

THE USE OF METAPHOR IN COUNSELLING:
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

by

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Abstract

This discourse analysis examined the way metaphor functions in therapy sessions, addressing the question: how do therapists and clients use metaphor? The approach met several needs within the literature: firstly, observing the naturalistic setting of therapy; secondly, engaging in third party observation; thirdly, comparing the metaphors generated by client and therapist, with attention to their roles; and fourthly, looking at therapeutic metaphors at the detailed level of the language itself. Five video-recorded career counselling sessions were analyzed for how the five individual clients and the therapist, Dr. Amundson, used metaphor. Results showed an overarching difference in the function of *common* and *original* career metaphors. Common metaphors were everyday words and expressions and revealed not only the client and/or therapist's conceptualization of career but also the broader culture's implicit assumptions. Original metaphors were explored in more depth by the therapist and client. These metaphors revealed something unique about the client's approach to career and provided an alternative to the dominant discourse. A number of career metaphors and emotion metaphors were identified in the analysis. Career metaphors included directional, spatial, capitalist, fittingness, construction, and retirement metaphors. Some emotion metaphors were grouped according to content categories, including metaphors of emotional impact, joyful emotions, and emotion as upwards and downwards movement. Others were grouped according to the therapeutic function of the metaphors: reflecting clients' emotions and transforming emotions. The therapist relied on metaphor for many therapeutic purposes: to empathize, normalize, communicate immediacy, encourage insight, reframe situations, process emotions, challenge and empower the client, to facilitate change, to introduce and frame interventions, and as a tool in brainstorming. Clients used metaphor to express emotions, to describe situations and to emphasize their meaning, to conceptualize their careers, and to undergo change with the therapist's help. These findings can be applied in two major ways: Firstly, counsellors can benefit from a heightened awareness of our culture's common metaphors for conceptualizing both career and the emotional experience of career challenges and transitions. Secondly, practitioners can observe the ways that the therapist used metaphor effectively and can try similar techniques in their own practice.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Conversation is the predominant means through which therapists work. Research that focuses on understanding verbal communication in counselling psychology looks at one of the most basic assumptions in the profession—the belief that simply talking can facilitate change and healing in clients' lives. As Corey describes it: “Therapists are able to facilitate healing through a process of genuine dialogue with their clients” (2005, p. 5). There is value in identifying how the many different forms of talking function within this important dialogue, how they contribute to the overall conversation. Research on communication and the use of language in counselling assists practitioners in raising their awareness of the process. This kind of research also informs the development of concrete skills for supporting and facilitating change in clients.

In this general sense, this research project explored how language currently operates in counselling sessions and how it can be used as a primary means of helping people. The theory of social constructionism is helpful in this venture because it acknowledges the centrality of language in people's individual identities and in their knowledge and experience of the social world (Gergen, 2003). Within discursive psychology (the application of social constructionism to psychology), there is an increasing interest in the detailed study of counsellor practice and translating this knowledge into training for the profession. Through the focused study of discourse, therapists are able to make more informed and strategic judgments about their work (Potter, 2003).

Specifically, I explored metaphor as a significant form of language within counselling. Metaphors are a salient element in the therapeutic conversation because they are pervasive in everyday language, thought, and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It is nearly impossible to describe internal states, abstract ideas, and complex notions without them (Tompkins, Sullivan,

& Lawley, 2005). For several decades, metaphor has been recognized as a valuable tool in the therapy process (Bowman, 1995). Therapists have used metaphors since their first attempts to fully understand their clients' experience of the world (Wickman, Daniels, White, & Fesmire, 1999). Theorists suggest metaphor can function as a catalyst in the change process (Barker, 1985; Lyddon, Clay, & Sparks, 2001). This may be due to metaphor creating an emotional tension or disequilibrium that shifts one's personal meaning. Currently, counsellors are becoming more interested in the way language, narratives, and stories influence their clients' personal and social realities. This has drawn particular attention to how metaphor facilitates the counselling process (Lyddon et al., 2001).

Lyddon, Clay, and Sparks (2001) reviewed the literature and suggested that metaphors may play a significant role in at least five developmental change processes in counselling. The change processes they identified are relationship building, accessing and symbolizing client emotions, uncovering and challenging clients' tacit assumptions, working with client resistance, and introducing new frames of reference. In the literature, there is a discussion of how metaphors can and have been used in a therapeutic setting. Most of this work involves individual case studies (Erdman, 1994; Tompkins et al., 2005; Zuniga, 1992) or a therapist's personal theory of how to use metaphors to build client rapport, embrace divergent forms of thinking, or overcome resistance (Kopp, 1998; Kopp & Craw, 1998; Pearce, 1996; Romig & Gruenke, 1991; Wickman et al., 1999; Wilkins, 2002). Romig and Gruenke (1991), for example, speak from their experience to suggest that metaphors help to overcome inmate resistance to counselling by raising curiosity and challenging thinking through indirect means.

Less attention has been paid to studying how therapists from a range of theoretical orientations are already using metaphor as a communication tool. It is useful for researchers,

theorists, and practitioners to continue informing one another as we develop a greater understanding of metaphor's place in counselling. It is also helpful to expand the variety of approaches to research in this area. By studying the use of metaphor in counselling with different questions and methods, a fuller perspective of metaphor's value emerges.

One specific perspective that would benefit the literature is third party observation of how metaphors actually arise and function within the conversation between therapist and client in the naturalistic setting of therapy. Therefore, I conducted an exploratory study using discourse analysis to look at the way metaphor was used by one therapist and his clients in career counselling sessions. I addressed the question: how do therapists and clients use metaphor in therapy? Five video-recorded career counselling sessions were analyzed for how the five individual clients and the therapist, Dr. Amundson, used metaphor. Dr. Norman Amundson is an experienced career counsellor and Professor of Counselling Psychology on faculty at the University of British Columbia. He developed the *Active Engagement* approach to career counselling, most recently revised in 2009. Among other techniques and approaches to communication, Amundson values and promotes the use of metaphors in counselling (1988, 1997, 2009; Inkson & Amundson, 2002; Stone & Amudson, 1989).

The analysis involved attending to the content and form of metaphors, identifying patterns in how they were generated and used, and acknowledging the influences of the role of therapist and client in the exchange. Metaphor was defined as speaking of one thing in terms of another (Tompkins et al., 2005). This definition will be further delineated in the Method chapter of this proposal. Rather than proscribing ways to use metaphorical language as an intervention, I offer the insights gained by paying attention to how actual clients and their therapist are already using metaphor as a communication tool in therapy.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Social Constructionism

As a discourse analysis, this project was situated within the theoretical framework of social constructionism. As a method for examining the social world, discourse analysis is based on a set of assumptions regarding how we know the world (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Social constructionism asserts that we experience the world primarily through the constructive effects of language (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). In this section, I will present the theoretical underpinnings of this project by briefly explaining the assumptions of the social constructionist view, including its perspective on the social world, personhood, language, discourses, and power. Social constructionism is a valuable theoretical framework for approaching the use of metaphor in counselling because it offers a relatively recent and critical perspective that has not commonly been applied to counselling research. In addition, it acknowledges the crucial influence of language in human relationships and society.

Social constructionism offers a critical alternative to positivist approaches within psychology and other disciplines (Burr, 1995). There is much variety within social constructionism, but most theorists and researchers share a few key assumptions. Burr (1995) has grouped these into four principles: Firstly, social constructionism involves a critical posture towards knowledge. Our observation of the social world does not yield objective, unbiased knowledge and the categories we use do not necessarily reflect real divisions. One example of this is the somewhat arbitrary distinction made in defining the genres of classical and popular music. Secondly, our categories and concepts are influenced by our historical and cultural context. This is exemplified by how the notion of childhood has changed over time and by how

new categories emerge, like *adolescence* and *young adulthood*. Thirdly, knowledge is constructed by the processes in the social interaction of day to day life. Language is a major focus in social constructionism because our shared versions of knowledge are constructed through talk and texts. Fourthly, these shared versions of knowledge (which we experience as real and true) cause human beings to act in certain ways. Through this process of describing the world in certain ways, some social actions are sustained while others are restrained.

Social constructionism differs from traditional psychology because it takes an anti-essentialist view—the nature of the world and of human beings is not determined or within their essence. The focus is not on identifying objective facts or a permanent understanding of human nature. As an interdisciplinary theory, social constructionism was born out of developments in sociology, psychology, and postmodern philosophy in the 1960s and 1970s (Burr, 1995).

The person. Social constructionism questions the common western concept of personality—the notion that human beings are discrete individuals whose emotions arise as personal expressions of an inner self. Traditionally, personalities have been understood to be unique to the individual, rooted in his or her nature, relatively stable through time, coherent as a group of traits, and a major influence on behaviour. Social constructionists prefer the concept of *identity over personality*. People behave in different ways depending on the circumstances and people surrounding them. A person's identity is constructed socially and exists in a different version in each relationship. This notion of selfhood allows for multiplicity and changeability, recognizing how culture and history influence who we are (Burr, 1995).

The role of language. As already mentioned, the process of constructing the social world is rooted in language. Social constructionism draws on the post-structuralist view of language as our means of structuring our experience in the world. Language does not simply express our

thoughts but defines the way we think by providing certain concepts and categories. In other words, language not only reflects phenomena but constructs them (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The structure of language, therefore, determines the structure of our experience and consciousness. The Cartesian dualism of mind versus body illustrates this well—it is difficult as a westerner to conceive of wellness without thinking in terms of these categories of either mental or physical (Burr, 1995).

In order to clarify the importance of language within social constructionist theory and research, it is helpful to outline the basic concepts of structural and post-structural linguistics. Saussure (1974) developed the theory that the connection between the spoken sound of words (the signifier) and the meaning or concept being expressed (the signified) is arbitrary. Furthermore, the concepts themselves organize our experience in arbitrary ways (Burr, 1995). The categories we use to structure our existence are constructed by our society and in turn, continue to shape society. To return to an earlier example, the age categories of child, adolescent, and young adult are a product of a certain kind of society.

Post-structuralism extends this line of reasoning to argue that the relationship between signifier and signified is not fixed. The meanings of words and ideas are fluid and up for debate. And since language is the site where we structure our experience of reality, this viewpoint shifts the psychological centre of humanity out of the individual mind and into the social realm. Talk is the place where versions of reality are enacted and come into conflict with one another. Our identities are established, challenged, transformed, and sustained through the use of language (Burr, 1995).

Discourse. This brings us to the concept of discourse, a construct that explains more specifically how language produces our social world. Language can be grouped into a number of

competing discourses (Burr, 1995). Parker (1992) defines discourse as a set of interrelated texts that are produced, disseminated, and received, thereby bringing an object into being. More simply, it is a “system of statements which constructs an object” (Parker, 1992, p. 5). Burr (1995) describes a discourse as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements...that together produce a particular version of events” (p. 48). There are a number of competing versions, for example, of what it means to be a *good mother*. Since the meanings within our social world are fluid, it may be difficult to make clear distinctions between different discourses. Instances of text and talk can be grouped together as a discourse if they describe an object in similar ways (Burr, 1995).

We cannot experience the world other than through the many conflicting discourses we are exposed to and participate in; they are the means by which social reality is produced (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The study of discourse, therefore, helps us to understand the context of social interaction and to identify how socially produced ideas and objects were created and are maintained. We draw upon discourses strategically. However, we are limited by their scope and by the complex processes of social construction that precede our participation in talk (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Discourses claim to reflect the truth about an object, such as a person or an event. Social constructionism considers what people say to be instances of discourse rather than expressions of personal attitudes or beliefs (Burr, 1995).

A person's identity, as the social constructionist concept of the self, is created out of the discourses available within our cultural and historical context (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). From this perspective, a person is a combination of particular versions of different categories, such as age and gender. There are a finite number of discourses at our disposal in producing an identity (Burr, 1995). With respect to occupational identity, for instance, we are limited to the options of

employed, unemployed, student, retired, or stay-at-home parent. If an individual does not fit into the employed category, he or she may be forced to take on an identity that is not as socially acceptable in some contexts. It is important to acknowledge that we are normally not conscious of how we construct versions of our identity and reality because language is so basic to our existence (Burr, 1995).

Power. Because of the way some discourses achieve more legitimacy than others, power is negotiated in society. Discourses are closely tied to the organization, structures, and practices of society and have political effects (Burr, 1995). The way individuals and groups are represented through dominant discourses can maintain power inequalities. Foucault's (1972) understanding of power has influenced social constructionist thinking. He draws attention to how certain versions of events give rise to social practices that marginalize other ways of behaving. The power to act, take resources, and control decisions depends on the type of knowledge that is currently prevailing. The distribution of power is dictated by the discourses that dominate in social interactions. However, everyone possesses the capability to resist dominant discourses by drawing on alternative discourses. Exercising power involves defining the world in a way that permits you to pursue your interests (Burr, 1995). All human beings who use language are involved in this ongoing negotiation of power to some extent.

Foucault (1972) argues for engaging in a process he refers to as the *archeology of knowledge*. This involves attempting to unearth the origins of certain discourses or versions of knowledge. We generally don't recognize how our use of language influences social control. How do certain discourses come to hold an important place in society? By understanding the process through which certain discourses thrive and others deteriorate, we gain the awareness to

question and resist the knowledge that is usually taken for granted. By employing marginalized discourses, we can begin to change our selves and our social reality (Burr, 1995).

Reflexivity. One last important concept to describe in this brief introduction to social constructionism is *reflexivity*. Being reflexive involves applying social constructionist theory to itself (Burr, 1995). Essentially, this is an acknowledgement that social constructionism is only one constructed version of reality among many competing theories about how we know and what is real. This version is brought into being by the talk and texts that rely on the discourse about power, language, and so on, that I have been summarizing here. Engaging in reflexivity requires questioning one's own position and maintaining a posture of openness to possibilities. This *polyvocality*, as Gergen (1999) refers to it, prevents us from losing sight of how we limit knowledge whenever we align ourselves with one perspective.

Taking social constructionism to the extreme can instill one with the unsettling feeling that there is no real ground beneath our feet and no point to investing in any one opinion over another. Burr (1995) has pointed out that one weakness in the anti-essentialist thinking of the theory is that it leaves us with a concept of the person as lacking in agency and empty of any innate psychological properties. Reflexivity, since it calls us to question our thinking, can actually prevent us from taking social constructionism to this kind of extreme. Reflexivity reminds us that this is only one version of how we experience the social world. It allows us to engage with the concepts without entirely abandoning other versions of reality. I am taking a moderate social constructionist position: I agree with the theorists who recognize discourse as a powerful formative influence on thinking and experience which does not, however, comprise that experience in its entirety (Burr, 1995).

Theories of Metaphor

Many theorists within counselling psychology and other disciplines such as philosophy, linguistics, and literary theory have articulated theories about the nature of metaphor or how metaphors relate to human communication and thought processes. I have selected a few theories to present here that are particularly relevant to my study of how therapists and clients use metaphors in therapy. These include Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) understanding of the human conceptual system as metaphorical, Kovecses' (2002) cognitive linguistic model of the role of metaphor in emotional expression, and Kopp and Crow's (1998) proposal of metaphor as a central form of expression within cognitive therapy. These theories suggest the breadth of metaphor's significance by addressing its role in three areas: firstly, the human conceptual system in general; secondly, the expression of emotions in particular; and thirdly, a practical application to communication within the therapeutic process.

Theory of Conceptual Metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), a linguist and philosopher respectively, collaborated to develop a seminal theory about the human conceptual system. They disagreed with traditional understandings of metaphor as a special device within language that adds a rhetorical flourish. Based on linguistic evidence, they posited that metaphor is instead a pervasive phenomenon within ordinary language and life. They view our conceptual system for thinking, talking, and acting as fundamentally metaphorical. The conceptual system is central in defining our reality because it not only governs our thoughts, but our everyday functioning, the structure of our perceptions, and how we relate to people and the world.

Lakoff and Johnson looked to linguistic evidence for the nature of our conceptual system because they believe language is an expression of the same conceptual system that structures our thoughts and actions. They provide many examples of how the metaphors that are embedded at

an implicit level in our everyday language indicate how humans tend to understand and experience concepts by thinking of them in terms of other things. One such metaphor is “argument is war” (p. 4). We see this metaphor in many typical expressions for referring to arguments in the English language. For example, “your claims are indefensible” (p. 4). We *attack, win, lose, or demolish* an argument. We view others as our *opponents* and use strategies’ to gain *ground*. Metaphorical concepts (such as thinking of argument in terms of war) structure our actions and how we understand them.

Lakoff and Johnson argue that the metaphorical concepts are systematic which results in the language we use to describe concepts being systematic too. The systematicity of understanding one concept in terms of another tends to hide other aspects of the concept. The metaphor we rely on heavily can prevent us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with it. The fundamental values of a culture cohere with the metaphorical structure of the culture’s most basic concepts. A telling example within English speaking North American culture is the metaphor “time is money” (p. 7). We *waste* time, *spend* time, *borrow* and *budget* time, and *save* hours. This metaphor for money corresponds with the relationship between time and work in modern, capitalist, industrialized societies. We conceive of time as a commodity or resource and we live and speak consistently with this perspective. We find it difficult to think of time in other ways.

Lakoff and Johnson’s theory and definition of metaphor has been widely taken up within the counselling literature (Angus & Rennie, 1988, 1989; Kopp & Craw, 1998; Lyddon, et al., 2001; McMullen, 1999; Rasmussen & Angus, 1996; Strong, 2006; Towers, 1987; Wickman & Campbell, 2003). In addition to providing a concise definition of metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 5), their theory is useful to

counselling psychology because a model of the human conceptual system can help us to understand clients' thoughts and actions at a fundamental and societal level. It also provides information about the abundant metaphors that are implicit within everyday language, which heightens our ability to empathize and speak about life using the client's terms. With respect to my research, this theory has increased my awareness of metaphors that are difficult to identify because they operate on a subtle level within our everyday concepts. Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson's notion of conceptual metaphor has many similarities to what social constructionists refer to as discourse. The theory of conceptual metaphor therefore provides a foundation for doing a discourse analysis that focuses on metaphor in particular.

