Using metaphors in the therapeutic encounter an International Delphi Study

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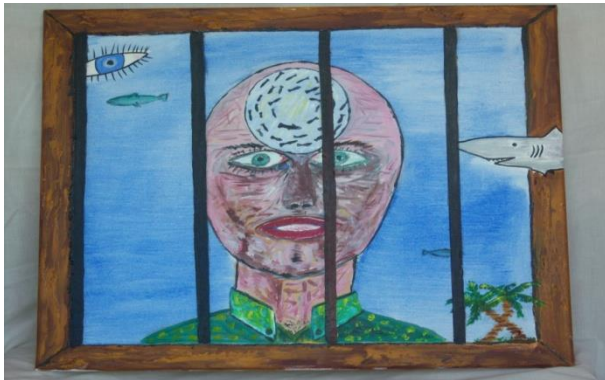# 20th NPNR Conference, University of Warwick
The development and evaluation of a pictorial metaphor technique in Cognitive Analytic Therapy

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The Study

Cycle 1– Prelim work - Workshops as focus groups

Cycle2 – Delphi method

Cycle 3 – Training Programme Pilot and delivery

Cycle 4– Proof of concept, small 'n' study (n=10 x 2) evaluating the effects on patient outcome/experience of using pictorial metaphor as
an elaboration of
Cognitive Analytic
Therapy.

CAT

- CAT is an integrative model of psychotherapy developed over the past 25 years. The aim of integrating the valid and effective elements of psychoanalytic object relations theory and cognitive psychology, especially Kellyian personal construct theory (Ryle 1990; Ryle and Kerr 2002).

- The CAT model has recently integrated Vygotskian activity theory and Bakhtinian concepts of the dialogic self (Leimann 1995; 2004). Key Vygotskian (1962, 1978) concepts include that of internalisation (understood as a transformative process through which early interpersonal experience becomes intrapersonal, so contributing to the social formation of self), the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and psychological tools (understood as sign-mediated cultural artifacts which may influence the mental activity of self or of another).

- CAT also makes use of psychological tools such as the co-constructed reformulation letters and diagrams aiming to summarise, in a 'top-down' manner, the problems with which patients present (conceived of as reciprocal role procedural enactments) in the context of a narrative account of their social-psycho developmental origins.

- The CAT pictorial metaphor technique is proposed to be an addition to these 'tools'.

however….Snowballing

- applications in wider 'therapeutic encounter'
- prelim work with
  - counsellors
  - mental health nurses
  - CRUSE

Metaphors

- Palmer (2006) observes metaphors have a long tradition in psychotherapy and there appears to be a developing literature on their use and importance.

- Metaphors be used in therapy (both the patient's spontaneous productions or the therapist's choice of words) but the process of psychotherapy can itself be explained metaphorically, in the interests of developing the treatment alliance (Blatner 2006).

- Metaphoric language in psychotherapy has been found to be used metaphors extensively and when expressed can facilitate insight providing new solutions and to enhance communication and working alliance (Angus 1996 and McMullen 1985 in Levit et al 2000).

Uniqueness

- This study is unique in that it sets out to deliberately explore, qualify and measure the use of metaphor and pictorial metaphor in Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT).

- Although CAT, and other psychotherapy clinicians, have been aware of metaphor as an approach in therapy, some focus on and use metaphor in their practice, there has been no systematic study of the development and effects of working with metaphor and pictorial metaphor in Cognitive Analytic Therapy (Turner 2011, 2012)

Action Research

The most suitable research philosophy for this project is action research.

Action research because research is 'learning based upon doing' Silverman (1997).

Research is a rigorous process of enquiry aiming to 'describe phenomena and to develop explanatory concepts and theories' (Bowling 1997) with an aim of this study is to contribute to a developing body of knowledge in CAT.

This knowledge contributes to the development of theories which challenge the status quo and therefore having significance for practice as described by Marshall and Rossman (1999).

