareness is seen as being "**bound by reality**, i.e. enriching but not glamorous" (p. 69).

In the mentally healthy person, the ability to remain in a state of awareness, consciousness and insight is described by Enright (1970) as constituting **a particular type of immediate experience that can be distinguished from other states of consciousness**. Enright posits that this ability can be developed as an acquired skill, the focus always being on the current situation and on including body awareness. This ability is contrasted with what Enright describes as:

> detached thinking-imagery...a more unfocused, pointless, dreamlike reverie, obsessing about, without particularly working on, unfinished business and serving mainly to distract and attenuate awareness of the actual (p. 136).

Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) regard both concrete immediate experience and the ability for abstraction to be part of healthy functioning. (Recognition of **levels of experience:** 5.1.9, p. 130; 6.9.2, p. 280.) They refer to them as "different modes of

behavior" (p. 68). Perls (1969) connects this to the recognition of **subjective** and **objective** approaches to subject matter. He remarks: "There is a kind of integration- I know that's not quite correctly formulated- of the subjective and the objective. That is the word *awareness*. Awareness is always a subjective experience" (p. 13). Thus, although Perls believed that pure objectivity did not exist; he did indicate his realisation of the value of approaching psychic material from various perspectives and in such a manner that an integrative balance is achieved.

6.3.3.4 Balancing **opposites**

Polarities are an important part of Gestalt theory and are theorised to exist in many different combinations. The most well known one is the so-called, 'top-dog' -'underdog' combination. (Sherno, 1996.) The 'cut off' parts or alternative roles (**unavailable contents**) are seen as resources or potential. Oaklander (1988) and Sherno (1996) emphasise, for example, that aggression is an important creative resource because of its positive potential. This is similar to Jungian theory regarding shadow material (Johnson, 1993) and narrative theory's concept of subjugated knowledges (White & Epston, 1990).

The metaphor that Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) use for the continual process of rebalancing that is necessary to maintain a healthy equilibrium, is that of a person riding a bicycle. This implies that although the act of balancing will never be over, it is possible to

become accomplished at it. Opposites are seen as necessary since often one opposite could not be recognised without the other. Perls (1969) stresses it is important to realise that conflict often exists between one part of the personality and the other and defines health as "an appropriate balance of the co-ordination of all that we *are*" (p. 6).

Like Erickson (6.4.1, p. 233), Perls was particularly skilled at making people aware of the value of paradoxes and underlining the value of the impact of the unusual or the unexpected (Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993). He was fond of quoting Freud's remark indicating that if people were found standing on their heads they would have to be turned upside down to put them back on their feet (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951).

6.3.3.5 **Personal responsibility**

Gestalt therapists tend to feel strongly about empowering patients to recognise and take responsibility for their thoughts and actions, also for those contents which are difficult to express or to recognise and are initially **portrayed or externalised in metaphorical form**. (See Oaklander, 1988.) Their viewpoint is that not to be in contact with certain aspects of inner life is a way of avoiding taking responsibility for them. For example, Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) assert:

> If one makes contact with them and becomes intimately aware of what they are and how they figure in one's functioning, then one becomes responsible for them- not in the sense of now having to assume some burden that was not there before, but rather in the sense of now recognising that it is oneself who determines in the most instances whether they shall or shall not continue to exist. This is quite a different concept of responsibility from that which has its core in moral blame (pp. 48-49).

Like cognitive therapists, Gestalt therapists consider it very important for people to realise that they themselves influence how they see things. What an individual 'sees' is not only determined by what is 'outside' or presented to them, but also by what they as an organism do with the input. Consequently, in its pure form, Gestalt therapy is reliant on the willingness of individuals to take responsibility for their own reactions and to make the effort to change (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970).

Despite the fact that certain psychic contents are initially not owned, the knowledge that there is a part of the individual that is accessible and that can co-operate with therapy is perceived to be important. This is similar to what Clarkson's (1995) means by 'working alliance'. Regarding the working alliance, Beisser (1970) explains that often one part of the patient is working with the therapist and the other is resistant to change. The therapist is warned not to join the client's dichotomy and encourage the client to accept both parts of himself.

The perception of Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) is that a patient is able to continue the process outside the therapy hour: "What the doctor sets in motion, the patient continues on his own...Such therapy is flexible and itself an adventure in living" (p. 40). These authors further remark: "What is essential is not that the therapist learn something about the patient and then teach it to him, but that the therapist teach the patient *how* to learn about himself" (p. 41). Sherno (1996) expresses an appreciation of the extent to which the patient is able to generate his or her own **process of self-regulation**. There is a focus not on pathology but on process and the understanding of process.

6.3.3.6 Impasse and implosion (**unavailable contents** and **mind-body unity**)

Blockages or interferences with effective, spontaneous interaction between the individual and his environment, are postulated to be caused by poor contact between 'body', i.e. somatic and emotional experiences and the outside world and are seen to be the result of the expression of needs being blocked (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970). This repression is postulated to be objectively visible in the posture and to affect the muscles and eventually health. Links therefore exist between the Gestalt approach and the work of therapists like Reich, Lowen, and Rolf (Wilber, 1977; Corsini & Wedding, 1995), who emphasise the mind-body connection. Links also exist between Gestalt therapy and with some techniques of eastern philosophy, especially when these are combined with commonly

used western theories (Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993). Viewing the process in therapy is seen as giving the therapist the chance to intuit the blocking taking place.

The premise that the process of recognising the nature of the 'blockages' described above must be grounded on a **sense of identity, security and 'centredness'** is widely recognised (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970). This is also described as the experience of feeling 'grounded' (Shorr, 1972; Oaklander, 1988).

In this regard, Perls (1969) believed **therapists** must be confrontational and must frustrate the client. He saw people as not utilising their potential because they believe themselves to be limited. "When we find the place where the person is stuck, we come to the surprising discovery that this impasse is mostly a matter of fantasy...He only prevents himself from using his resources by conjuring up a lot of catastrophic expectations" (p. 39).

6.3.4 Theory of change

Clarkson and Mackewn (1993) describe the concept of the safe experiment as a way of inducing change. According to these authors, the safe experiment comprises of the following five principles:

- An attitude on the part of the patient which comprises of a willingness to experiment with real issues, while maintaining awareness that 'this is only an experiment'
- Doing something which depicts the real situation, for example acting out a situation
- During the acting out, the impasse will be enacted. However, in the therapeutic context, viewed as an experiment, it is, paradoxically, simultaneously **real and safe**. (Compare sandplay, Appendix C.)
- In the above context anxiety is less and the chances for awareness increases. Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) describe the **attitude** necessary for allowing change to occur as follows:

> Hold in abeyance your standard evaluations of good or bad, desirable or repugnant, sensible or silly, possible or impossible. Be satisfied to stand between them- or, rather, above them- at the zero-point, interested in both sides of the opposition but not siding with either (p. 70).

According to these authors, the person must realise that they have the power to make their own evaluation, also that they are the person condemning themselves and that the way to induce the one who judges in the personality to suspend judgement, is to adopt a '**playful spirit**' (p. 75).

This makes it possible for **complexities** to be optimally negotiated.

6.3.5 Expressive techniques and dream material

The Gestalt approach lends itself to use in conjunction with creative activities. Rhyne (1970) emphasises the **pre-verbal nature** of these activities and the fact that playing must not be ridiculed as a childish activity. She feels strongly about the fact that the therapist must not force themselves into the patients' framework, thereby blocking the process but that people must be encouraged to use art materials to aid self-discovery, also accessing feelings. She relies on techniques, intuition and relatedness and expects flexibility from herself and the participants in therapy. She feels that there is a "process pattern" and that, "the parts of the pattern develop as the process of discovery takes place" (p. 314).

Shorr (1972) regards imagination to be "at the central kernel of our consciousness" (p. 11). Even so, she describes the ways in which people who are self-alienated will go through the process of working with symbols and metaphors while still denying the psychic reality. In this way the products of fantasy can lead to the 'real', but can also lead to 'illusion'. Shorr feels that when used correctly imagination can play a role in resolving conflicts between what he calls "outer reality" and "inner fantasy". He makes the point that all plans for the future are the result of imaginings.

Techniques described include fantasy, visualisation and psychodrama. Fantasy, movement, drawing, modelling and role playing are all seen as possible aids to the

process of experimentation described above (Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993). According to them, Perls considered it more helpful to do something, provided the subject matter was approached realistically and not as part of a defence, since this could lead to an integrated assimilation of cut off material and not only to cognitive insight.

Perls was also extremely fond of working with dream material (Perls, 1969; Fagan & Shepherd, 1970). Dreams, especially nightmares, were seen by Perls to be metaphors for disowned parts of the self. He felt that dreams could also provide metaphors for an impasse, or portray a person's life script (Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993).

Regarding working with dreams, practitioners like Enright (1970), tend to prefer a non-interpretative approach. Patients are guided to find their own meaning for the dream images. Every image in the dream is taken to be an alienated part of the self. Patients are helped to relive the dream in order to reclaim and experience these parts appropriately. The role of the therapist can be to suggest the order in which these parts of the dream are to be re-experienced, which, according to Enright will usually progress from less to the more vivid aspects. He further deals with the question of resistance and encourages the value of the experiential and the avoidance of intellectualisation in this regard. Enright suggests viewing the dream images in relation to their meaning within the context of the patient's current existence.

Perls (1969) viewed dreams as an opportunity for 'the resister' (compare Kalsched, 1996, 6.2, p. 206) to be expressed. He felt that the content of both dreams and daydreams had to

be removed and what positive functioning is expected and that the therapist should specify his own value choice.

The approaches of the various practitioners of the Gestalt approach to psychotherapy tend to vary. Enright (1970) is of the opinion that whatever contributes to the patient's awareness is permissible. If there is transference, the transference is handled by making the patient aware of the discrepancy between the fantasy and the actual person of the therapist. When asked about the Gestalt view of man, Laura Perls (1970) answered as follows:

> I believe that ...every single thought and act is informed by our basic conviction of what makes man "human"...Speaking strictly for myself — the only way a Gestalt therapist can say anything at all — I am deeply convinced that the basic problem not only of therapy but of life is *how to make life livable for a being whose dominant characteristic is his awareness of himself as a unique individual on the one hand and of his mortality on the other*' (p. 149).

Perls stresses throughout that he is against manipulations or quick fixes. He sees the process of personal growth as something that must be gradually gained by the individual, largely by means of their own independent insights (Perls, 1969).

The value of disclosure is emphasised, often described as making what is 'implicit', 'explicit'. Shepherd (1970) stresses that the Gestalt therapist must be extensively trained

be examined in order for individuals to become aware of either what was missing from their lives or, alternatively, of those fantasies which were keeping the individual from engaging reality. Perls (1969) wrote: "If you're capable of projecting yourself totally into every little bit of the dream- and really *become* that thing- then you begin to reassimilate, to re-own what you have disowned, given away" (p. 99).

*6.3.6 Role of the **therapist***

Beisser (1970) addresses the issues of **evaluation and control**. He says that evaluation takes place as part of the process of psychotherapy. The therapist has the task of becoming aware of and describing the patient's habitual patterns of behaviour and also of recognising and channelling the patient's existing skills. This leads to the question of control, which, in the opinion of the researcher, is a delicate matter.

Beisser describes control as follows: "Control is defined as the therapist's being able to persuade or coerce the patient into following the procedures he has set" (pp. 91-92). He borrows from descriptions of **interpersonal strategies** (for example, Haley, 1963 and Erickson 6.4, p. 233), describing how the therapist has to resist being controlled by the patient's symptom pattern, since motivation for change can be high, but willingness to surrender control can be low. Beisser advocates that the therapist specifies symptoms to

in the use of Gestalt therapy. The therapist must be capable of containing and dealing with the emotions that are released as well as being capable of living in the present and of offering a solid presence. She also stresses the therapist's willingness to encounter the patient with honest open responses and the ability to challenge the patient's manipulative use of symptoms without rejection.

Perls was a charismatic figure and attracted a 'cult' of followers, some of whom tended to become nebulous both in practice and theory. Others were more interested in emulating his power and techniques, showing a poor understanding of his basic premises and lacking respect for their clients. He attacked these practitioners scathingly (Perls, 1969). Current practitioners of the Gestalt approach, while retaining the emphasis on the experiential, tend to show evidence of more integrated and mature theorising and application. Examples of current Gestalt approaches are those of Oaklander (1988) and Sherno (1996).

6.3.7 Gestalt perception of ***process***

The diagram provided (fig. 6.3) is an example of how the process of working with a metaphor or image could take place in Gestalt psychotherapy. This diagram was adapted from Oaklander (1988) and Mortola (1999).

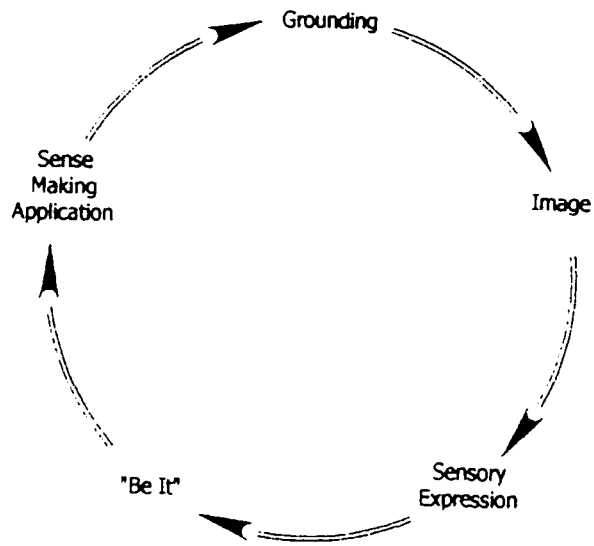

Figure 6.3 Gestalt perception of process

Grounding is the creating of a safe setting within which the introduction of psychic material can take place. Oaklander (1988) explains that some individuals lose the ability to fantasise creatively and others use their inner fantasies as an escape from reality. She believes that having a fragmented or compartmentalised inner world inhibits an individual's ability to retain a feeling of groundedness, since this ability is anchored in an experience of being connected to the body.

Oaklander has examined the positive use of aggression in children's fantasies. She is of the opinion healthy aggression provides the impetus for change and that the ability to be constructively aggressive, implies empowerment. According to Oaklander, if the aggressive drive is thwarted, especially in a way which threatens the person with the loss

of what is essential or meaningful, the joy of being able to be creative in the world, is replaced with fearfulness, rigidity, passivity and despair.

The *image* is then introduced. It can either be a spontaneous creation of the patient, or a visible portrayal of an emotion, thought or situation that needs to be addressed. The image can also be suggested to the patient by the therapist, or be the result of collaboration between the patient and the therapist.

This is followed by the *sensory expression*, (for example, 'draw it'). In some circumstances the image can initially be introduced by way of a sensory expression. When a problem is expressed in this way, it becomes externalised. Mortola (1999) refers to this as the metaphorical articulation. Appropriate facets of this metaphorical articulation then have to be recognised or 'owned' by the patient as a legitimate part of their psychic reality.

The next two steps in the process are the injunction to '*be it*', which is the experiential owning of the psychic material and the *sense making application*, which is aimed at articulating and examining the significance of what the patient has become aware of and the relevance that this material has for the patient's life.

The process ends with the patient again becoming grounded and the new awareness being integrated. This perspective underlines the value of **containment** and grounding, as well as the fact that **body awareness** plays and important role in achieving these. The

importance of the **experiential** 'owning' of psychic material coupled with **cognitive** insight is recognised.

6.4 Ericksonian approach

- The work of Erickson is important for this thesis because of his emphasis on the utilisation of various strategies and techniques to access the resources of the patient and the fact that he frequently used **metaphors as vehicles for indirect, multilevel communication**.

6.4.1 Erickson: the person

Milton Erickson was born in Wisconsin in 1901. In 1917 and in 1947 he suffered from debilitating bouts of polio, the last of which left him bound to a wheelchair. As a result of his own suffering and the months that he spent unable to move, he became **a very sensitive and skilled observer** and started using this information to influence his own physical reaction to pain, and also to amuse himself by **influencing the behaviour of others through suggestion.**

In his professional career, Erickson excelled in healing others by utilising the information that he gleaned by observing them to bypass their resistance and to implant unconscious suggestions that helped them to change their behaviour. He was **especially fond of embedding his suggestions in stories or anecdotes.**

The therapists who trained under his guidance seemed to have found him to be a **charismatic** teacher. Lankton and Lankton (1987) write: "Erickson gave us a nontangible quality we call enchantment. Enchantment is a quality of delivery, like fascination, that has a relationship to his techniques as empathy does to reflective feedback" (p. 60). Mills and Crowley (1993) refer to him as a "caring and crafty genius" (p. xv).

6.4. 2 Use of metaphors in Ericksonian therapy

In Ericksonian therapy, **metaphors are mostly used in the form of stories and anecdotes** and are used to implant or imbed suggestions. This approach views metaphor as a therapeutic tool and the patient is often unaware of the exact nature of the process being employed to induce healing. For example, in a section of their book with the title "*Tranceports: the four doorways to trance*", O' Hanlon and Martin (1992) describe how it is possible to induce the trance state by asking the patient to imagine certain stories. An example would be: "I am lying on the grass looking at the clouds" (p. 71).

Lankton and Lankton (1987) provide the following definition of a therapeutic metaphor: "A story with dramatic devices that captures the attention and provides an altered framework through which the clients can entertain a novel experience" (p. 154).

Erickson (1954) differentiated between **conscious** and **unconscious** fantasy, describing conscious fantasy as being a form of wish fulfilment, but **unconscious fantasies** as **communications of actual potential**: "Unconscious fantasies...are psychological constructs in various degrees of formulation, for the unconscious stands ready, or is actually awaiting an opportunity, to make part of reality" (p. 421).

According to Lankton and Lankton (1987), psychological change results from the fact that the metaphor is able to retrieve certain **associations from the unconscious** and link these with what patients are experiencing in their current situation in a way which induces a changed approach to their situation. The therapist has the task of structuring the therapeutic input in such a manner that the details, imagery or symbols which are introduced activate the retrieval of certain of the patient's experiences. These are then linked to the current situation by means of certain suggestive techniques like proximity, suggestions or binds.

Erickson and Rossi (1979) emphasise the involvement of the right hemisphere and the **incorporation of emotional and imagistic processes**. They suggest since "symptoms are expressions in the language of the right hemisphere, our use of mythopoetic language

may thus be a means of communicating directly with the right hemisphere in its own language" (p. 144).

Rossi (1987) uses the term "two-level communication" to imply communicating simultaneously with both the conscious and the unconscious. From the Ericksonian perspective, the ability of metaphors to function in this way leads to their use in psychotherapy to **influence "out-of-conscious" -systems** (Zeig, 1987.) This process is described by Mills and Crowley (1993):

> While the conscious mind is provided with one message (in the form of concepts, ideas, stories, images) which keeps it 'occupied', another therapeutic message can be slipped to the unconscious mind via implication and connotation.... While the conscious mind is listening to the literal aspects of the anecdote, the carefully designed, interspersed suggestions are activating the unconscious associations and shifting meanings which accumulate and finally 'spill over' into consciousness...The conscious mind is surprised because it is presented with a response within itself that it cannot account for...Analogy and metaphor as well as jokes can be understood as exerting their powerful effects through the same mechanism of activating unconscious patterns and response tendencies that suddenly summate to present consciousness with an apparently "new" datum of behavioral response (p. 18).

Working with Erickson, Bandler and Grindler (1975) developed a linguistically orientated framework to explain the function of metaphor. These authors proposed:

1. The metaphor presents a surface structure of meaning, i.e. the actual words of the story,
2. this activates a deeper structure, indirectly relevant to the listener, and associated with the initial surface meaning,
3. which leads to a deep structure of meaning being recovered by the listener, which is directly relevant. In this last case, a transderivational search has been activated by which the listener's unconscious processes. The listener then applies the appropriate aspects of the story to himself and "generates that meaning which is maximally relevant" (p. 22).

[Bandler & Grinder further developed their own work in the field of NLP. An example is their 1982 publication *Reframing: neurolinguistic programming and the transformation of meaning*.]

6.4.3 Methodology

Zeig (1987) describes Ericksonian methodology as being goal-directed, non-theoretical and aimed at identifying and modifying maladaptive patterns of behaviour. According to

Zeig, the goal in this approach is to structure communication in such a way that the patients can be induced to change not only the presenting symptom, but also other aspects of their lives. Zeig identifies two pertinent processes as 'building responsiveness' and 'accessing and utilising resources'. The patient's frame of reference is used to gain entry into his or her world. He writes:

> The therapist promotes patient-based change by meeting and engaging the client at his frame of reference, and by using individualised multilevel therapeutic communication to build constructive interpretative responsiveness and especially to identify, elicit, develop, recombine, and utilise existent patient resources...The goal is to uncover and understand previously unrecognised aspects of life- to promote the patient's awareness of the influence of the past or the structure of the present (p. 393).