Cognitive Linguistic Model. Kovecses' (2002) cognitive linguistic model of emotions emphasizes the role of figurative expressions in human beings' communication of emotional states. Of the hundreds of linguistic expressions that English speakers, for example, use to discuss emotions, most are metaphoric or metonymic (substituting a word or expression for something closely associated with it). Kovecses builds on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of conceptual metaphor which posits that metaphoric expressions reflect humans' conceptual structures.

Kovecses (2002) argues that we use conceptual devices to construct emotions, especially the metaphor of emotion as *force*. Linguistic expressions suggest that people view emotions as forces that emerge apart from the rational and conscious self, result from certain causes, and often need to be controlled. Some conceptual metaphors for emotion are universal; others are specific to a given culture. He bases this theory of emotion as social-cognitive construction on a detailed examination of linguistic expressions in a number of languages. Kovecses refers to this as a *folk* concept of emotion because it is based on a study of how we use language rather than on

physiology. Interestingly, he points out that the current neurobiological understanding of emotion contrasts this theory in some ways, suggesting that human response actually precedes the experience of emotion. In certain ways however, folk concepts of emotion do align with the physiological experience of emotions, as in the expression *a hot temper* which reflects the phenomenon of one's temperature rising when angry.

This cognitive linguistic model of emotions applies to counselling psychology because of the importance that processing emotions holds in many approaches to therapy. Kovecses' (2002) linguistic analysis and theoretical model suggests that the verbal expression of emotions is a particular area of therapeutic interaction that merits study with respect to metaphor.

Metaphors in Cognitive Therapy. Kopp and Craw (1998) propose a central role for client-generated metaphors in cognitive therapy, based on their theoretical understanding of metaphor as a "distinct form of cognition" (p. 306). They identify three different types of cognition: propositional, imaginal, and metaphoric. Propositional cognition (also known as syllogistic) describes a logical relationship from premise to conclusion, using words. Cognitive therapy's concepts of core beliefs, schemas and automatic thoughts are considered propositional cognitions. The statement "if I don't have love, then I am worthless" (p. 307) exemplifies this. By contrast, imaginal cognitions illustrate relationships directly through image. Research in cognitive science supports the concept of imaginal cognitions operating by a separate set of principles and characteristics (see Kosslyn, 1996). A mental picture of a ball on a table is an example of an imaginal cognition.

Kopp and Craw suggest that a third type of cognition, metaphoric, integrates propositional and imaginal thoughts. Verbal metaphors are word pictures that communicate an image while also conveying propositional meaning by forming a connection between two

disparate things. Based on this theory of cognition, Kopp and Crow suggest that an appropriate intervention would be to attend to clients' metaphors that illustrate their life problems, encouraging them to explore and eventually transform the metaphors. This process draws upon metaphoric cognition to create a connection between the imaginal and propositional understandings of the life problem. It is hypothesized that the process of clients "shifting between their explored and transformed metaphoric imagery and their current life problem" (p. 309) can create new insights and possibilities for problem-solving.

Kopp and Crow view metaphor as a source of novelty and change in therapy but call for future research to identify the particular processes of therapeutic change that involve metaphoric cognition. My project did not focus directly on articulating the processes of therapeutic change that use metaphoric cognition; however, this theory has raised my awareness of metaphor's potential in transforming clients' views of their life problems.

Review of Research Studies

Now that I have presented several theories that informed this project, I will summarize some of the previous studies that have addressed the use of metaphor in counselling. The research on this topic can be divided into two main areas: clients' use of metaphor and the therapists' intentional use of metaphor. There are also a few studies, described in more detail below, that look at the interaction between therapist and client in the construction of metaphors (Angus & Rennie, 1988, 1989; Rasmussen & Angus, 1996; Wickman & Campbell, 2003). Those who focus on therapists' use of metaphors (Donnelly & Dumas, 1997; Gore, 1977; Heffner, Greco, & Eifert, 2003; Martin, Cummings & Hallberg, 1992; Suit & Paradise, 1985) show an interest in how this impacts the client. These studies share many similarities with research on the use of metaphors in supervisory relationships (Newton & Wilson, 1991; Young & Borders, 1998,

1999) where the effect of supervisors' metaphors on the counsellor-in-training are examined. By contrast, other studies (Larsen & Larsen, 2004; McMullen, 1999; Thompson, 2004) focus on clients' use of metaphors, with an interest in naming the various functions of metaphors.

Therapists' Intentional Use of Metaphor

Counsellor desirability. Some research has suggested that a counsellor's use of metaphor influences the client's engagement in the therapeutic process and perception of counsellor desirability (Gore, 1977; Heffner et al., 2003; Suit & Paradise, 1985). Gore (1977) found that high-quality, creative metaphors employed by counsellors in the early stages of counselling aroused client interest in therapy. In an analogue study, Suit and Paradise (1985) found that when counsellors used narrative analogy metaphors (a direct comparison between a subject and object) to discuss clinical issues, they were rated as *more expert* by psychology students. Similarly, childhood behavioural therapists, Heffner, Greco, and Eifert (2003), found that children preferred receiving metaphorical versus literal relaxation instructions.

Client recall. Donnelly and Dumas (1997) performed an analogue study similar to Suit and Paradise's (1985) to see how participants would rate analogical¹ versus literal advice being given to a patient by a therapist. They also tested participants' recall memory according to their assigned role of reading the vignette from the perspective of a therapist, patient, or observer. The participants were 141 college students. They read vignettes that described a person encountering a significant life stressor and included therapeutic advice that was either literal or analogical. The researchers believed that analogies function as "bridges to understanding" (p. 124) by comparing something difficult to grasp (the target domain) with something that is familiar (the source

¹ this study referred to metaphorical language as "analogical" but believed that in terms of the counselling literature, the terms analogy and metaphor could be used interchangeably (Donnelly & Dumas, 1997).

domain). The concepts of target domain and source domain were useful in developing my definition and analysis of metaphors.

Participants rated analogical advice as significantly more helpful and found it easier to recall than literal advice. In addition, they recalled information according to their assigned role when the advice was analogical but not when it was literal. Results showed that analogies affect therapeutic interactions based on the material being processed and the role of the one processing it. For example, literal statements enhanced the ability of participants who were in the role of patient to recall the stressors described in the vignette while analogical statements enhanced their memory of the therapeutic advice. While this analogue study was intended to approximate the therapeutic setting, there are obvious limitations in generalizing to the therapeutic context. The participants were not clients and may have had different experiences and engaged in different processes than clients in therapy would. The findings are also limited by only using metaphors for one clinical purpose—advice-giving. The strength of this research is that it is one of very few experimental studies on this topic and demonstrates statistically distinct impacts of literal and figurative communication.

Martin, Cummings and Hallberg (1992) also examined the therapist's intentional use of metaphor for its effect on memorability, clinical impact, and possible epistemic and motivational functions. This study was also an experimental manipulation (the first of its kind in the metaphor literature) where experiential therapists intentionally used metaphor in therapy sessions, attempting to enhance clients' recall of important therapeutic material. Therapeutic metaphor was defined as instances where "a metaphoric vehicle not typically associated with a particular topic [was] used to inform that topic." For example, "Right now, you are being driven by the red devil of perfection" (p. 144). Four therapist-client dyads participated to produce a data set of 41

audio-recorded sessions. Immediately following the sessions, clients completed a questionnaire regarding their perception of the memorable events and the helpfulness of the session.

Clients were able to recall therapists' metaphors about two thirds of the time and most often when they developed the metaphors using repetition and collaboration. On average, clients rated sessions as slightly more helpful when they recalled the therapist's use of metaphor. The researchers reasoned that the recall of metaphors indicates that the metaphors had assisted clients in encoding and recalling significant therapeutic material, allowing them to benefit more from the session. Four epistemic and motivational functions of metaphor were reported by clients: enhanced emotional awareness and understanding, conceptual bridging, enhanced relationship with therapist, and goal clarification. One weakness is that the operational definition of *clinical impact* was limited to clients' reports of how helpful the session was. While the results of this creatively designed study are promising to the field, it relied on a very small sample size for experimental research (three therapists and four clients). The researchers called for larger scale studies with diverse populations and procedures. While my project was not large scale, it offered different insights than this one because the metaphors' function was analyzed through third party observation of naturally occurring processes rather than experimental manipulation and client reports.

Clients' recall of metaphors and *counsellor desirability* have been popular themes in the literature, probably because they are easier to measure than the less tangible benefits of metaphors. It is much more difficult (and likely more significant) to measure the impact of metaphors on the clients' change process.

Supervisors' Intentional Use of Metaphor

The literature on supervisors' intentional use of metaphor parallels the research involving counsellors. Newton and Wilson (1991) examined how metaphors correlated to judged points of insight in supervision sessions. Their case study looked at the process of change in supervision sessions and the characteristics and functions of metaphors. They found *novel* and *frozen* metaphors present in both the best and least effective sessions. Frozen metaphors are those that have become more idiomatic or entrenched in everyday language and are more likely to be used without the speaker being conscious of the figurative aspect. Novel metaphors are less idiomatic and are intentional figurative comparisons being made by the speaker. Only the novel metaphors present in the best session correlated significantly to the points of insight. However, others (Rasmussen & Angus, 1996; Siegelman, 1990) have argued or demonstrated that researchers cannot assume the value of metaphor based on the categories of frozen versus novel.

In two studies, Young and Borders (1998, 1999) looked at how counselling supervisors' use of metaphor impacted the supervisees. Their analogue study (1998) divided participants, who were counsellors in training, into two treatment groups. One group watched a video segment of a supervision session where the supervisor used a narrative analogy metaphor to discuss a particular case. The other group watched a similar video segment, involving the same actors; it instead used direct language to address the clinical concerns. The participants then filled out instrument packets, responding as if from the perspective of the counsellor in the supervision session. The instruments measured their thought process in forming a clinical hypothesis. The researchers found little support for the idea that a metaphor can increase divergent thinking in the listener, but they recommended a larger study and sample size.

The following year, their multiple case study (1999) investigated the intentional use of metaphor in the naturalistic setting of counselling supervision as a means to develop the cognitive counselling skills of beginner counsellors. Young and Borders examined the impact of supervisor-generated metaphors on three factors: “1) supervisees’ recall of supervision events, 2) supervisees’ perception of the effectiveness of supervision, and 3) the supervisees’ ability to conceptualize clinical situations” (p. 137). The two supervisors deliberately used metaphors across sessions with three certain supervisees while avoiding the use of metaphor with two other supervisees. Again, they suggested research with more sensitive instrumentation and larger samples of data because their findings were not statistically significant. However, the participants’ process observations suggested that the use of metaphor was noticed and impacted them positively. Perhaps a qualitative focus would have been more appropriate due to the small number of five supervisees participating in this project.

The small and hopefully growing literature on the value of using metaphor in counselling supervision provides a potential comparison to its value within the clinical setting. It appears to be too soon to articulate the similarities and differences of using metaphor in these two settings. However, we can learn from the limitations and suggestions for further research within the supervision literature. Future research about metaphor in supervision may give us a fuller picture of how metaphors function within teaching and helping relationships in general.

Clients’ Use of Metaphor

Recently, some attention from the narrative and psychodynamic perspectives has been given to how specific client populations use metaphors in their process of recovery or identity.

Recovery narratives. Thompson (2004) investigated the metaphors used by ten participants in their process of recovering from psychological distress. Results demonstrated a

complex, inter-relational recovery process. Participants' metaphors predominantly involved the present tense, active voice, and first person perspective. The metaphors illuminated the recovery process as participants used metaphors to know and communicate their stories. This study called for further research on metaphors used in recovery narratives.

Adolescents' construction of self. Similarly, Larsen and Larsen (2004) looked at how adolescents describe themselves through the construction of self-metaphors. They explored how adolescents' self descriptions relate to narrative developmental assumptions. The adolescents' themes were grouped into three categories: 1) multiple selves 2) the self as complex and 3) embodying hope. The results reflected assumptions of both traditional and narrative developmental theories. Self-metaphor construction proved to be a task of fruitful self-reflection.

Depression. Discourse analysis has not commonly been applied to the study of metaphor in a counselling context. However, McMullen (1999) situated her descriptive/interpretive approach as a discourse analysis in a general sense. McMullen analyzed the metaphors in the talk of ten depressed women in psychotherapy. The goal of this study was to learn more about the discourse of the modern-day, western conception of depression. This primarily female, devalued condition is characterized by a discourse of oneself as deficient. The transcriptions of ten depressed women's therapy sessions were examined for the use of metaphor in relating themselves to their perceived difficulties. This provided an opportunity to examine how they constructed themselves in their social contexts. The data was taken from a separate, previous study where participants engaged in therapy-as-usual to study the effects of training in Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy.

McMullen and Conway (2002) initially used this data to examine the counselling session transcripts of 21 clients describing their experience of depression. The most dominant and

productive metaphor they found was “depression is descent” such as “spiraling down” or “sinking low” (p. 103). In McMullen’s follow-up analytical study (1999), the focus was on the metaphors that were used by ten of the women specifically to talk about their *selves* in relation to their perceived difficulties. Using the talk regarding the deficient self, two cultural imperatives were identified in the clients’ metaphors: 1) don’t be too mothering and 2) don’t be too child-like. These messages point to society’s devalued conception of mothers and children and the western cultural values of autonomy and personal responsibility of the individual. The analysis revealed how deeply our conceptions of depression are shaped by time and place.

This cultural critique of the metaphors of depression demonstrated the value of a discursive approach to metaphors in a therapy context. It provides support for my research by showing that clients’ metaphors indeed reveal significant information about their conception of self in relation to their psychological and personal struggles. This study focused on what the clients’ metaphors reveal about broader cultural attitudes to mental illness. Similarly, my research looked at what the therapist and client’s metaphors suggest about cultural conceptions of career. However, I also focused on the function of metaphor within the counselling context specifically.

Therapist and Client Generated Metaphors

One particularly interesting direction in the literature is a focus on the interactional nature of metaphor generation and use in the therapeutic context.

Psychodynamic. Rasmussen and Angus (1996) did an intensive, qualitative analysis comparing the experience of therapists’ and borderline and non-borderline clients’ metaphoric expression in a single therapy session. They looked at four cases: two borderline and two non-borderline clients who were engaged in psychoanalysis with one of two therapists. The sample

consisted of a single psychotherapy session and open-ended interview with the client and therapist who were engaged in psychoanalytically oriented, long-term treatment. This study drew upon Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) definition of metaphor as "a form of verbal expression and cognitive structuring which invokes a transaction between differing contexts of meaning" (Rasmussen & Angus, p. 523). Using audio-recordings of the sessions, the researcher selected discrete metaphoric phrases that appeared to convey significant aspects of the session. The day after the therapy sessions occurred, the therapist and client were interviewed separately and played the recorded selections of metaphor. They were asked to explain what they experienced at that moment in the session.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using a grounded theory approach to address the perspective of the client, the therapist, and the researcher. Three major categories in the function of metaphors were identified: "1) metaphors illuminate clinical issues, 2) metaphor functions to depict clients' self and object relationships, and 3) therapist metaphor stimulates an intensification of client experiential engagement in the therapy hour" (p. 521). The results suggested that borderline and non-borderline clients process metaphors differently. For the non-borderline clients, metaphor played a central role in the process of therapy. By contrast, borderline clients had some difficulty using metaphors in expansive and shared ways. This may be due to borderline clients' difficulty in shifting between fantasy and reality during therapy.

This study was limited by its small sample size (analyzing four therapy sessions). The researchers did not report on how many metaphorical segments were selected from within the sessions to analyze and discuss during the interviews. The strength of this research is that the design used observation of actual therapy sessions combined with a process interview of participants. This is one of the few studies on metaphor that look at both client and therapist-

generated metaphors. Although the researchers do not explicitly make comparisons based on the therapist and client's respective roles, the analysis implies that each party uses metaphors for different purposes.

Conceptual metaphor. Wickman and Campbell (2003) used Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor (1980, 1999) to investigate how meaning was negotiated in a counselling session. The subject of their analysis was the counselling session between Carl Rogers and Gloria that was documented in *Three Approaches to Psychotherapy* (E.L. Shostrom, 1965) and is widely used as a training film for counsellors. Conceptual metaphor theory is based on the belief that people understand abstract concepts and events by drawing on concrete experiences. The language people use demonstrates their framework for making sense of the abstract world. Wickman and Campbell wanted to see if patterns of conceptual metaphor, based on Lakoff and Johnson's theory, operated within Rogers and Gloria's session. In other words, is the theory of metaphor indicated within real life conversation?

The researchers grouped the metaphorical language of the counselling session into categories of conceptual metaphor. They considered how the metaphors played a role in Rogers and Gloria's therapeutic interaction. Three pervasive metaphor systems were identified: "self as container, knowing is feeling, and knowing oneself is seeing oneself through others' eyes" (p. 17). Interestingly, the conceptual metaphors were first reflected in Gloria's language and adopted by Rogers. The session ended with Rogers and Gloria together creating a novel metaphor of Utopia, a place of wholeness within oneself. The researchers found that conceptual metaphor theory indeed proved a helpful framework for perceiving the negotiation of meaning in the counselling session. Wickman and Campbell conceived of the overall session as a "reconstruction of Gloria's metaphoric ways of knowing and making meaning" (p. 21).