Action Research

- Quantitative research and action research are familiar in changing practice and have a developing portfolio in nursing (Whitehead and McNiff 2006).

- One of the reasons for its development in nursing is the needs of service to have strong foundations in theory within a 'fluid' and arguably 'unstable' environment.

- There are therefore dilemmas with action research on this basis as there may be limited time for an action researcher to complete a project, or to allow for the continuity of staff development over time (Hart and Bond 1995).

Cycle 1

- Background Lit review and prelim work

Lit review into (ongoing)

CAT, Metaphor, Psychotherapy, research Methods (AR, GT, Focus Groups, Small N studies)

Cycle 2

Observe and reflect

- **Design and implementation of the of the Delphi consensus development**

Act, evaluate and modify

- **Three iterations of Delphi**

Reflect

- **Crystallisation of findings, recommendations for clinical work, implications for cycle 3**

Cycle 3

- Development and Pilot of a Training Programme

Cycle 4

- Single case study research is well represented across all professional journals and is useful in generating evidence-based practice. In the preparation of practitioners in the field of mental health care, intensive case study methods have been indispensable in bringing clinical learning into the classroom (Greenwood & Loewenthal, 2005).

- 10x 2 cases (?) measurement each session post (HAT Scale) and set points in therapy (16 sessions three measurements using CORE-OM, GHQ and PSQ)

- Self report competency scale developed and evaluating this as pilot then for post doc work