At times, insight is used to empower the patient and to promote change. It is, however, not considered a necessary condition for change (Lankton, 1986). The Ericksonian emphasis is on approaching the patient as an individual and on creating a special context within which effective communication can take place. Generating individual responsiveness to minimal clues (not always with the use of hypnosis) is seen as providing access to what Zeig (1987) refers to as 'the constructive unconscious', for which, "like fine poetry, each image, each element of the communication was chosen with care for multilevel effect" (p. 395).

The Ericksonian approach often makes use of **hypnosis or hypnotic suggestion** to assist the process of change. Metaphors are used to introduce hypnotic suggestions to the patient and become powerful manipulative tools (Lankton & Lankton, 1987; Zeig, 1987; Coombs & Freedman, 1990; Mills & Crowley, 1993). Lankton and Lankton (1987) suggest that hypnosis should not be seen only as a technique for removing symptoms but should rather be viewed as an integral part of the therapeutic process. This has implications for the patient-therapist relationship.

The utilisation of metaphors takes place within the framework provided by the Ericksonian therapy. Lankton (1986) names the following five principles of Ericksonian psychotherapy:

- **Empathy** and **respect** for the patient
- The **utilisation** of the patient's **inner resources**
- A view of the **unconscious** as a **different level of awareness** which could serve as a **potential source of growth**
- **Non-reliance on theory**- a fluid approach aimed at creative solutions with the emphasis on viewing the patient as a unique individual who needs to be approached in an individualised manner- this approach is more interested in a patient's skills, experiences and motivations than in making a diagnosis
- **Use of the therapist as a tool**- someone who can be seen as 'real', i.e. congruent, who is flexible, a good observer and who possesses good intuitive abilities. The role of the therapist is discussed in more detail under the next heading.

6.4.4 Role of the therapist

According to Erickson, **the therapist's task is to utilise each individual's unique life experiences**. The **symptom** is often viewed as **a metaphor** containing a story expressing the patient's problem. The therapist is regarded as a skilled observer who carries the responsibility of utilising the patient's potential. The mechanism used by the patient to create the problem is often believed to be the exact mechanism that can be accessed as a potential resource for solving the problem (Coombs & Freedman, 1990).

Lankton (1986) maintains the therapist views the patient's past as a source of information. Although the therapist is expected to have insight into the patient's psychodynamics the patient does not need insight into the intricacies of his or her own past. Lankton believes that the therapist should use the background information to supply the patient with a sustainable projection towards the future. One of the techniques that Lankton describes, involves allowing the patient to fantasise about their own wishes for the future, but then instructing them to have amnesia for this fantasy. This method intends to bypasses **resistance to change**, and enables patients to fulfil the goals that they have unconsciously set for themselves.

A positive **attitude** from both therapist and patient is considered to be important. The Ericksonian attitude towards power is similar to that described by the narrative therapist White (White & Epston, 1990, see 6.7.3, p. 266). The therapist regards his or her empowerment in a positive light. To acquire enough power to be able to create a context within which it will become possible to initiate a process that will lead to change is considered to be a desirable therapeutic goal which does not impede the patient's empowerment (Lankton & Lankton, 1987). Zeig (1987) notes: 'The best attitude is one in which the therapist has a goal in mind, such as relaxation, distraction, or distortion. Then the therapist creates communication (which will usually be indirect or "one-step removed") which helps the patient to associate his or her power to achieve the goal' (p. 400).

6.4.5 *Ericksonian perception of* ***process***

The diagram (fig. 6.4) is an integrated adaptation made by the researcher from the descriptions of Lankton and Lankton (1987) and Mills and Crowley (1993).

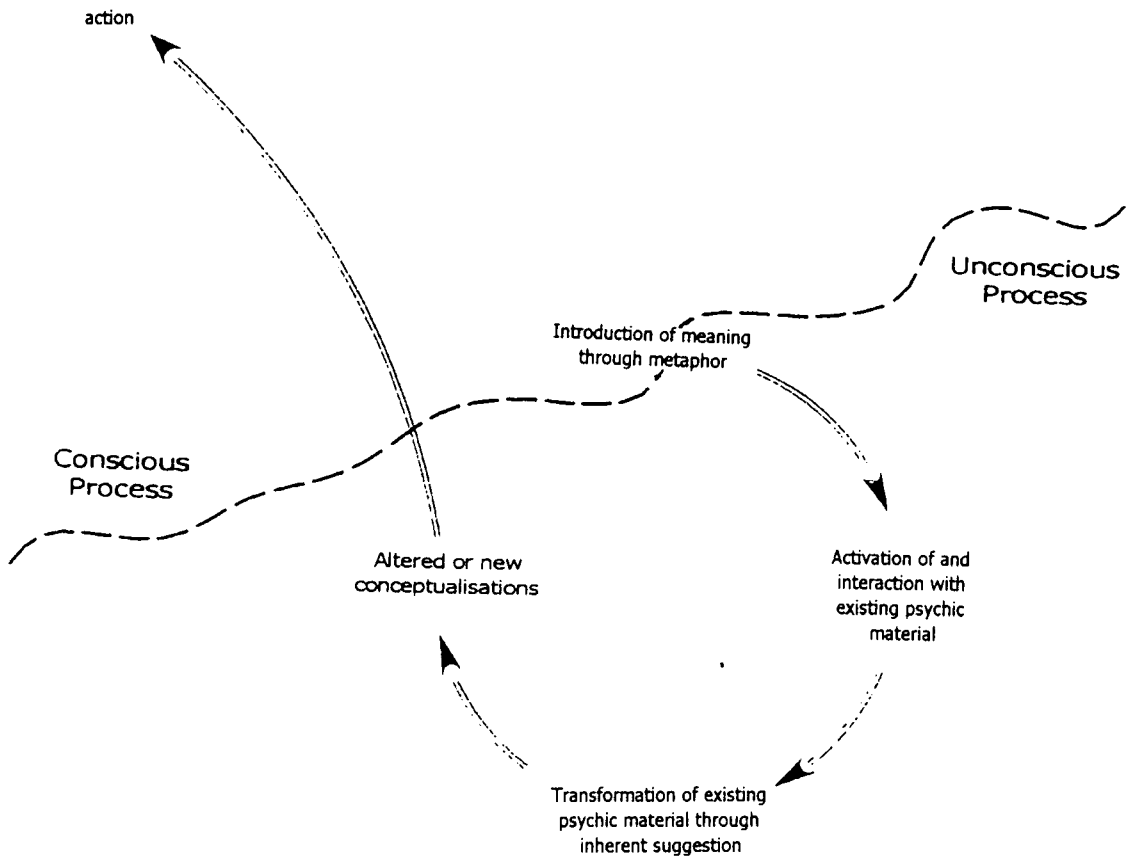

Figure 6.4 Ericksonian perception of process

According to this perspective, a metaphor is constructed and introduced to the patient by the therapist in a planned way. By making use of the principles of hypnotic induction, this metaphor is presented to the patient in a manner aimed at enhancing its acceptability. The diagram depicts *introduction of meaning through metaphor* as initiating the process.

In order to facilitate the next phase, *activation of and interaction with existing psychic material*, a particular metaphor is constructed to introduce material to the patient's unconscious. This material is chosen to match the patient's life experiences.

Ericksonian theory holds that the material introduced by means of the metaphor will induce the *transformation through inherent suggestion by activating and interacting with existing psychic material*. This leads to *altered or new conceptualisations* with a resultant change in behaviour (*action*).

According to the Ericksonian model, the patient does not need to be conscious of the reasons for the behaviour responsible for the initial problem, nor needs to understand why the behaviour has changed. However, in order to be capable of initiating the process of change, the therapist does need to understand both the psychodynamics involved and the strategies employed in initiating change.

6.5 Rossi's perception of process: the ***composite nature of process***

According to Rossi (1987), there are systems which keep **dissociation** in place (for example, as described by Kalsched, 1996, 6.2, p. 207) and systems which hold the potential for transformation, i.e. for healing dissociative splits. Rossi considers the latter to be those systems that Ericksonian or narrative therapists want to access.

Rossi (1972 & 1987) integrated the Ericksonian perspective and the analytic perspective with his knowledge of physiology, and adopted a perspective with links to NLP. For example, in Rossi's (1987) opinion, the Ericksonian injunction to make the symptom

worse is "actually a very direct means of accessing the state-dependent memory and learning systems that encode the problem" (p. 382, italics omitted).

Rossi (1987) attempts to explain the mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of the Ericksonian model. He emphasises the **unity of mind and body** and portrays the mind and the body as being, "one information system" (p. 381). He postulates that what Erickson referred to as the 'creative unconscious', "could be conceptualised as the repertory of state-dependent patterns of memory and learning that can be made available for problem-solving" (p. 382, italics omitted). In Zeig (1987, p. 384) Rossi portrayed the various functions that he considered part of the creative processes in the following diagram (fig. 6.5):

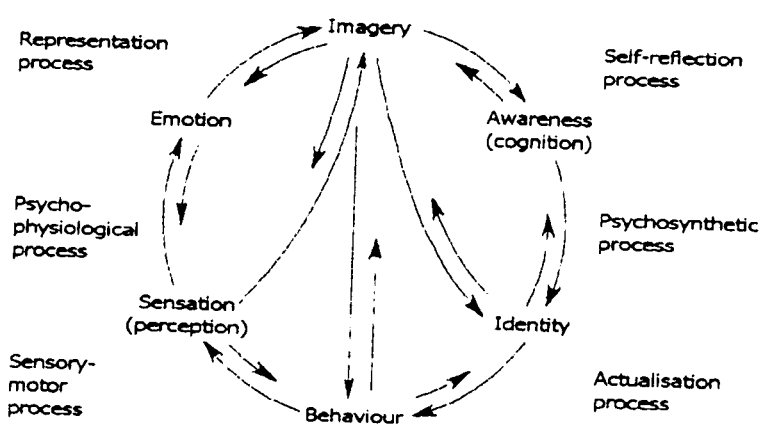

Figure 6.5 Rossi's perception of process (From Zeig, 1987)

Rossi perceives the above to be different 'dimensions' or 'more-or-less autonomous' **systems which interact** in order to induce psychological change. He describes these systems as enhancing and at times explaining one another. The example that he gives is

of *emotion* being experienced as *imagery* and the imagery then making a new pattern of *awareness* possible. He regards imagery as central to the process (Rossi, 1972).

The cognitive approach, which is discussed next, differs from Rossi regarding the primacy granted to cognition. However, the following remark by Perris et al. (1988) indicates how interlinked current theories tend to become: "The developmental theory at the basis of cognitive psychotherapy is constructivist and interactionist based on the postulate that cognitions are complex, organised internal structures that obey their own sets of laws" (p. 10).

6.6 Cognitive approach

- Cognitive theory is relevant to the subject matter of this thesis, for the following reasons: cognitive theorists have not only arrived at certain **postulates regarding inner systems (including stories, images and other metaphorical material) which serve to impose meaning** on experiences, but have also extended the range of cognitive theory to postulate about the basic **building blocks (concepts, metaphors) of cognition** as such. Often taking an inter-disciplinary vantage point, cognitive theorists co-operate with researchers from related fields, such as neurophysiology, learning theorists, semioticians and computer scientists. Examples of the latter collaboration are the work of Thagard (1992) and Dennett (1996).

6.6.1 Development and theoretical emphasis of this viewpoint

The ideas and techniques that led to the development of cognitive and rational-emotive psychotherapy originated with Albert Ellis and the advances pioneered in the therapeutic treatment of depression by Arnold Beck and his associates in the 1960s. Although cognitive and rational- emotive therapies have become separate approaches, there are areas where their points of view overlap (Corsini & Wedding, 1995).

The cognitive approach **utilises techniques as well as theoretical concepts from other related approaches** such as behavior therapy and Ericksonian psychotherapy. However, the emphasis of the cognitive perspective is on the **primacy of cognition**. For example, Perris, Blackburn and Perris (1988) claim: "Thoughts are of greater importance than feelings in the classification and discrimination of emotional states" (p. 5). Beck and Weishaar (1995) similarly mention that cognitive therapy differs from multimodal therapy in that "it uses **thoughts and *images*** [researcher's italics] as the entry to the system of behavior, affect, relationships, and biology. Multimodal therapy gives equal coverage to all modalities" (p. 233).

With its insistence on good **research** and **systematised working methods**, cognitive therapy has valuable insights to offer therapists. However, cognitive theory is sometimes

considered to be more concerned with the description and functioning of the mechanisms involved in mind processes than with containing these insights in a holistic theory of the functioning of the human psyche. Since this criticism implies cognitive therapy is mainly a methodology and not a holistic theory, Perris et al. (1988) defend cognitive psychotherapy in this regard. According to Beck and Weishaar (1995), "Cognitive therapy can be thought of as a theory, a system of strategies and a series of techniques" (p. 229).

From the cognitive perspective, the methods of adjustment that have arisen during the life of the individual, are the result of the way in which the particular individual has processed information necessary for survival. Since this information is often stored in metaphorical format (for example as a story or life-script), **metaphors can form the basis of cognitive schemas.**

Cognitive theory puts forward the premise that when this information is not realistically processed, an individual develops certain maladjusted concepts or habits that cause emotional discomfort or distortions of perception (Beck & Weishaar, 1995). While **dysfunctional metaphors can form the basis of dysfunctional schemas, metaphors can be introduced to stimulate a process of change.**

McMullin (1986) makes clear that the cognitive therapist's purpose when identifying these schemas is not to make patients feel guilty or in order to blame, but to assist them to correct these misperceptions as optimally as possible. **Core concepts** that develop during

the early years of life are thought to be more prone to irrational thought patterns and beliefs, and hence considered to be more difficult to access and transform.

Psychopathology is believed to be the result of **dysfunctional meaning structures**, schemata or working models. These models (or metaphors) are seen as being capable of remaining dormant and then being **triggered by the impact of external events**. It is further believed that **certain biases** play a central role in the development of the different forms of psychopathology. According to Burns (1980), one of the major examples of work done in this regard, is the work, mentioned above, done by Beck and his associates on the conceptual aetiology of depression. Specific underlying thought processes are considered to be characteristic of each particular pathology. Obsession, for example, is seen as a systematic **bias in information processing** which leads to the incorrect perception that the individual is in danger or that their safety might be threatened (Perris et al. 1988).

The cognitive viewpoint acknowledges **cultural and biological constraints on human development**. Man is not seen as a *tabula rasa*, but as being born with certain innate response potentialities. Consider the following remark from Perris et al. (1988) that illustrates this point: "The infant enters the world with a basic set of genetically determined potentialities, or rudimentary structures which allow his active seeking and processing of information, and which unfold throughout the life cycle" (p. 11).

The cognitive viewpoint respects the research done in experimental psychology and applies the findings of this research to the treatment of disorders. **The emphasis is on that which is empirical and testable and will solve the presenting problem of the patient without going into unnecessary diversions** (Perris et al., 1988). However, as McMullin (1986) makes clear, the techniques of cognitive therapy must not be seen as a 'quick fix'. A considerable investment of time and effort might be necessary to correct attitudes and core concepts which have literally been activated thousands of times to influence the behaviour of the patient prior to them seeking the assistance of the therapist (Beck & Weishaar, 1995).

6.6.2 Use of metaphor in cognitive psychotherapy

According to McMullin (1986), about **one third of cognitive techniques make use of imagery**, and these are most commonly related to conditioning or perceptual shifting. Similarly to previously mentioned approaches, there is an implicit acknowledgement of the basically **narrative structure of many thought processes**. For example Beck and Weishaar (1995) express the following opinion: "An individual whose thinking selectively synthesises *themes* [the researcher's italics] of loss or defeat is likely to be depressed" (p. 230) and, "the therapist and patient collaboratively *weave a tapestry that tells the story* [the researcher's italics] of the development of the patient's disorder" (p. 230).

As far as techniques involving the use of images, stories, metaphors or fables are concerned, the following remark by Beck and Weishaar can be considered to be representative of the literature in this regard: "**The patient's imagery is used as a pictorial representation of his or her cognitive distortions. Imagery is subjected to the same type of evaluation and modification as cognitions**" (p. 231).

In the opinion of the researcher, it is important to bear in mind that **metaphorical material has a composite character**. To the degree that the images or concepts that cognitive therapists use to work with are also composite, this needs to be recognised.

Procedures used in cognitive therapy are the identification of **common themes** in the patient's emotional reactions, imagery, and narratives. These techniques are similar to methods used by other therapies. However the **emphasis** is **on** how **cognitions** affect the patient's current situation. Only those irrational beliefs that are the cause of problems are addressed (McMullin, 1986).

McMullin (1986) gives examples of the use of metaphors. He acknowledges that "**stories, fables, fairy tales, analogies, and metaphors** are valuable means of communicating some of the subtleties of life to certain clients" (p. 139). The specific examples that McMullin gives are very similar to the Ericksonian approach. The method of analysis for existing material that he advocates concentrates on the core values which

are being propagated by the particular myth, and on how the consequences of holding these values are dealt with.

According to Beck and Weishaar (1995), **imagery is evaluated and modified in the same way that cognitions are**. McMullin (1986) makes an interesting observation regarding auditory input, stating that most patients tend to 'hear' their thoughts as verbal messages as opposed to 'seeing ' them. He advocates the use of auditory tapes in therapy.

6.6.3 Principles of cognitive psychotherapy

Cognitive psychotherapy is viewed to be a collaborative process between therapist and patient. The patient is thus both **empowered** and encouraged to accept **responsibility** for a part of the therapeutic process. The relationship between the patient and the therapist is either seen as a teacher-student relationship, or, alternatively, as a collaboration between two allies working together to generate clear testable hypotheses about the problem behaviour. The identified behaviour will then be addressed according to clear-cut principles (Beck & Weishaar, 1995).

According to Perris et al. (1998), the cognitive therapist tends to have an open agenda (**conscious awareness** is encouraged), explaining to the patient exactly how the problem is viewed. In therapy the patient's **interpretations of reality are treated as testable**

hypotheses and the therapist works with the patient to elicit an awareness of these responses, examine their origin and appropriateness, and also examines alternative interpretations with which to replace them. In this therapeutic framework, both therapist and patient would become aware of those metaphors which govern behaviour and cognitive principles would be applied to them. Metaphors would thus be translated into schemata or cognitive concepts.

Patients are expected to take a cognitive stance (**attitude**) towards their problem, must be prepared to analyse their behaviour, take notes of behaviour patterns and the feelings which accompany them, arrange the elements of these patterns into hierarchies and to address them systematically, viewing the process as one aimed at re-education. In this way patients are empowered to learn to manage their own inner processes (McMullin, 1986). Regarding metaphors, this would imply **recognising dysfunctional metaphors and generating more appropriate ones with the aid of the therapist**.

Although there are individual differences amongst the various practitioners of cognitive therapy, according to McMullin (1986) most applications are rooted in the well-known A-B-C analogy (**process**), where A is seen as the trigger event or stimulus, B as the internal reaction to this, and C as the response. In cases where the process described under B elicits a response which is disproportionate to what could reasonably be expected, this is considered to be indicative of an internal response that needs to be changed or modified. The therapeutic process is seen to consist of three steps:

1. **Identifying** thoughts, beliefs or schemata (also metaphors) which give rise to the behaviour
2. Engaging the patient in a process of **analysing** these as regards usefulness and rationality
3. Employing various techniques to assist a patient in **replacing dysfunctional beliefs** with more appropriate perspectives.

6.6.4 Strategies and techniques used in cognitive therapy

The summary which follows was made from McMullin (1986), Perris et al. (1988) and Beck and Weishaar (1995).

- Apart from **collaborative empiricism**, which has been mentioned, cognitive psychotherapy employs the strategy of **guided discovery**. Cognitive theorists see the attitudes that govern an individual's behaviour as for the most part functioning **outside conscious awareness**. Cognitive therapy tends to refer to this as the Socratic approach or the technique of **a dialectical deductive dialogue between therapist and patient** (Perris, et al. 1988). The **unconscious** is conceptualised in an entirely different way to for example the way it is traditionally seen in psychoanalysis. However, an investigation is required to enable both therapist and patient to become aware of, as well as understand the situations that trigger the patient's behaviour. The

term 'guided discovery' is used, since the therapist is expected to lead the patient to the discovery of the patterns of behaviour of which they are unaware and to help them to understand their function and influence (McMullin, 1986). It is important to **note** the **metaphors employed**, especially the metaphor of the patient's history as a story.

- Another strategy is that of **reality testing**. The therapist is active, directive, and prepared to challenge the validity of certain constructs through the use of the Socratic method of directed questioning.

- Strategies aim to bring about a **'cognitive shift'**. For example, Beck and Weishaar (1995), see individuals as having a 'panic program', or a 'depressive program' that needs to be readjusted by being fed back correcting information.