This study asked valuable questions by applying a theory of metaphor to an actual counselling session because the various theories remain largely untested within the research context. A possible weakness of their analysis is that the metaphors they have categorized are so implicit to everyday language, some may think the interpretation is contrived. For example, conceiving of knowing as feeling is metaphorical on such a subtle, implicit level. Statements such as “I don’t feel like you’ll be so harsh on me” (p. 19) are only metaphorical in the broadest sense and I would suspect that most therapists are able to successfully connect to this type of language without any consciousness or intentionality. At any rate, the metaphors examined by Wickman and Campbell were more implicit than most that are being studied in the literature. My research differed from this study by not using a specific theory of metaphor as the lens through which to analyze the counselling interaction. Instead, my discussion section provides a dialogue with the theories. I was also able to identify patterns that operated across more than one client working with the therapist.

Rationale for Proposed Study

The research on supervisors, counsellors, and clients has not yet provided enough empirically and statistically significant findings on the function of metaphor, partly due to challenges in method—small case studies and analogue studies are common. However, as a creative device embedded in an interactional dynamic between therapist and client, metaphor may not lend itself to being quantified or studied on a large scale. Rasmussen and Angus have pointed out that it is difficult to study the implicit and explicit meanings of language as they are experienced in actual therapy sessions (1996). In addition, there is a lack of dialogue between researchers from different theoretical approaches, such as the cognitive, narrative, and psychodynamic schools.

The literature is beginning to move in helpful directions. For example, Bayne and Thompson (2000) looked at a group of experienced counsellors, finding that they explicated and extended the clients' metaphors but rarely helped their clients to create new metaphors. However, this analysis was based on the counsellors' self-reports of the perceived effect. Similarly, in many case studies the researcher is also the therapist within the study. There is a need for analyses of metaphor where the results are not influenced by the therapists' knowledge of their own intentions and their perceptions of the effect on the client. The literature could also benefit from more research looking at metaphors generated by both client and therapist within the same research study, in order to examine how their roles relate to the way metaphors are created and used.

As an outside observer, I looked at how metaphors were used by one therapist and five individual clients within their sessions. In contrast to some previous studies, I studied actual counselling sessions that were previously video-recorded. As a result, the sessions were not influenced or controlled by the research question. The therapist relied on his own approach to counselling rather than intentionally altering his interventions for the sake of the study. The literature could benefit from observations of how metaphors arise within actual therapy sessions and within various practitioners' particular styles. This project offered a perspective on one such therapist and his clients. There is also a need to look at therapeutic metaphors at the more detailed level of the language itself. This point will be discussed in the Method chapter.

My project contributed to the field by giving therapists valuable insight into how practitioners and their clients communicate through metaphor and what effects this kind of talk has in the interaction. This knowledge can be applied to the development of communication skills training for professionals and students of counselling. It also clarified worthwhile avenues

for further research and began to provide a foundation for the development of theory regarding the use of metaphor in counselling. Since talk is the essence of a therapist's work, it is imperative that we take a precise and thorough look at counselling discourse in order to ensure and improve the effectiveness of the profession.

Research Question

How do therapists and clients use metaphor in therapy?

Chapter Three: Method

Restatement of Purpose and Question

This discourse analysis examined the way metaphor functions in therapy sessions, addressing the question: how do therapists and clients use metaphor? This project took an approach that met several needs within the literature: firstly, observing the naturalistic setting of therapy; secondly, engaging in third party observation; thirdly, comparing the metaphors generated by client and therapist, with attention to their roles; and fourthly, looking at therapeutic metaphors at the detailed level of the language itself. The analysis attended to the content and form of metaphors, the patterns in how they were generated and used, and the influences of the role of therapist and client.

Epistemological Framework

Discourse Analysis is rooted in the theory and practice of social constructionism. Within this framework, academic discourse is viewed as creating particular realities. Discourse analysts are thus not only interested in the discourses they examine in society but in the academic discourses they are responsible for producing themselves (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). They also aspire to acknowledge the relationship between academia and discourse in the way they design and represent their research (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Burr (1995) outlines three specific theoretical assumptions of doing research in this way. Firstly, there is a rejection of the concept of objectivity. The researcher acknowledges being embedded within a perspective and works with one's own involvement in the research process and the part this plays in the results produced. Secondly, social constructionists attempt to balance the perspectives of the researcher and researched. The researcher's voice should not be considered more powerful or truthful than the participants'; the validity of the participants'

accounts of their experience must be incorporated into the findings. Thirdly, the researcher acknowledges the role of reflexivity: due to the constitutive nature of talk, someone's account of an event is also an event in itself. According to the same concept, social construction recognizes itself as only one constructed version of accounting for experience.

Research Design

This project used the qualitative methodology of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis begins with a broad set of questions rather than a hypothesis and examines discourse as the central organizing principle in constructing social worlds (Potter, 2003). This functional perspective on language focuses on the way talk is used to perform actions (Potter, 2003). The application of this method within the field of psychology is referred to as discursive psychology. It differs from most psychological approaches to research by emphasizing human performance through communication rather than underlying competencies (Potter, 2003). Individuals' interpretative repertoires are identified, based on the grammatical constructions that people use to construct their accounts (Burr, 1995).

Discourse Analysis is a rather recent development in research methodology—the first studies in social psychology appeared in the mid-1980s (Potter, 2003). Over the last few decades, several strands of discourse analysis have developed. Phillips and Hardy (2002) identify four broad categories of discourse research, acknowledging that not all studies fall neatly into one category. Of those four categories, this project was mainly situated within Critical Linguistic Analysis, also referred to as discursive psychology, which focuses on the microdynamics of text. In this initial study, my main focus was on the use of metaphorical language within therapy sessions specifically. However, I was also, in a preliminary sense, looking at the power dynamics of how the therapeutic context influences the use of metaphor and how the broader psychological

and cultural discourse influences the use of language within therapy sessions. This secondary focus moves more towards Parker's approach (1992) and could potentially guide the questions for a follow-up study.

Discursive psychology differs from other types of discourse analysis by studying discourse in a more specific and concrete way. The analysis is grounded in specific conversational materials. In this case, the material came from individual therapy sessions. The discourse is not conceptualized abstractly, but rather as the talk within a specific social practice. Discursive psychology understands construction as a concrete and practical process where versions of the mind, persons, and reality are created and stabilized within conversation and texts (Potter, 2003).

I drew mainly on the theoretical principles and analytical strategies outlined by Potter (2003). There are three major theoretical principles to Potter's conceptualization of discourse: *action orientation*, *situation*, and *construction*. Action orientation refers to discourse as the primary means through which human action and interaction occurs (Potter, 2003). The principle of situation acknowledges that discourse is situated sequentially (previous talk sets up current utterances), institutionally (institutional identities, such as the role of therapist and client, may influence the interaction), and rhetorically (descriptions may resist attempts to challenge their version of reality). Construction represents how discourse is both constructed (from resources such as words, ideas, and systems) and constructive (versions of the world are established through talk in the course of actions) (Potter, 2003).

Rationale for the Research Method

This research method was fitting for investigating the use of metaphor in therapy for several reasons. Firstly, discourse analysis focuses on naturally occurring records of interaction

that occur independently of the researcher (Potter, 1996). There is a great need, in the literature on metaphor, for studies to engage in third party observation of the naturalistic setting of therapy sessions. (Much of the work has involved analogue studies or case studies where counsellors report on using their own strategies with their clients.) An analysis of metaphor by an external observer offered a different perspective than results that are predominantly influenced by the therapists' knowledge of their own intentions and their perceptions of the effect on the client.

Secondly, since metaphor is a phenomenon of communication, it was appropriate to examine metaphor through a rigorous analysis at the level of language itself. In fact, this demonstrates a gap in the literature—empirical research has focused on how clients are affected by the use of metaphor but without a detailed look at the actions being performed by the metaphorical talk. Discourse analysis provided a means to examine how metaphors function linguistically in therapy.

Thirdly, the counselling process itself is, like metaphor, a phenomenon of language. In recent years, researchers have recognized that language constitutes our social reality and should therefore be a focus of study when trying to understand our social world (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The counselling process is socially constructed and exists primarily in language, especially in the talk of therapists and clients. It is appropriate to study the profession of counselling from the framework of social constructionism. Language does not simply reflect and represent the counselling process but creates it.

Fourthly, discourse analysis transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. The counselling research on the use of metaphor (and on therapists' other communication strategies) has remained fairly isolated from related knowledge in fields like literary theory, cognitive linguistics, and cognitive psychology. Discourse analysis has not been applied to this question

before; it could provide a starting point for dialogue and the sharing of expertise across disciplines.

Finally, Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue for a plurality of methods in research. Using a new method can provide new insight. Discourse analysis, as a unique and relatively new approach within qualitative methods, revealed different information about metaphors in therapy, expanding our understanding of the topic.

Working Definition of Metaphor

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *metaphor* as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable (e.g. *food for thought*)” (AskOxford.com). In literary studies, a distinction is made between metaphors, similes, and analogies. However, I considered all of these figures of speech part of the broad category of *metaphor*, as is common in the counselling psychology literature.

The analysis examined both explicit and implicit metaphors. An explicit metaphor was defined as referring to one kind of thing in terms of another, where both are named. For example, “It sounds like your anger is a volcano inside of you.” In this case, the client’s feeling of anger is being talked about in terms of something more concrete—a volcano. Implicit metaphors involve figurative language on a subtler level: “Was that event emotionally charged for you?” The concept of *charged* implies a metaphor of electricity. This definition was adapted from Tompkins, Sullivan, and Lawley’s (2005) understanding of metaphor in a therapy setting. Donnelly and Dumas’ (1997) conception of metaphor as the comparison between something difficult to grasp (the target domain) and something that is familiar (the source domain) also informed my analysis. Whether communicated explicitly or implicitly, the target domain and source domain needed to be identifiable in order to consider the use of language metaphorical.

In addition, the analysis included internal and external metaphors. An internal metaphor pertains to the client himself or herself directly by describing an aspect of the client's identity, the client's relationship to something or someone, or the client's past, present or future circumstances (including the change process). For example, "my relationship to my mother has been a rollercoaster lately" is an internal metaphor because it involves the client directly. By contrast, "the weather was a dream last weekend" provides a metaphor for the weather but does not offer direct information about the client.

Data Collection

For this study, I had initially proposed to recruit therapists and a few of their clients who would be willing to have one or two of their ongoing counselling sessions audio-taped as the data for my analysis. I attempted to recruit therapists from several college and university counselling centres with no success. I then sought therapists working in private practice or other settings, but again, no one was able to participate. While the difficulty in recruitment no doubt reflected the ethical challenges of recruiting counselling clients and recording actual therapy sessions, it may have also suggested clinicians' reluctance to have their skills subjected to the analysis of a third party. It is a challenge to researchers and students in the field of counselling psychology that most of the actual work of counsellors happens behind closed doors. After a number of months of struggling with recruitment, one of my professors, Dr. Amundson, suggested the possibility of using some of his counselling videos instead.

Therefore, for the data in this study, I used video recordings of actual career counselling sessions that were previously produced for educational purposes and available for public use. The data consisted of five individual counselling sessions with five different clients. Each session was between 30 and 50 minutes in length. For each of the five sessions, the therapist was

Dr. Norman Amundson, an experienced career counsellor and Professor of Counselling Psychology on faculty at the University of British Columbia. Session One was taken from a DVD in the Merrill Education Media Series titled *Career Counseling: Work in Progress DVD* (2005) which was produced by Pearson Education, Inc. to accompany the career counselling text, *Essential elements of career counseling* (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey, & Niles, 2009). The rest of the sessions came from a DVD series accompanying the third edition of Dr. Amundson's career counselling text, *Active Engagement*, (2009) and were published by Ergon Communications. Sessions Three and Four were from the DVD *Active Engagement Through the Lifespan* (2009). Sessions Two and Five were from the DVD *Active Engagement Through a Cross-cultural Lens* (2009). The five sessions were suggested by Dr. Amundson as a diverse selection from the sessions included in the DVD series.

Description of Counselling Sessions. Client One was a woman who had recently lost her job of 10 years in the airline industry and was exploring new career directions. She was having difficulty in finding work and questioning whether she should continue looking in the airline industry or whether she should start looking elsewhere. The therapist and client explored her up and down emotional experience of being unemployed. Next, they identified some of her transferable skills. Then, the therapist led her in an intervention where she described in detail a favourite activity of hers—going for coffee with a friend to do some people-watching. From this, the client discovered that a major career interest of hers is investigating people and information. This concept of *investigating* was used as an umbrella term to brainstorm new career directions for the client. Finally, they discussed how these possibilities could lead to a new path for her, like Dorothy's yellow brick road. They explored how this metaphor of the yellow brick road applied to the client's situation and how she would bring out the courage she needed on her journey.

Client Two was a woman who immigrated to Canada from Africa in the 1970s. She had worked for over 20 years in the financial services industry. She had recently lost her job because they were streamlining the organization. She began the session by sharing that she did not know where to go, whether to continue in banking or to explore other aspects of the career world. This was difficult for her because she had typically known where she was going in the past. The therapist and client touched on the challenges of her transition to Canada as a young girl. Then they discussed her interest in finding a profession that involved managing or helping people. They decided to focus the session on exploring her interests, using the example of her volunteer work mentoring immigrant women in their transition to Canada. The client emphasized that at the core, she enjoys helping people reach their goals and wants to work in a way where she sees concrete results. They also discussed the challenges she faces at times by being perfectionistic, fearing failure, and lacking confidence in herself. They spoke about narrowing her interests to a few possible fields, including human resource management, organizational change, and immigrant transitions. They ended the session by planning for the client to pare down her choices by doing further research into these possible careers.

Client Three was a young man in his first year of university studying sciences. He was considering a career in medicine but also leaving himself open to other science-related professions. They explored some of his hobbies and interests and decided to focus on his experience of studying woodworking in high school. The client spoke highly of his teacher who encouraged him to be autonomous and to learn how to design his own projects. He also spoke of the reward of making a high quality finished product. He described the frustration that he felt when pieces of wood didn't fit together and how difficult these setbacks were. Out of this exercise, the client reflected that he enjoys working through problems on his own and the

therapist identified the client's creativity as a strength as well. They explored how the client's perseverance is valuable in university and how he now wants to take responsibility and learn for the sake of learning. The therapist suggested that the client's approach to school and career is like a construction project where the client remains flexible and designs his career for the most part autonomously. The client expressed how it bothers him that many science students assume they will go into medicine even though this may not be realistic. He emphasized that he wants to remain open and flexible with his goals. The therapist encouraged the client in his ability to make good choices for himself.

Client Four was a woman who worked as a primary school teacher. She was planning to retire in the next couple of years and wanted to explore career options for after her retirement. The therapist and client spoke about retirement as an opportunity for her to explore something new. Then, they debriefed her previous counselling session: It was a group session where some of her strengths were identified after she described one of her hobbies. The hobby involved the entrepreneurial pursuit of going to garage sales and thrift stores to find clothing she could use or fix up and resell. She spoke of the values of being thrifty, recycling and reclaiming old items, and being creative by putting an outfit together for her friends. She reflected that the feedback from the group session had caused her to take this hobby more seriously and to consider ways it could be applied as a career pursuit in her retirement. The therapist and client brainstormed a number of possibilities for how the client's passion for reclaiming used clothing could be applied in her retirement. She mentioned wanting to take this pursuit to another level by writing a book or by using her skills at a non-profit organization. She expressed an interest in entrepreneurship, working with people, and approaching her work in unique and different ways. The therapist encouraged her to also consider starting her own business related to personal shopping. She left

the session with plans to speak with others about her ideas and to look for an organization where she could apply her skills.

Client Five was a woman who had immigrated to Canada from China a number of years ago. She told the story of how hard it was at first to find work in Canada and how she took the advice of a woman who recommended she could become trained as an employment counsellor. Years later, the client was now completing her master's in counselling and wanted to discuss her decision-making process about whether or not to pursue a PhD. She spoke of a strong desire to do a PhD because she loves teaching and would like to return to China to teach at university. However, she also expressed fear because English is her second language and she felt she may be too old to start a PhD. The therapist asked her to provide an image and the client described herself as a butterfly wanting to fly upwards but wondering if it's too far to go. By exploring her fear, the client realized that things would be easier for her now because her daughter had just graduated from high school and her partner would now be in Canada to support her. The therapist led the client through an exercise of walking from where she is now to where she would be after completing the PhD. By looking back from the future to the present, she was able to describe the concrete steps she would need to follow to achieve her goal. The client realized that she would regret the decision for the rest of her life if she did not pursue her dream. She also remembered that her strong love for teaching would be a huge motivator in her studies.

These five video sessions were not planned or scripted and involved real clients with actual concerns. The DVDs were not initially produced for the sake of this research project but rather for educational purposes. They can therefore be considered demonstrations of the naturalistic environment of therapy without any influence as a result of the presence of the

researcher. However, the clients were of course aware that they were being video-recorded which could have influenced the sessions to some extent.

Transcription. The choices one makes in the transcription process depend on the type of analysis and the limits of time and resources (Silverman, 1993). Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) have argued that the process of transcription involves an initial type of analysis. The transcriber interprets, to some extent, by choosing what types of sounds and what level of detail will be noted in the transcription. This limits the conclusions that may be drawn from the data. Therefore, transcription reflects a theoretical framework and should be aligned with the method and questions being asked by the researcher.

While I recognize the importance of non-verbal behaviour in interactions (Silverman, 1993), I mainly limited my transcriptions to what could be heard on the DVDs. However, when non-verbal behaviour was due to active involvement in a counselling intervention (such as writing on the flipchart) I noted this in the transcript. My transcription was an incomplete representation of the counselling sessions I studied and unavoidably reflected my interpretation of what was seen and heard. By reflecting on the influence of transcription and by reviewing the video recordings several times throughout the analysis, I tried to minimize the negative impact of transcribing.