G - case example
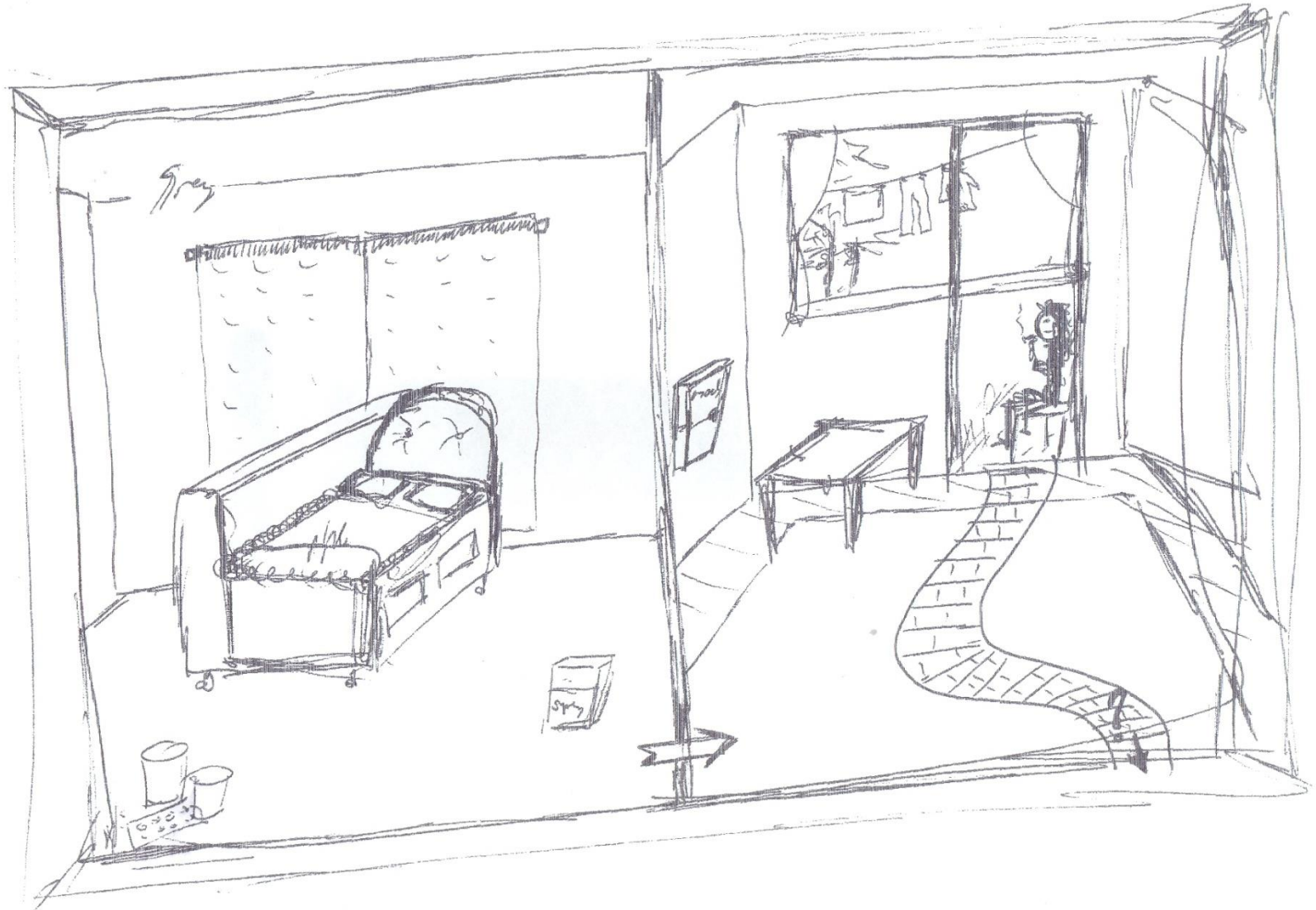
L -case example
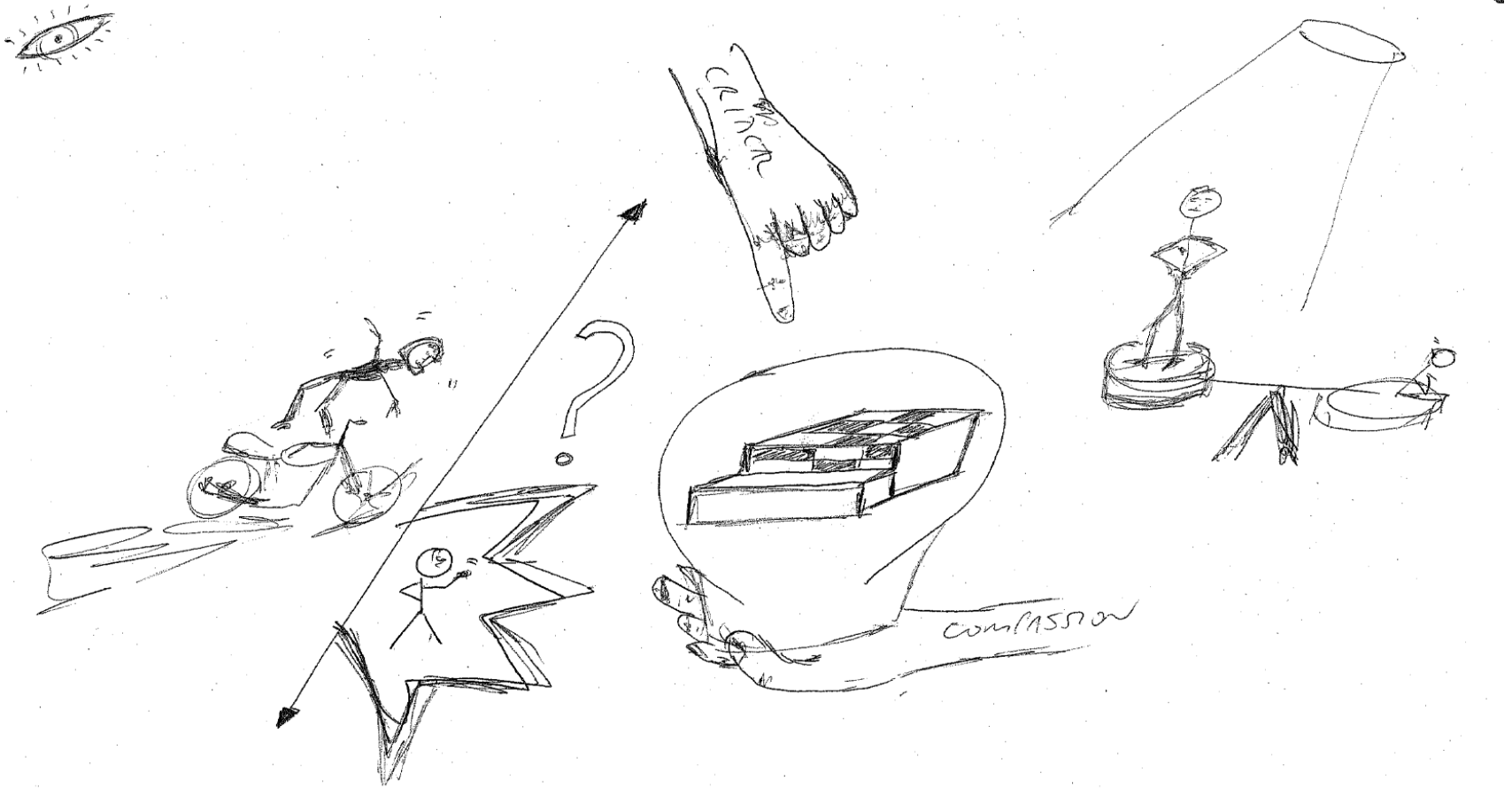
What client 'L' had to say…