- An important contribution made by cognitive theory is the emphasis placed on **knowledge becoming action**. A link is made to an ongoing process that takes place outside therapy: homework is given, change is evaluated and experiments are given for homework. Follow-up sessions are planned in order to monitor progress and to ensure that lasting change takes place.

6.6.5 *Cognitive perception of* ***process***

A diagram, made by the researcher, depicting the process of change from the cognitive perspective is shown below.

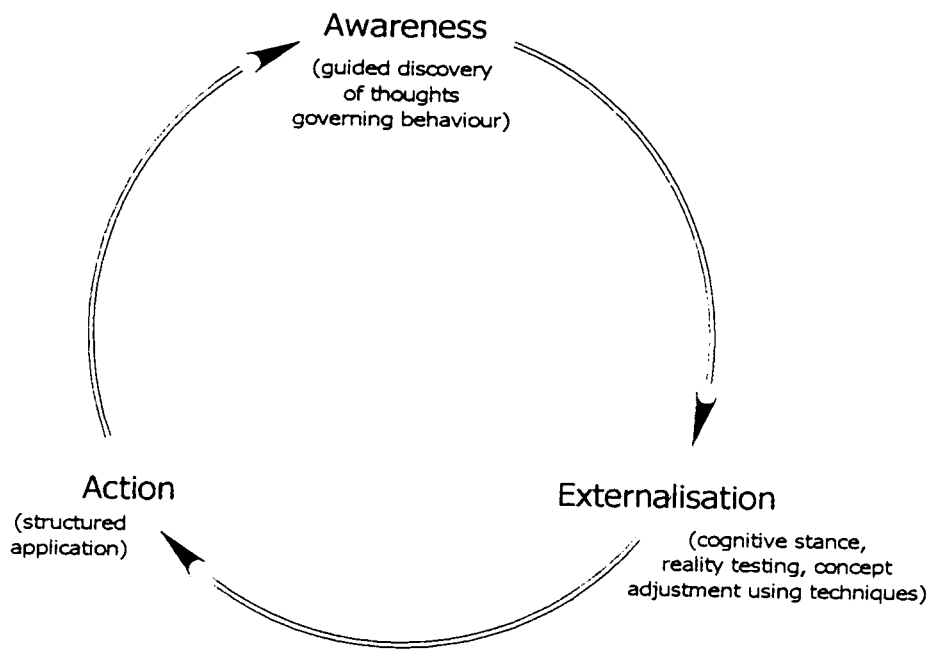

Figure 6.6 Cognitive perception of process

The process commences with the therapist co-operating with the patient to enhance *awareness* of thoughts and images governing behaviour. The therapist elicits this awareness as part of a process of guided discovery to determine the nature of those thoughts and images governing disproportionate responses. (Burns, 1980) relates Beck

would often ask patients what they were fantasising about or what fantasy preceded a feeling or behaviour.

Externalisation includes analysis, reality testing, concept adjustment and the formulation of clear testable hypotheses. The patient is expected to take a cognitive stance towards the process and could, for example, be asked to make notes of the place, time and circumstances under which specific behaviour patterns occur. These actions serve to shift the patient's perspective from that of simply experiencing certain problems, to being able to approach them more objectively and analytically. According to McMullin (1986), approximately one third of the techniques used at this point include the use of images or metaphors.

Action is structured as an ongoing process of application that takes place outside psychotherapy, the results of which are monitored in following sessions.

6.6.6 Closing remarks

Cognitive psychotherapy theory and techniques have had a wide-ranging effect on psychotherapeutic practices. **Aspects of cognitive therapy are often incorporated into other approaches**. An example of work of the latter is the approach of Frýba (1995). He

supplements the principles of growth, as seen from an eastern philosophical and religious perspective, with cognitive techniques.

A close relationship exists between cognitive therapy and rational emotive therapy, as well as between cognitive therapy and behavior therapy. Cognitive therapy applies certain principles of behavior therapy to internal experiences, i.e. to images, thoughts and attitudes.

The emphasis, however, remains on the primacy of cognition. The **metaphor of information processing**, using the metaphor of 'mind as computer' is sometimes used by cognitive theorists. For example, Dennett (1996) argues that we are all descended from macromolecules which function like self-replicating robots:

> To put it vividly, your great-great...grandmother *was* a robot! Not only are you descended from such macromolecular robots but you are composed of them: your haemoglobin molecules, your anti-bodies, your neurons, your vestibular-ocular reflex machinery- every level of analysis from the molecular level on up, your body (including your brain, of course) is found to be composed of machinery that dumbly does a wonderful, elegantly designed job (p. 30).

By utilising the concepts of schemas which govern thought and behaviour and the conception that these 'working models' can be both faulty and unconscious, **cognitive psychology can initiate inquiry into the narratives which govern social and cultural**

and individual meaning structures. This is the path followed by one of the co-founders of the Centre for Cognitive Studies in 1960, Jerome Bruner. (Bruner's contribution is discussed under 6.7.1, p. 259).

6.7 Narrative approach

- Within the broader definition of metaphor, **narratives are in themselves metaphors**, therefore a discussion of narrative theory and therapeutic methods addresses some of the key issues involved in working with metaphor.

It is interesting to note the following excerpt from Freud and Breuer's 1895 work *Studies in Hysteria* (cited in Schwartz, 1999) which points clearly to the narrative nature of work with the psyche:

> It still strikes myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the stamp of serious science. I must console myself with the reflection that the nature of the subject is evidently responsible for this, rather than any preference of my own (p. 55).

Freud himself seems to have written the remark apologetically, without realising its significance. In his autobiography, Bruner (1983) describes the similar experience of

noticing how the introduction of narrative influenced one of his experiments but of only realising the significance of the fact more than twenty years later.

6.7.1 Jerome Bruner

The work and personal development of Jerome Bruner is used as an example of one of the ways in which an **integrated viewpoint** can be arrived at. Bruner was one of the co-founders of the Centre for Cognitive Studies in 1960. However his later work emphasised the value of the narrative perspective and therefore this discussion is included here. The summary which follows was adapted from Bruner (1983), Bruner (1990) and Crain (1992).

Bruner advocated interdisciplinary co-operation and was influenced by a wide variety of theorists. He spent the major part of his working life in academic societies, spending time with people like Luria, Piaget, Köhler, McDougall, Chomsky, Roman Jakobson and Henry Murray, to name but a few. He progressed from his initial apprenticeship to McDougall's research program, to the founding of the Centre for Cognitive Studies with George Miller. Bruner did infant research, made a major contribution to education both in America and Britain, and was involved in language acquisition studies at Oxford, eventually formulating what amounts to a **narrative theory of mind and culture.**

Bruner (1983) is sensitive to the **'world' created by a certain milieu** referring to the academic 'world of the mind' as follows:

> There is a way that things are different when one gets to the life of the mind. You discover as an "intellectual" that **you have walked on stage into a drama already well scripted by others, a drama that has been going on for centuries before you made your entry**. Your own intentions and thoughts become linked to ideas, issues and institutions that have long had a reality of their own. Karl Popper calls this world where ideas and paradigms and truths live independently of their origins World Three, a world of 'objective knowledge' (p. 56).

Understanding the **basic premises** underlying certain functions was very important to him:

> "Learning" is, most often, figuring out how to use what you already know in order to go beyond what you currently think...Knowing how something is put together is worth a thousand facts about it. It permits you to go beyond it (p. 183).

Bruner (1983) conceptualises **consciousness** as an instrument of mind that highlights the immediate. He believes that two theories of consciousness, namely a 'Trouble Theory' and a 'Zest Theory' are implicit in what is written about consciousness. In Bruner's opinion, consciousness aids individuals in dealing with difficult choices, but also serves

to make the creative playing, which provides the ideas or images necessary to aid transformation, possible. He also believes that the **images** of individual psyches, along with outside images, like those found in art and literature, **provide** individuals with **vehicles** for the changing and rearranging of conceptualisations:

> If there is any purpose to consciousness, beyond its being an instrument for the analysis of necessity and trouble, it must surely be to provide us with a vehicle for making present the absent, making visible the unseen, making possible the unimagined... (in)...the narrative mode, the one that gives access to human predicaments?...you will find the presence of two or more voices- at the very least, the character's own and the authorial one. In the convention of fable, for example, one voice sets the stage, speaking in the timeless perfective tense of "once upon a time," and the others speak in the midst of action. There is something inherently dialogic in the art embodied in language...So in the end I come to the conclusion that the "ornaments" of consciousness- Huizinga's products of zest rather than tools for repairing trouble- are also tools, but such extraordinary ones! For they, the works of art and the canonical cultural forms, are instruments for envisaging possibility communally. They are the means of continuing the conversation by social means that can be internalised in thought, in internal dialogue (p. 216).

Central to Bruner's (1990) viewpoint is the **relationship between acting and saying or experiencing**:

> There are agreed-upon canonical relationships between the meaning of what we say and what we do in given circumstances, and such relationships govern how we conduct our lives with one another. There are procedures of negotiation, moreover, for getting back on track when these canonical relations are violated. This is what makes interpretation and meaning central to a cultural psychology- or any psychology or mental science for that matter (p. 19).

Bruner (1990) argues that human beings function in a **symbolic culture** and that constructivism will not necessarily lead to complete fragmentation or relativism since these cultural constructs, although they can be negotiated or change over time, tend to be more permanent in nature. He further argues that values can be expressed by making responsible choices, and he pleads for open-mindedness towards a '**viable pluralism**' (p. 30).

According to Bruner (1990), the central concept of a human psychology is **meaning** as well as the transactions involved in the construction of meanings. His viewpoint is that intentionality shapes acts- this process becoming visible through participation in the symbolic systems of culture. Bruner considers **evolution** to have influenced the patterns that these symbolic systems tend to take. In his opinion this **has resulted in a standard narrative form**. In his opinion, this standard narrative form **tends to be sequential, tends to look for what is understandable or usual and then manages to deal with the exceptional by explaining it**.

Citing Kenneth Burke, Bruner (1990) postulates that stories tend to consist of five parts, an actor, an action, a goal, a scene an instrument and trouble. Bruner thus asserts that man has a mimetic ability to capture and interpret life as narrative, i.e., "a symbolic schema for mediating between sign and 'world'- an interpretant that exists at some higher level than the word or the sentence, in the realm of discourse itself" (p. 47). In Bruner's opinion folk psychology focuses on what is the usual in the human condition and the **narrative form gives meaning to these experiences**.

According to Bruner's theory, individuals tend to tell a "story" to themselves about who they are, what they think the world is like, and what their behavioural options are. A part of this story and its implications can be automatic or **unconscious**. The particular person involved just accepts their story as obvious or the "**truth**". Under certain circumstances, the person might sense that something is not working, but be unable to pinpoint where discrepancies lie. Bruner regards a story of this nature to be an **extended metaphor**, comparable to a home movie with feelings and images that can be accessed and re-experienced (Bruner, 1990).

For Bruner (1990) the **contextual background** against which the narrative is created is important. 'It simply will not do to reject the theoretical **centrality of meaning** for psychology on the grounds that it is "vague." Its vagueness was in the eye of yesterday's formalistic logician. We are beyond that now' (p. 65).

Bruner's research has shown that a child encounters one narrative every seven minutes. These **narratives** also **contain the values of the culture or subculture in story form**. Part of the procedure is also learning to tell the right story, the one that culture will accept. He regards the individual's sense of 'self' or 'selves in different contexts', to be rooted in the way the interpersonal and the cultural environment shapes the individual's sense of self over time (Bruner, 1990). As illustration, Bruner discusses the case history of Emily. He writes about Emily that in the taped recording of her speaking to herself, "She was not simply reporting; she was trying to make sense of her everyday life. She seemed to be **in search of an integral structure that could encompass what she had *done* with what she *felt* with what she *believed***" (p. 89).

In her monologues Emily seemed to be **playing** with words and stories, **but** what she said showed that she was **searching** for meaning, searching for relationships between things, sorting the usual from the unusual, deciding what seemed to be the most important facts to remember, and also finally introducing a personal perspective to her monologues. These monologues were to some extent guided by the interpretations of life events provided by **significant others**. Consequently her narratives differed from narratives recorded from children in different social settings. Emily's parents were academics and, in keeping with this, she seemed to stress getting facts correct, being able to give reasons and knowing what her options were.

The value of narrative, according to Bruner (1990), is:

> It mediates between the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of beliefs, desires, and hopes. It renders the exceptional comprehensible and keeps the uncanny at bay-save as the uncanny is needed as a trope. It reiterates the norms of the society without being didactic....it provides a basis for rhetoric without confrontation. It can even teach, conserve memory, or alter the past (p. 52).

In Bruner's view, **the creation of fiction takes place** within a wider horizon of possibilities and operates **in "the domain midway between the real and the imaginary"** (p. 55). Since the narrative provides the individual with a metaphor of reality, Bruner regards narrative to be an aid to metacognition.

He does not view this as a subjective process since the products of cultural discourse are visible and can be shared. He sees 'folk psychology' as providing culture's description of how human beings function. Inherent in this 'ethnopsychology' are theories of mind and theories about what motivates individuals and groups. In Bruner's (1990) opinion:

> Folk psychology, though it changes, does not get displaced by scientific paradigms...And though it changes, it resists being tamed into objectivity...it alters with the cultures changing responses to the world and to the people in it...*The idea of jettisoning it in the interest of getting rid of mental states in our everyday*

explanations of human behavior is tantamount to throwing away the very phenomena that psychology needs to explain. It is in terms of folk-psychological categories that we experience ourselves and others...Scientific psychology, after all is part of that same cultural process, and its stance toward folk psychology has consequences for the culture in which it exists [italics added] (p. 14).

6.7.2 Influence of postmodernism on the narrative approach

Although narratives have been created and valued since ancient times, and almost all theories of psychotherapy acknowledge the narrative nature of the psyche, current approaches to narrative therapy is often approached through an interest in the philosophy of the postmodern movement. The contribution made by this movement has been discussed in some detail (5.2.7.2, p. 177) and needs to be kept in mind in order to understand the narrative viewpoint in context.

6.7.3 Narrative psychotherapy

Narratives are recognised as basic, innate, meaning-making devices by most current perspectives on psychotherapy. Given the diversity inherent in postmodernism itself, it

follows that narrative therapy should be similarly **characterised by diversity** within the ranks of its practitioners. In the opinion of the researcher, this fact is illustrated by the tendency for various viewpoints and techniques to be integrated according to the perspective held by any particular author.

Parry and Doan (1994) perceive individuals as being **endowed by evolution to construct images or models of the world**. These models are hypothesised to facilitate conceptualising, social interactions and the insights and reactions necessary for survival. These internalised narratives can at times serve to hinder optimal adjustment instead of aiding it. Although transformable, these narratives are seen as being capable of creating a psychic reality within which perceived threats are reacted to in the same way in which they would be reacted to in physical reality. Despite pointing out the limitations inherent in narratives, Parry and Doan agree that there is no alternative to the creation of meaning through means of man's innate narrative potential and "for the storytelling animal, the only alternative to stories is silence" (p. 38).

White and Epston (1990) consider the stories according to which people govern their lives to be potentially capable of providing individuals with a sense of **identity, safety, meaning, understanding and purpose**. When individuals are **empowered** to discover what White and Epston refer to as 'unique outcomes', i.e. the possibility of creating uniquely personally applicable narratives, they are postulated by these authors to experience their lives as meaningful, rich and fulfilling. Parry and Doan (1994) point out that stories can provide **containment** as well as moral perspective. Hanlon and Wilk

(1987) feel that people can become empowered to respect and take responsibility for their own narratives.

However, when the stories pertaining to what White and Epston (1990) refer to as the 'unitary knowledge's' contained within a **society or system** no longer serve as adequate mediators of understanding and functioning, these stories need to be challenged. The potential for change is seen to be made possible by the existence of 'subjugate knowledge' (White & Epston, 1990), or 'hidden texts' (Parry & Doan, 1994). These **hidden texts are regarded** by Parry and Doan **to have a potentially, "powerful metaphorical resonance"** (p. 40), and to be capable of indicating viable alternatives to the individual.

Attitudes of authors towards **reality** vary. While some authors feel that certain aspects are 'irreducible' (Parry & Doan, 1994) or that there is a 'bottom line' which distinguishes between negotiable and non-negotiable concepts (Hanlon & Wilk, 1987), others work from a perspective that all viewpoints are relative (Miller, 1997). The aspects that Parry and Doan (1994) consider to be irreducible are what they refer to as the '**embodiedness**' of human life and biologically predetermined factors on the one hand, and the fact that meanings are creations and not natural phenomena. In their opinion, stories are created as a result of attempts to bridge this gap.

In therapy, White and Epston (1990) challenge the power held by the dominant narratives in a society over the individual. These authors assert that the **individuals** themselves

have to be empowered with the knowledge which could enable them to make optimal choices regarding the narratives which are potentially capable of providing meaning to their lives. These authors see the deconstruction of existing narratives and the creation of more functional replacements as an **ongoing process**. According to them, the usefulness of any given narrative tends to reach its limits and then the beliefs and assumptions hidden in this narrative need to be made aware and questioned.

If this process takes place in a therapeutic setting, the **role of the therapist** is to facilitate this process. The therapist begins by bringing the reigning narratives that appear to have a bearing on the problem into awareness. Since part of the goal of therapy is for the story or stories in question to become externalised, certain access points are identified (Hanlon & Wilk, 1987). Parry and Doan (1994) see these access points as being those places where **reactive emotions** like rage, shame, guilt, rage or anxiety become apparent.

Many theorists, (Hanlon & Wilk, 1987; Parry & Doan, 1994; Miller, 1997), view **emotions** as interpretations or constructs. According to these authors, the naming of emotions results in the formulation of stories teaching forms of feeling. However, in their opinion, this does not imply that emotions can be willed away, but that the narratives in which they are embedded have to be deconstructed. The individual concerned is invited to participate actively in the reorganisation process. The value of **identifying and externalising** a problem (story) is seen in the fact that this aids the process of freeing the individual from the way in which present behaviour is being influenced by a particular narrative.

The optimal use of **language** is regarded to be one of the basic tools of therapy. The fact that an existing story is being questioned opens the space for the creation of a new one. **Stories are perceived to provide meaning to experience**. Sometimes these stories are considered to be no longer applicable since they are serving either to perpetuate a problem, or function in service of a goal authored by an outside source which does not best serve the interests of the individual situation. With the individual's co-operation, themes are identified that can become the basis for new stories (White & Epston, 1990). People are empowered with their ability to become aware, to challenge the validity of existing narratives and to take the responsibility for making valid choices and taking those actions which will lead to the creative construction of new perspectives or narratives to replace the problematic one (Miller, 1997).

The authors mentioned describe techniques for **optimising** the **process** as well as ensuring that the newly created narrative endures. These include being alert to ways in which the **existing narrative devises strategies to ensure its survival**. Parry and Doan (1994) describe the **role of the therapist** as that of the editor of the story. His tasks are seen as those of keeping the story re-vision alive and of adopting a stance of neutrality, curiosity, compassion, treating everything as information, going with resistance, watching for strengths, expanding focus, giving oneself permission not to know, not working harder than the clients and the recognition of limits.

6.7.4 Narrative perception of process

Narratives can contain metaphors, and can also themselves be considered to be extended metaphors, since they portray certain ideas or themes in a metaphorical way (Barker, 1985). The researcher has constructed a diagram illustrating the narrative perception of working with metaphors:

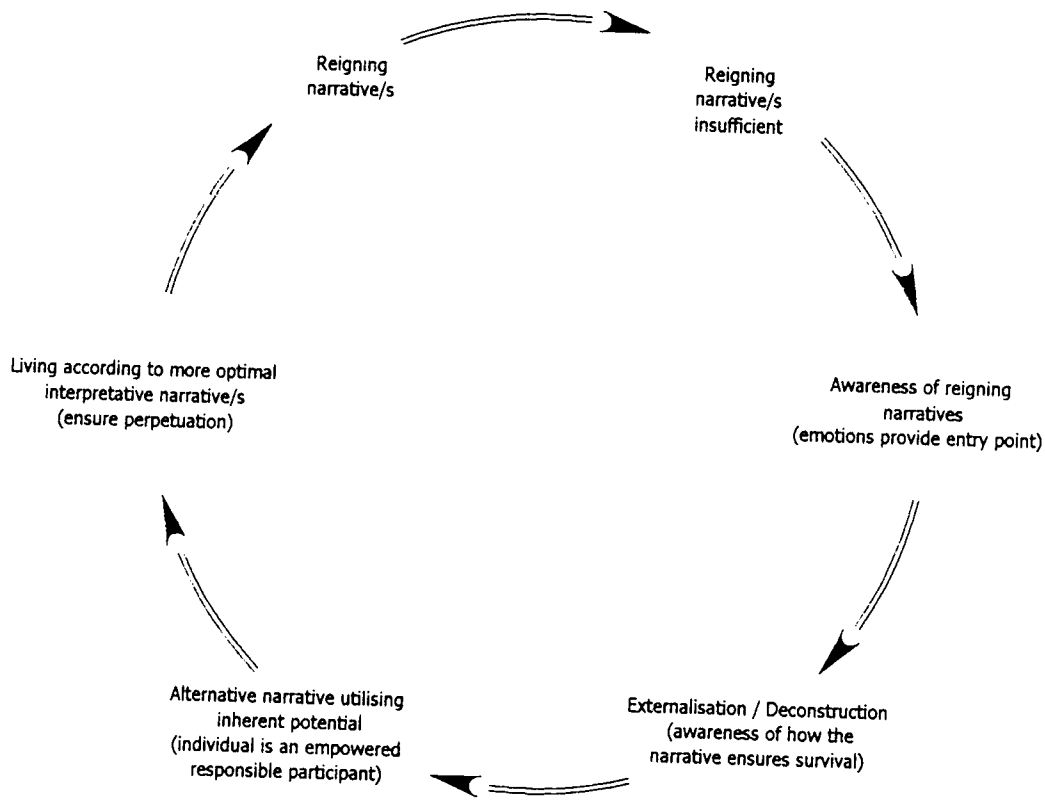

Figure 6.7 Narrative perception of process

According to the narrative perspective, individuals live their lives guided and contained by certain *reigning narratives*. These narratives are part of cultural, familial and

individual meaning-making activities. Individuals tend to function naturally and without conscious awareness of how their behaviour is structured by implicit narratives, until one or more of these *reigning narratives prove insufficient*, and difficulties are experienced. Often using *emotions* to *provide* the *entry point*, the therapist then works with the patient in order to arrive at an *awareness* of these narratives.