Jefferson developed a transcription system that is commonly used by discourse researchers (2004). In addition to transcribing all words, this system records features of interaction that have been found to be important for the analysis of talk, such as hesitations and voice intonation (Potter, 1996). The length of pauses, for example, is significant in counselling interactions because it may indicate the client is taking time to reflect on what was just said. My study was unique in that it focused on the content of metaphors rather than exploring the very

detailed level of linguistic communication that interests many discourse analysts. For this reason, I limited my transcription to a very simplified version of Jefferson's system: I transcribed all spoken words, vocal hesitations (e.g. um, ah), laughter, and lengthy pauses (three seconds or longer), as well as the nonverbal gestures mentioned above (e.g. writing on the flipchart).

My Role as a Researcher

As a researcher working within a qualitative approach and social constructionist framework, I am aware that my context and my perspective affected the way I structured this research study, the questions I asked myself, and the way I went about answering those questions. I am a 32 year old, female graduate student in counselling psychology. As I analyzed the interactions between the therapist and clients within this research study, I was myself going through the experience of learning to be a counsellor. This involved studying particular theories and techniques, practicing supervised counselling as a trainee, and even beginning my first job as a professional in the field.

I studied counselling in the UBC Counselling Psychology program which teaches the Rogerian client-centred approach as a foundation to other counselling skills and theories. The training covered a broad range of theories and interventions. Concurrently, I have been working on a diploma in Existential Analysis, a particular existential theory of psychotherapy developed in Vienna, Austria by psychiatrist Alfred Langle. I am aware that my personal theoretical orientation and approach to counselling, which I would call a humanistic-existential-experiential approach, has influenced my analysis of the counselling sessions in this research. In particular, my training experience and orientation impacts what I recognize as valuable therapeutically in the interactions between the therapist and clients.

My context as a student of counselling has given me the fresh perspective of someone fairly new to the practice of counselling. I have also had the fruitful experience of being both a counsellor and a client in therapy. I approached this research with the assumption that therapy is valuable for clients by raising awareness and facilitating change. I also assumed that there is still much to be learned about how the therapy process works and a constant need for improvement and accountability in the effectiveness of the profession.

With respect to the study of metaphor in therapy, I approached this topic with a personal interest in poetry and a passion for integrating creativity into the therapy process. Through my limited experience, I believe that metaphor can be a valuable tool in therapy. I viewed this project as an exploration into the potential value of metaphor.

Data Analysis and Validation Procedures

Before beginning the analysis of each counselling session, I watched the video at least two times in order to transcribe what was said. For each session, I began the analysis after the transcription was complete.

These analytical procedures were adapted mainly from Potter's (2003) approach with some additions from Parker (1992) and were tailored specifically to meet the needs of metaphor as the talk of interest. The analysis involved four broad stages which overlapped one another at times. The same procedure was used for each of the five counselling transcripts.

1. Coding: I began by reading over the transcript in its entirety. While doing so, I searched the transcript for segments of interaction where the therapist or client used a metaphor. I highlighted metaphors initiated by the client in blue and those initiated by the therapist in green, directly in the transcript. I also copied each of these metaphorical segments into an archive (a chart in a separate document). In the chart, I

- numbered the metaphors in order of appearance. The segments copied to the chart included the antecedent and consequence that surrounded the use of metaphor in order to provide context for the analysis. I created a separate analysis chart for each counselling session.
2. **Generating Hypotheses:** I generated more specific questions, hypotheses, and initial reflections on the use of metaphor. I noted any intriguing phenomena. These comments were recorded in a second column in the chart, alongside each metaphorical segment.
 3. **Doing the Analysis:** In general, I developed conjectures about how metaphors were functioning through a close reading of each coded segment. The adequacy of each particular hypothesis was verified through comparison to the entire corpus of coded metaphors. I attended closely to both the content (meaning conveyed) and form (how meaning was constructed). I approached the analysis in several specific ways:
 - a. **categorizing the meaning of metaphors:** For each coded segment, I categorized the type of metaphor based on content. I grouped these metaphors into content categories. For example, I found a significant number of career metaphors and emotion metaphors. I created a third column in the analysis chart for the categorizing of metaphors. In this column, I named one or more potential content categories that the respective metaphor could fit into. I also included a literal translation of what I understood the person to be saying through the metaphor. I often consulted a dictionary during this process.
 - b. **searching for patterns:** I read through the transcript and chart of metaphorical segments to identify patterns of consistency and variability in how metaphors

were used. I looked at how each metaphor was phrased: Was it in the form of a question? a statement? Was the metaphor a verb, noun, or idiomatic expression? Was it embedded within a story? During this step in the analysis, attention was paid to the function of the metaphor within the therapeutic context. I identified how the speaker was using the metaphor. For example, the metaphor may have been used to communicate empathy, express an emotion, or to reframe a situation. I made note if the metaphor seemed to be part of a particular discourse, conceptualization, or attitude within our culture. I also recorded whether the metaphor was stated explicitly or implicitly, according to my definition of metaphor. All of these comments were recorded in a fourth and final column in the analysis chart.

- c. considering next turns: The sequential organization of interaction provides important information for understanding how talk is functioning. Every utterance displays the speaker's understanding of the utterance that came before. I noted which speaker generated the metaphor by highlighting therapist initiated metaphors in green and client initiated ones in blue in the analysis chart. I looked at the roles of the two speakers in the interaction (therapist who tries to help and client who wants help) to see how the two institutional identities related to the interaction. The analysis attended to the interactions surrounding the metaphor—the antecedent and consequence in addition to the metaphor itself. In other words, I considered what kind of talk preceded and followed the metaphor in the conversation. One aspect of considering next turns is the identification of the action orientation of the

speaker (Parker, 1992). For example, the meaning of the metaphor that is being presented could be in alignment with the previous utterance or against it. This type of analysis helped to identify the rhetorical character of the talk.

- d. focusing on deviant cases: The analysis attended to the identification of exceptions. Important information was discovered, for example, when an uncommon metaphor was used or where a surprising next turn appeared.

4. Synthesizing the Analysis: After I had analyzed two of the counselling sessions, I wrote down some initial thoughts on the patterns I saw emerging when I considered the two sessions together. This helped me to take the analysis to a deeper level and to begin envisioning how the results would be organized. Once I had completed a separate analysis of each of the five counselling sessions, I synthesized the material from across the different sessions, according to content categories. To do this, I created a new analysis chart specifically dedicated to career metaphors and another for emotion metaphors. I copied all the career metaphors and the accompanying analysis into one chart so that I could recognize more patterns and group the career metaphors into further sub-categories. I followed a similar approach with a chart of emotion metaphors and analysis. I then decided on sub-categories of metaphors for career and emotion respectively. I created another document where metaphorical segments (direct quotes from the transcripts) were grouped together according to sub-categories. I worked directly from this document in order to write the Results Chapter. Throughout the process of writing, I also returned to the transcripts and individual session analysis charts to reflect and to verify my analysis.

This approach allowed me to examine various practices that are characteristic of using metaphors in interaction. As is common in discourse analysis, validation happened throughout the analysis.

5. Validating the Analysis:

- a. One way that the analysis was validated was by looking at *participants' orientations*. As previously mentioned, any turn of talk is oriented in some way to the utterance that preceded it and in the same way, provides an environment for what comes next. Therefore, the claims I made about how metaphor functions in a given interaction were evidenced in how the recipient oriented (whether directly or indirectly) to the use of metaphor. Careful attention to the display of understanding demonstrated through turn-taking provided a significant verification of my interpretations. If the therapist presented a metaphor and the client responded by accepting and expanding personally on the metaphor, the client's response could be said to validate the therapeutic value of the metaphor.
- b. Similarly, *deviant cases* validate findings by demonstrating whether or not a generalization is robust. If the talk departs from the normal pattern and this departure leads to interactional trouble, this confirms the validity of the pattern. If a deviant case, on the other hand, leads to a very similar response from the recipient, the pattern or generalization would need to be revisited. Not many deviant cases emerged in this analysis, but those that were identified proved helpful to refining the results. For example, in a couple of cases, the therapist initiated a metaphor and the client responded by correcting

him with a more fitting metaphor (“looking ahead” was corrected to “looking towards” by Client Five). This may suggest that when a client does not correct the metaphor, the client accepts that the therapist-generated metaphor does fit well for him or her.

- c. *Coherence* with the findings of other studies contributed to the validity of this discourse analysis. A number of the claims in the reviewed literature corresponded to the results of this study.
- d. This study is accountable to the *readers’ evaluation* of the research claims. The analysis is presented with a range of extracts from the transcript alongside each interpretation so that readers can evaluate for themselves.
- e. The analysis was subject to external *audits*. During the initial stages of analysis, my supervisor read two transcripts and their analyses. She offered helpful feedback and pointed out metaphors that I had missed. Another committee member read an additional transcript and analysis and agreed with the interpretations being made. During the writing of the results and discussion, drafts were commented on by my supervisor. Throughout the study, this process of receiving feedback challenged and strengthened the analysis. Since this study did not involve the recruitment of actual participants but the analysis of previously produced videos, I was not able to seek member checks from the clients.

Representation of Data

The data was represented in the Results Chapter in two major categories: career metaphors and emotion metaphors. To begin, an overarching difference in the function of

metaphors was presented based on the distinction between common and original metaphors. Within the career section, the data was grouped into sub-categories based on the content of the metaphors. This included directional, spatial, capitalist, fittingness, construction, and retirement metaphors. Within each content sub-category, metaphor was used in a number of ways by the therapist and the client. In the emotion section, some metaphors were grouped according to content categories, including metaphors of emotional impact, joyful emotions, and emotion as upwards and downwards movement. Others were grouped according to the therapeutic function of the metaphors: reflecting clients' emotions and transforming emotions. The analysis attended to how the metaphor was received by the listener. The roles of the therapist and client were considered with respect to how they used metaphor. The relationship between the metaphors and cultural conceptions of career and emotion were explored. Overall, the interpretations were consistently supported with quotes from the transcripts.

Ethical Considerations

Since the data for this study came from DVDs that are available to the public, there were no ethical concerns regarding human participants. Nonetheless, I took care not to reveal the names or identifying information of the clients in the videos. I felt that it was appropriate to name the therapist in the videos since they are intended to accompany his career counselling text and since he has explored the use of metaphor in counselling in his academic publications. By examining one clinician and theorist's practice regarding metaphor, this study can encourage more academic dialogue about the use of metaphor within career counselling.

Chapter Four: Results

A number of metaphors were identified in the transcripts, some generated by the clients, others by the therapist. Two significant content categories that emerged are metaphors relating to career and emotion, respectively. I will first report on the analysis of the career metaphors, then the emotion metaphors. When excerpts from the transcripts are presented, “T” indicates the therapist’s speech and “C” indicates the client’s speech. All coded metaphors are italicized. The number of the transcript and the metaphor are listed in parentheses after each quotation (e.g. Transcript One, metaphor five = 1.5).

Career Metaphors

The metaphors of career revealed how the client and therapist view the client’s career and how they conceptualize career more generally. We can also extrapolate that some of these metaphors suggest how the broader culture conceptualizes career, since the therapist and client are relying upon metaphors that are prevalent in everyday language. I therefore observed two overarching trends in the way these metaphors relate to our culture’s discourse about career: some metaphors were common, everyday words and expressions that we use to speak about career; others were original metaphors that revealed something unique about the client’s particular situation or approach to career.

I refer to the former as *common* metaphors of career because they appear to belong to the society as a whole and therefore merit analysis on that broader level. The therapist and client use these metaphors often without necessarily even being aware that they are doing so. These common metaphors are significant to this study because examining them provides the opportunity to bring our assumptions to the surface and engage in a dialogue about them. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) look at the most basic metaphors in language and what these suggest about

how we, as humans, structure our reality. Similarly, the metaphors of career identified in these counselling sessions are intrinsic to the way our culture approaches career. This is important because career is essentially a way of looking at life's major tasks and interests. The way we conceptualize career reflects what is valued by our culture and what is meaningful in life for us as individuals.

The common metaphors identified here can be grouped around a few basic beliefs or assumptions about what a career is. By examining these basic career metaphors, which arise repeatedly in the counselling sessions, we can identify what is often taken for granted. The intrinsic values of a Western (or Canadian) conception of career become evident. We recognize the assumptions we are making about how career should be approached in life. By bringing to the surface these assumptions that are generally automatic and deeply embedded in our approach to life, we can begin to see other options. We can live into new career metaphors and free ourselves from the imbalances of having only one or two dominant ways of thinking. It is important to note, however, that the dominant metaphors for career in our culture are not inherently bad. They offer some weaknesses and some strengths. Nonetheless, the tendency when one metaphor becomes an unconscious assumption is that other possibilities are easily silenced.

Returning to what I refer to as *original* metaphors, these demonstrate that the client and therapist do not always operate within the dominant discourse. At times, the therapist and client generate a fresh or personalized metaphor that provides an alternative way of conceptualizing career. These are opportunities to resist or transcend the dominant discourse and introduce more variety in the approach to career. They often arise out of the client's particular style, concerns, or

interests. This means that they are uniquely relevant to the client rather than reflecting a widely held belief about career.

With original metaphors, significant time may be spent in the counselling session to expand the metaphor and elaborate on its meaning for the client. The therapist and client give evidence of their awareness that they are speaking metaphorically (using a source domain to gain insight into a target domain). These career metaphors appear to provide more therapeutic value within the counselling sessions. They are also significant from a constructionist perspective because they offer alternatives to the dominant discourse. These alternatives can be applied within the field of career counselling to open up new discourses and thus, new possibilities or ways of being.

In addition to the umbrella concept of metaphors functioning as common or original, the career metaphors identified in the transcripts have been grouped into several content sub-categories. These include directional, spatial, capitalist, fittingness, and construction metaphors. One transcript also provided a couple of metaphors for retirement that are worthy of note. Within each content category, I will first discuss the common metaphors of career and then highlight any metaphors that appear to be original in some way. By far, the most ubiquitous of the metaphors found are those that pertain to career as direction.

Directional Metaphors

The transcripts demonstrated that the most widespread metaphor of career conceptualizes it as a movement or direction in life. For example, the following quotations reflected how a career involves taking a direction in life, heading somewhere, pointing towards something, or going straight from one thing to another:

T: To see where they're *pointing* in terms of a career *direction* (1.25).

T: You're just trying to figure out who you are and get a sense of your own identity and what *direction* to take (2.12). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: So that's where I'm *headed* I guess but... (3.27). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: But it's a chance to sort of change *direction* and do something way *off the map* (4.4). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: Yeah, yeah so *straight* out of high school (2.1). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The last quotation here, which refers to beginning a job “straight out of high school” (2.1), revealed the value of having a clear direction upon graduation and not wandering or diverging from it.

Note that the metaphor of career as direction is so implicit and obvious that it almost does not seem metaphorical. Yet it is a metaphor—I visualize this as career being an arrow pointing towards something. Career does not inherently have to be a direction. By contrast, career could mean staying exactly where you are now.

Some more imagistic ways of envisioning career as direction were based on the notion that career is like taking a path or road, looking a particular way, or going on a journey:

C: Or if I should *look a different way* (1.8).

C: In order to change my career *path* (1.59).

T: You know, you thought you were going to *go down this road* (3.31). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: The safer *route* would be and that's what people say and that you're a natural and just continue tutoring... (4.5). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: And so what's next, what's your next part of this *journey*, this career *journey* (5.3)? (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The idea of a journey connotes excitement, meaning, or adventure along the way. In addition, the metaphors of a path, road, route, or journey suggest the assumption that a career should be in motion, advancing, and going forward towards a destination.

Other metaphors that emphasized the movement component of career being a direction include the notions of taking steps, going somewhere, and moving:

C: I kind of don't know what my *next step* is now (1.1).

C: It's very confusing and it's also frustrating because ah I've always known *where I wanted to go* when I was working (2.13). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: I'm getting to the point where I want to *move on* where I still have a lot of energy and time to do it (4.9). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: So what *steps*, what am I going to have to do to get there? Can you guide me?

C: One *step* at a time.

T: One *step* at a time (5.19). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The metaphor of taking steps comes out of the human experience of being embodied. It compares the physical experience of walking to the act of developing a career. This is interesting because developing a career does not actually necessitate physically moving. One could move a great distance in one's career while staying in the same city, institution, or even the same building. It seems that comparing abstract concepts, like career, to the concreteness of being embodied is helpful for making sense of our experience in this world. But this metaphor comes with the assumption that a career should be moving rather than stagnant. It also emphasizes the importance of setting goals (*aims*) and achieving them.

The following quotation is interesting because it applied the metaphor of direction to an industry rather than to an individual employee:

C: Industry that's *going nowhere* (1.5).

The client was referring to the industry of airline transportation. We recognize, here, the idea that industries, similar to workers, are valued when they are progressing, growing, or moving towards something.

Note the following excerpt where the therapist presented a directional metaphor and then the client reworded it to fit her specific situation:

T: Then you do some education and so today you're sort of in a master's program in counselling psychology.

C: Right.

T: And *looking ahead*.

C: And *towards* actually, I'm just towards the end of my program and I've done all the courses and practicums... (5.4). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The therapist provided a directional metaphor for career: "looking ahead" and then the client corrected it to a more precise visual metaphor for her situation: "towards." This has more of a connotation of a specific arrival point than "looking ahead"; it is focused on a particular end. Both are metaphors for envisioning and anticipating the future. This was a rare moment in the transcript where we observe some *interactional trouble*. The client did not accept the metaphor exactly as presented, but refined it. Here, interactional trouble can be viewed as positive therapeutically because it provided an opportunity for the client to identify a metaphor that is more suitable for her current situation. The therapist and client understood her focus better as a result.