'As I progressed through the therapy process I identified some images that described my overcoming of this initial 'swimming through' and these were depicted by Jim and positioned at the 'other end of the vortex'. The image of the fish, for example, came from the idea of a fish that is able to keep on swimming, regardless of difficulties it encounters. The image of an explorer emerged towards the end of the sessions in an answer to a question from Jim as to how I now perceived myself, having gone through the process of therapy; in this case I perceived myself as being ready to venture into the potentially exciting realm of the unknown, complete with a 'toolkit' that I could use in order to examine and help any psychological problems that I found flaring up in myself.

What client 'L' had to say...

- *'Initially the image was useful to me as a tool in clarifying the state that I had described, and was present in the room used for the sessions and often referred to by myself and Jim. Later on in terms of the therapy process, I was able to conjure up the image of the explorer in my mind and focus on it being a state that I wanted to aspire to, giving me further motivation to work through my issues'*

client -M

What client 'M' had to say

- *'I was attracted to (CAT) therapy due to its practical nature. It looked like a method with a procedure. I was hoping to get actual results and understanding. I wanted to gain a set of actions for continuing future use. The investigations during my therapy lead to some important points. Knowing these and their background allows me to act accordingly when situations arise. Jim summarised these points with a picture, having three areas. A glance at the picture reminds me of all the major points and the relevant thought behind them. It summarises the important findings that I need to keep fresh, clear and forward in my mind. The picture gives me a precise, practical view of the therapy, why it was required and the outcomes it produced.'*

When utilising metaphors in therapy Kopp (1995, p5-6) in his well developed evaluation of metaphors in psychotherapy notes a number of useful steps:

- **Step 1:   Notice metaphor**
- **Step 2a: Explore the metaphoric image**
- When you say ….. What image/picture comes to mind?
- What do you see in your minds eye?
- Could you describe?
- **Step 2a: If client does not respond**
- If I were seeing it (the metaphor) the way you see it what would I see?
- May I tell you what image occurs to me?
- **Step 3:   Exploration of the metaphor as sensory image**
- What else can you see?
- Describe the scene?
- What else is going on?
- What are the other people doing/saying?
- What happens next?
- **Step 4:   Explore and define feeling in relation to the metaphoric image**
- Drawing image – agree not to intrude but to create and explore
- **Step 5:   Revision**
- If you could change the image in any way how would you change it?
- What if the e.g. 'x' part of the metaphor were an '?'
- What would the image look like if you were feeling better?
- What do you need to do to get there, what shall I draw on the picture to   represent this 'exit'
- **Step 6:   Back to the tea party**
- What parallels do you see between the image of picture and original picture/metaphor?

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