The narratives are *externalised* and examined in order to ascertain their nature and influence on, and to question their appropriateness in terms of the patient's life. The formulation of the problem as a narrative is metaphorical. **The process of externalisation then makes this metaphor visible to the patient.** Since the problem has now become an external 'story', it is easier for the patient to relate to this material in a more objective and less constricted way. The 'hidden' aspects and implications of the reigning narratives are sought. Awareness of the manner in which **dysfunctional narratives ensure their survival** is also inquired into.

The therapeutic objective is to assist the patient to become empowered enough to be able to choose more optimal alternative narratives or to make adjustments to existing ones. The patient is viewed as a co-constructor of alternatives, i.e. as an **empowered responsible participant**. The *more optimal alternative narrative* is constructed by utilising inherent potential, or what White (1990) would call 'subjugated knowledges'. Steps are then taken to ensure that this more optimal interpretative narrative will survive without becoming subverted by the survival strategy of the previous narrative.

6.7.5 *Closing remarks*

Note the similar elements described by the cognitive and narrative approaches:

- Narrative therapy describes the process of creating awareness of existing narratives which can be defined as problematic, externalisation of these narratives, the search for more optimal methods of description and the introduction of alternatives which would change the problematic narrative, and the integration of this new option into the individual's existing narrative network (White & Epston, 1990; Parry & Doan, 1994).

- The cognitive perspective advocates a similar approach (McMullin, 1986). Beginning with an analysis of the problem and bringing the underlying dynamics into awareness, cognitive therapists move on to the generation of more adaptive thoughts and responses and then the third step is seen as the application of these responses in the individual's everyday world (Singer, Kenneth & Pope, 1978).

It is not the intention of the researcher to equate these two approaches, merely to point out certain similarities.

6. 8 Kolb's perception of process: experiential focus

Kolb (1984) focuses on an integrated approach to experiential learning. Nevertheless, since **conceptual change** is an implicit condition for learning, his approach is relevant to a better understanding of any process of conceptual change. The researcher considers Kolb's perspective on how conceptual change can be achieved to be equally applicable to instances where metaphor becomes the vehicle for concepts.

Kolb (1984) explains how the transformation of old concepts and adjustment to new information takes place as part of an ongoing process that **incorporates both subjective and objective experiences**. He emphasises the importance of keeping in touch with the experiential as a source of learning and development. Kolb believes **experiential centredness** provides individuals with a possible counterbalance to the loss of the, essentially illusionary, centredness previously provided for them during the scientific era by the structured nature of externally imposed perspectives.

Furthermore, Kolb (1984) highlights the **dialectical nature** of the learning process. He describes learning as an active process of gathering and processing information. According to Kolb, an ongoing dialectical process exists between new experiences and existing concepts: concepts interpret experience and experience can serve to change concepts.

In order for the process of conceptual change to proceed optimally, Kolb (1984) maintains individuals need to be able to **experiment** with various options. Information identified during the course of this experimentation, must then be integrated with existing concepts. Alternatively, new concepts must be developed to add to or replace the less optimally functioning existing ones.

In the opinion of the researcher, metaphors are useful vehicles whereby concepts can be objectified and, due to their ability to point to new possibilities, they can serve as containers of possible or potential meanings.

Kolb (1984) holds that new information only really becomes integrated when the individual is able to utilise that information either to generate new ideas or to initiate actions.

Kolb's model differentiates between **internal reflection and actions taken in the external world**. He refers to the former as 'intention' the latter as 'extention'. According to him, individuals will exhibit a preference for assimilating new information in a certain manner, which will be influenced by their personality type (Kolb, 1984).

While making allowances for individual preferences, the process of working with metaphors in psychotherapy, should allow the patient the opportunity to make use of all **four types of approaches** that Kolb (1984) mentions. These are **concrete experience,**

reflection, abstract concept formation and active experimentation. In order to honour the fact that it is sometimes necessary to experiment without fear of consequences, active experimentation can be simulated.

A diagram (fig. 6.8) shows Kolb's portrayal of the dimensions that he feels are involved in the process of experiential learning. The diagram is adapted from Kolb (1984, p. 42).

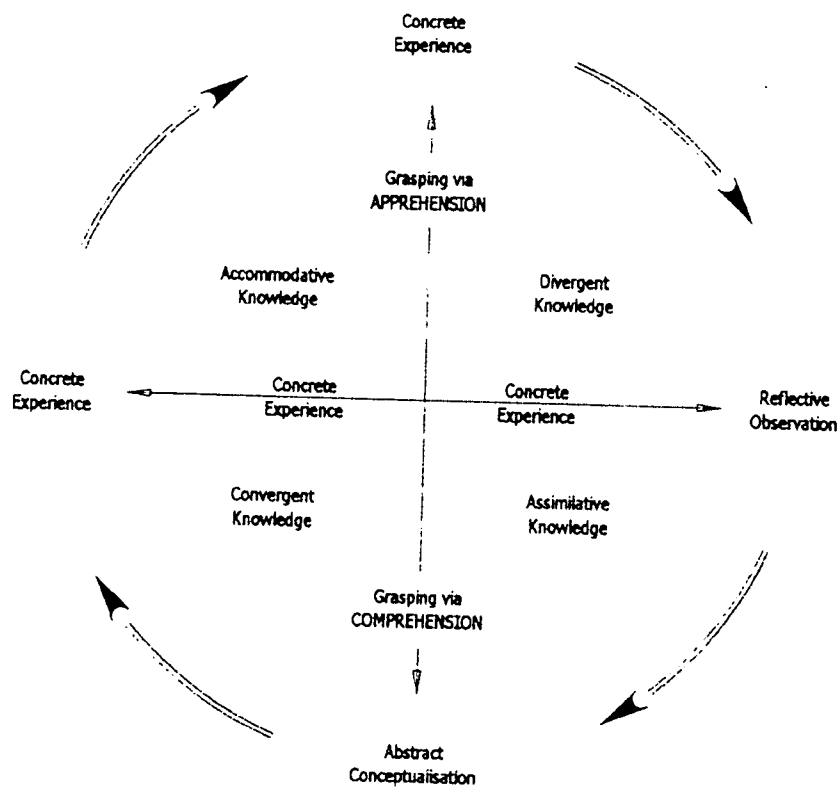

Figure 6.8 Kolb's perception of process

Kolb's perspective highlights the importance of approaching work with concepts, by implication including metaphor, as part of an ongoing process of change. He illustrates

the dialectical nature of the experiential process, as well as the necessary dialectical interaction between concepts which are considered to be objective and those which are experienced to be subjective in nature. Kolb further demonstrates the value of experimentation and underlines the usefulness of labelling psychic material by means of the terms 'inner' and 'outer'. The researcher considers Kolb's theory that an enhanced proficiency in **experiential experimentation** and **concept-development** can provide a model for dealing with fast-changing current realities to be an important contribution to theories dealing with conceptual change.

6.9 Further conclusions

6.9.1 A spontaneous movement towards theoretical integration

The second half of the 20th Century was characterised by a series of inquiries into the nature of the therapeutic relationship and the optimal conditions for change. For example, Rogers' earliest publications date from the 1930s onwards, but the publications containing the work for which he is most well known date from the early 1950s.

From the 1960s onward, theories show a tendency towards becoming more and more inclusive of the insights from other theories and disciplines and towards making at times

eclectic use of formulations both from past theories and from those which exist in same time slot as their own. It is not always clear whether therapists working, for example, from Ericksonian foundations are aware of when they are making use of cognitive therapy formulations or techniques, since this is often done without acknowledgement.

Although the founders of the various approaches that came into existence at that time show evidence of a certain depth of insight into the psychodynamic underlay of their client's problems, the practitioners themselves often tend to miss the bigger picture turning psychotherapy into a powerplay of techniques and one-upmanship. Perls was extremely critical of the latter tendency (Perls, 1969).

The researcher believes that, especially from the 1960's onwards, many psychological theories exhibit a tendency towards what could be termed a form of psychotherapeutic minimalism. They either attempt to describe the nature of the basic building blocks of psychic meaning which offer the inherent possibility of also providing vehicles for the transformation of psychic content (as is the case with cognitive therapy) or, taking a different perspective, other theories attempt to describe the ideal conditions under which change could take. Many researchers at this time investigate those conditions that are theorised to be conducive to change, regardless of the theoretical orientation of the therapist (Haley, 1963; Truax & Carkhuff, 1973).

These works were followed by attempts to make the eclectic tendency among practitioners a more coherent process guided by certain principles. (Examples:

Proschaska, 1979; Mahrer, 1989.) The current trend seems to include integrated approaches like those of Malan (1995), who combines psychoanalytic principles with behavior therapy, and the highly integrated approach of Ivey (1993).

In the opinion of the researcher, the viewpoints discussed in this chapter, from 6.2 onwards, are all examples of two tendencies: first, the tendency towards integrated theory, and second, the tendency of therapists to work within one framework while incorporating techniques or parts of other theories into their therapy. For this reason, therapists working within a certain framework can vary greatly regarding where they place their particular emphasis.

This study indicates that the responsible use of metaphors in psychotherapy would require an adequate holistic understanding of the nature of metaphor, the key concepts and the process involved. Application of the insights that emerge from this study would, therefore, be partly reliant on the discernment, abilities, theoretical approach and practical experience of each individual therapist.

The therapist would also have to bear in mind that, within a broad definition of metaphor, theories are themselves metaphors. Richards (1996) points out that psychological concepts like 'the unconscious', 'complexes' and 'ego' did not exist before the end of the 1800s.

6.9.2 Integrating experiences and concepts

Working with metaphor highlights the value of recognising the contribution of the experiential aspects of perception. The recognition given to the value of integrative processing by the biological sciences (5.1, p. 108) indicates the integration of perception to be an area meriting further investigation. The viewpoints put forward by Kalsched (1996) and Mortola (1999) support this premise.

At present, investigations into these aspects of psychotherapy tend to be limited to certain approaches. Some of these approaches could be considered to fall outside mainstream psychology.

Frýba (1995), who combines experiential work with cognitive theory, discusses various possible levels of experience and thought. He postulates a continuum of thoughts and experiences ranging from a basic level of experiencing at a rudimentary level, to a level of manipulating concepts which have no immediate origin in experience. According to Frýba, individuals seem able to access various levels of experience and thought at will and are apparently able to enhance their skills at any level through practice. The ideal is that the various levels of experience should function as a separated but well integrated totality. This enhances the ability to retain a feeling of intactness and groundedness.

While theorists tend to agree with the principles mentioned by Frýba (1995), they formulate distinctions of perception in different ways. The researcher discerns two main approaches, namely distinguishing **different levels of awareness**, and distinguishing **different systems or dimensions of perception**.

Ammann (1991) mentions three levels of consciousness that play a role in sandplay. These are body-consciousness, pictorial and imaginative consciousness which is more free-flowing and ambiguous than the third type of consciousness which she describes as rational consciousness, characterised by logical, systematic thought. Kolb (1984) distinguishes among concrete experience, reflection, abstract concept formation and active experimentation. Rossi (1987) distinguishes among emotion, imagery, awareness, self-identity, behaviour and sensation, visualising separate but linked systems which can enrich or explain one another.

In this thesis, the term '**experiential**' is used to indicate an individual's unique experience in the here-and-now, including awareness of different levels or dimensions of perception. In order to make the term 'experiential' useful, it needs to be viewed, as far as possible, in a specifically non-theoretical way, i.e. as merely indicating an instance of perception, grounded in the here-and-now, which acknowledges immediate sensory, emotional and conceptual awareness, with the aim of achieving a baseline from which to proceed.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Metzner (1986) have pointed out that **metaphors implicit in conceptual systems have an experiential basis**. This also applies to metaphors used in psychotherapy. In fact, as the Ericksonian approach demonstrates, patients are often influenced by the images they create even though they only understand them cognitively much later, or perhaps never. This principle is also supported by therapists who work within the theoretical framework provided by the analytical approach. Whitmont (1978) states:

> Without understanding her picture the patient was calmed by painting it, for the unconscious expression of archetypal fantasy material in such forms as clay, paint or body motion usually has the effect of transforming and thereby relieving the pressure from the unconscious (p. 76).

The Gestalt approach points out how attention to **experiential perception can guide** a patient towards **recognising** where certain '**blockages**' occur. In psychotherapy, metaphor is often employed to assist individuals in bypassing these fixed patterns of cognitive and emotional response. If they are not brought into consciousness, such patterns could otherwise override and contaminate awareness and, at times, distance individuals from an identity-based sense of empowerment.

Metaphors provide composite images that often initially focus on here-and-now awareness. However, in the process of interaction with the composite image evoked by any given metaphor, the individual's focus could shift to allow him/her to take a more

distanced cognitive stance. Thus, the value of the experiential in relation to work with metaphors is recognised, not with the goal of relying only on the subjective, or of denying the use of reason, but in order to allow for an **awareness of immediate experience** which **complements abstract concepts**.

Proficiency in dealing with the experiential facet of working with metaphor cannot be acquired through the imposition of an external cognitive model. These **skills need to become part of lived experience**. Bradway (1997) describes three interconnected "areas of healing", namely the non-verbal, including sandplay and images, verbal therapy and life itself.

Metzner (1986) describes **consciousness** as the experience of being at the same time both within and part of a certain context or field of awareness. A conscious individual is, simultaneously, both aware of thoughts, images, intentions, feelings and sensations as well as subjectively experiencing them. Such an individual **both experiences and observes**, having the option to make an impact on his/her own "stream of awareness".

It would appear that the most common distinction is made between experiential awareness or sensory expression of psychic contents and cognitive conceptualisation. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Du Preez (1991) suggest a process of moving from subjective experience to objective or abstract concepts, while Frýba (1995) visualises retaining embodied awareness, but developing the ability to move flexibly between levels of awareness. Kalsched (1996) advocates a process of retaining and finding words to

express embodied awareness, suggesting that one way of achieving this would be to work around an image (metaphor) expressing psychic contents.

For the purposes of metaphor-use in psychotherapy, the researcher believes that a relatively simple model would be sufficient to portray the process of **retaining integrated awareness or perception**.

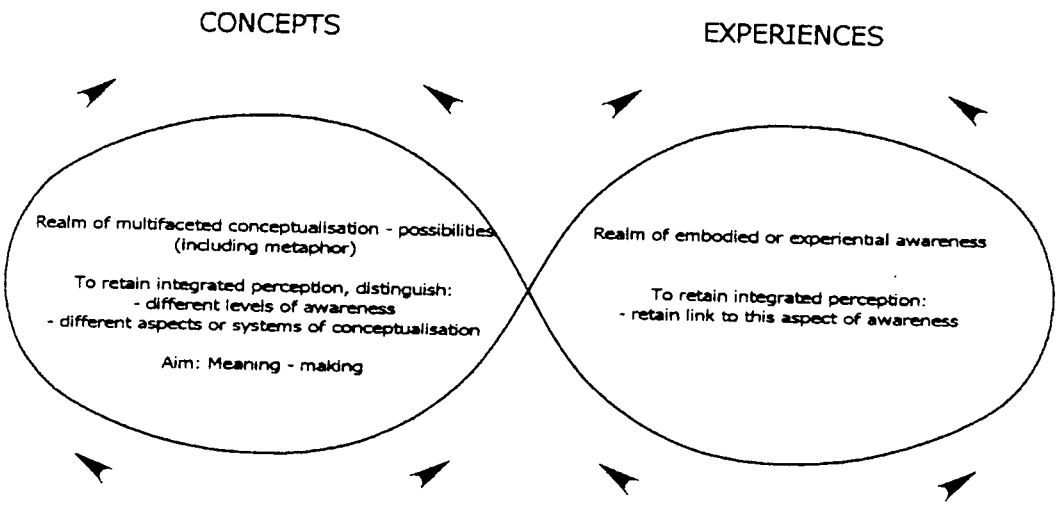

Figure 6.9 Retaining integrated awareness

The diagram illustrates allowing embodied experiential awareness to nurture the process of conceptualisation, while employing conceptualisations to make it possible for patients to express, recognise and 'own' experiences. Retaining the link to embodied awareness allows multifaceted conceptualisations which distinguish different levels of awareness and recognises different aspects or systems of conceptualisation.

6.9.3 Viewing metaphor-use as a linked system of conscious and unconscious processes

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed and illustrated each approach's contribution to the process of metaphor-use. This information enabled the researcher to identify certain focal points in these descriptions and to construct an integrated model in which metaphor-use is portrayed as a linked system of conscious and unconscious processes (7.3.1, p. 321).

Although the research questions have been addressed throughout the preceding chapters, chapter 7 will present the final integration as perceived by the researcher.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The researcher used the information provided by this study to formulate theoretical guidelines to enhance the use of metaphor in psychotherapy and child psychotherapy. The aim was not to provide a theoretical framework for the entire process of psychotherapy. The assumption is that any therapist who finds metaphors useful will implement these guidelines within his/her own preferred theoretical framework.

The issue of integration was approached from the perception that the psyche is the whole and that the various approaches discussed each make their own unique contribution towards understanding it. The integrated perspective is, therefore, not intended to change any practitioner's total therapeutic framework, but to suggest using the valuable contributions contained in other theories to enrich his/her work with metaphor.

As indicated in chapters 2 and 3, a study of the literature revealed certain repetitive themes. On examining these themes, the researcher initially identified three main areas of focus. These were: the *nature of metaphor* (the concept metaphor and the nature of the psyche), identification of *key concepts* mentioned (especially regarding conditions conducive to metaphor-use) and

descriptions of the *process of metaphor-use*. The research questions presented in chapter 3 (p. 53) were formulated with these three issues in mind.

In this chapter, the final replies to the questions are presented.

7.1 What are relevant themes regarding the nature of metaphor?

7.1.1 How is metaphor defined?

- No clear distinction exists between the concept 'metaphor' and other representational devices. Leary (1990, p. 2) referred to "a comparative, relational mode of understanding that I presume to be fundamental to human cognition" (2.3, p. 22). However, it appeared the concept 'metaphor' was most often used when interpreting one thing in terms of another (2.1.2, p. 16). Using 'image' in the sense suggested under 2.1.1, p. 13, metaphor could be defined as was done by Samuels, Shorter and Platt (1987, p. 93): "the definition and exploration of one thing by reference to the image of another" (4.12.3, p. 93).

- Metaphor belongs to a group of representational phenomena that make consciousness possible. Viewed in this way, metaphor is a phenomenon which gives visible form to

psychic material (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Block, 1981; Lusebrink 1990; Leary, 1990; Du Preez, 1991; Mills & Crowley, 1993).

- Any portrayal of psychic material in a symbolic fashion can provide a metaphor for that material. These include narratives, drawings, modeling, fantasies, dreams and sand pictures (Barker, 1985; McMullin, 1986; Allan, 1988; Lusebrink, 1990; Leary, 1990; Mills & Crowley, 1993; Parry & Doan, 1994; Goldstein, 1999).

- Within a broader definition, metaphors, concepts, narratives, symbols, theories and models, are all metaphors for reality. This perspective implies that theories need to be appraised in context, with awareness of the extent to which the metaphor used by the theories influences understanding (Leary, 1990; Bruner, 1990; Coombs & Freedman, 1990; Mills & Crowley, 1993).

- However, although a broader definition of metaphor is useful for the purposes of psychotherapy and essential for understanding the nature of metaphor, it is not appropriate to view every representational instance from the " metaphorical mode" (Eco, 1984; Eco, 1986; Du Preez, 1991).