One last type of directional metaphor of career is the notion of career as upwards movement:

C: I started working as a teller and then *worked my way up* (2.3). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

This connotes the well-known metaphor of the *career ladder*. It emphasizes progress and a conception of the workplace as hierarchical, with employees gaining more power as they move

upwards. I was surprised that this one quotation was the only common metaphor I found for career being conceptualized as moving upwards. This could very well depend on who the clients are—of the five sessions analyzed here, only one client had worked in the business world.

Up until this point, the directional metaphors discussed have been *common* or abundant in everyday conversation about career. They reflected the dominant discourse that career should be moving in a particular direction, on a path or journey that involves taking steps (setting and achieving goals). I see the strength of the directional metaphor being that it can help people to envision a goal and to understand what actions (or “steps”) are necessary to get there.

A weakness, however, is that this metaphor suggests individuals should have an idea of where they are going. This dominant discourse could be experienced as disconcerting or negative for clients or people in general who are studying, learning, or exploring their stage of career. They could internalize the belief that it’s wrong not to have a destination in mind. This could cause unnecessary stress. Similarly, people who take value in sticking with one job at one level for many years may feel that their choices or circumstances are not socially acceptable. They may feel marginalized by the discourse that workers should *move*, *step forward*, or *change paths* more frequently.

It would be helpful if therapists and clients, as well as society as a whole, could generate different metaphors to widen the range of possible ways to conceptualize career. For example, some alternatives could be metaphors for career as exploration or career as a state of *being* rather than *doing*. In addition, comparing career to a plant or tree could be helpful because this conceives of development differently: a tree can be growing and changing while remaining rooted in one place. A path or road, on the other hand, implies constant movement.

In addition to the common metaphors already explored, two *original* metaphors that relate to career as direction were identified in the transcripts. The following excerpt demonstrated how the metaphor of *career as path* can be developed into an elaborate metaphor that is personalized to the client's needs:

T: It's interesting when you think of like leaving your last position which I gather you enjoyed.

C: Yeah.

T: This could be, you know, I mean a *launch pad* for you in some ways.

C: A new *path*.

T: A new *path*. Let's think about that. If we had to draw an image for that, what do you think it might look like, the new *path*?

Client One took the metaphor that the therapist introduced as "launch pad" and rephrased it as "a new path." The therapist, then, noted the client's choice of language and invited her to take ownership of the metaphor by envisioning it and putting it in her own words.

Next, the client came up with the image of the "yellow brick road"—a reference to the book *The Wizard of Oz*. She seemed to be suggesting that beginning a new career could be a beautiful, easy, dream-like activity with no obstacles in her way:

C: I just see like the *yellow brick road* with the green grass all parting so the sun can shine down and I can walk right through into my new *path*.

T: A new *path*, ok, so you're—

C: I don't know. Like that's my thing as far as jobs and careers I just- it seems huge

T: Well I like that *yellow brick road*, let's just take that – you had your – if we look at it. You had your – what happened to Dorothy before she got to the *yellow brick road*?

The therapist initiated expanding this metaphor and examining how it applied to the client's current situation. The client had expressed a concern that choosing her new path was "so huge" and that she wanted to be able to "walk right through" onto her new path.

The therapist then used the yellow brick road analogy to reframe the challenges the client was facing in a positive way where she could find a good result in the end:

C: (*laughs*) She went through a *tornado*.

T: She went through a *tornado*. (*laughs*) Yeah we've been talking about the job loss sort of stuff and all of that. She was probably happy in her home and doing this sort of stuff.

C: Yeah.

T: And then what happened to her? The *tornado* starts.

C: She got took away by a *tornado*.

T: And it just kind of happened, right? I mean, she didn't ask for it or whatever.

C: She didn't have any notice. (*laughs*)

T: She didn't have any notice.

C: She couldn't plan for backup.

T: She couldn't plan for backup and there she lands. Ok, so what happens when she lands, what happens then?

C: She's kind of confused I guess.

T: She's kind of confused, where am I going to go, what am I going to do?

C: Yep – looking around.

The therapist was helping the client to expand the metaphor and identify similarities between

Dorothy's situation and the client's. Dorothy's tornado informed the client's understanding of

her experience of sudden job loss. By identifying with the story's character, the client could find

meaning in the hardship she was enduring and could hope for what could come next in her

career:

T: What else happens in that story?

C: I guess she learns a lot. (*laughs*)

T: Yeah.

C: It all works out.

T: It all works out in the end.

C: It has a *happy ending*.

T: Now she also has some *companions*.

C: Yep.

T: Ok, and what are those *companions*, are they just friends or people helping her, or do they represent something?

C: Yeah, they all kind of represent something different I guess. Like one wants a *brain* and a *heart* and *courage*.

T: Courage.

C: So I guess you need all of those to go on your *journey*.

Entering fully into the story of the Wizard of Oz offered an opportunity for the therapist to

challenge and empower the client:

T: On your *journey*, so the brain (*both laugh*) you got the *brain*, you've got the *heart*. Do you have the courage?

C: Yeah, I think I do. It's hiding maybe a little bit.

T: Ah? It's hiding a bit.

C: Maybe.

T: Yeah. What's going to bring it out?

C: My need to learn, my need to have excitement and busyness and change and challenges (1.60 – 1.72).

We see that the therapist dedicated significant time to exploring the meaning of this metaphor. Overall, the result is that the client's metaphor has been reframed. It began as an image of career being easy and was transformed into an emblem for overcoming adversity and developing the qualities one needs to succeed. By the end of the counselling session, the "happy ending" provided hope while allowing room for hardship and personal growth along the "journey."

While the "yellow brick road" metaphor corresponded with the motif of career as direction, once explored, it enriched the basic assumption that career should be moving towards a destination and provided more detailed meaning for the client's situation. It expanded the notion of career to include hardship (job loss), personal growth (the development of courage), and the possibility of new discovery (a happy ending). This excerpt showed the usefulness that expanding a metaphor can have for the therapeutic tasks of empathy, reframing, discovering meaning, and strength challenge, to name a few.

A second original metaphor for career as direction provided a picture of Client Five as a butterfly flying upwards. The client was describing the decision she needs to make between working as a counsellor or continuing with school to complete a PhD. She expressed her strong desire to do a PhD because she loves teaching but also her fear of continuing her studies because English is her second language. The metaphor arose when the therapist directly asked her to provide an image for her situation:

T: So can you think of a metaphor that might describe that? I mean, sort of an image, do you have an image that comes to mind at all?

C: A *butterfly*.

T: Yeah.

C: *Want to fly, not very high*, I'm not talking about a *butterfly like flying very high*, no but I feel like *I have the wings*.

T: Yeah.

C: I am starting to think it's like *wanting to fly*, so that's the metaphor. (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The metaphor of “wanting to fly” represented the client’s desire to do something that she views as challenging in her career—pursuing a PhD. Her comment, “not very high,” reflected her fear or hesitancy about her ability. The butterfly’s fragility seemed to capture the client’s doubts while its wings symbolized her desire to follow her dream. By expanding on the description, the client demonstrated how a metaphor can be complex and nuanced to a particular person’s situation and feelings about it.

The therapist then asked her to draw the image on a flipchart. This provided more opportunity to draw meaning from the metaphor:

C: So this would be the *ground*. (*drawing on the flipchart*)

T: Ok.

C: Yeah, this will be the *ground*, and I will put up *here* (*draws*) and now I feel like *I have the wings*, but the *sky is here*, so we will see the *teaching and university level is there*.

T: Ok so it's *way up here*.

C: But see *my head is looking up*.

T: So you're *looking this way*.

C: Yes, it's not like if I'm *looking that way* and I don't have any confidence but I am *looking up*, so.

T: So you've got some confidence here but you're sort of seeing, wondering if you can make the *big flight*, is that it?

C: Umhmm, whether I can or whether I'm able to and um, considering a lot of you know factors, you know, I'm 44. (*laughs*)

T: Aha ok.

C: That's another thing that I'm thinking “hmmm.”

T: So the fears then, that's where you sort of left this, when you sort of talked about the fear, you know, can you *make the flight*? What are the fears that you're facing (5.5-5.9)? (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

By putting the image on paper, the client had the opportunity to place the butterfly in a context, locating her in reference to her goal of being able to teach at university. The process drew attention to details within the image, such as the meaning behind which way the butterfly's head is looking. To her, "looking up" meant that she has some confidence even though she is unsure about the decision. The image became allegorical; each part of the drawing represented one aspect of the client's situation.

We see that this image fits with directional metaphors because the client conceptualized her future goal as above her in the sky. She needed to fly upwards to reach it. In the common metaphor for upwards movement that was previously discussed ("worked my way up"), the idea of height represented gaining a supervisory position in the organization. Whereas in the original metaphor, the upwards movement may have related more to the difficulty or challenge involved in reaching a goal. To the client, her goal felt like it was above her, like it was something she needed to reach for.

The therapist showed that asking a client explicitly to name a metaphor can yield an opportunity for the client to thoroughly explore how she views her situation. There was additional therapeutic value in asking her to draw the image on paper. The therapist engaged fully with the client's image of herself by asking her, "can you make the big flight?" He used her image but also put it in his own words by referring to "the big flight." This metaphor provided him with an entrance into processing the client's fear. The therapist spoke of the "butterfly," her "flight," and "moving upwards" a number of times during the session, which provided thematic continuity to their conversation.

To summarize, we have seen that the metaphor of career as direction is intrinsic to a western approach to life and work—it unearths our emphasis on the value of progress and

constant movement. However, we have also seen that the simple directional metaphor of a path or flight can be elaborated to emphasize the rich meaning of career for one client's particular circumstances.

Spatial Metaphors

Spatial metaphors of career are similar to directional metaphors but they distinguish themselves by conceptualizing career as located in a physical space. For example, types of professions are grouped together using space metaphors:

T: So, where do you find jobs that kind of fit into this general *sphere* (2.41)? (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: I know practically that immigration is opening up, it's a huge *area* of, a *field* of help (2.43). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: They don't know why that is and they're just maybe pursuing it because that's a *field* that many scientists go into (3.26). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: And it's a little, it's, it seems *way out there* from teaching because it has no, um, there's no commonality to this (4.11). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

In order to make sense of different types of careers, we tend to categorize them into fields, areas, spheres, or domains. Jobs that are similar to one another, therefore, occupy the same metaphorical space. These metaphors for grouping careers are common to everyday language and are necessary in order to organize the chaotic variety of professions in modern society. However, one limitation of this conceptualization of career is that clients and therapists might overlook job or career possibilities that are not in the "field" that interests the client. A client may not realize that careers in other fields may require similar skills or offer similar values. By conceptualizing careers as physical areas, it could be difficult for us to see the connections between one domain and another.

One way to overcome this problem in counselling is to use different metaphors when clients group careers and brainstorm options. For example, the metaphor of *mind-mapping* or *mind-webbing* can transcend the boundaries between fields. Another alternate discourse could be to talk about career *themes*. A theme is not located in physical space, so it could feel more natural to identify parallel themes in careers that are not usually grouped together.

In fact, in Transcript One, the client and therapist came up with a metaphor for career that transcends the boundaries of occupational fields. Initially, they were discussing the client's interest in work that involves "investigating." Then the client suggested the image of an "umbrella" to signify the importance that the word "investigating" has for her:

T: So if when you're finding out about people- And investigating is kind of a big word isn't it? I mean you can be doing investigating about-

C: It sounds really cool.

T: It sounds really cool – it sounds like a word that we could expand into lots of possibilities.

C: It's like an *umbrella* word I guess, so you can pull what you need (1.46).

A bit later in the session, they began considering career options for the client. The therapist brought back the image of an "umbrella" and drew it on the flipchart to provide a structure for their brainstorming session:

T: Ok, so we're going to think about investigating people and information. Let's just start by putting that in the middle. (*writes*) I mean, that's sort of a big *umbrella*. Do you like the image of an *umbrella*?

C: Yeah.

T: If we make a big *umbrella* – an investigating people and information *umbrella*...

C: (*laughs*)

T: Now, what are the things that we could *hang* underneath this *umbrella*? And maybe rather than having me write this I'll let you just work with the pen a while. What are some possibilities, just letting your mind go, what are some career or occupational areas that involve investigating people and information (1.51)?

The image of an umbrella was helpful for brainstorming because it allowed the client and therapist to be open to many different possibilities along the theme of investigating. As the

therapist implied, there are a number of different “occupational areas” that could “hang underneath this umbrella.”

Now, to return to the conceptualization of *career as space or location*, Client Two took this metaphor to a more personal level:

C: Now I’m *sitting in a place* where I really don’t know *where to go* from here (2.5). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: I’m realizing now that there is a *whole world* out here that I haven’t explored (2.6). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

This client appeared to be conceptualizing career as *where she is located* in life right now. It makes sense that as embodied creatures, this would be a helpful way to make sense of the abstract concept of career. This has obvious similarities to the metaphor of career as direction, but in this case, career was a world to be explored. The metaphor is not unidirectional. On the contrary, an exploration can move in many different directions and connotes the idea of discovery.

There are definite strengths to this metaphor of career: it communicated a sense of adventure, excitement, and the opportunity for growth. Nonetheless, the metaphor of a world to explore suggested that one may have to venture far from home. It could be overwhelming and we see that the client expressed a concern that she didn’t “know where to go from here.” It is interesting that the client appeared to be looking for a sense of direction within this intimidating career world. Perhaps the metaphor of a path or journey would be helpful for her or she may even appreciate a new metaphor that has yet to be created.

Capitalist Metaphors

A few metaphors from the counselling sessions related to career as a capitalist enterprise. This included the concept of the employee needing to “sell” oneself in order to get hired:

C: I'm not getting the callbacks to *sell myself* at an interview (1.3).

According to this metaphor, the employee was like a commodity that needed to be marketed and purchased.

A similar metaphor was evident in the client's attitude towards time spent in an organization:

C: I've *wasted a lot of time* in the industry that's going nowhere (1.4).

This statement suggested that work is an investment and that a good investment involves receiving a return of some kind. To "waste time" implied that one could have been doing something more valuable instead. By contrast, if the industry was "going somewhere" (growing, thriving, offering job possibilities), it would be a valuable use of the employee's time.

An interesting word that came up in several of the counselling sessions is "pursue":

C: And I hope to *pursue* a career in medicine (3.2). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: So I didn't *pursue* higher education (2.2). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: And it may end up that I do something different but I think the thing for me is to keep in mind that there are other things besides my career that I could *pursue* (4.27). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The word "pursue" is so commonly used to refer to goal-setting that it may not seem metaphorical. However, the first definition of pursue is to "follow with intent to overtake, capture, or do harm to" (Thompson, 1992, p.730). It is a word that is associated with aggression and the idea of an animal hunting. I have included *career as pursuit* with metaphors of capitalism because it connotes the idea of aggressive competition and goal-setting. These values are imbedded in the capitalist approach to economics. It is not surprising that our culture's approach to career would resonate with principles of the market economy since our employers and employees function within such an economic system.

A corresponding connotation was present in the word “spearheading”:

T: We kind of have a tradition of, you know, thrift stores and consignment stores but maybe there’s some new structures or a new way of kind of organizing that you might sort of be *spearheading* here (4.24). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

A *spearhead* is literally the “point of a spear” (Thompson, 1992, p. 876). We use this word to speak about taking initiatives in career and it carries the association of leading an attack. Again, this implies that career requires an aggressive approach in a competitive environment in order to succeed.

It is quite understandable that career would be experienced and conceptualized as competitive and requiring an aggressive approach in a capitalist society. A strength of the *career as capitalist* metaphor is that it motivates and empowers individuals by emphasizing the importance of goal-setting, striving, and fighting for one’s dreams. One weakness is that the sense of competition can be experienced as negative for workers or those seeking employment. An aggressive approach to career can have the side-effect of damaging relationships. Granted, developing new career metaphors cannot fundamentally change our economy and the fact that there are more unemployed people than available jobs. Nonetheless, it could be helpful to develop more collaborative, communal metaphors for career development and seeking employment. For example, the metaphor of *resonating* with an organization rather than “selling oneself” suggests the possibility that the employer and employee could experience a mutual connection.

Metaphors of Fit

Metaphors of *career fit* reflect that it is good when the individual is the right *size* and *shape* for the job, that a worker and a work environment can correspond with one another. The following quotations referenced this type of metaphor:

C: I enjoy finding them things, you know most of them don't speak English when they come from central Asia, so where do they *fit*, so I assess them (2.21). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

C: The safer route would be and that's what people say and that you're a *natural* and just continue tutoring... (4.5). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

To be a "natural" is the idea that one has an inborn ability to do a certain type of work. To "fit" means that one belongs or goes well with a certain place or environment.

A similar metaphor was present in the concept that people or jobs can *line up* with one another:

T: Yeah, I mean one of the things I guess I remember, um, from that session is that you know as a teacher, the natural thing to think about once you retire is well then I'll tutor or I'll, you know-

C: Something in education

T: You know it's a little *line* of the teaching, it's an educational *line*, I'll just do something different (4.2). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

In a few of the sessions analyzed, the therapist actually presented to the clients an activity that reflects this metaphor:

T: Do they all kind of *line up* with something in the *centre* (2.17)? (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The therapist presented a wheel diagram based on the concept that career is best when *aligned* with different aspects of self and life. The diagram suggested how the therapist looks at career exploration and decision making. The wheel diagram was a visual metaphor that actually expanded beyond the typical concept of *fit* within career counselling.

Traditionally, the concept of *fit* referred to the correspondence between personality or interests and the client's career choice. Here, the therapist's wheel includes not only personality and interests but also family, education, experience, and labour market, to name a few. The traditional metaphor of *career as fit* was helpful for clients because it encouraged self-awareness about how people with different personalities enjoy different types of work. However, the metaphor was somewhat restrictive because it implied that personality or interests were more

important than many other contextual factors such as the abovementioned family, education, and experience. The therapist's new metaphor for career was a wheel where a number of factors align with a career decision in the centre. This broadens the clients' scope of what it means to fit with a job, hopefully providing a realistic and holistic picture of what influences a career decision.