- Although a specific metaphor could portray certain themes reflecting what appear to be core meaning-structures, metaphor itself is best viewed as one facet of an on-going representational process characteristic of psychic functioning (Edelman, 1992; Kaplan &

Sadock, 1995). Any metaphorical portrayal of psychic contents, therefore, reflects an essentially transient psychic reality (Ammann, 1991; Signell & Bradway, 1995).

- As has been extensively illustrated (for example, in chapter 2 and Appendix C), metaphors evoke a perceptually integrated image and a metaphorical interpretation of reality is experientially grounded, combining form, emotion and meaning. The definition of metaphor provided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), highlights what are, in the opinion of the researcher, the two most important aspects of metaphor-use, namely *experiencing* and *understanding* one kind of thing in terms of another (2.1.1, p. 13).

- Metaphors possess objective reality (Lowenfeldt, 1979, see Appendix C, p. 372). This implies that, while certain characteristics unique to metaphor-use will always have to be taken into account, various theoretical frameworks could be employed to explain the relevance of the same metaphor.

- Metaphor indicates more than can be expressed in words and cannot be completely explained as a phenomenon (Eco, 1984; Ricoeur, 5.2.5, p. 157).

7.1.2 What characteristics of metaphors enable the portrayal of psychic contents?

- Representational phenomena, including metaphor, are regarded as the symbolic devices by means of which meaning can be portrayed or evoked (chap. 2). One component of meaning is the combination of internal value criteria with the form provided by the metaphor (5.1.5, p. 121). In this way, metaphor can serve as a central focus for associated meanings.

- Metaphors can effectively portray psychic realities in a condensed form, hinting at more than can be said in words (Miller, 1979; Ricoeur, 1978 & 1981; Jung, 1990, CW 6; Du Preez, 1991). By giving visible form to psychic contents, metaphor makes communication of these contents possible (Dundas 1978; Ammann, 1991; Ryce-Menuhin, 1992; Dennett, 1996).

- Metaphors can enhance "vividness, complexity, or breadth of implication (Preminger, 1974, p. 490), often becoming a vehicle for new meanings (Preminger, 1974; Du Preez, 1991; Macaulay, 1996). Due to their potential for attracting associations, metaphors not only provide vehicles for existing meanings, but also attract associated psychic contents which can then be examined. Metaphors thus have the potential to create concepts or images which cause meanings to change and parts of the meaning-network itself to be changed or adjusted (Hall, 1977; Ricoeur, 1977; Edelman, 1992; Dennett, 1996).

- Metaphors often serve as the impetus for more abstract and scientific formulations (Pribram, 1990; Du Preez, 1991).

- Metaphor is a threshold device mediating between the real and the imaginary (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner & Feldman, 1990). The "domain" of metaphor-use is the transitional space (Winnicott, 1988; Fujii, 1995). Playing implies the use of representational phenomena (Bates, 1979). There is support for the creation of this space and the creative playing that takes place inside it across theories and disciplines (Dundas, 1978; Barker, 1985; Winnicott, 1988; Bruner, 1990; Coombs & Freedman, 1990; Lakoff, 1991; Ammann, 1991; Jung, 1993, CW 12; Amatruda, 1997).

- Since metaphor provides an image which can be examined, reality-testing can take place (McMullin, 1986; Winnicott, 1988; White & Epston, 1990; Ammann, 1991; McMahon, 1992; Parry & Doan, 1994).

- A metaphor representing psychic contents, like a story or a picture in the sand, can serve the dual function of both containing and visibly externalising (portraying) these contents. In the case of psychic contents which an individual experiences as chaotic or anxiety provoking (Jung, 1989, CW 3), "the apparently incomprehensible and unmanageable chaos of his total situation is visualized and objectified...the picture he has made interposes itself between him and the experience" (p. 260). In this way, a metaphor or image can help the ego to contain, integrate, and manipulate complex, previously

unknown, or potentially disturbing subject matter (Allan, 1988; Oaklander, 1988; Kiepenhauer, 1990; Mills & Crowley, 1993).

- Metaphors can integrate different levels and different dimensions of awareness. Conceptualisation is often characterised by imagery (Klinger, 1971 & 1977). By evoking a composite image and activating and linking different systems (Bandler & Grindler, 1975; Rossi, 6.5, p. 243), a metaphor can integrate different levels or dimensions of awareness providing an experience or expression which is more than can be said in words (Dundas, 1978; Lusebrink, 1990; Du Preez, 1991; Soyland, 1994).

- Due to the integrated nature of the image produced, metaphors can influence conscious and unconscious processes simultaneously, linking different systems and bypassing resistance. As vehicles for indirect, multilevel communication, metaphors can provide multifaceted images, uniting opposites and incorporating emotional as well as imagistic and abstract cognitive processes. This makes it possible to capture the imagination and embed suggestions in metaphors (Bandler & Grindler, 1975; Erickson, 1980; Lankton, 1986; Zeig, 1987; Lakoff, 1991; Lakoff, 1993; Mills & Crowley, 1993).

- Metaphors not only reveal, but also hide meanings. When they present psychic contents in a certain way, metaphors highlight aspects of a matter, but make alternative options difficult to perceive. Metaphors which have become accepted as 'truths' can, therefore, often show considerable resistance to change (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Bruner, 1990; Du Preez, 1991; Lakoff, 1991; Soyland, 1994).

7.1.3 What information regarding other representational phenomena may be relevant to metaphor?

- Metaphors originate in a systems-network. As part of the tool kit of representational phenomena which assist meaning-making processes, metaphor has a close relationship with other representational phenomena. The researcher views all representational phenomena as facets of the same network of interrelated systems. The function of these phenomena is to initiate consciousness by means of conceptualisation, i.e. to point to what needs to be recognised (Ricoeur, 1977; Eco, 1984; Eco, 1986; Bruner, 1990; Edelman, 1992; Lakoff, 1991 & 1993; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995).

- To the researcher, it appears that the concept 'metaphor' stands in the closest relationship to the concept 'symbol'. A symbol represents something, but also points to more than can be said in words, i.e. something intangible (Ricoeur, 1978; Eco, 1986; Jung, 1989, CW18; Jung, 1990, CW 6; Du Preez, 1991). Metaphor provides form through a portrayal, usually a comparison, which allows the creative exploration of psychic contents and meanings (chap. 2). This often implies a narrative, or exploring one domain of experience in relation to another (Lakoff, 1993).

7.1.4 What is the perceived contribution of the biological sciences?

Images or memories affect the body physiologically, and vice versa (Wilbur, 1977; Lusebrink, 1990; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995). Although it is possible for the mind to go along paths that are out of alignment with the body, it appears that a certain mind-body connection needs to be maintained in order to ensure the health of the body as well as optimal functioning and decision-making (Ammann, 1991; Kalsched, 1996).

The researcher, therefore, suggests that psychic functioning be viewed as a process with the body (most notably the brain) as the structure of interlinked systems by means of which this process operates (Edelman, 1992; Kalsched, 1996; Capra, 1997). The researcher thus regards the concept 'psyche' to describe the mind and body as a functional unity.

According to this view, biological processes form the basis of conscious and unconscious psychic processes. It was found that while family, society and the cultural collective shape behaviour, certain inborn components influence the nature and form in which external stimuli reach the psyche (Bruner, 1990; Edelman, 1992; Dennett, 1996). Underling biological processes, therefore, provide psychic functioning with certain predetermined characteristics (Bates, 1979; Lieberman, 1984; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Dennett, 1996; Leakey & Lewin, 1996).

In this context, it is necessary to mention certain specific abilities. They are: the limitations of consciousness, the fact that consciousness is focused by a sense of identity and agency and also

the human propensity to define experiences in an embodied way (for example as 'inner' and 'outer') and in terms of time and space (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Winnicott, 1958; Kant, 1959; Gordon, 1967; Perls, 1969; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Winnicott, 1988; Edelman, 1992; Waterman, 1997).

In addition, certain innate mechanisms trigger specific responses to psychologically meaningful events (Stevens, 1990; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Dennett, 1996). Probably the most often quoted example of this would be the mother-child bond. The development of this relationship relies on cultural and familial patterns as well as on the responses of two unique individuals. However, these responses are also dependent on innate response-potentialities for their numinosity and strength. Henderson (1984) expresses this as follows: "The primal experience of mother and child is certainly the most basic form of the psychobiological equation because it cannot exist at all without a fully functioning polarity between the image and the behavior (sic) pattern" (p. 101).

7.1.5 What is the role attributed to culture?

The concept of a network of meanings, which is carried in culture but also forms part of an individual's 'inner' conceptualisation system, is found in biology (Edelman, 1992), linguistics (Preminger, 1974; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), philosophy (Ricoeur, 1978; Eco, 1984; Innis 1985; Eco, 1999) and psychology (Henderson, 1984; Bruner, 1990; Du Preez, 1991; Goldstein, 1999).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) demonstrate how metaphors are embedded in language and form part of culture and have the ability to influence conceptualisation processes, often without conscious awareness (Lankton, 1986; Rossi, 1987; Lakoff, 1991; Lakoff, 1993; Mills & Crowley, 1993). Cognitive psychology also acknowledges the extent to which conceptualisations are subject to cultural and biological influences (6.6.1, p. 246).

The researcher included the object-relations approach in the literature study since primary relationships are credited with aiding the development of symbolic ability as well as aiding development of sense of agency and identity (Gordon, 1967; Winnicott, 1958 & 1988; Bruner, 1983; Klein, 1987; Schwartz, 1999).

Examination of the literature indicated two complementary processes combining at a certain point in human pre-history. It would seem that the cultural collective influenced the development of a number of functions necessary to promote social interaction, for example: symbol-formation, higher-order processes, playing activity, the development of language and maternal bonding (Henderson, 1984; Stevens, 1990; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Dennett, 1996).

It is postulated that these two complementary processes initiated the development of the innate propensities referred to by Bruner (1990). Using metaphors as representational tools must have formed part of this complementary dialogue (Bates, 1979; Lieberman, 1984; Henderson, 1984; Stevens, 1990; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Robertson, 1995).

7.1.6 How are issues of interpretation addressed?

Although the researcher recognised these issues to be complex, this question acknowledged that issues pertaining to subjectivity and objectivity; truth and reality (including psychic reality) and meaning are relevant to understanding the nature of metaphor.

- Although various systems work together to produce integrated conceptualisation, the researcher concluded that the distinction between experiencing and more abstract conceptualisations, or between subjective and objective seemed to receive the most attention. Since the psyche is the subject of its own reality (Jung, 1989; Sarup, 1993; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995), it would appear that objectivity and subjectivity are necessary opposites for interpretative processes (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Leakey & Lewin, 1992). Many authors support the concept of negotiated objectivity (Peirce, 5.2.3, p. 149; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Innis, 1985; Leakey & Lewin, 1992; Fernàndez-Armesto, 1997).

- Conceptual progression is most often visualised as proceeding from the experiential to the abstract. However, different kinds of concepts or images, drawing from different systems, can enhance or supplement more abstract levels of conceptualisation. For the purposes of psychotherapy, it is often important to turn this progression around and recapture, recognise and work with an individual's subjective experience of what is experientially or emotionally perceived to be "real" or "true". In the latter instance, the progression would be from abstract to experiential with the goal of understanding,

questioning or integrating the original basis of a conceptualisation (Oaklander, 1988; Kalsched, 1996).

- The diagram presented as figure 6.9 (p. 284) is intended to provide the practitioner with an initial guideline to the process of retaining integrated awareness. This area merits more detailed research (7.5, p. 330).

- The various possible exchanges, i.e. between consciousness and the unconscious, between a culture and its people, or between individuals, is most often depicted by using the metaphor of an ongoing dialogue (Jung, 4.2, p. 68; Hegel, 5.2.2, p. 145; postmodernism, 5.2.7.2, p. 177; Kolb, 6.8, p. 274). For example, Hegel described how conceptual processes originate and change in society through means of an ongoing dialectical process. Hegel's idea that the potential into which the idea can change can be discovered by examining the nature of the existing thesis can be compared to White and Epston (1990)'s concept of subjugated knowledges, or to Ricoeur's idea of positive and negative hermeneutics (5.2.5, p. 157). The ongoing process of dialoguing between various realities can never be considered to be complete. It is always possible for the psyche to change its ideas or to enlarge or restrain its focus or scope.

7.1.7 How is metaphor perceived to function on the threshold between conscious and unconscious psychic material?

Although there is agreement on the vital role played by consciousness as an indispensable tool for higher-order processing, the study indicates the definitive amount of mental processing taking place outside of awareness.

- Highly organised, unconscious, structured processes often determine thought processes and behaviour. The unconscious functions as an active organisational entity and the human symbol-making ability is considered to be a natural function of the unconscious. The unconscious can be conceptualised both as an entity and as an ongoing dialogical process (Jung CW 7, 1977, p. 232; Edelman, 1992; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995; Capra, 1997). Metaphor thus functions as a vehicle which provides consciousness with some indication of the world outside its boundaries.

- Mechanisms or autonomous psychic systems are theorised to be capable of inhibiting awareness of specific psychic material. The majority of theories concerning the use of metaphor to influence psychic contents, assume the existence of an organised, mostly unconscious regulatory system or integrated number of systems in the psyche (Kaplan & Sadock, 1995; Kalsched, 1996).

- At times the unconscious appears to 'confront' consciousness with certain thoughts and ideas, often in the form of metaphorical material. From this perspective, consciousness becomes an internal apparatus by means of which it is possible for the inner regulatory system to induce awareness of inner unconscious processes and priorities. For example, in analytical theory, the inner regulatory system is seen to be connected to the archetype of the self and to facilitate healthy ego functioning (4.2, p. 68).

- While the psyche is believed to be capable of attempting to heal itself, the autonomous systems causing resistances are often perceived to be the result of the malfunctioning of this innate tendency. When the monitoring mechanisms fail to become aligned with reality, individuals seem to be vulnerable to the consequences of certain of these self-regulatory systems. An important function of consciousness itself seems to be the ability to co-operate in a process aimed at the re-direction of these efforts. According to these theories, this can occur when certain processes are simultaneously unconscious and have an autonomous influence on behaviour or when the person does not have an integrated link between body-awareness and the ability to put these experiences into words Metaphors can play an important role in containing and effectively portraying these contents in a manner, which suggests possibilities for change (Freud, 1964, XIX; Fagan & Shepherd, 1970; Jung, 1981, CW 8, p. 173; Rossi, 1987; Kalsched, 1996; Schwartz, 1999).

- The psyche should be viewed as a whole. It is the function of the agency of consciousness to appraise contents that enter its field of awareness, and the function of

metaphorical material to facilitate this process. Consciousness can, however, learn to occupy a vantage point that endeavours to take the total psyche into account, since this would provide a more balanced view of what needs to be done in any given circumstance. Authors underline the value of cultivating the ability to be aware of 'blockages' which autonomous complexes cause (Perls, 1969; Rossi, 1987; Frýba, 1995; Kalsched, 1996; see 4.14, p. 103; see 6.9.2, p. 280; see also the discussion of Derrida, 5.2.7.2, p. 178).

- Consciousness reflects the transient nature of most expressions of psychic contents. While the *ability* to be conscious is an extremely valuable psychic asset, Robertson (1995) remarks: "There is nothing which we retain permanently in consciousness, including our sense of identity or ego, which comes and goes. Consciousness is only a sliding frame which moves along, sometimes lit by awareness, sometimes not" (p. 154). From this perspective, consciousness can be viewed as a function of the psyche as a whole, with the psyche somehow retaining a certain regulatory authority (5.1.7, p. 126; 4.2, p. 68).

- As has been mentioned, one of the most common themes in the literature studied is the metaphor of representational phenomena serving a network of potentially available meanings and associations. The concept of a network of potential meanings is used to refer to meanings in culture, as well as to the unconscious or to what is subjectively simply experienced as the unknown (Ricoeur, 1978; Eco, 1984; Bruner, 1990; Edelman, 1992; Houser & Kloesel, 1992).

- The process of changing or rearranging the meaning-network is often depicted by the metaphor of energy striving for equilibrium. While Freud, Jung and Perls used the metaphor of psychic energy striving to promote equilibrium, postulating the existence of dynamic meaning-structures is equally useful. In the opinion of the researcher, metaphors, Jung's theory of complexes, cognitive psychology's schemas and narratives would be examples of the latter (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Freud, 1964, Vol. XIX; Jung, 1981, Vol. 8; Klein, 1987; Parry & Doan, 1994; Beck & Weishaar, 1995).

- The inherently narrative nature of the psyche and its visible products are widely recognised (Sarup, 1993; Hollis, 1995; Macaulay, 1996; Cilliers, 1998; Eco, 1999; Schwartz, 1999). To assert that the psyche shows a teleological tendency implies narrative ability. Narratives are essentially metaphors which organise psychic contents and create meaning. As complexes contain internalised narratives which are often unconscious but according to which we act, reality-testing remains important: perceived threats are reacted to in the same way in which they would be reacted to in physical reality (Parry & Doan, 1994). According to the Ericksonian approach, what is suggested to the unconscious awareness in narrative form can influence behaviour without conscious awareness of the cause (6.4.2, p. 234).

- The narrative ability of the psyche and the complementary dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious give rise to the teleological tendency the psyche exhibits. The teleological tendency should not be understood in the sense of predicting the future as such, but of showing the conclusion to which a certain mind-set might lead.

> Each narrative contains an inherent prediction of outcome. According to some theories of psychology, the recognition of these themes can cause anxiety and the contents can be manifest in dreams, slips of the tongue, or symptoms. The narrative underlying any given behaviour can often become conscious by a vigilant attitude which respects their significance, noting, for example, the reactive emotions which provide clues to their existence (Hanlon & Wilk, 1987; White & Epston, 1990; Parry & Doan, 1994).

Psychotherapy is usually conducted by means of more abstract conceptualisations than child psychotherapy. In addition, metaphor is a psychotherapeutic tool with unique characteristics. However, from a certain perspective, psychotherapy essentially remains a type of transitional activity. For this reason the guidelines below, although they are specific to metaphor-use, mirror general guidelines for psychotherapy.

7.2 Which guidelines for metaphor-use emerged from the key concepts?

7.2.1 Attitude: respecting metaphorical material

This thesis postulates that, when working with metaphor, it is necessary for both therapist and patient to adopt an attitude that allows for the possibility of change. Patients need to be guided to appreciate the possible symbolic value of images as well as to adopt a creative or 'playful'

attitude that allows the ego to withhold the immediate censure of unusual contents and to experiment with possibilities. The optimal attitude here referred to, implies a voluntary acceptance of, and a willingness to explore certain contents which form part of psychic reality, including those images that might initially seem to be childish or ridiculous (Freud, 1964, Vol. XIX; Jung, 1961; Kalff, 1980; White & Epston, 1990; Ammann, 1991; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993; Derrida in Sarup, 1993; Parry & Doan, 1994).

Psychic reality and metaphorical material need to be respected (Kalff, 1980; Oaklander, 1988; Winnicott, 1988; Kiepenhauer, 1990; Kalsched, 1996). It is furthermore important not to fear transitional activity (Kalff, 1980; Ammann, 1991; Goldstein, 1999). Fear is lessened by the knowledge that considering 'as if' possibilities does not imply losing control or relinquishing the ability to make informed, responsible choices. (See also second last paragraph p. 311.) Children tend to understand this spontaneously, while adults seem to lose this insight. Authors considered the intrinsic ability of the therapist to negotiate creative transactional processes to have a vital influence on the therapeutic atmosphere (Ammann, 1991; Clarkson, 1995; Signell & Bradway, 1995; Goldstein, 1999). (See 7.3.2, p. 325.)

The ability to adopt a creative attitude towards psychic material is linked to the ability to feel truly alive (Rhyne, 1970; Weaver, 1973; Neumann, 1974; Winnicott, 1988; Goldstein, 1999), and to be partly dependent on the ability to be positively or assertively aggressive and empowered (Kohut, 1977; Klein, 1987; Oaklander, 1988).

The optimal attitude towards metaphorical material further includes accepting and coping with the nature of the psyche, which produces an intrinsically creative, limited, flawed, meaningful ongoing flow of conceptualisation and mediation (5.1, p. 109).

Finally, since it is one of the characteristics of metaphor to allow more than one meaning to co-exist in a single image or symbol, an important facet of a creative attitude is openness to complexities. Apart from cultivating appreciation for the intricacies, which characterise individual psyches, insight into the advantages of allowing different theories to co-exist and retaining openness towards the contributions of other disciplines, is needed. However, recognising the flexibility of conceptualisation does not imply that people create meaning out of nothing or that there is no objective reality limiting the process (5.2.7, p. 170).

The research identified the following additional conditions or principles to be potentially conducive to metaphor-use:

7.2.2 Containment: creating a safe space to use metaphors

The boundaries provided by the metaphorical representation itself, as well as the space within which transitional activities take place, contain 'as if' imaginary activity and prevent it from spilling over into reality.