A Construction Metaphor

The metaphor of career as construction is an original metaphor that was generated by the therapist in Transcript Three. Initially, the therapist and client spent much of the session exploring the client's interest in woodworking as a hobby:

T: What would be something you enjoy doing?

C: Well, ah.

T: That you want to talk about?

C: I really enjoy, like I mentioned already I really enjoyed woodworking when I was in high school (Transcript Three). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

Afterwards, when they returned to the discussion of the client's career plans, the therapist introduced the metaphor of career as a construction project:

T: It's interesting cause um when you were saying this I was thinking as you like a lot of the same skills allow you to make something like this, the designing and the perseverance and the attention to detail and some of this. I mean, that's what you need in your studies in sciences right? But, I was also sort of struck by the fact that just as we started off the conversation you were saying um, "I'm in science now but I think I'm going to end up in medicine" but you know I was wanting to one extent, you know, our careers are like *construction*, like we *construct* something right? It's like um, here you are at university, you've kind of ah, you've *designed* a career called medicine ok? And now you've taken courses and that might be the *wood*, here's all the pieces of *wood* that are kind of flopping around at your feet that you're having to do something with. Um but in the end, it's gonna hopefully be something that'll last, that'll be good. Um, but it's gonna change a little, you know, like you might have times of frustration, you may have to modify it some way, um, you know in a way a career is sort of like you're *building* a career. I don't know, does that make some sense what I'm saying that it's like a *construction project*? (pause) And ah you're sort of *building* this and it's probably important for you that you're *building* it on your own, you know that people are allowing you the freedom to not say, "well you should be you know"... that applies to someone like me as well as parents and others. You know that advice is good and things like this but in the end, it's like going to be your show and your *construction project*. And you're gonna come out of this and enter into a life where career is *construction*. I don't know.

C: Yeah, I kind of, struck actually what you just said, the part about I take like take some advice whatever but in the end it's my decision (3.24). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

In this excerpt, the therapist generated a metaphor out of the client's own life experience with woodworking. By selecting a metaphor that related to the client's world, the therapist communicated that the client's story had been understood and he reflected it back in a new way. The original metaphor allowed the therapist to join with the client and empathize at a sophisticated level. Empathy can at times become mundane in counselling when therapists robotically reword what the client just said while emphasizing the emotions. In this instance, the therapist instead empathized indirectly by referencing an activity discussed earlier in the session and using it in a different way. The therapist highlighted the importance and value that woodworking had for the client without using a heavy-handed formula.

The original metaphor did not only offer the opportunity for joining and subtle empathizing; the therapist also provided a meaningful and helpful framework for how the client was approaching career. The client emphasized several times that he was studying sciences and may pursue medicine but that he wanted to be open to other options too:

T: And now, so far so good, this has worked, this hasn't worked, you're trying – it's a bit like that, you know? And maybe there's things that come up along the way or there's going to be ah, the *chip that comes off the piece of* [wood]...you know, you thought you were going to go down this road and well now you gotta *rebuild some pieces* or retake it in certain directions. But um in a sense, you are *constructing* your career and I really like the idea too that it's, the fact that you are have ownership, that you're not depending on somebody else to tell you what to do or where to go. You can actually decide this for yourself and you have the confidence in yourself to know that you're going to make the right decisions when the time comes.

C: Hopefully.

T: Hopefully, right. (*laughs*)

C: I – I don't know, I find that a lot of things that I am setting, like I do enjoy it so it is keeping me on that path and I know that I've only gone through my first year so, like there's so much more that I will study. And so, I am hoping that if the opportunity arises where I do see an interest that I will actually pursue it, I won't say "oh no, like wait, wait a bit longer" because you know, you might find something that'll take you back to medicine and so, I don't know. I want

to keep, I want at least I'm saying I want to *keep the doors open* (3.30). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The therapist generated the metaphor of construction which allows for creativity, flexibility, and intentionality in the career development process. It appeared to be well-tailored to the particular needs of this client. Having unknowns in the future can be anxiety-provoking for clients, especially for students beginning university with many options to choose from. In this case, the therapist reframed the unknown as meaningful by pointing out how it engaged the client's ability to be dynamic in the process—to design, begin constructing, encounter obstacles, and then redesign. He also recognized the importance this client places on making it his own.

The approach to career being described by the client did not fit well with the dominant discourse of career as heading towards a particular destination. In fact, the client drew on the metaphorical expression “keep the doors open” in order to transcend the assumption that one should have a set destination. Similar to the idea of “keeping doors open,” the image of a construction project resisted the common metaphor of following an established path. The metaphor of career as construction, therefore, provided a useful alternative to more common career metaphors by placing value on intentionality, creativity, and flexibility. This type of metaphor could apply well to clients at university or at major transition points. They need to feel secure and confident in their agency despite facing many choices, unknowns, and potential obstacles in the future.

Having argued for the value of the construction metaphor, it is important that I mention that this client did not take up the metaphor of construction explicitly by speaking about it. The client responded openly to the metaphor but did not engage it strongly. It seems that this particular client did not tend to communicate through metaphors that are extrinsic to everyday expressions. It may also be relevant to note that the metaphor of construction was generated by

the therapist. Compare this to the “yellow brick road” and “butterfly” metaphors discussed earlier which were generated by the clients themselves. In those cases, the clients strongly engaged in the discussion of the metaphor. Metaphors initiated by the client may result in more expansion and application of the metaphor by the client.

Retirement Metaphors

One of the counselling sessions analyzed involved Client Four who was approaching retirement and considering what her next options were. In this session, the therapist presented a few different metaphors for retirement:

T: I mean, I think I find that kind of the exciting part of retirement is that it’s a chance to almost like take a *second look* at it, *catch a second wind*... (4.3). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: But it’s a chance to sort of change *direction* and do something way *off the map* (4.4). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

These retirement metaphors seemed to relate to common metaphors of career that we have already discussed. The phrases “catch a second wind” and “change direction” were directional metaphors; the idea being that at retirement, one can move in a new direction. “Way off the map” corresponded to the spatial metaphors of career and suggested that retirement can involve exploring new, uncharted territory. The expression “take a second look” did not necessarily fit in these major career metaphor categories but its meaning corresponded to the others—having a fresh perspective or a new focus in life.

These expressions for retirement demonstrated metaphor’s capacity to capture the meaning and significance of an activity using only a few words. They implied that retirement can be an exciting, positive change in life with the possibility for new activities, new identity, and personal growth. In this way, metaphors can function as a shorthand in counselling—validating the meaningfulness of a given task that the client faces.

It seems to be very important to develop metaphors that identify the meaning that retirement has for the client. Retirement is a time when the client will be preparing for significant losses, including the loss of a job, contact with co-workers, a daily structure, and even one's career identity. The therapist, here, named a way of conceptualizing retirement that opens up the value that this phase of life could have for the client. In this particular session, the therapist and client did not explore these metaphors in any detail. However, these excerpts demonstrated the potential usefulness of creating and exploring retirement metaphors in counselling. This is an area that merits future research, especially given the high numbers of baby boomers who will be reaching retirement age in the next few years.

Emotion Metaphors

Many metaphors identified in the counselling sessions related directly to the clients' emotional experience and its importance for them. This is not surprising since by its very nature, the counselling process focuses on what's personal to the client. Furthermore, the concept of a person's inner, psychological self is an abstraction. It is difficult to speak meaningfully and comprehensibly about abstract concepts like sadness, fear, or passion without relying on metaphor. Indeed, metaphors are what we use to make sense of abstract ideas by speaking about them in terms of the concrete, embodied world—in terms of what we can see and sense physically. The metaphors we use to describe feelings provide us with insight in developing a conception of how emotion works. They also offer a tool for working with emotions in counselling—giving clients insight into their emotions and the potential to transform them.

Metaphors of Emotional Impact

The clients used a number of metaphors to express the emotions they experience. Some of these emotions were challenging to the clients by impacting their outlook or ability to do work. In this first example, Client Two describes feeling emptied emotionally:

C: So I really feel like it *drains me out* sometimes (2.25). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The client is describing the emotional impact of her work as a volunteer mentor. The metaphor of being “drained” suggests that the client has emotional energy which is given out when she works with others and cares for them. This suggests the importance in career counselling of managing the emotional impact that work has on the client.

Another emotional impact is communicated by the metaphor of a “burden.” This excerpt shows how a client can experience having a major responsibility in life:

C: It’s just the age thing. My daughter has been accepted for UBC.

T: Oh, ok.

C: And I feel like a big *burden* is off (5.11). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

“Burden” is a word that is commonly used metaphorically; it conjures up the image of being weighed down physically by a responsibility that is felt as heavy. The implied emotion here is that the client feels relieved now that her daughter has graduated. We learn a lot about the client’s experience by simply attending to the meaning of the metaphor.

Joyful Emotions

So far, we have looked at emotions that are somewhat difficult for the client—feeling drained or burdened. However, metaphors can also capture joyful feelings. In this example, the Client One is describing her experience of a favourite activity—people-watching in a coffee shop:

T: But there’s really – you’re *alive* mentally, is that what you’re saying?

C: Yeah, and it makes me feel like really *full*, I'm doing something.

T: Yeah. (*pause*) What do you feel like when you're doing that? You say you're really *full*.

C: Inquisitive, like I feel like you could just never know enough about anyone and everyone and the world and life, stuff like that (1.39).

To start with, the therapist reflects back the client's description with the metaphor of being "alive mentally." He has provided an image of her mind as stimulated and active. Notice how the language the therapist uses enriches the conversation. To paraphrase on a literal level, such as, "your mind is active," is less visual than to say, "you're alive mentally." The metaphorical language enriches the statement. It also gives power to the statement by giving both the speaker and listener a way to visualize the phenomenon being described.

Next, the client responds with her own metaphor by saying it makes her feel "full." She has moved deeper into expressing the emotion of the experience. Similar to other examples, the psychological/emotional experience is being described in terms of a physical experience—to be full. When we eat, we are filled with food and feel satisfied. When we participate in a valuable activity, we are filled by experiencing the value and thus feel satisfied. The concept of *fulfillment* connects to this metaphor.

As in other cases, the therapist is attuned to the client's use of metaphor; he repeats it and asks her to elaborate on it. As a result, she identifies one of her characteristics, being inquisitive, which is an obvious strength she could use in her future work life. In this example, metaphors enrich the language by giving a powerful image of an emotional experience. Furthermore, by emphasizing the client's metaphor, the therapist has drawn attention to one of her strengths.

Reflecting Clients' Emotions

The therapist not only attends to the metaphors generated by the client, but also generates metaphors himself to emphasize and reflect the client's emotions. The following examples illustrate this well:

T: The way your eyes were *lighting up* when you were talking about this (1.59).

C: So when I see someone achieving certain goals, it's just, it's good.

T: It kind of *stirs* in you something (2.30). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: Yeah, yeah. So I guess that is, I mean I just remember your face, you were just *beaming*, you know (4.10). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

T: It's the quality that's so important. And you just *beam* when you talk about this. The passion is just so strong in you (5.24). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

In these instances, the therapist relies on metaphorical language to empathize and to use immediacy. He reflects the emotion he sees on the clients' faces through metaphor. He describes the excitement or passion for an area of interest as a light shining through the client's eyes or face. Again, this has more impact than a literal description like, "you look excited."

The therapist also conceptualizes emotion as something that moves or touches people by "stirring" something in them. The themes of movement and action have come up in most of these metaphors of emotion. This indicates how we, as humans, experience and conceptualize our feelings as an inner movement in response to being touched by something. A sophisticated understanding of emotion is crucial to the field of counselling psychology. In addition, a facility in processing emotions is an essential skill for therapists and metaphors can provide an entry point into exploring emotions more deeply.

Transforming Emotion through Metaphor

In the following example, Client One and therapist explored the metaphor more thoroughly in order to process the emotion and transform it from fear to courage:

T: On your journey, so the brain (*both laugh*) you got the brain, you've got the heart. Do you have the courage?

C: Yeah, I think I do. It's *hiding* maybe a little bit.

T: Ah? It's *hiding* a bit.

C: Maybe.

The client said that her courage is “hiding.” This is a visual way of talking about a quality within the person. She expressed a feeling of fear or timidity about her ability and strength. But there was hope for change already present in the metaphor of “hiding” because the client said that she does in fact possess the courage. It was simply concealed by the fear at this point.

The therapist picked up on this client-generated metaphor and used it to challenge the client to change:

T: Yeah. What’s going to *bring it out*?

C: My need to learn, my need to have excitement and busyness and change and challenges.

By using the expression “bring it out,” the therapist worked within the image as presented by the client. This is an image of the psychological person having physical layers. It envisions the person as having some abilities or capacities that can exist below the surface and are able to be drawn out. The client responded well to the therapist’s challenge, by naming what will motivate her to act courageously.

Next, the therapist empathized while further developing the metaphor:

T: Just the, I mean, all these things are *welling up* inside of you.

C: Just really having a purpose. That’s what I think it is – having a purpose and getting myself out enough to do it, you know?

T: Yeah.

C: Because it is kind of scary. Yeah, and if I can kind of just get through that and start then I know it would be really exciting once I was going, I would really be into it, any kind of learning (1.74-1.77).

By referring to the client’s need to learn and change as “welling up,” he provided another image for an inner, psychological movement. First, the courage was “hiding” but now the therapist transformed the metaphor to one that portrays her desires springing up like water. Her fear was being transcended by the powerful inner movement of her desires coming up. This segment demonstrated how inner experience is conducive to being described through metaphor. In addition, we see how the therapist can work with the metaphor to invite the client to change.

This next segment contains another metaphor that relates directly to transforming emotions. Client Five had been discussing her fears about pursuing a PhD:

T: Ok, so that's the point is that um you could help a little bit but, to really go so, it's the fear of age, the fear of health, poor health or something like that happening.

C: Umhmm, umhmm.

T: So what do you think you're going to need to *get past that*, or do you think you can (5.14)? (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

The common expression “to get past that” is interesting because it is embodied. It relies on the idea of physically moving past something to represent a psychological process of overcoming an emotion. Movement has been a major theme in the metaphors relating to emotion. We also commonly speak of being *touched*, *moved*, or *held back* by emotions. We relate to the world through our bodies and conceptualize life in terms of being in our bodies. And of course, bodies move. This could explain why movement is a major metaphor for how we understand and experience emotions.

So in this example, a simple expression provided a metaphor to help the client envision how change could happen. The therapist challenged the client to change her perspective. As a result, the client went on to describe how her PhD may actually not be so difficult:

C: I can't get younger.

T: Yeah, you can't get younger.

C: Um. (*pause*)

T: Have you-

C: I thought about that actually. I thought about that today when I went jogging and I thought, you know, um maybe the difference between if I go on to do a PhD program, because when I did my masters I was raising my daughter alone and she's in high school, I had to spend a lot of time with her, I had to make a living by myself, I had to teach evenings and weekends to support myself. So, but I'm thinking if I'm going to do a masters PhD program, my partner will be in Canada. So I don't have to worry about finances and also my daughter is you know, she will have enough money.

T: More on her own now.

C: More on her own, I've saved enough for the education fund for her, so I'm thinking she is also 18, she can do some part-time work. So I'm thinking maybe if I can just look at it and you know, because I don't have to work that hard, I can just focus on the PhD program, maybe it's not that difficult (Transcript Five). (© Ergon Communications, 2009, by permission)

This excerpt shows how we conceptualize difficult emotions as something we can move through or move past. It also provides one example of how to work through the process of overcoming fear by starting with a common metaphorical expression.

Emotion as Upwards and Downwards Movement

We have just discussed how emotions are often conceptualized broadly as movement. When we speak about the experience of mood, the metaphors often relate specifically to the notion of upwards and downwards movement. The following segment involved the therapist and client exploring what it's like for the client to be unemployed. It illustrates well this metaphor of mood as moving up and down:

C: Yep, that's where I'm at. I don't – I'm losing that confidence I guess because I'm not getting those calls for interviews to sell myself.

T: Ok, and so that, that's *bringing you down*. Do you find yourself kind of *going up and down*? Do you feel like it's-

C: Yes, actually. I didn't really think about it but I do have *waves* where I feel really good. And like I said my *confidence is up* and I'm ready. And then after a couple applications with no callbacks-

T: Yeah.

C: I *go back on the down slope*. Yeah.

T: I mean, some people have talked about this as almost an *emotional rollercoaster* experience.

C: Yeah, I didn't really think about the *ups* being in there but there are *ups*.

T: There are times that *you go up and then it's crashing down*.

C: Yeah (1.13-1.19).

The therapist empathized with the client's emotional experience and also helped her to gain insight about it. He introduced the concept of the "emotional rollercoaster" which comes out of his research on the experience of unemployment (Borgen & Amundson, 1987). This metaphor served to normalize what she was going through.

The therapist's introduction of the metaphor had obvious value by normalizing experience and empathizing with the client. However, the metaphor of mood going up and down merits reflection on a broader, cultural level as well. The metaphor of *up* connotes all that is

positive: a good mood, happiness, success, even heaven. In the same way, *down* is a powerful symbol for the negative in life: depression, sadness, failure, and hell. The word *depression* itself is metaphorical (McMullen, 1999), connoting something *pressing down* or *lowering*.

Conceptualizing emotions as up and down has utility by giving us language to work with. It also fits with our bodily experience of mood: when people feel depressed, they often feel like laying down; when people are excited, they may respond by jumping upwards (*jumping for joy*). As already discussed, we need metaphors in order to describe abstract phenomena such as mood and how it changes.

However, the powerful symbolism of some emotions being *up*, good, and positive while others are considered *down*, bad, and negative could be challenging or harmful to people's emotional wellbeing. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2003) as well as other therapeutic schools, have recognized that conceptualizing sadness as negative can actually intensify sad feelings and increase the severity of depression. They suggest that accepting uncomfortable or unpleasant emotions as natural can provide relief and improve one's emotional well-being. Perhaps the words themselves that we use reinforce the idea that some emotions are negative or bad.

Generating new metaphors for the fluctuation of mood could be important work for researchers and therapists in the future. A guided imagery called "the River" (Paterson, 2006) depicts an image of boats drifting down the river, each one representing a different emotion. This metaphor of the river could be a starting point. It avoids the negative connotation by conceptualizing emotions as floating horizontally along a river rather than as waves moving vertically.

To summarize, metaphors of emotion can be used therapeutically to empathize, normalize, use immediacy, encourage insight, and facilitate change. By analyzing these metaphors, we also gain important information about how humans understand and experience emotions. For example, emotions can be felt as “weighing” on us, “hiding” inside of us, or as moving and changing into something new. This is valuable to the fields of counselling and psychology because these metaphors suggest possible ways of working with emotions. Our theories of emotion should relate to how clients and people in general experience their feelings. In addition, the metaphor of upwards and downwards movement offers a potential critique of our culture’s conceptualization of emotions. We may be able to change our difficult relationship to particular emotions by generating an alternative discourse with new metaphors.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Discussion of the Literature

Theories of Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued that the human conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical. This conceptual system guides how we structure our perceptions and relate to the world. These theorists drew attention to the implicit metaphors that are pervasive in everyday language, indicating that we understand and experience concepts by thinking of them in terms of other things.

My study of metaphors in career counselling confirmed the abundance of subtle metaphors in the everyday language we use to describe careers. For example, the therapist and clients spoke of heading in a direction, taking a new path, going one step at a time, and moving on or towards something. Lakoff and Johnson spoke of these overarching metaphors as systematic and dominant, causing aspects of the concept to be hidden if they do not correspond to the given metaphor. As a result, the fundamental values of the culture tend to cohere with the metaphors for basic concepts.

My findings correspond to this systematic understanding of how metaphors function. The most common category of career metaphors I found related to *career as direction*. Indeed, this conceptualization of career is so prevalent that it can be difficult in our culture to fathom career as anything other than movement in a particular direction. Some aspects of career do seem to become hidden as a result of this metaphor. For example, career can involve putting down roots in one place, staying where you are, or turning down a promotion or new job because you want to rest or have balance. However, we do not often speak in these terms about career and our language does not have a colloquial metaphor that captures these aspects of work life.

Lakoff and Johnson link systematic metaphorical concepts to our physical and cultural experience of life, asserting that our conceptual metaphors have an experiential basis. I view this as the result of being embodied creatures. A basic phenomenon of our existence is that we experience life through our bodies. This demonstrates how strange the Cartesian divide between body and mind is: the body is our primary means of perceiving the world and experiencing life. So, to know or to think is certainly a process that is not separate from the body.

In reflecting on the common career metaphors identified in the counselling sessions, I am suggesting that it would be difficult, maybe even impossible, to conceptualize career without comparing it to some kind of physical experience of being in the world. Metaphor makes an abstract concept accessible to us through a concrete experience we have in life. One illustration of this is how our minds grasp the notion of career by comparing it to the experience of walking along a path towards a destination. Similarly, we can organize the many different jobs and professions by conceptualizing them as career fields, areas, or worlds. It is as if the various jobs exist in a particular concrete space. This helps us to make sense of how they relate to each other and not to be overwhelmed by the many possibilities.

The metaphors of emotion that I found also corresponded to Lakoff and Johnson's work. While the theorists do not focus their linguistic study on emotions in particular, they do name two types of emotion metaphors that relate to my findings. Firstly, they identify the metaphor of *eyes as containers for emotions*. In my study, the therapist used metaphors to describe one client's eyes "lighting up" with emotion but also spoke of another client's face as "beaming." Secondly, Lakoff and Johnson refer to the metaphor of "emotional effect as physical contact" (p. 50). This corresponds to the metaphor I found of being "stirred" by emotion and an undergirding concept in my results of *emotions as movement*. Overall, my analysis of common metaphors can

be viewed as a detailed application of Lakoff and Johnson's theory to the domains of career and emotion.

Kovecses' (2002) cognitive linguistic model of emotions emphasizes the role of metaphor in the way we communicate about our emotional states. He found that the majority of expressions referring to emotion rely on metaphor. His study of linguistic expressions suggests that people view emotions as forces that emerge apart from the rational and conscious self, result from certain causes, and often need to be controlled.

I found a number of metaphors that connect in some way to his theory of how we understand and speak about emotions. The descriptions that I grouped as metaphors of emotional impact involved one client speaking of feeling "drained out" and another feeling a "burden." These expressions seem to correspond with Kovecses' understanding of emotion as a force and resulting from certain causes. The idea of being drained or burdened suggests that there is an external force impacting the person.

My findings correspond with Kovecses' articulation of emotion to suggest that metaphors of emotion communicate not only an external force or cause but also an internal movement or response. Kovecses states the following: "Both emotion and the cause of emotion are metaphorically viewed as concrete forces. The cause-as-force produces the emotion and the emotion-as-force produces the response" (p. 114).

In my results, the internal movement is evidenced by metaphors of a beaming face, feeling full, and the experience of something welling up within the person. Interestingly, movement also came up as a theme in the processing or changing of emotions—like the metaphor of "getting past" a fear or "bringing out" courage. Certainly, the metaphor of the emotional rollercoaster also fits with the movement motif. The idea of unemployment or

rejection “bringing you down” corresponds to Kovecses’ notion of emotion as a force that emerges apart from the conscious self. It is interesting that the metaphors again imply there is both an external and internal component to emotions. Sometimes they are conceptualized as doing something with us and somewhat outside of our control; other times we conceptualize emotions as inside of us and moreso within our control.

My research contributes something new to this theory of emotion by beginning to apply it to the therapeutic context—we are not limited to understanding the conception of emotions through metaphor but can also use metaphor to process or work through difficult emotions. This is illustrated by Client One who brought her courage out of “hiding.” Similarly, Client Five explored how to “get past” her fear by transforming the lonely butterfly image into a partnership of two butterflies. To gain clarity about what our metaphors say about how we experience emotions, especially regarding how we change or process them within therapy and life more broadly, more research is needed. It would be helpful to have more examples of how emotions are not only expressed but processed using metaphor in therapy.

Moving on to discuss Kopp and Craw’s (1998) theory of cognition, they recommend encouraging clients to explore and transform the metaphors that illustrate their life problems. This intervention is based on the belief that drawing upon metaphoric cognition connects the imaginal and propositional understandings of the life problem. It is hypothesized that shifting between the transformed metaphor and the current life problem can create new insights and possible approaches to problem-solving for the client.

The therapist, in my study, did explore and transform metaphors with clients in a few particular cases. Client Five generated a metaphor of herself as a butterfly flying upwards. This image captured her life challenge of wanting to do a PhD but feeling held back by fear. By

exploring this metaphor at some length, another butterfly, her partner, was added to the picture. This transformation of the image gave the client the ability to visualize the encouragement she would receive from her partner alongside her during the PhD. It seems that this intervention was a major factor that helped the client to discover that she had the support she needed in order to realize her goal. She also explored the metaphor physically by literally *walking through* the flight of the butterfly. This helped her to identify how important and meaningful “making the flight” would be for her life. According to Kopp and Crow, the value of this type of intervention is in creating insights and possibilities for problem-solving. In this instance, I would say that the transformed metaphor did both of those things; but to speak more broadly, it reframed the situation as a whole. Essentially, this allowed the client to approach her goal in a new way.

Similarly, the therapist explored Client One’s metaphor of wanting her career to be like a “yellow brick road.” This image was transformed in a different way than by changing the image itself: Since the image was already hopeful and positive, the therapist guided the client in integrating her challenging experience of losing her job into the metaphor. This allowed the idealistic metaphor to become realistic and relevant to her immediate situation, while still retaining the hopefulness of the image. Kopp and Crow recommended that therapists work with clients’ metaphors for their life problems. The yellow brick road metaphor demonstrated that the intervention can also begin with a metaphor of how the client would like things to be, rather than how she sees things now. Then, the life problems or circumstances can be integrated into the metaphor. Similar to the butterfly example, this is a form of reframing the client’s situation.

A third instance where the therapist expanded and transformed a metaphor is the construction metaphor he presented to Client Three. This intervention diverged from Kopp and Crow’s because the therapist actually generated the metaphor himself and presented it to the

client. The therapist drew on the client's interest in woodworking and applied it to his life by conceptualizing the client's career as a construction project. The therapist used this metaphor to envision the client's desire to remain open and flexible in selecting a career as part of a meaningful process of "building" his career. While this metaphor may not have had the same impact on the client as the previous two examples, it illustrated that there are a number of possible ways to use metaphor to transform a client's perspective or approach to a situation.

Therapists' Intentional Use of Metaphor

A few studies have suggested that a counsellor's use of metaphor contributes to the client's engagement in the therapeutic process or increases the clients' perception of the counsellor's ability (Gore, 1977; Heffner et al., 2003; Suit & Paradise, 1985). As a discourse analysis, my study did not compare the effectiveness of metaphor to other techniques nor did it measure the clients' perception of the therapist. However, by simply analyzing what happened in the sessions, it was apparent that the clients often presented themselves as active and engaged in the process when the therapist spoke metaphorically.

Donnelly and Dumas' (1997) analogue study demonstrated that participants found metaphorical advice significantly more helpful and easier to recall than literal advice. What strikes me about this study is that it assumes very different therapeutic purposes for metaphor than what is indicated by my study. The therapist in my study did not tend to use metaphor to offer advice. In fact, he did not give advice much in general, whether through literal or figurative communication. So this may simply indicate that advice-giving is not a significant intervention within this therapist's theoretical orientation and style of counselling. The idea of using metaphor primarily for advice seems to miss the mark of its potential value as a therapeutic tool. In my study, metaphor was valuable when used to explore meaning, gain insight, and facilitate change.

While client acceptance of advice and ability to recall it can have value in counselling, these factors contrast the depth of exploration that I recognized as metaphor's value in my study.

Martin, Cummings and Hallberg (1992) used an experimental study to evaluate metaphor's impact on clients' ability to recall the session. As I already mentioned, my study was limited to the discourse within counselling sessions so I cannot comment on the clients' memory of the metaphors. I do acknowledge, however, that clients' ability to recall what is covered in therapy is important. It seems that change does not occur during the session as often as it does between sessions. For this to happen, the client must be able to retain the significant aspects of what was discussed in therapy. I found that the metaphors that seemed most powerful therapeutically in my results were those that were created by the client or at least engaged with by the client. In the future, it would be interesting to compare client-generated and therapist-generated metaphors for client recall. Martin, Cummings, and Hallberg only examined the metaphors that were intentionally initiated by the therapist.

Supervisors' Intentional Use of Metaphor

Newton and Wilson's (1991) case study of supervision sessions examined the process of change and the characteristics and functions of metaphors. Their distinction between frozen and novel metaphors seems to correspond to the metaphors I identified as common and original, respectively. Frozen metaphors are more idiomatic or entrenched in everyday language and are often used without the speaker being conscious of the figurative aspect. The speaker uses novel metaphors, which are less idiomatic, to make intentional figurative comparisons. Newton and Wilson found that only the novel metaphors present in the best session correlated significantly to the points of insight. My study confirmed that there are these two broad trends to the way we use metaphors to communicate.

In addition, I found a similar result that the original metaphors often brought about more insight or possibility of change for the client. However, this may be partly a result of the way we define an original or novel metaphor. We have said that these metaphors are entrenched in everyday language and are often used unconsciously. This means that the speaker is not aware of the comparison they are making. It seems fairly obvious that clients and therapists would gain less insight from metaphors that they are using unconsciously. This parallels an essential principle of discourse analysis—that we are not aware of the assumptions or meanings we are perpetuating when we rely on a discourse. We generally have the feeling that this discourse *is* reality, as opposed to simply being one perspective. Discourses become dominant and pervasive to the point where it is difficult to see that there are alternatives, other ways of thinking or speaking.

With regard to frozen metaphors, the fact that they are entrenched in everyday language does not mean that they are void of the opportunity for insight or the facilitation of change. It simply means that the therapist and client will find it more difficult to notice the metaphor and its therapeutic potential. This is one of the contributions of my research to the practice of counselling: The analysis drew attention to the implied meaning of many common metaphors and named some alternatives to them. By applying a social constructionist approach to the analysis of metaphors, the potential value of frozen or common metaphors came to light.

Common metaphors of career, for example, are rich with potential for insight about our culture's assumptions and the client's personal meaning of career. Once these inherent assumptions are drawn to the surface, we can begin to explore the metaphor's meaning in counselling, gaining insight and even transforming it into an image that is more fitting, hopeful, or powerful for the client. This is illustrated by the common metaphor of career as a path. People

often speak about their career as a path without having much intention behind the comparison they are making. But in one of the sessions I analyzed, the therapist asked the client to come up with a more specific image for her new path. By attending to the frozen or common metaphor, they were able to expand it into an original metaphor that was personalized to the client, thus providing a vehicle for talking about change.

Young and Borders' (1998, 1999) two studies of the use of metaphor in supervision sessions used a quantitative approach and found promising but not statistically significant results. The participants' process observations suggested that the metaphors were noticed and impacted them positively. After completing my discourse analysis which emphasized the *interaction* between therapist and client, I see the value that this qualitative and analytical approach could have for the literature on clinical supervision. Perhaps the value of metaphor is in how the interaction unfolds and is therefore difficult to quantify by measuring a supervisee's perception of the supervisor? Assuming that there is some crossover between the processes of counselling and supervision, my findings would suggest that the most meaningful metaphors in supervision may be those that are generated by the supervisees themselves and expanded with the help of the supervisor. This is a more interactive and client-centred approach than using metaphor to disseminate information.

Clients' Use of Metaphor

Previous studies have demonstrated that examining client-generated metaphors can provide valuable information about people's identities and psychological processes. Thompson's (2004) investigation of the metaphors used by participants in their recovery from psychological distress found that the metaphors illuminated their process; participants used metaphors to know and communicate their stories. Larsen and Larsen (2004) looked at adolescents' description of

themselves through metaphors of self. They found that metaphor construction was a fruitful exercise in self-reflection for the participants. My analysis showed that client's metaphors have comparable value in the field of career counselling. Specifically, clients' metaphors revealed their understanding of their careers, the meaning it has for them, and their emotional experience of career related concerns. As in Thompson's research, metaphors were used by clients to communicate their stories. Furthermore, my findings expanded on this to recognize that clients' metaphors also communicate something about the broader culture. Some metaphors were deeply personal and particular to the client's situation while others communicated an attitude or meaning that is shared by many in the society.

Using a discursive approach, McMullen and Conway (1999, 2002) examined clients' descriptions of their experience of depression. They identified the dominant metaphor as "depression is descent" such as "spiraling down" or "sinking low" (2002, p. 103). McMullen (1999) also used the clients' metaphors of themselves as deficient to identify two cultural imperatives: 1) don't be too mothering and 2) don't be too child-like. The analysis revealed how deeply our conceptions of depression are shaped by society's devaluing of mothers and children and overvaluing of autonomy and personal responsibility.

There are obvious commonalities between the identified metaphor of *depression as descent* and some of the metaphors of emotion that emerged in my results. I found the metaphor of *emotion as upwards and downwards movement* in Transcript One. The therapist presented the notion of unemployment as an "emotional rollercoaster." This resonated with the client's experience of emotional ups and downs as she looked for work. My analysis is informed by McMullen and Conway's critique of depression and focuses in particular on our culture's powerful symbolism of some emotions being *up*, good, and positive while others are considered

down, bad, and negative. It could be helpful for the counselling profession to generate some constructive alternatives to this metaphor which associates sad feelings with being *down*.

McMullin and Conway's insightful study of female clients struggling with depression indicates that valuable discoveries and cultural critiques could be made by applying the same kind of focused analysis to the emotional experience of career. In career counselling, difficulties and transitions such as career decision-making, unemployment, and retirement are addressed. The metaphors identified in my study demonstrated that there is an emotional component to dealing with these challenges. Borgen and Amundson's qualitative study of the dynamics of unemployment showed that unemployment often results in widely shifting emotions of grief, enthusiasm, discouragement, and renewal of perceived self-worth. They referred to this phenomenon with the metaphor of an "emotional roller coaster" (1987). Since my exploration of these emotional experiences of career was limited in its scope, I anticipate that our culture's implicit attitudes could be further brought to light by more focused study on this topic.

Therapist and Client Generated Metaphors

Research studies that look at both the therapist and client's use of metaphor are able to discuss the interaction that occurs in counselling and therefore can make more claims about the process itself and how the speaker impacts the listener within the conversation. Rasmussen and Angus's (1996) qualitative analysis compared the experience of therapists' and borderline and non-borderline clients' metaphoric expression in therapy. Afterwards, the therapists and clients (four dyads in total) were interviewed individually to explain what they experienced during the metaphoric segments of the session. Results showed three major functions of metaphors: "1) metaphors illuminate clinical issues, 2) metaphor functions to depict clients' self and object

relationships, and 3) therapist metaphor stimulates an intensification of client experiential engagement in the therapy hour” (p. 521).

In my study, the participants were not interviewed after the sessions; therefore, the claims about how metaphor functions in therapy were drawn only from direct analysis of the transcripts. I cannot comment on whether metaphors in my study depicted self and object relationships, since the therapist and the research were not informed by a psychodynamic orientation. However, I would agree that the metaphors illuminated clinical issues, although the therapist did not use a diagnostic but more of a client-centred, exploratory approach when issues emerged. I would say that my study did not confirm the finding that therapist-generated metaphors intensified the client’s experiential engagement. This may have occurred in some cases. However, in general, the clients appeared to be most experientially engaged when the therapist attended to the client’s own metaphors or when the therapist elicited a metaphor directly from the client.