Boundaries are provided by: the intrinsically linear nature of human perceptual abilities (5.1.2, p. 115; 5.1.10, p. 131); the concrete space created in therapy by play activities like sandplay; and by the limited nature of the therapeutic space itself (Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, 1951, Kalff, 1980; Weinrib, 1983; McMahon, 1992; Ryce-Menuhin, 1992, Waterman, 1997).

Self-containment is dependent on developmental level and individual ability (Fordham, 1957; Stewart, 1981; Klein, 1987; McMahon, 1992). The therapist can supplement or strengthen a patient's ability to contain transitional activity (Fordham, 1957; Oaklander, 1988; Ammann, 1991; Mills & Crowley, 1993). Finding images or words for experience also aids the process of containment (Vygotsky, 1978; Winnicott, 1988; Kalsched, 1996). Ideally, therapeutic space should provide safety, as well as the freedom to experiment, affirmation of what has been created and the opportunity to test realities (Kalff, 1980; Allan, 1988; McMahon, 1992; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993; Amatruda, 1997).

The fact that a metaphorical portrayal of psychic contents is contained, yet accessible, provides an individual with the capacity to relate to, rather than identify with, either inner or outer reality. Working with psychic material in this manner, enhances a child's capacity to distinguish between inner and outer reality (Gordon, 1967; Klein, 1987; Winnicott, 1988; Neumann, 1990).

Both psychic contents and individuals need containment. In psychotherapy the process described above takes place in a literal, concrete space. However, the concept of the therapeutic hour and the nature of this relationship create a symbolic or figurative space. This is one of the primary conditions for creating what Clarkson and Mackewn (1993) refer to as a 'safe experiment'. The

idea of a 'safe experiment' implies that problematic contents can be acknowledged and creatively considered without the consequences, which could result from such material being dealt with in real life.

From a developmental point of view, the ability to feel contained and to contain others develops during the initial interaction between a child and its primary caretakers (Klein, 1987). McMahon (1992) emphasises that incorrect or inappropriate containment responses during child development can lead to difficulties in later life. On the contrary, the development of an ability for self-containment makes it possible for a child to lessen dependence on the parental figures. This implies the ability to sustain an inner knowledge of own identity and empowerment and is sometimes referred to as having inner space (Schwartz, 1999).

Children who lack this ability to contain themselves can exhibit a constant need for support (McMahon, 1992). Developing this ability through the creative use of metaphorical and other symbolic material, leads to increased self-reliance and self-confidence and the capacity to approach life's realities with an attitude of creative autonomy.

The therapeutic situation can itself become a metaphor for containment. It is one of the goals in play therapy to re-create the conditions under which a sense of inner containment can develop. Clarkson (1995) refers to this as reparative work. In psychotherapy a sense of containment is created by boundaries imposed by time, place and relationship. Fordham (1957) regards the therapist's as well as a care-giving adult's role during a child's development to be one of acting

to enhance or support the child's ego function. When a child internalises a concept of how healing transitional activity can take place, these experiences can be recreated in other situations.

Contexts from diverse sources (social, cultural, parental, peer groups or formal set structures), can also supplement individual ego strength and provide containment which sanctions metaphorical activities. In culture, basic life transitions are often marked and contained by ritual (Henderson, 1984). Social structures can either enhance or inhibit the ability to initiate a process of change (Goldstein, 1999).

7.2.3 Initiating transitional activity: creating a forum for using metaphor

Playing was described as a natural activity of childhood in search of meaning (Piaget, 1951; Vygotsky, 1978; Kalff, 1980; Allan, 1988; McMahon, 1992; Ryce-Menuhin, 1992; Goldstein, 1999). Since the ability to conceptualise possibilities relies on a higher order ability to relate to concepts in terms of "as if", play was found to be closely linked to forming representational phenomena and vice versa (Piaget, 1951; Gordon, 1967; Winnicott, 1988; Bates, 1979; Leakey & Lewin, 1992). Owing to the fact that playing activity mediates between imagination and reality (Henderson, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978; Goldstein, 1999), the researcher considered understanding the contribution of play as such to be important.

During play, thinking, feeling and action combine spontaneously to create a metaphor portraying the child's experience (Dundas, 1978; Bradway et. al, 1981; Kalff, 1980; McMahon, 1992; Ryce-Menuhin, 1992). As an essentially natural process, play is not reducible to one viewpoint or theory (Ryce-Menuhin, 1992) and takes place in what Winnicott (1988) refers to as an "intermediate area of experiencing"(p. 16). According to Winnicott, play develops or heals the ability to interact or engage in creative dialogue with the environment, and play in a safe external space, aids a child in the development of 'inner space', thereby enhancing the ability for transitional activities.

Both Winnicott (1988) and McMahon (1992) maintain retaining the ability to play remains important into adulthood. From what is known about mental processing, it is probably more appropriate to refer to the psyche's ability to negotiate transitional *activities* rather than to concretise the function and refer to transitional *space*. However, human beings exhibit a tendency, not only to conceptualise in terms of inner or outer transitional space, but also to create actual creative transitional space as a child does while playing or an adult might do when writing out some ideas on paper. In fact, the creation of transitional space is such an integral component of mental processing that humans create the transitional space needed for metaphorical 'as if' transactions by means of language in everyday speech (Fujii, 1995).

The conceptualisation of playing in a "world where worlds meet" (Amatruda, 1997) is consistent with what Bruner and Feldman (1990) point out to be the metaphor of the threshold where the unknown becomes visible. By playing symbolically or metaphorically, a child can conceptualise, examine and experiment with various meanings. A child's aim in the course of this process is the

understanding of certain realities and the process includes determining relationships between concepts and reality testing.

Since an important component of focused consciousness is a sense of agency and self-identity, it is necessary for a child to find validation for self in the metaphors it creates (Winnicott, 1988; Kalff, 1980; Goldstein 1999; Schwartz, 1999). This study underlines the necessity for understanding developmental processes and each individual child's developmental level (Kalff, 1980; Stewart, 1981; Weinrib, 1983; McMahon, 1992).

The researcher examined object-relations theory to arrive at some understanding of a child's ability to develop the use of symbols through the experience of primary relations. Object-relations theorists deem these primary relations to be instrumental in the development of the capacity to work creatively using the concept of inner or outer transitional space and to use symbols, which have been cathected with meaning (Winnicott, 1958; Gordon, 1967; Klein, 1987; Klein, 1988; Schwartz, 1999).

Play includes reality-testing (Winnicott, 1978; McMahon, 1992; Goldstein, 1999). However, as Vygotsky (1978) has pointed out, the main focus of this activity is the discovery of meaning. According to him, play has to do with "movement in the field of meaning" (p. 101). A child's own discoveries about his or her inner world is linked to the expectations of family and society. The setting, as well as the metaphors created during play, serve a containment function and the stories that children tell themselves while playing as well as their creations give insight into their

thought processes (Piaget, 1951; Henderson, 1974; Neumann, 1974; Neumann, 1990; Stevens, 1990; Goldstein, 1999).

Understanding playing activity creates understanding of elements conducive to use of metaphor: attitude, containment experiential integration, sense of agency and reality testing. The researcher views transitional activity as an innate ability, which humans can utilise in therapeutic procedures. It is a premise of this thesis that creative transitional activity is not only restricted to the formal setting of psychotherapy, but that it forms a natural part of the process of development and day-to-day socialising, living, changing and decision-making.

Under certain circumstances, playing can become frightening. Winnicott (1988) remarks: "The thing about playing is always the precariousness of the interplay of personal psychic reality and the experience of control of actual objects" (p. 55). Thus while playing can contain and resolve fairly high levels of anxiety (Allan, 1988; McMahon, 1992) certain outside circumstances, usually accompanied by unbearably high levels of anxiety, can inhibit the ability to play (Winnicott, 1988).

7.2 4 Encouraging empowered metaphor-use

Freud can be credited with making the initial connection between ego-identity and consciousness, thereby implying that a sense of identity gives rise to a sense of agency (Gabbard,

1995). According to Jung (1980, CW, 9i, p. 5), identity-based, focused consciousness provides sense of will and the ability to choose and take the responsibility for making choices.

Without consciousness and the resultant sense of agency provided by self-awareness, which is sometimes referred to as the 'ego', or 'self', individuals, especially children, often find it difficult to mediate between inner and outer worlds. This is supported by metaphoric expressions from common speech, such as "You know where you are"; "I have lost myself".

Although "owning" the psychic material revealed by a particular metaphor often takes place at a non-verbal level (Ammann, 1991), it is important that patients be encouraged to respect and accept the products of their psyches. (See also 7.2.1, p. 303.) Rossi (1987) connects this to the actualisation process (6.5, p. 243).

The principle of empowerment includes the expectation that individuals learn to take moral and ethical responsibility for their actions (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Lankton, 1986; Perris, Blackburn & Perris, 1988; Coombs & Freedman, 1990; Clarkson, 1995).

7.2.5 Retaining integrated perception: discerning levels or dimensions of awareness

The researcher advocates a balance between abstract conceptualisation and the empathic understanding of experiential reality. Both are viewed as necessary co-constituents for the

responsible use of metaphorical material in psychotherapy. (The integration of perception has been discussed under 6.9.2, p. 280.)

Analytical psychology, Gestalt therapy, as well as the Ericksonian approach recognise that therapy is supplemented by an essential non-verbal component (Perls, 1951; Fagan & Shepherd, 1970; Coombs & Freedman, 1990; Ammann, 1991; Mills & Crowley, 1993; Goldstein, 1999).

The researcher hypothesised that transitional activity is facilitated by the psyche's ability to negotiate between different levels or dimensions of awareness. This hypothesis is supported by the literature across a wide range of different disciplines and viewpoints (Kolb, 1984; Eco, 1986; Edelman, 1992; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993; Frýba, 1995; Kaplan & Sadock, 1995, Rossi, 1987; Kalsched, 1996).

As has been described (5.1, p. 109), it is due to their ability to perform meta-cognitive judgements that individuals are able to distinguish between the contents of these levels and to arrive at conclusions about them. The mind's tendency to experience in spatio-temporal terms has been recognised in the past (Kant, 1959) as well as in more recent research done in the area of cognitive science (Bruner, 1990; Edelman, 1992; Siegel, 1995). This tendency enables the mind to orient itself in order to distinguish between 'inner' and 'outer' and to differentiate various levels of thought. This would include retaining the awareness of reactions in the present ('staying in the moment') as well as viewpoints on mind-body unity and the importance attached to the ability to apply words or concepts to sensation. Metaphors are often used to clarify concepts and feelings in a manner, which acknowledges the experiential facets of these concepts,

or feelings: "Freezing with fear"; "Walking a tightrope"; "Crossing the bridge from childhood into adulthood". Since metaphors often have an experiential component, issues of subjectivity and objectivity become relevant.

It is the opinion of the researcher that those therapies that underline the importance of retaining awareness in the moment when using metaphor, contribute to the healing process by bringing to awareness those automatic patterns that disrupt an optimal adjustment to reality, consequently making it possible for the individual to recognise and reconsider automatically behaving in accordance with these patterns (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Perls, 1969; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993).

7.2.6 Retaining contact with reality: grounded metaphor-use

Being able to employ conceptual markers and to retain an awareness of self, enhances an individual's ability to remain 'grounded' (Rossi, 1987). Certain authors use this term to indicate that individuals retain their contact with reality and their connection with their bodily sensations (e.g. Oaklander, 1988). The importance of remaining grounded during the process of working with metaphors is often emphasised (Rhyne, 1970; Oaklander, 1988; Ammann, 1991 and Goldstein, 1999).

Winnicott (1988), Oaklander (1988) and McMahon (1992) warn that some children use their inner worlds to escape from reality. These authors agree with Kalsched (1996) that the ability to remain grounded is anchored in an experience of being connected to the body.

7.2.7 Allowing conflicting meaning-structures or systems to co-exist despite tension: using metaphors as multi-faceted vehicles for meaning

Tension caused by what Ricoeur (1978) refers to as 'semantic incongruencies' forms a core focus of psychotherapy. Since development or transformation often takes place at the meeting point between what may be regarded as opposing opposites or areas of challenge or conflict, it needs to be recognised that this tension is a necessary component of change (Vygotsky, 1978).

However, many theorists (see end of this paragraph) agree that psychic processes are not always capable of dealing efficiently with meanings which cause tension. Ideally, the meanings which give rise to tension should be examined in the transitional space and considered in relation to the demands of external and internal realities. In practice, certain defensive or dissociative mechanisms can undermine the ability to retain an integrated perception of the realities or evoked meanings which give rise to tension (Freud, 1964; Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Casement, 1985; Bruner, 1986; Allan, 1988, Bruner, 1990; Crain, 1992; Clarkson, 1995; Corsini & Wedding, 1995).

Rossi (1987) sums this up as follows:

> Since dissociation in one form or another is the psychological source of human problems, we can view the entire history of psychotherapy as a series of efforts to heal the artificial divisions in man's nature...the basic problem is always dissociation or a split that needs to be healed (p. 370).

Therefore, from a psychological point of view, all work with metaphor in order to examine and possibly adjust or replace existing concepts, implies a willingness to become involved in a process, which might take individuals out of their comfort zone and confront them with uncomfortable and conflicting emotions. Individuals thus need to develop an ability to contain conflicting opposites in awareness. As Jung (1978) has remarked: "The sad truth is that man's real life consists of a complex of inexorable opposites- day and night, birth and death, happiness and misery, good and evil" (p. 75).

Retaining the tension between opposites until a satisfactory solution presents itself, can lead to a creative synthesis of the opposites, or a totally new idea or insight into the necessity of allowing both opposites to co-exist in some meaningful way. Metaphors are useful aids to this process since they often allow conflicting aspects of the same matter to be expressed in a single image.

7.2.8 Using metaphor to externalise psychic contents

Externalisation provides the opportunity for non-threatening awareness and objectification. Metaphors can provide a composite image, integrating the different dimensions of awareness, for example, they can portray form plus feeling-value and this embodied consciousness makes value discernment or meaning possible, thereby providing cognitive processes with essential value-criteria.

As has been pointed out, certain autonomous complexes could jeopardise the interpretation of reality (Jung, 1981, CW 8, p. 177; Rossi, 1987; Kalsched, 1996). Although unconscious material can be regarded as 'subjugated knowledges' (6.7.4, p. 271) or as 'shadow material' (4.7, p. 81), it is also thought to contain the individual's unlived potential. A therapist is dependent on the potential contained in a patient's psyche or those suggestions that the psyche is capable of accepting and elaborating upon. These contents are often experienced as alien or 'not me' and need to be examined or owned. Similarly, material found to form part of the reigning narrative and therefore regarded as ego-syntonic could become externalised, challenged and on examination found to be insufficient or in need of change (Whitmont, 1978; Zeig, 1987; White & Epston, 1990; Ryce-Menuhin, 1992, Gabbard, 1995).

White (White & Epston, 1990) lists as advantages to externalisation decreased inner conflict, an increased sense of empowerment, using the externalised images as aids to mobilising the energy, opening up new possibilities for action and presentation of opportunities for dialoguing. Kalff

(1980) similarly believed that, "the symbols speak for inner, energy laden pictures of the innate potentials of the human being" (p. 29).

Externalised objects may be experienced as meaningful and significant emotions or ideas can be contained in this way. These externalised objects represent a part of the person's world which could be threatening and has the potential to induce an intense emotional reaction. However, by being represented symbolically and so getting an identity and a 'life' of their own, such objects can be experienced as part of the individual, but a part that is temporarily visible 'outside' and therefore easier to deal with.

7.2.9 Converting inner knowledge into action: living the new metaphor

Therapists who follow the cognitive approach emphasise that patients should be induced to convert insight into action and prescribe concrete tasks for their patients (McMullin, 1986). White and Epston (1990), who underwrite a narrative approach to therapy, similarly advocate that it is an imperative part of the process not only to discover which underlying narratives are keeping pathology intact, but also to introduce a narrative which will lead to a sustained difference in the patient's interpretation of and reaction to their life situation.

Jung (1989) explained his approach to the knowledge that he obtained through working with his own symbolic material in his autobiography:

> It is...a grave mistake to think that it is enough to gain some understanding of the images and that the knowledge can here make a halt. Insight into them must be converted into ethical obligation...The images of the unconscious place a great responsibility upon a man (p. 193).

7.3 How is the process of metaphor-use described by each psychological approach?

7.3.1 Does the study reveal a pattern of identifiable stages or phases in the process?

This question led to the formulation of an integrated description of metaphor-use. Each psychological approach was studied to determine the viewpoint taken towards the role played by metaphor as an aid to conceptual change. The study further revealed those stages or phases in the process identified by each approach.

The researcher maintains that, while individuals retain the responsibility to make choices with integrity, a certain amount of comfort needs to be taken, not from the secure knowledge of a preconceived outcome, but from the fact that it can become possible to identify some of the stages or phases of the process and to gain experiential familiarity with the process itself.

Separate descriptions of each approach's perspective on the process of metaphor-use were provided: analytical perception of process (4.1.4, p 103); Freud's perception of process (6.1.7, p. 206); the Gestalt perception of process (6.3.7, p. 230); the Ericksonian perception of process (6.4.5, p. 241); the cognitive perception of process (6.6.5, p.255) and the narrative perception of process (6.7.4, p. 271). In addition to these perceptions of process, Kalsched's perception of what happens when dissociation occurs (6.2, p. 207), Rossi's perception of the composite nature of process (6.5, p. 243) and Kolb's experiential focus on process (6.8, p. 274), were discussed. A discussion of the value of integrated perception was included (6.9.2, p. 280).

The researcher's integrated model is presented in the diagram below (fig. 7.1). This model is itself a metaphor for what remain infinitely complex and essentially indescribable psychic processes.

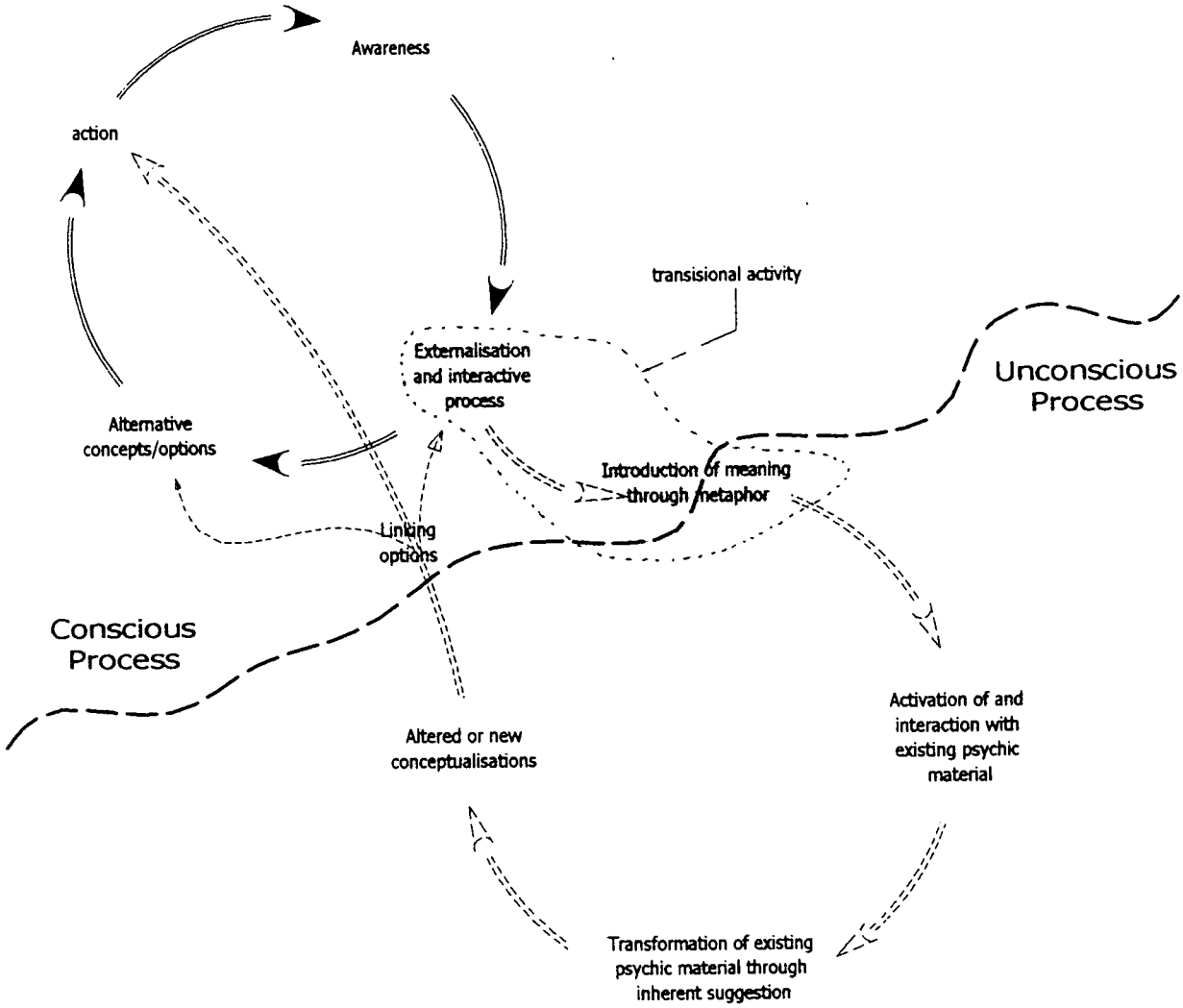

Figure 7.1 Integrated model of metaphor-use

Awareness: Conscious awareness is not a prerequisite for change in every case. However, typically, the process commences with the individual's becoming aware of psychic material which evoked meaning. Awareness could result from reactive emotion (anxiety, tension), material introduced from an outside source, or material introduced via inner unconscious processes as dream images or symptoms.