My study gave evidence of a number of different therapeutic functions of metaphors. These are more specific but not contradictory to Rasmussen and Angus’s (1996) findings that metaphor illuminates issues and intensifies experiential engagement. The therapist used metaphors often, exhibiting an obvious facility for figurative communication; he seemed to use metaphors as an intentional therapeutic tool at times and also as part of his natural style. The following are some of the ways he used metaphor: to empathize, normalize, communicate immediacy, encourage insight, reframe situations, process emotions, challenge and empower the client, to facilitate change, to introduce and frame interventions, and as a tool in brainstorming.

Both the therapist and client relied on common metaphors in order to communicate about abstract ideas, like the concepts of career and emotion which I focused my analysis on. They also created original metaphors to provide a meaningful framework for the client’s particular

approach to career. The clients each had their own style of speaking, some more metaphorical than others. Clients used metaphor to express emotions, to describe situations and to emphasize their meaning, and to undergo change with the therapist's help. Since metaphor, by definition, references further meanings, it also functioned as a shorthand form of communication within the therapeutic conversation. For example, the therapist could use a metaphor to quickly reference an entire segment of conversation from earlier on in the session. But even if the metaphor was arising for the first time in the session, it immediately brought in all its associations without requiring that time was taken in stating them.

To elaborate on metaphor's role in finding or creating meaning, this emerged as its overarching function in my analysis. When time was spent in session exploring a client-generated metaphor, it inevitably resulted in the meaning of the feeling, experience, or situation for the client being revealed or further understood. It makes sense that metaphor would relate significantly to meaning in therapy because metaphor, in its essence, is a semantic function. By comparing a target domain to a source domain, the speaker is bringing the *meaning* of the source over to inform the understanding of the target domain. By exploring the metaphor, one is tapping into the meaning for the client.

This is an important phenomenon for the practice of counselling because of how essential it is to find what's meaningful to the client in therapy. Certain therapeutic schools, of course, emphasize the role of meaning more than others. Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, for example, aims to help people find meaning in life, even in the most difficult circumstances. Frankl asserted that humanity's primary motive is the "will to meaning" (1969). Existential analysis, like many other existential approaches, highlights the importance of finding one's individual meanings in life as

one of four fundamental human motivations (Langle, 2003). The further study of metaphor's role in meaning-making would have obvious application within these existential schools of therapy.

My findings that metaphor functions in an overarching sense to emphasize meaning relate to Wickman and Campbell's (2003) study of the conceptual metaphors in Carl Rogers and Gloria's counselling session. They found that metaphor proved a helpful framework for perceiving the negotiation of meaning. Wickman and Campbell described the session as a "reconstruction of Gloria's metaphoric ways of knowing and making meaning" (p. 21).

I have already listed a number of ways that metaphor functioned therapeutically within the counselling sessions. My analysis also revealed metaphor's value in highlighting ways to dialogue with our culture's assumptions about career and emotion. For the most part, this process did not happen during the therapy hour but afterwards, as a result of third party observation. These findings can now be applied to counselling practice in the future. By cultivating an awareness of common metaphors for career and how they may restrict clients or stigmatize their choices that transgress the dominant discourse, therapists can bring this dialogue with culture into the therapy hour. They can raise clients' consciousness of how the discourse limits their ways of being in the world, their ways of approaching career and life. They can then intentionally create alternative metaphors that are more fitting or empowering for the individual client's needs.

An additional value of metaphor that arose in the results was the potential to understand psychological phenomena through the study of metaphor. My study affirmed that we get information about how people experience emotions by the metaphors they use to describe them. Linguists and philosophers who attend to language, like Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kovecses (2002), have recognized what metaphors can tell us about the human conceptual

system and emotional experience. There would be great value in applying this focus on language more within psychology, to gain a focused understanding of what metaphors reveal about human experience of our inner, psychological world. My study was not comprehensive enough to develop a theory of emotional experience that could be integrated into a counselling theory. But my findings suggest there would be value in further pursuing this line of research.

Amundson's Writing on Metaphor

The therapist in this study, Dr. Norm Amundson, has made a valuable contribution to the literature on the use of metaphor in career counselling. In order to maintain an unbiased perspective in analyzing the data, his publications were not consulted until after the results were written.

By synthesizing others' research and theory with his own experience as a clinician, Amundson articulates a number of ways that metaphor can be used to enhance the therapeutic process (1997, 2009; Inkson & Amundson, 2002). He advocates for using metaphors in therapy as a valuable tool in communicating, defining the problem, and resolving the problem. To begin working with metaphors, he encourages counsellors to become comfortable identifying them in everyday conversation. Then, they can apply this awareness of metaphoric communication within the therapy room (2009). He also cautions counsellors to be flexible to each client's communication style. The use of metaphor may not be appropriate for all clients (1997). He emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the counsellor and client when trying to develop understanding using metaphor (1997).

Amundson considers metaphor to be helpful in clarifying clients' emotional states, narrowing them from a broad feeling to a more precise articulation of the client's experience (2009). This was seen in his work with Client One when he reflected that she was "alive

mentally.” She then described herself as feeling “full” when she engages in people-watching. The therapist asked her to expand on that image and she was able to precisely describe what was filling her up inside—an unending supply of information about people. Amundson also identifies metaphor’s value in expressing empathy and furthering the counselling process (2009). This was illustrated a number of times in my analysis, including the current example when he empathized that Client One was feeling “alive.”

Amundson suggests transforming a metaphor by using drawing. In this way, the counsellor and client can work together to change the image on the page into something more positive (2009). This was well illustrated by his work with Client Five when she drew an image of herself as a butterfly. This was an entry point into understanding her situation more. They also added positively to the image by eventually drawing her partner as a butterfly alongside her for support. The butterfly flying upwards is an image of action that facilitates movement towards her specific goal (1997).

Amundson recommends creating a metaphor for the client that acts as a summary and demonstrates the counsellor’s understanding of the problem. With career exploration in particular, he recognizes the value of metaphor in conceptualizing one’s career. Raising clients’ awareness of their metaphors and encouraging them to develop new ones can help them to be flexible and creative in their approach to career. This is important when dealing with today’s fast-paced and constantly changing labour market (2009). The therapist’s creation of the career as construction metaphor for Client Three illustrated well this summarizing function of metaphor. The metaphor integrated a number of aspects of the client’s interest in woodworking with the ways he approaches his education and career development. Therefore, the metaphor not

only summarized the session but conceptualized the client's approach to career in a way that highlights his strengths.

It can be helpful for career counsellors to carry with them knowledge of a variety of metaphors for career. Inkson and Amundson (2002) provide 10 archetypal metaphors that can be useful for counsellors to rely on when a new metaphor is needed. These include 1) career as a journey, 2) career as an inheritance, 3) career as fit, 4) career as a sequence of seasons, 5) career as growth, 6) career as a creative work, 7) career as a network, 8) career as a resource, 9) career as a story, and 10) career as a cultural artifact. A number of these metaphors were validated by my findings, especially career as journey, career as fit, career as a creative work (like a woodworking project), and career as a resource (which I called "career as capitalism"). By cultivating an awareness of this list of archetypal metaphors, counsellors will notice when clients are relying on one of them to describe their approach to career.

Amundson also emphasizes metaphor's value in externalizing the problem. Once the problem is externalized, it can be easier for the client to reframe it as a new metaphor that involves more personal agency or direction. The "yellow brick road" metaphor in Session One demonstrates this well. After the client provided the metaphor for her career, the therapist asked her about what happened to Dorothy before she got to the yellow brick road. In this way, they were able to compare the client's job loss experience to going through a tornado. While job loss can be felt as a personal rejection, a tornado is a powerful image for how job loss and unemployment can often be outside of the individual's control, like a storm one has to weather.

Amundson has also researched the use of metaphor in supervision and case conceptualization (1988; Stone & Amundson, 1989). He suggests that counsellors and counsellors in training can draw a picture or make a collage to metaphorically illustrate their

view of the client's problem. This visual metaphor can also incorporate how the counsellor envisions the case proceeding. Such an exercise can help counsellors to conceptualize the case more clearly and to make new discoveries about their role in the counselling process. After using the drawing as a map when presenting the case, the counsellor, along with colleagues and supervisor, can discuss the problem, the counselling relationship, and possible ways to change the drawing to facilitate a shift in the counselling approach (1988).

Stone and Amundson's study (1989) compared this drawing technique with a traditional verbal case debriefing approach in group supervision sessions at a community crisis centre. Both groups of supervisees and supervisors filled out a questionnaire to evaluate the experience. The group that participated in metaphoric case conceptualization indicated greater gains in understanding regarding the concerns of the client, the development of the counsellor, the client-counsellor relationship, and the counsellor's goals. They also rated the perceived value of the supervision sessions as higher. This study indicates the great potential for crossover between metaphoric approaches used in the counselling process and in supervision and training.

Overall, Amundson's articulated theory of working with metaphor confirmed many aspects of what emerged through third party observation and analysis of his clinical practice. Furthermore, I found that metaphor served some additional purposes that he was perhaps aware of but did not mention in his text on career counselling, *Active Engagement* (2009): Metaphor served as a shorthand form of communicating meaning and enriched the dramatic impact of language in the sessions. It also provided a pathway into challenging our implicit and sometimes limiting assumptions about career in Western society.

Implications for Counselling Practice

Throughout the Results and Discussion chapters, I have commented on ways to apply these findings in the practice of counselling. I will summarize here the two major ways that this study can be applied: firstly, using the critique of our culture's discourse to create alternative metaphors and secondly, using metaphor as a therapeutic technique for a variety of purposes.

Discourse and Alternative Metaphors

It is important for practitioners to be conscious of the discourses that are relied upon in society at large and in counselling sessions specifically. Metaphors have been shown, in this study, to offer an entry point into recognizing the dominant discourses and their implications for how we view our situation within society. In particular, career counsellors can benefit from a heightened awareness of our culture's common metaphors for conceptualizing both career and the emotional experience of career challenges and transitions. Therapists can bring knowledge of common career metaphors into their sessions and can cultivate an ability to draw attention to these metaphors when they might be restrictive or problematic for the client. The therapist and client can then challenge the assumptions that are implicit within the metaphor and together create an alternative metaphor that is more empowering, meaningful, or appropriate for the client's circumstances and goals.

The dominant metaphor of *career as direction* illustrates this well, unearthing the Western values of progress and movement. It implies that individuals should be constantly on the move and should know where they are going. This could be alienating for clients who are studying, unemployed, or looking for a career change. The idea of having a career direction is quite taken for granted in our society but it may not resonate with their experience and may throw into question the value of exploring a variety of possibilities and having unknowns in the

future. Similarly, workers who remain in one position for many years may feel marginalized or unacceptable because of their choices.

I have encouraged therapists and clients to seek out alternative metaphors that emphasize being rather than doing, exploring rather than “heading,” or becoming rooted rather than moving. A tree grows while remaining in one place. A mapmaker explores without a particular destination in mind. The therapist generated the metaphor of *career as construction*, which could also be a useful alternative to more common career metaphors by placing value on intentionality, creativity, and flexibility. This metaphor empowers clients to feel secure and confident in their agency despite facing many choices, unknowns, and potential obstacles in the future. Given these alternatives, it is important to note, however, that the metaphor of *career as direction* could indeed be helpful for some clients, as in the example of the “yellow brick road” metaphor that was generated by Client One.

In a similar way, the spatial metaphor of careers grouped into “fields” or domains could be restrictive in career counselling. If a client is trying to generate new career possibilities, he or she may overlook options that are outside of a particular field of interest. The client may miss the opportunity to consider jobs in other fields that require similar skills or interests. The therapist can draw attention to this potential barrier when they brainstorm options together. I have suggested working with *themes*, *mind-mapping*, or *mind-webbing* as metaphors that could help the client to imagine beyond the boundaries of particular career fields. In Session One, the client generated the image of an umbrella which the therapist then used as a metaphor to guide their brainstorming of career possibilities. This original metaphor of using an “umbrella” term could be applied by other therapists as part of a brainstorming intervention to encourage associative and imaginative thinking in their clients.

Another predominant metaphor that can be questioned or engaged with in counselling is the concept of career as capitalism, as in the idea of “selling oneself,” “pursuing” and competing for jobs, or working one’s way up the career ladder. Therapists and clients could develop more collaborative, communal metaphors for career development and seeking employment that could reduce the experience of the career world as aggressive and combative. The metaphor of *resonating* with an organization suggests a mutual connection between employer and employee rather than a buy and sell mentality. However, we should not negate the reality that clients may experience a sense of competition surrounding them even if they would prefer to approach career differently. Changing our society’s conception of career will be a gradual and challenging process.

Metaphor as Technique or Intervention

The therapist and clients in this study used metaphors in a number of ways that had therapeutic value within the sessions. Practitioners can observe the ways that the therapist used metaphor effectively and can try similar techniques in their own practice. They can also become more familiar with the ways that clients might use metaphors; this will improve their ability to attend to client-generated metaphors rather than leaving them unacknowledged. As previously mentioned, the therapist relied on metaphor for many therapeutic purposes: to empathize, normalize, communicate immediacy, encourage insight, reframe situations, process emotions, challenge and empower the client, to facilitate change, to introduce and frame interventions, and as a tool in brainstorming. He also used metaphor as a shorthand way of referencing material explored earlier in the session.

In some cases, the therapist asked clients directly to provide an image for something they were describing. At other times, he generated a metaphor himself that was relevant to what the

client had shared. These intentional metaphors were sometimes expanded at length in order to gain understanding and insight and then to transform the metaphor's meaning. This transformation of the metaphor reframed the difficulty in a more hopeful way. This style of working with metaphor seems to be set apart as a purposeful intervention for exploration and facilitating change. It differs from briefer uses of metaphor as a simple technique to join with the client, empathize, or illustrate a concept. The therapist also demonstrated that when using metaphor as an intervention, a flipchart can be employed to draw the image and to further explore it.

In addition, the therapist attended to the metaphors that the clients used to express themselves. Clients used metaphor to express emotions, to describe situations and to emphasize their meaning, to conceptualize their careers, and to undergo change with the therapist's help. By becoming more sensitive to metaphorical language, practitioners can learn to take up the client's metaphors, speaking in the client's language. Further research is needed, but this study raised the possibility that clients may experience more engagement and resultant change as a result of generating their own metaphors, rather than being presented with metaphors created by the therapist.

This research also raised the possibility of using metaphors when counselling clients who are going through the transition of retirement. The therapist in this study used metaphors to conceptualize retirement in a meaningful and positive way for Client Four. Metaphors could be a powerful tool to help clients to find meaning in a period of life that involves significant losses as well as many new possibilities.

Limitations

This study was limited to making claims that are fitting for the approach selected—a qualitative project using discourse analysis. The results cannot be used to make quantitative statements about the frequency of metaphors in therapy or the statistical significance of one function of metaphor compared to another. As a discourse analysis, this project involved a third party analysis of the counselling transcripts. All findings were based on the analysis of what was spoken in the sessions. While I explored how effective metaphors appeared to be within the interaction, I did not consult the participants about their evaluation of the use of metaphor or its effect on them.

This project was also limited by its scope as a focused examination of five career counselling sessions involving one therapist and five individual clients. This was a very small sample which allowed for an in depth analysis but also meant that a diversity of clients was not necessarily represented. Certainly the analysis of the therapist was limited by the fact that as a practitioner, he has reflected on the value of metaphor and uses it intentionally in his work. This study was therefore an informative demonstration of how metaphor can be used in therapy but not an indication of how it is typically used by a variety of practitioners. Finally, the analysis was limited by my uniqueness and my biases as the researcher. As someone who is interested in metaphor and is trained and practiced in an existential-experiential approach to counselling, I certainly analyzed the data from a particular perspective.

Implications for Future Research

Since my study is exploratory and one of the first to use discourse analysis to look at metaphor in counselling, it has opened up a number of directions for future research. I will now review these suggestions that have been touched on throughout the discussion. One major way to

expand this type of discourse analysis would be to enlarge the sample to a number of different therapists. This would allow comparisons to be made between each therapist's respective strengths and challenges in working with metaphor.

Within the field of career counselling, it would be useful to do a more comprehensive discourse analysis of metaphors of retirement specifically. Such a project could examine how different metaphors impact the meaning of retirement in clients' lives. Retirees are currently a growing client population because of the large numbers of the baby boomer generation approaching retirement age.

I have raised the question of whether clients are more engaged by their own metaphors or by those the therapist generates. Further research is needed to compare client-generated and therapist-generated metaphors for client recall, engagement, and clinical impact. This question could be approached from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

I have highlighted the importance of metaphor in drawing out what's meaningful for the client. Research that intentionally examines the role of metaphor in meaning-making for the client could offer important applications for therapy. These findings would be informative for existential, narrative, and experiential approaches to counselling, to name a few.

With regard to emotions, more research is needed to clarify how we can process feelings by entering into clients' metaphors. I have provided a few examples but a more comprehensive study could provide the foundation for a model of working through emotions using metaphor. Furthermore, my study and McMullin and Conway's (2002) have begun to explore our culture's implicit attitudes towards emotional challenges like depression. The negative impacts of our culture's discourse around emotions and mental health more broadly need to be brought to light.

The in-depth analysis of metaphorical language has already provided us with valuable insights about human experience and conceptual systems (Kovecses, 2002; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The literature within counselling and psychology could benefit from engaging in more dialogue with this type of research. In addition, future studies could be designed to examine specific areas of our psychological experience and how we conceptualize them through our use of language.

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