At this stage, the therapist's role would be to guide the discovery process. This could be done by asking about fantasies or thoughts preceding behaviour (Burns, 1980; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993), advocating and demonstrating through his or her own behaviour that metaphorical material is meaningful and worthy of respect and attention (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970; Ammann, 1992), ensuring that the patient remains experientially centered or grounded (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Kolb, 1984; Oaklander, 1988; Clarkson & Mackewn, 1993), and retains an identity-based sense of agency (Kalff, 1980; Rossi, 1987).

Transitional activity: Transitional activity examines meanings and relationships between meaning-structures in inner and outer meaning networks. The researcher views the transitional activity of the psyche, of which metaphor-use forms an integral part, to be a natural, ongoing psychic activity linking various dimensions of psychic functioning like imagery, emotions and abstract conceptualisation (Kolb, 1984; Rossi, 1987; Goldstein, 1999). This process provides the psyche with what Jung referred to as its transcendent function (4.14, p. 103).

Externalisation and interactive process: Transitional activity requires that psychic material becomes available to consciousness by externalising it in some form, since this makes possible a process of conscious interaction with these contents. Externalisation could happen by means of verbal conceptualisation, but could also be some other form of representation, for example, a drawing. The conceptualisation could be abstract, comprising, for example, a set of verbal guidelines or a theoretical model. Alternatively, the conceptualisation process could rely on a more directly experiential component like a visual image. The psychic material could also be contained in a story.

Successful outcome would require that the patient be able to identify with or 'own' the material portrayed. This goal could be achieved by using material the patient spontaneously introduced, co-constructing material with the patient or asking the patient to portray an aspect of his or her psychic reality. In the case of Ericksonian psychotherapy, the therapist would often carry the responsibility for this part of the process (Lankton, 1986; O' Hanlon & Martin, 1992). However, the metaphor introduced should still be compatible with the patient's inner world and be accepted by the psyche. Patients should retain their sense of empowerment and responsibility even though some suggestions might bypass consciousness in an effort to avoid resistance (Lankton & Lankton, 1987; Zeig, 1987; Mills & Crowley, 1993).

Introduction of meaning through metaphor: The most basic function of representational phenomena and transitional processing is to initiate and sustain a continuous process of forming and reforming associative patterns. When information regarding the biological substratum of psychic activity is taken into account, it seems clear that, as one of the representational phenomena, metaphor links and integrates the contributions of various systems around certain meaning-cores. Whatever form any given externalised conceptualisation takes, it would, in the opinion of the researcher, become a metaphor for psychic contents with an inherently composite character. A meaning-rich portrayal would include different dimensions of psychic functioning thereby promoting integrated awareness.

Unconscious processes: Since metaphor is capable of evoking related psychic material, enabling this material to resonate with other psychic material, it is portrayed on the diagram as functioning

on the threshold between consciousness and the unconscious. Any given metaphor *activates and interacts with existing psychic material*, resulting in the *transformation of existing psychic material* and the formulation of *altered or new conceptualisations*. Through this interactive process, the psychic material is transformed and an altered or new meaning-structure added to the network.

Linking options: In those cases where some existing conceptualisations resist transformation, externalising these conceptualisations consciously and dealing with them as part of a conscious transitional process could lessen resistance. At other times, the new information could be introduced to the psyche in a way, which circumvents resistance. The revised conceptualisations would then become available via one of the other linking options portrayed in the diagram:

- First, the conceptualisation could become part of the information being consciously processed and the individual could come to some sort of understanding of this psychic material by examining it. It would be considered important to complement experientially rich or subjective dimensions of awareness by more abstract or objective dimensions and vice versa.

- Second, the entire process could become a largely unconscious one, which results directly in actions. An example of this would be altered behaviour as a result of Ericksonian suggestion.

- Third, an alternative conceptualisation could become available to consciousness as an option, which the individual might not understand in depth, but might consider a viable alternative.

7.3.2 What role is the therapist perceived to play?

In the opinion of the researcher, knowledge about the functioning of the psyche and its use of representational material aids the therapist in the same way that knowledge of the cultural networks of symbolical and mythological material in the cultural collective aids the therapist in amplification.

The researcher suggests that, should the therapist wish to gain some understanding of the patient's presentation of psychic material, the therapist has to apply his or her own conceptualisations to this material. The intricacies of this interactive relationship are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the researcher believes a certain amount of complementary interaction takes place in this situation.

This interaction is clearly indicated in the description of the introduction of metaphor by therapists working from the Ericksonian perspective. These therapists accept responsibility for initiating the conscious part of the process. The descriptions provided by the authors discussed (Erickson, 1980; Lankton & Lankton, 1987; Zeig, 1987; Mills & Crowley, 1993), indicate to the researcher that the part of the process often remains at an unconscious level for the patient. Thus the therapist accepts responsibility for consciously producing and introducing a metaphor that will be appropriate to the patient's situation. This calls for the conscious conceptualisation,

externalisation, and manipulation of appropriate material on behalf of the patient. The therapist then becomes directly responsible for appropriate understanding and processing of material.

Both White and Epston (1990) and Ericksonian theorists regard therapist empowerment positively, namely as knowledge or skill which makes it possible to influence a patient to change. They also do not envisage therapist empowerment as necessarily detracting from the patient's sense of empowerment or responsibility.

While recognising the therapist's contribution to the process of change by means of insight and skill, the researcher suggests the ideal condition is for the therapist to be an aware and insightful companion to the process, but that the introduction and processing of psychic material largely remain the privilege and the responsibility of the patient.

However, even in cases where there is less therapist involvement, a certain amount of complementary activity seems to take place. An example of this is the containment of psychic contents that takes place as described by Fordham (1957) and Ammann (1991) and is sometimes referred to as providing supplementary ego strength (Clarkson, 1995).

In the light of this discussion regarding the role played by the therapist, the researcher recommends that the reader visualise the role of the therapist in the diagram provided (fig. 7.1, p.321), as being that of supplementing that part of the process which is not carried by the patient alone.

It remains a therapist's responsibility to gain as much understanding of the process as possible. This knowledge enhances the ability to facilitate the process of change. Apart from understanding the process of change, the therapist needs a clear grasp of the principles of working with metaphor and the background needed to amplify symbolic material and to allow theories to complement one another.

According to Hall (1977), the amplification of symbolical material takes place at three levels, namely personal, cultural and collective. In the light of the above it becomes clear that, in order to work meaningfully with images in psychotherapy, the therapist needs a thorough knowledge of cultural material, including myths, fairy tales and symbols. Jung (1973) maintained:

> The psychologist cannot do without a "comparative anatomy of the psyche". In practice, to put it differently, the psychologist must not only have sufficient experience of dreams and other products of unconscious activity, but also of mythology in its widest sense. Without this equipment, nobody can spot the important analogies (p. 57).

The ability to recognise analogies between theories would require therapists to acquire similar 'equipment' for theories. An integrated perspective on metaphor implies that insights from disciplines and psychotherapeutic perspectives other than the therapist's own should be accommodated.

In the opinion of the researcher, there are two ways in which this process of accommodation could take place. In the first place, the perspective could be broadened to accommodate new information. This could enrich the perspective, but could also potentially change its character. In the second place, varying perspectives could be allowed to co-exist, complexity could be acknowledged and the principles underlying a particular perspective could be respected. Both options imply comprehension of, as well as respect for, the fundamental principles and implications of each perspective involved.

The researcher examined ways in which different theories and disciplines approach the use of metaphor for the purpose of arriving at some form of conceptual integration. The goal was to provide an integrated perspective on metaphor, which could potentially enrich the approach of a particular practitioner.

Although the patient could also contribute certain concepts regarding the nature of the process and the appropriate approach to metaphor, the task of integrating principles of using metaphor within a solid theoretical framework ultimately remains the responsibility of the therapist. The researcher takes the stance that, as far as any specific instance of psychotherapy is concerned, a theoretical framework is put into action as it is integrated and understood by each individual therapist.

In the researcher's opinion, therapists using metaphors in psychotherapy should pay particular attention to acquiring the following:

- Knowledge of the specific nature and functioning of metaphorical material.

- Knowledge and experience of transitional activity, especially as regards the role ego-function plays in negotiating metaphorical material. This would include practical work with experiential processes and the facilitation of integrated perception.

- Knowledge of unconscious processes. This would include studying the manner in which unconscious material is presented to consciousness and knowledge of the biological processes which provide the underpinning for psychic functioning.

- Increased knowledge of the metaphorical material contained in cultural networks.

- The ability to facilitate the guidelines for metaphor-use which emerged from this study.

- A holistic perspective on the process of metaphor-use.

7.4 Limitations of this research

- As mentioned in chapter 3 (p. 39), the trustworthiness of this study's investigation of the literature on metaphor was dependent on the researcher's subjective insights into the

concepts mentioned. In view of the researcher's appreciation of specific theoretical and therapeutic approaches and the belief in experiential application, subjectivity existed throughout this investigation.

- In the interest of covering a relatively wide field of investigation and providing a broad understanding of metaphor, a variety of approaches and disciplines have been discussed. Consequently, the contents of this study could be criticised for lack of detail and depth.

7.5 Suggestions for further research

- The qualitative and descriptive nature of the researcher's findings needs to be supplemented with experimental research. Subsequent studies could focus in depth on specific aspects mentioned, for example the functioning of unconscious processes.

- The recognition given to the therapeutic value of retaining integrated awareness suggests the need for research in this area. The systems responsible for providing integrated perception could be studied. An investigation could also be carried out into methods, which facilitate integrated perception.

- Another area of research not specifically covered by this study, which could yield informative data from a novel perspective, would be to gather data, which focuses on the patient's experiences and conceptualisations regarding metaphor-use.

- Finally, the researcher would like to suggest viewing the exchange of information between current theorising, experiential studies and what is known about the biological processes underlying psychic functioning to be a necessary ongoing process of continual change and development.

SUMMARY

This theoretical study focused on the use of **metaphor** in psychotherapy. The aim of the study was to provide guidelines for the use of metaphor in **psychotherapy** and **child psychotherapy**. Any visible portrayal or image of psychic contents was considered to provide an externalised metaphor for these contents. Metaphors were regarded to form part of a group of representational phenomena, which function as tools portraying psychic material.

The researcher adopted an **integrated approach** and examined the contributions of theorists representing six **psychological theories**. These theories were psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, Gestalt therapy, Ericksonian psychotherapy, cognitive therapy and narrative therapy. Additional individual contributions mentioned were those of Rossi, Kolb and Kalsched. Information gathered from these theories was supplemented by information from disciplines outside the field of psychology. These contributions included views on the biological processes giving rise to representational phenomena, philosophical viewpoints and viewpoints on issues of interpretation and **meaning-making**.

An initial, tentative study was conducted, which included gaining experience with the use of metaphor in psychotherapy, specifically the **sandplay** method. On the grounds of this study, research questions were formulated regarding the nature of metaphor, the key concepts mentioned in relation to metaphor (focusing on the identification of general principles regarded

as conducive to metaphor-use) and descriptions of the process of using metaphorical material in psychotherapy.

Metaphor was found to be a complex phenomenon. This was theorised to be partly as a result of the complexity of metaphor itself and partly due to the fact that metaphor-use reflects the nature and functioning of the psyche. The psyche was approached as a functional **mind-body unity**. The composite nature of metaphors allows the integration of levels and dimensions of awareness, specifically the integration of **experiential** participation with conceptualisation and understanding.

Nine key concepts were identified which could serve as general guidelines for metaphor-use. An integrated model of metaphor-use was presented, indicating the various stages of the process and the manner in which the introduction of meaning through metaphor included the activation of and the interaction with existing unconscious psychic material, leading to new or altered conceptualisations with different linking options.

Since a metaphorical portrayal of psychic contents possesses its own reality, it was postulated that, bearing in mind the general guidelines provided, a therapist could apply his/her own theoretical framework to the process. However, the guidelines and the integrated model of the process of metaphor-use could make it possible for a therapist to allow his/her framework to be enriched by contributions from other approaches. Regarding the **role of the therapist**, the study indicated that the therapist often became responsible for that part of the process which was not carried out by the patient.

It is hoped that this study could be used as a framework to structure therapy with metaphors and indicate areas for future research.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie teoretiese studie het gefokus op die gebruik van **metafore** in psigoterapie. Die doel van die studie was om riglyne vir die gebruik van metafore in **psigoterapie** en **kinderpsigoterapie** te ontwikkel. Enige simboliese voorstelling van psigiese inhoude is beskou as 'n metaforiese voorstelling van daardie spesifieke inhoude. Metafore word beskou as 'n groep uitbeeldingsveskynsels wat as hulpmiddels funksioneer om psigiese material weer te gee.

In die navorser se benadering tot die studie is die **integrasie van verskillende benaderings** nagestreef. Die bydraes van ses psigologiese teorieë is bestudeer. Hierdie teorieë was psigoanalise, analitiese sielkunde, Gestalt terapie, Erickson se benadering, kognitiewe psigoterapie en narratiewe terapie. Die individuele bydraes van Rossi, Kolb en Kalsched is ook bygebring. Bykomende inligting is vanuit teorieë buite die veld van die sielkunde ingewin. Hierdie inligting het bydraes oor die onderliggende biologiese prosesse wat betrokke is by uitbeeldingsverskynsels en sekere filosofiese sienswyses ingesluit. 'n Belangrike faset van dié deel van die navorsing is die verskillende **maniere waarop betekenis aan ervarings gegee word** om psigiese realiteite te skep.

Navorsingsvrae is geformuleer op grond van 'n aanvangstudie, wat praktiese ervaring in die gebruik van metafore in psigoterapie ingesluit het. Die **'sandplay'-metode** is gebruik as voorbeeld van die gebruik van metafore in kinderpsigoterapie.

Die navorsingsvrae is gebruik om die navorsing te rig. Hierdie vrae het gefokus op die aard van metafore, die identifisering van kernkonsepte rondom metafoorgebruik, en beskrywings van die proses van metafoorgebruik. Wat die kernkonsepte betref, word veral gefokus op beginsels wat bevorderlik is vir metafoorgebruik.

Die studie het bevind dat die metafoor'n komplekse verskynsel is, gedeeltelik vanweë die feit dat enige uitbeelding van psigiese inhoude ook die aard en funksionering van die psige weerspieël. Die psige is benader as 'n funksionele **eenheid van liggaam en denke**. Aangesien die studie op die gebruik van metafore in psigoterapie gemik is, het die navorser veral gekonsentreer op twee fasette van metafoorgebruik naamlik die vermoë van 'n metafoor om **eksperiensiële** betrokkenheid sowel as konseptualisering en abstrakte begrip te fasiliteer.

Nege sleutelkonsepte is geïdentifiseer wat **riglyne vir metafoorgebruik** verskaf. Daarby het die navorser 'n geïntegreerde model vir die proses van metafoorgebruik opgestel. Hierdie model maak ook voorsiening vir die rol van die terapeut. Aangesien enige metaforiese uitbeelding van psigiese inhoude 'n eie bestaansreg het, kan die voorstelling vanuit 'n betrokke terapeut se raamwerk van voorkeur benader word. Die algemene riglyne wat uit die studie geblyk het, dui egter op sekere universele aspekte van metafoorgebruik en skep die moontlikheid dat 'n terapeut sy/haar teoretiese raamwerk sou kon verryk deur insigte vanuit ander benaderings.

Wat die proses van metafoorgebruik betref, is bevind dat die terapeut verantwoordelik raak vir die suksesvolle voltooiing van dié gedeelte van die proses wat die pasiënt nie self voltooi nie.

Die navorser hoop dat die riglyne wat deur hierdie studie verskaf is, gebruik sal word as 'n raamwerk vir psigoterapie met metafore en tot verdere navorsing kan lei.

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APPENDIX A

A CASE ILLUSTRATION WITH REFERENCE TO CHAPTER 1

For a frame of reference regarding the relevance of the theoretical material to psychotherapy, it might be helpful to bear the following therapeutic example in mind:

> Imagine a small girl of five who is receiving therapy. She has been traumatised by certain experiences. She and her parents form a working alliance with the therapist. She has short dark hair, a lively disposition and a ready smile. She loves singing, is quite intelligent and verbally expressive, but remains silent regarding the events that have caused her so much trauma. She does not consciously know that one can be driven by inner turmoil, but her behaviour depicts this turmoil. She plays anxiously and intensely, using the same themes over and over again, often becoming uncertain and upset. Although she can become totally absorbed in play activity, she often glances up at the therapist and smiles or makes a remark showing that she has achieved the ability to be self-observant and to take a more objective position at times. She has never heard the expression 'one foot in and one foot out', nor does she know that at five there are certain mental tasks that the pioneer in cognitive-developmental theory, Piaget, would not judge her capable of achieving.

She is confronted with a life situation and a set of circumstances that she cannot control, and the outcome of which is uncertain. She feels this, but this does not deter her from following her inner drive towards wholeness and healing. She is largely unaware of the courage she displays in attempting to create hope and security for herself in the life that she has been dealt with, although she does feel the effort that this involves.

There is no preconceived psychological theory already existent in her mind to which her endeavours are subordinate. However, she finds herself bound by the same necessities that are universal to the human condition, having to set limits to infinite possibilities and complications while facing the task of making meaningful connections and creating workable concepts. She does not know when she creates a world of symbols or metaphors to try to explicate this meaning for herself, that she is engaging in a field the complexity of which has kept far better minds than hers or her therapist's busy for a very long time. In fact, although she is in danger of being overwhelmed by circumstances, playing does not feel that complex to her. Her experiences do, however, feel serious and real to her.

She is using the metaphors that she creates during the course of her playing, to structure her realities, and through them she is creating vehicles to contain her anxieties. Confronted with the issues of life, yet working within the bounds of her own subjective reality, she is playing with the realities of life as humans have done over the ages.

What is at stake for her are her happiness and security, her ability to trust in life and to engage in meaningful relationships and her ability to stay engaged in this process with hope and courage. To do this, she needs support from those charged with her care and the benefit of a therapist who would be able to assist this process with optimal insight.

APPENDIX B

A CASE ILLUSTRATION WITH REFERENCE TO CHAPTER 2

This case study illustrates the way in which metaphor can be used in psychotherapy. The material presented comes from working with an actual patient seen at the time of writing this section of the thesis. Autobiographical details are omitted in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

A patient, who experienced great difficulties in understanding her feelings or even knowing where to start dealing with her problem, reported feeling depressed and unable to move forward. As the therapy continued, it became possible for her to become aware of unconscious thought processes causing her to feel that her case was hopeless and that it would be better to remain dependent and passive. Judging from her clinical history, this behaviour pattern seemed to have originated in the mother-daughter relationship. However, at the onset of therapy, the patient merely described feeling that everything was hopeless, that she felt stuck, that she wanted to end it all and that it was impossible to find words to illustrate the problem.

Taking a black crayon and a piece of paper, she said, "This is how I feel", and made a drawing without lifting the crayon from the paper.

She then proceeded: "It looks like a ball of tangled wool. I feel like that ball of wool and that there is no loose end that I can see and take which will help me to begin to unravel the mess of my life. Even if I were to find a loose end with which to begin, the ball is so hopelessly knotted that I will never be able to complete the process."

She and the therapist then proceeded to discuss the possible meanings inherent in this image. Attempting to remove the impasse, the therapist described three ways in which balls of wool or thread had been used in fairy tales and mythology. The first was illustrated by the story of the dancing maidens. This story tells of a ball of twine unrolling magically in front of a young man showing him where the maidens went at night. The second illustration was the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. In this myth, the king's daughter Ariadne helped Theseus not to get lost in the Labyrinth by providing him with a ball of twine, the beginning of which he tied to the entrance. As he proceeded into the Labyrinth, the ball of twine would unravel. To find the entrance again, all he would have to do would be to start rewinding the twine, which would then guide him back. The third story was that of the Gordian Knot. In this legend Alexander the Great was given the task of untying a huge knot, which was considered to be impossible to untie. Instead of attempting a clearly impossible task, he did the unexpected. Drawing his sword he proceeded to cut through the knot.

These stories helped the patient to begin considering possible ways of solving her problem. She could also visualise her mother as a giant spider, spinning the threads,

which kept her bound. Her own solution was the following: "Since at least some of it is the thread of my life, it would be better not to cut off all the threads simultaneously. Let's unravel as far as we get and roll a bit up. If we get stuck we cut the bit off and look for another starting point. Eventually the tangled portion will get smaller and we will have some balls of wool to join together and use".

The drawing of the picture created a visible image of her feelings. This in turn helped her to formulate the concept of the tangled and knotted ball of wool. The stories then helped her to start creating her own ideas concerning her situation as depicted by her drawing. She later developed an increased ability to address her problem in ways that could lead to solutions.

About a month after the patient had made the initial drawing, which aided discussions in therapy, she started going out more often, visiting friends and exercising. She also dug out a ball of crocheting yarn and started making herself something, a creative act she enjoyed tremendously, since she saw it as symbolically meaningful.

The above describes an instance of using metaphor in psychotherapy. It shows how the initial creation of the metaphor could take place on what seems to be a pre-verbal, or level of rudimentary awareness and how this could activate a process of finding words for what was initially intuited. Although the process is clearly dependent on language, it can be assumed that the initial awareness was achieved by being able to associate the feeling with a picture. This association facilitated the patient's verbal description of her situation. The resolution of the

impasse thus helped her to begin to express and contain her situation, not only in rudimentary visual form, but also in words and action.

APPENDIX C

SANDPLAY: A METHOD ILLUSTRATING THE UTILISATION OF METAPHOR IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

The discussion of the sandplay method is an example of how the theoretical conditions necessary for optimal use of the metaphor as a way of externalising and dealing with psychic contents, could be concretely created.

History and development of the sandplay method

The sandplay method originated from HG Wells' book *Floor Games*. (See Wells, 1975.) Wells played these games with his two sons and wrote the book in 1912. His aim was to inspire parents to play with their children. He also wanted to emphasise the importance of creative imagination. With these goals in mind, Wells encouraged parents to buy interesting, mostly realistic toys, which would encourage children to use their imaginations to create their own games. He warned against "playing with somebody else's dead game in a state of *rigor mortis*" (p. 23).

Margaret Lowenfeldt played *Floor Games* as a child. When she qualified as a psychiatrist, she encouraged children to play with various objects in a sand tray. Lowenfeldt saw this as a means of communication. Her 1929 publication *World Technique* developed from these beginnings

(Lowenfeldt, 1979). According to Bradway, Signell, Spare, Stewart, Stewart and Thompson (1981), Lowenfeldt's publications describing the technique influenced other therapists to use the same method and invite children to build a world in the sand. Her goal was "to help children to produce something which will stand by itself and be independent of any theory as to its nature" (p.3). Lowenfeldt's remark makes it clear that she regarded the picture created in the sand tray as possessing objective, non-theoretical reality.

Dora Kalff is the sandplay therapist whose name is associated with the origin of the sandplay method as it is currently practised. Many well-known sandplay therapists, like Estelle Weinrib, Lois Carey, Joel Ryce-Menuhin and Ruth Ammann, studied under Kalff. She integrated the atmosphere of her old house near Zurich, built in 1485, with her therapy. Children were allowed to play in the house investigating its various nooks and crannies, and then encouraged to play in the basement where she had equipped a playroom with a sand tray and figures depicting everything (Kalff, 1980) "which exists in the world as well as in fantasy" (p. 38). The child was free to choose what to use. The resultant "sand pictures" were used as part of an ongoing therapeutic process.

According to Thompson (1981), some authors on the subject sound very prescriptive and rigid when describing the guidelines for sandplay. However, she emphasises the spontaneous nature of the process and that the manner in which the method is implemented will be dependent on the orientation of a specific therapist. She warns her readers: "sandplay, however useful and exciting, is not a treatment but an adjunct to treatment, and the approach to it *must* vary with the individual therapist" (p. 11).

There are differing opinions regarding the use of the terms 'sandplay' and 'sandtray'. Most authors reserve the term 'sandplay' for Jungian therapy. Allan (1988) makes the following distinction: "sandplay is the process, sandtray is the medium, and sandworld the finished product" (p. 214). Recent developments combine the use of sandplay with other types of therapy. An example of this would be Lois Carey's combination of sandplay and family therapy (Carey, 1991).

The researcher will refer to both the process of playing symbolically in the sand and the method as 'sandplay' and will refer to the person playing as a 'sandplayer'. The product will be referred to as a 'sand picture'.

Implementing the method

Material

Most therapists provide two waterproof sand trays, one for dry and one for wet sand. A standard sized rectangular sandtray measuring 57 x 72 x 7 cm. is most often used (Ammann, 1991). However, Thompson (1981) warns against a rigid approach and points out that Eriksson used a square table. The general opinion is that the entire sandtray must easily be seen without the sandplayer having to turn his/her head. The sandtray must be easily accessible and is often put on a table with wheels so that it can be moved. The tray is usually painted blue on the inside so that the child can create the illusion of water.

The sandtray is assumed to provide what Kalff (1980) referred to as a "free and sheltered space" (p. 29) within which the sandplayer can create a sand picture using any of the figures or other objects available on the shelves. These objects are usually arranged in groups on open shelves and players choose objects with a certain fantasy value for them. Kalff explained: "symbols speak for inner energy laden pictures of the innate potentials of the human being" (p. 29).

Although the choice of figures depends on the individual therapist, the aim is to provide the sandplayer with a variety of figures of good quality that can be used to represent (as far as is practically possible) anything he/ she might imagine. Sandplayers tend to make creative use of whatever is provided, and often are inclined to ascribe their own unique meanings to figures.

The figures provided would depict people from all walks of life, as well as figures that could be used to portray family members, friends and other races or nationalities. The objects and figures used could allow for cultural differences, for example, Japanese objects might include a rice bowl. Figures could further include buildings, fences, gates, bridges, trees, other plants and flowers, animals (including fantasy animals), folklore and other fantasy characters and musical instruments. Shelves should also contain figures that lend themselves to the possibility of a universal symbolic or archetypal meaning.

According to Kalff (1980), therapists should provide objects which might be termed "scary and ugly things" (p. 38), natural objects like shells, stones and pieces of wood and materials with which the sandplayers can build objects of their own choosing.

The researcher could trace no research regarding the figures that are preferred by South African children. Obvious examples to consider would be typically South African wild animals (buck, lions, giraffes) or examples of the types of vegetation or crops (thorn trees, mealies), which grow in South Africa. The use of figures portraying the mythologies of Africa could be investigated.

Signell and Bradway (1995) remark that some authors warn against the danger of overstimulation when a sandplayer is presented with too many figures. Signell and Bradway regard putting the figures into drawers or arranging them on shelves with doors as a possible solution. Other therapists differ from this view. Hegeman (1996), for example, has over 3000 figures. Kalff (1980) and Ryce-Menuhin (1992), believe the groups of objects present sandplayers with a choice of possibilities and they will choose figures to represent their inner worlds without feeling overwhelmed.

Sandplayers sometimes build sand pictures only using sand (Ammann, 1991).

Instructions

The medium and the objects are introduced to the patient, explaining that they can be used to build a picture. Bradway (1997) remembers Dora Kalff saying, "Look over the shelves and take down something that talks to you" (p. 46). Instructions will vary according to the theoretical orientation of the therapist involved. Weinrib (1983) explains the patient is free to "play out his fantasies, to externalise and to make concrete in three dimensions his inner world" (p. 12).

Instructions must be kept as simple and neutral as possible. If it appears that a patient is considering building a sand picture, the therapist could ask, "Would you like to build a picture in the sand?" The therapist will sense when a person seems to feel that the picture has been completed, and can then remark/question, "It seems that you have finished?"

When requested to do so, therapists could assist sandplayers to perform certain functions, like pouring water for them, or helping them to find objects they need. Sometimes it would be appropriate to sit quietly by as the sandplayer works, witnessing the process, at other times a more active role may be called for (Signell & Bradway, 1995). When the picture-building process has been completed, the therapist may ask, "Is there a story to go with this picture?" (See Dundas, 1978.)

Recording the process

A balance should be struck between the therapist's empathic presence during the flow of the process and the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the recording process. Generally, the therapist would make certain notes and diagrams and later photograph the sandtray. Either a photograph or a slide could be taken. Individual figure-formations could be photographed, but the therapist should take the main photograph from the perspective from which the patient worked. Photographs or slides could later be discussed with the sandplayer, but the timing for this must be appropriate. According to Ammann (1991), discussing photographs or slides "helps

make the experience with the unconscious more concrete. It reiterates and reinforces change" (p. 15).

Making a video recording of the process is usually considered to be intrusive. A video should only be made if the goals are clear and a live commentary on the process is required. The video would provide an additional vantage point, but its potential influence should be taken into account (Bradway et al., 1981).

The therapist as witness and companion

The therapist should act as a companion to the process, respecting both the process itself and the intrinsic value that the picture has for the sandplayer. Sometimes it is necessary for the therapist to teach the sandplayer to respect his or her own work.

The positive influence of the therapist's presence can facilitate the process of dealing with difficult psychic contents. The therapist's presence can also serve to contain and validate the process. Ammann (1991) reminds therapists to bear in mind that when the sandplayers leave, they carry an image of the sand picture away with them, knowing that, having witnessed the process; the therapist also carries this picture in his/her mind (Ammann, 1991). According to Weinrib (1983) this emphasises the role the personality of the therapist plays as the psychological container and protector of the sandplay process.

According to Ammann (1991), the sandplay process becomes the interactive relational field in psychotherapy. In Ammann's opinion, the therapist as well as the norms of society, influence the process. Therapist qualities that she considers to be important include knowledge of psychodynamics and the use of symbols, knowledge of the body and psychosomatic illnesses, basic psychic stability and the ability to maintain inner balance. Emotional concern, intelligence, creativity, and the therapist's ability to change his/her own inner psychic structures and not to fear the necessary ongoing processes of transformation intrinsic to living, are other essential qualities Ammann mentions.

Hall (1983) supports Ammann's viewpoint. He regards "the person of the analyst...(to be)...the most crucial factor, rather than some set of principles that can be superficially applied but that do not govern the life of the analyst" (p. 135).

Inquiries after completion

The inquiries after completion of the sand picture should be aimed at achieving a clearer understanding of the work done. The meaning of the picture might not be known to the sandplayer. Contents might be displayed which are unconscious. It might often be advisable to limit inquiries. When inquiries seem warranted, the therapist could say, "Tell me about the picture", or ask, "Is there a story that goes with the picture?" The therapist would attempt to determine what meaning a sandplayer appears to attach to certain figures or formations in the sand, as well as noting what feelings seems to accompany the process. Therapists should

remember not to manipulate the sandtray, and to interpret or comment on the sandplayer's efforts with care.

Pitfalls to avoid

Estelle Weinrib (1983, Author's Note) warns that the method should be used with caution. She writes: 'Sandplay is a powerful, invaluable modality. The operative word is "powerful". To the extent that any method can heal, so can it do harm.'

Signell and Bradway (1995) highlight the following as possible therapist errors:

- The therapist's need for a visible record might force inquiry.

- The therapist could let the method instead of the therapeutic process take centre stage, mystify the process and forget that some work with objects can be relatively superficial.

- The therapist could attribute more value to the sandplay process than it deserves in relation to other processes that are going on in the sandplayer's life, because the other 'inner' or 'outer' therapeutic work is less obviously visible. The therapist could thus emphasise the symbolic aspect of psychotherapy and neglect other important personal relational and practical aspects of growth.

- The focus on sandplay work could compensate for inadequacies in the therapeutic relationship.

- The therapist could neglect to remain focused on the meaning objects have for the sandplayer and project his/her own meaning on to objects, for example favouring archetypal meanings.

Theoretical considerations

Sandplay should always form part of a process of psychotherapy, within a responsible theoretical framework. The analytical perspective discussed above forms an integral part of the theoretical foundation of sandplay. However, the method lends itself to be used by therapists with differing theoretical orientations (Thompson, 1981).

By becoming involved in the process, sandplayers make a connection with their inner creativity. Kalff (conversation, June 1972, cited in Weinrib, 1983) describes the reason why a therapist should choose to make use of the sandtray:

> Because the collective unconscious is so vast, there is the need for sensation reality, three dimensions, and the confinement of the box. It provides containment and security. It contains the fantasies. The energies, contained, yet able to move, are more readily transformed (p. 43).

Kalff (1980) regards the sandplay space to represent a concrete prototype of the "free and protected space" created in therapy. She writes: "When a child feels that he is not alone-not only in his distress but also in his happiness- he then feels free but still protected, in all his expressions" (p. 30). Kalff explains that psychic contents have to be owned to facilitate change and that the sandplayer has to accept the responsibility for them and be prepared to develop the possibilities contained in the material depicting his or her life.

Weinrib (1983) distinguishes between psychological healing and the expansion of consciousness. According to her, "Psychological healing involves restoration of the capacity to function normally, while ego-consciousness has to do with awareness and choice of what we are doing while we function" (p. 21). She suggests the process of psychological transformation would include, "subjective and objective changes in the person: apperceptions, attitudes, value systems, behavior, self-image, perception of the inner and outer worlds; who one is in relation to oneself, others, society and the transpersonal; a feeling of rebirth" (p. 43).

Ammann (1991) identifies two types of therapeutic processes that she feels are facilitated through the medium of sandplay. The first is what Clarkson (1995) would refer to as "reparative" and deals with building the foundations basic to creative living, like acceptance, validation and containment. The second type of process, Ammann refers to as "transformative." According to Amman, language is less important during sandplay than expression. She explains: "The deeper the emotions and feelings are covered up, the more distanced from consciousness memories and a part of our personality have become, the less likely it is that we can find the words to express them" (p. 2).

Dundas (1978) is of the opinion that different personality types will benefit from sandplay in different ways.

Sandplay and the symbolic function

The picture created in the sand could be understood as a symbolic three-dimensional representation, or metaphor, of psychic contents. The image created in the sandtray, is a metaphorical representation of the patient's inner concepts, thus creating a visible, externalised image of the inner psychic situation. This process facilitates change. However, not all playing in the sand would be considered to be symbolic work in the sense that is implied by the term "sandplay." According to Signell and Bradway (1995), some work in the sand is relatively superficial.

For this method to be useful, both therapist and patient should agree on the symbolical value and importance of the activity itself, and recognise the significance of the sand pictures. Weinrib (1983) describes this process as follows:

> At the beginning stages of sandplay, the patient's engagement has a passive quality. In playing out his fantasy, he *projects* onto the figures. With the emergence of the "new" ego, the patient has more energy, awareness and assurance. He consciously recognizes that he is involved in a meaningful process, that the pictures represent himself, that the figures are metaphors for aspects of

himself and that he can interact with them and use them to express himself (p. 76).

Jung emphasised the importance of sacrificing the dominance of the conscious attitude as a necessary precondition to transformation. This does not imply that the conscious attitude becomes paralysed, but merely that an attitude is assumed which allows for input from outside the sphere of the dominant ego attitude (Jung, 1990, CW 5).

Ammann (1991) reminds her readers the sand picture itself is transient, describing it as a "momentary necessary form"; she adds, "We must look behind the external and static form of the picture and be aware of the symbolic meaning of the powers which have been set in motion and continue to move the analysand" (p. 36). Signell and Bradway (1995) agree with Ammann. They state that the integrated nature of the sand picture enables the process to influence the functioning of the psyche as a whole, i.e. consciousness and unconscious contents interact.

Developmental perspectives

Dora Kalff (1980) believed that the child's level of development was portrayed in the sand and should be taken into account. Using Neumann's developmental model (Neumann, 1973) as her reference, she believed that the therapist first had to look for the child's ability to be able to create symbols of wholeness and that this moment formed the basis for healthy ego development and the owning of identity. She also researched the symbols of other cultures, looking for symbols that appeared universally, concluding that, "these images may show us that in all

traditions, our lives correspond to a physical and psychic flow which can be looked on as the basis of individual development" (p. 37). She proposed three distinguishable stages of ego-development become visible in sandplay work. These stages are named for the themes depicted in sand pictures. They are indicated by pictures depicting *animal-vegetative* material, *fighting* scenes and those illustrating *adaptation to the collective.*

Weinrib (1983) asserts the examination of series of sandplay pictures will confirm theories that underwrite the critical role of mother-child unity and the archetypally determined process of development will occur automatically under conditions which are conducive to healing.

Charles Stewart (1981) has done extensive research concerning the influence of developmental levels on what he refers to as the 'sandplay text'. He advocates the use of integrated models of child development as interpretative aids. The three developmental theories, which, in his opinion, combine most effectively to serve as guidelines in the interpretation and use of 'sandplay texts', are those of Neumann, Eriksson and Piaget.

Interpretation

The sand picture becomes a metaphor for a certain psychic process, and often portrays psychic contents that have considerable emotional value for the sandplayer. Understanding the sand picture is linked to each individual therapist's own conceptual framework, theoretical model, knowledge of the collective values and ability to achieve empathic entrance into the world of the sandplayer.

The therapist needs to have a wide knowledge of what could be considered unusual, individualistic, or archetypal. While having a knowledge of the possible meanings of certain symbols, therapists should ask sandplayers to explain what a particular symbol means to them. Some theorists have preconceived ideas about the meanings of certain symbols. For example, Eriksson thought that there was a connection between the use of houses and the body (Bradway, et al., 1981).

The researcher believes that therapists should guard against imposing preconceived meanings onto a sand picture. To do so is to sabotage the essential value of the method, namely providing patients with the opportunity to create unique pictures. From the holistic perspective of the therapeutic process, of which sandplay merely forms a facet, it is important to bear in mind that the main aim of the sandplay process is not diagnosis. The 'sand text' can however aid understanding by providing the therapist with a 'live' personalised image of the sandplayer's life situation.

Ammann (1991) writes: "The meaning of the sand picture is as ambiguous and complex as the world of the person who creates it" (p. 47). Kalff (1980) emphasises that it is not always necessary to interpret the sand picture:

> We are dealing here with the...*experience of the symbol in the free and sheltered space.* Under certain circumstances, however, the pictures are interpreted to the child in an easily understandable way that is connected to his life situation. With the help of the

exterior picture, the inner problem is made visible and brings about the next step in development (p. 39).

Regarding the use of the image, Anne Watkins (1981) claims: "As the image and experience interpenetrate, the image is not discarded but becomes an eye through which one perceives and senses" (p. 117).

Ammann (1991) and Amatruda (1997) emphasise both the contribution of an integrated body awareness and the connection between the body and creative products.

Other factors that could provide insightful information would be attention to movement and tension. The use of unusual figures or figures that have a particular meaning for the sandplayer should be noted. The sandplayer's sand picture could be compared to what is known about the sandplayer's background (Carey, 1991).

According to Ammann (1991) the process can only be interpreted to the patient if the latter is felt to have what has been called an 'observing ego'. The therapist can point out what he/she sees, being especially sensitive to the accompanying emotions. Ammann stipulates that if a cognitive interpretation is made too easily or at the wrong time, the effect of the sand picture can be disrupted. The danger lies in "naming" and intellectualising the image prematurely. This attitude "deadens" the symbols and prematurely blocks the creative process. Ammann remarks, 'The analysand might say, "Oh yes, that's it; that's my situation!" But that's *not* it, yet, it is still *becoming* something new' (p. 3).

A special provision for sandplay is the freedom that must accompany the sandplayer's inner creative process. Both therapist and sandplayer need to respect this. A child's sand picture will be seen in the light of his/her development and any discussion must take place at the level of the child's conscious understanding. The therapist should rely at least partially on his/her own empathic ability to enable him/her to recognise the possible significance of the sand picture.

Consider the following descriptions, which show Kalff's (1980) empathy with and respect for her patients, but also raises the question of guarding against projection:

"The small, round pond with the bridge gave me the impression of clenched lips. Here, in my judgement, the whole solitude of the little girl was expressed" (p. 132).

"During the therapy hours, an intense effort was made to strengthen further her newly gained personality. The new aspects were as tender as new grass which had just sprouted out of the ground" (p. 138).

The therapist, although respectful and empathic, should not impose meaning on the sand picture.

Signell and Bradway (1995) point out that the nature of the objects chosen and how the sandplayer uses them can provide clues to the meaning of the sand picture. For example, according to these authors, what is unknown, or formless can indicate material, which is more unconscious; realistic pictures tend to give indications of the current problem and its possible

solution; and sand pictures depicting shadow material could tend to have a chaotic quality. They mention that these clues can indicate the nature of problems or the direction of further development to the therapist. For example, Signell and Bradway believe it is important to note when a sandplayer show resistance to involvement with certain material and whether the patient uses only the surface of the sand.

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